

QUALITY VARIABLES IN HOUSE AND OFFICE MOVING INDUSTRY: A STUDY IN TERMS OF SERVICE PROVIDERS AND CUSTOMER PERCEPTION⁽¹⁾

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to evaluate the services of house and office moving industry and to determine the quality variables from the perspective of service providers and customers. In the study, after the literature review, the process of house and office moving service distribution system was analyzed. With the actors in the process, a qualitative research technique namely focus group was conducted and service quality variables were determined. House and office moving industry service providers, public and private institutions, personnel from transportation companies and representatives of customers joined the study. The results showed that main determinants of service quality in house and office moving industry can be categorized as vehicles, equipments, packaging materials, personnel and reliability on the moving company.

Keywords: House and office moving, service quality, logistics

JEL Codes: M31, R41

EV VE OFİS TAŞIMA ENDÜSTRİSİNDE KALİTE DEĞİŞKENLERİ: SERVİS SAĞLAYICI VE MÜŞTERİ ALGISI ÇERÇEVESİNDE BİR İNCELEME ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı evden eve eşya taşımacılığı endüstrisinde sunulan hizmetlerin değerlendirilmesi ve hizmet kalite değişkenlerinin ortaya konmasıdır. Çalışmada, literatür taraması yapılmış ve evden eve eşya taşımacılığı hizmet süreci analiz edilmiş ve evden eve eşya taşımacılığında hizmet kalitesi değişkenlerinin tespiti amacıyla, hizmet süreci

1 This paper is a revised version of an earlier paper presented at VIII. International Logistics & Supply Chain Congress held in Maltepe University, Istanbul-Turkey, 4th-5th November 2010. The previous version of this paper was published in the congress proceeding under the title of "Quality Variables In House And Office Moving Industry: A Study In Terms Of Service Providers And Customer Perception".

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içerisinde bulunan aktörlerle odak grup çalışması düzenlenmiştir. Çalışmaya evden eve eşya taşımacılığı yapan işletmeler, özel ve kamu kuruluşlarından katılımcılar, taşıma işletmeleri temsilcileri ve evden eve taşıma hizmeti almış müşteriler katılmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda, kullanılan ekipmanlar, paketlenme malzemeleri, personel ve taşımacılık yapan işletmeye duyulan güven ana hizmet kalitesi belirleyicileri olarak ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Evden eve eşya taşımacılığı, hizmet kalitesi, lojistik

JEL Kodları: M31, R41

1. Introduction

Home moving has been performed by the people since years. In most cases, moving represents an exciting time in a person's life. For teenagers going to college or university, moving means newfound independence. For newly married couples moving into their first flat, this means the start of a brand-new life together. Families moving into a dream home represent growth. For career-driven people who are relocated to a different place as part of a promotion, moving signifies success. In circumstances such as these, moving is always seen as a happy event. In other circumstances home moving can create problems (Irolis, 2010).

Home moving is not just about packing for the moving. In order to get house moving done, you have to sort out all your belongings and categorize which ones you will take with you to your new home, which ones you will throw away and which ones you will put into storage. Not only that, you would also need to make an inventory of your belongings and then pack them in crates and boxes with the hope that nothing would be lost, broken or misplaced (Irolis, 2010).

Today instead of having the home moved by the people themselves, more and more house and office moving companies give house and office moving services in order to facilitate the life of people. Although they give the similar types of services, quality of services differs. Since the quality is an essential competitive element, the concern for quality in house and office moving industry is evident.

Since the eighties, service quality has been one of the most important issues in the literature and is considered as a vital element in management strategies in order to succeed and/or to outlive in competitive environments. The pressure of competition in most industries has forced managers to look for ways to enhance their competitive position. Many have decided to improve service quality in order to differentiate their services from those of their competitors (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

The focus of this paper is to determine the service quality variables in order to measure the service quality in the house and office moving industry. Many business organizations have felt the critical need to use a tool for evaluating service quality in order to appropriately assess and improve their service performance. The result of the study showed that there are several service quality variables in house and office moving industry. The main determinants of service quality in house and office moving industry can be categorized as vehicles, equipments, packaging materials, personnel and reliability on the moving company.

2. Literature Review

a. Service quality

Service quality is considered an essential strategy for success and survival in today's competitive environment. However, unlike goods quality, which can be measured with some objectivity, service quality is abstract and elusive. The unique features of services such as inseparability of production and consumption, intangibility and heterogeneity make measurement of quality a very complex issue. In the absence of objective measures, firms must rely on consumers' perception of service quality to identify their strengths and /or weaknesses, and design appropriate strategies (Karatepe et al., 2005).

The complex feature and the importance of service quality attracted the attention of researchers and practitioners all over the world (Chowdhary and Prakash, 2007) and they have increasingly focused their attention on customer service and how to improve the quality of external service encounters between the contact employee and external customer. While some researchers were interested in the physical surroundings that improve service encounters, Parasuraman et al. (1988; 1991) focused on minimization of organizational "gaps" that affect customer satisfaction. However, internal service quality is equally important because an organization's ability to meet the needs of external customers relies on employees' internal capabilities to satisfy the needs of internal customers.

While the literature on service quality is reviewed, it is seen that two schools of thought dominate the extant thinking. One is the Nordic school of thought based on Grönroos's two-dimensional model. And the other is the North American school of thought based on Parasuraman et al.'s five dimensional SERQUAL model. Chowdhary and Prakash (2007) indicates that other significant conceptual and empirical works (models) in the service quality area can be encompassed as follows: (1) customer's experiences with the tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy aspects of services delivered by a firm; (2) technical and functional quality; (3) service product, service environment, and service delivery; and (4) interaction quality, physical environment quality, and outcome quality. All these four models share a common feature: They propose a multidimensional service quality conceptualization that it is inherently linked to the measurement of consumer quality perceptions. Therefore, service quality models offer a framework for understanding what service quality is, as well as how to measure service quality in each proposed conceptualization (Martinez and Martinez, 2010).

The service quality models can also be categorized in three distinct groups, showing the limitations of each conceptualization: (1) Multidimensional reflective model such as RSQS-Retail Service Quality Scale (Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz's Model). (2) Multidimensional

formative models such as GM (Grönroos' Model), ROM (Rust and Oliver Model), SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's model) and SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor's Model). (3) Multidimensional formative–reflective model such as BCM (Brady and Cronin's multidimensional and hierarchical Model) (Martinez and Martinez, 2010).

In the literature, it is seen that many studies has been performed in different industries regarding service quality. However, there are very limited studies in logistics and no study has been encountered on service quality in house and office moving industry. Some of the studies in the literature related to service quality are as follows: Measuring service quality in the hotel industry (Akbaba,2006; Briggs et al., 2007; Ekinci et al. 2003; Haywood, 1983; Tsauro and Lin, 2004; Wilkins et al., 2007;), in banking (Choudhury, 2008), in retail industry (Magi and Julander, 1996; Vazquez et al., 2001), in automobile repair and maintenance industry (Andaleeb and Basu, 1998), in airline service (Chang and Yeh, 2006; Chen and Chang, 2005; Chen, 2008; Nathanail,2008), in shipping (Chen,2009), in retail transportation (Caro and Garcia,2007), in e-business (Ho and Lee, 2007), in restaurants (Ha and Jang, 2010; in railway transportation (Ha and Jang, 2010), in health care services (Lee and Yom,2007; Li, 1997; Teng et al., 2007), in telephone service quality (Ai and Sappington, 2005).

b. Theories and studies on house moving industry

Although no direct study has been confronted regarding service quality in house and office moving industry, there are some studies on house moving. The topic of house and office moving is discussed in the literature as “house moving” and this topic has been formulated as ‘residential mobility’ and has been examined from more psychological, economic and policy oriented perspectives. The studies in this area have tended to use more quantitative methods in order to examine the causes and effects of such mobility. Moreover, they have tended to conceive residential mobility as a problem, as opposed to the norm of a stable home, where mobility was intimately tied to poverty, inadequate housing and ill-health, as well as family and community breakdown (Metcalf, 2006). This pathologisation of mobility was only tempered by Rossi's pioneering study which argued that residential mobility was in fact normal and could be seen as an effect of transitions in the family life-cycle. The early theory on housing mobility is the so-called “life cycle model”. According to this model, frequency of mobility will increase in connection with changes in life stages, e.g. finishing education, marriage, divorce, new job, retirement, children leaving home, death of spouse, or infirmity. Further studies confirm that the propensity to consider moving and actually to move is higher at such times (Metcalf, 2006). Another theory on housing mobility is the so-called “stress threshold model” first developed by Wolpert (1965; 1966) and later developed further by Brown and More (1970), Speare (1974) and Fokkema et al. (1996). Metcalf (2006) states that Wolpert

assumes that a decision on moving is a function of what he calls the location's utility to the person in question. The location is not just the dwelling, but also the physical surroundings and the social environment. If the utility of a location is high, there is no reason to move, even though the utility of another location might be higher. If utility decreases for some reason, the person will feel a certain stress. However, only if this feeling of stress is sufficiently high and exceeds a certain threshold, will the person consider moving. Brown and More suggest that there are two steps: first, to consider moving and, secondly, the decision as to where to move (Metcalfe, 2006).

Beside the theories explaining why people move their house, following studies have looked at the topics from similar perspective. Some of the studies encountered related to house moving are as follows: The reasons of older people's decision on moving their house (Hansen and Gottschalk, 2006), the psychiatric symptoms of moving house on children (Hall, 1966), children's understanding of moving house and homelessness experience (Van Blerk and Ansell, 2006), home moving and children's homelessness experience (Kirkman et al. 2010), the health complaints and annoyance after moving into a new office building (Hutter et al. 2006), the interrelation of congestion and residential moving behavior (Larsen, 2008) and the family moving home and social stratification (Gayle, 2008).

All previous theories and studies deal with the reasons and the results of house moving. However, no accessible study has dealt with the house and office moving industry from the service quality perspective of logistics service providers.

3. Logistics Services in House and Office Moving Industry

House and office moving services are not different from the logistics services and quite similar activities are carried out (See Figure 1). The services given in house and office moving industry can be categorized as transportation (both intracity and intercity transportation), transportation insurance, expertise (supervising), packing, wrapping and stretching, elevator services, loading, unloading, stuffing into the truck, assembly and disassembly, warehousing and storage, supplying garment rails for clothing, supplying cartons and packaging materials and tracking systems.

The house and office moving process starts with the order of the customers and it is completed by reaching the cargo to its destination. Between these two points a series of logistical activity carried out by the service providers and majority of these activities are the same as logistics activities.

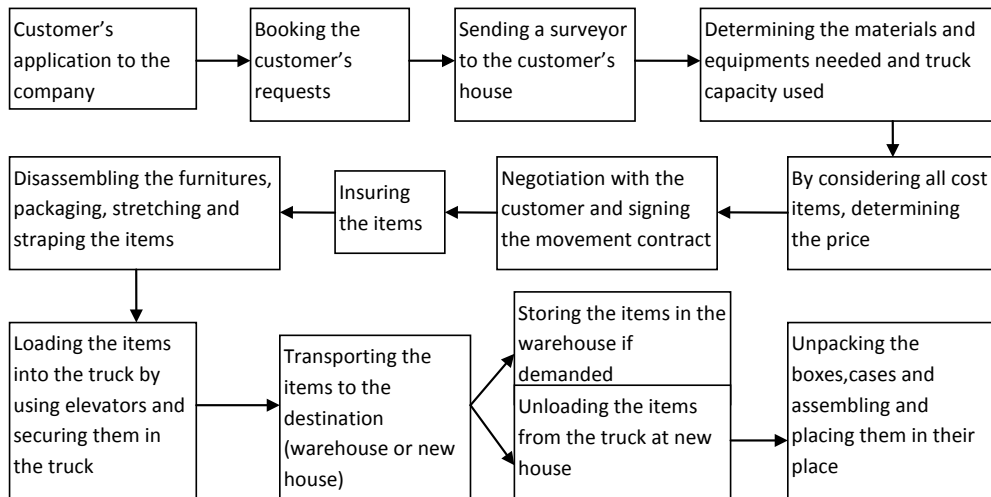


Figure 1:
The Process of House and Office Moving Activities

a. Authorized parties deal with home and house moving activities

The rapid developments of transport and developments in economic, commercial and social life in Turkey cause house and office moving industry to have a stronger legal infrastructure. Consequently, Road Transport Act Numbered 4925 was accepted and has come in to force by Sublime Parliament in order to correct the irregularities in the industry and to order the industry in line with the needs of economic, technical, commercial and social life (Ministry of Transportation, 2010).

According to the article no. 6 of Road Transport Act Numbered 4925, the only authorized party who can carry out the home office moving activities in Turkey is the parties who have K3 certificate. In order to obtaining the K3 certificates, parties have to fulfill the general conditions stated in the article 12 and special conditions stated in Article 13 of Road Transport Act Numbered 4925. According to Article 13, the party apply for the K3 certificate has to have the vehicles which have the total carrying capacity of at least 30 tons and the equity capital of 5,000 Turkish Liras. According to Article 80 of the regulation, the party who applies for the K3 certificate for intracity house and office moving activities has to pay TL 6,471 for the certificates.

4. Methodology

The main aim of this study is to evaluate the services of house and office moving industry and to determine the quality variables from the perspective of service providers and customers. A qualitative study is aimed and the methodology used is focus group discussion. A focus group is a distinctive type of group in terms of purpose, size, composition and procedures. Participants who do not exceed 10-12 in number are selected because they possess certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic or theme of the research. Focus group interviews, originating in marketing research, were developed in the 1930s. Differing from the traditional information gathering techniques, focus group discussion is a qualitative methodology where around 10 open-ended questions are directed towards the group of participants in an average of one hour period with the help of a moderator to state, explain and share their experiences, attitudes and opinions with no influence or boundaries (Cerit, 2001; Garrison et al., 1999).

Figure 2 summarizes the focus group discussion procedures. The steps in the procedure are question development, group composition and recruitment, interview protocol and logistics, implementing the focus group discussion and data analysis (Garrison et al., 1999; Mears, 1995)

a. Data collection forms and question contents

Two separate forms are used for the research. The first one aims to collect information on the demographic profile of the participants and the second one is the moderator's discussion guide with blanks under each question to record key ideas. The form searching the demographic profile of the participants covers questions on the gender, age, occupation, education, etc. When developing the questions, both Parasuraman et al's five dimensional SERQUAL model and four marketing mix elements which is product, price, place, promotion were taken into account. The questions included variables related to the house and office moving industry.

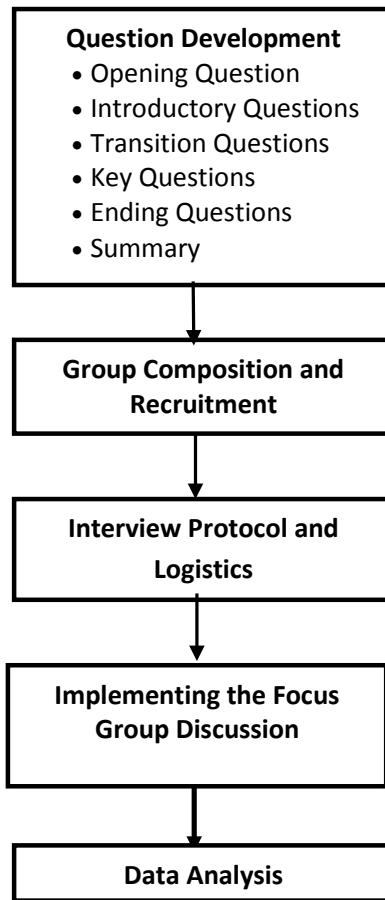


Figure2:
Focus Group Discussion Procedures

b. Group composition and recruitment

The focus group is composed of 9 people. People directly related with house and office moving industry such as service providers, customers and people from the Chamber of Truck Drivers which is the member of Izmir Chamber of Tradesman and Craftsman were included into the group. The profiles of the respondents are given in Table 1.

Table 1:
Profile of the Focus Group Participants

Gender		Education		Occupation		Age	
Male	9	Primary School	4	Public sector	2	20-35	4
Female		High School	3	Private sector		36-45	2
		Undergraduate	2	Entrepreneur	7	46-over	3

The participants were selected in a differentiated way to represent the qualifications appropriate for the objectives of the study. In addition to these qualifications the probable activity level for the focus group discussion was also taken into account. In Table 2 the company or organization of the participants are clarified.

Table 2:
Company or Organization of the Participants

Participant No.	Company or Organization
1	Akdoğan Nakliyat (Akdoğan Transport)
2	İzmir Kamyoncular Odası (İzmir Chamber of Truck Drivers)
3	İzmir Kamyoncular Odası (İzmir Chamber of Truck Drivers)
4	Salmanoğlu Nakliyat (Selmanoğlu Transport)
5	Dokuz Eylul University (Home moving service taker)
6	Dokuz Eylul University (Home moving service taker)
7	Sihirli House and office moving Company
8	Sihirli House and office moving Company
9	Dünya Nakliyat (Dunya Transport)

c. Interview protocol and logistics

The logistics of the focus group discussion include the location and scheduling. The building of the Chamber of Truck Drivers was chosen as a place that is easy for the participants to find and to access. The participants were contacted 15 days before the session, the nature of the study was explained and they were invited to the meeting at the specified day and hour. All of the participants reached the meeting place by their own means. 2 assistant moderators joined the meeting to assist the moderator in handling the operational or environmental conditions and logistics.

The meeting room was organized in a manner that the moderator's table stood in the middle and the assistant moderators sat behind the moderator, and around the moderator the participants' seats were designed in a circle. Beverages and cookies were served before the discussion started. Questionnaires and discussion guides were prepared in necessary numbers beforehand. The focus group discussion was recorded by videotaping and also by written notes. All the related equipment was checked before the meeting to maintain efficient operating conditions during the meeting.

d. Implementing the focus group discussion

Before starting the discussion, the objective of the meeting was briefly explained to the participants and the questionnaires related to the participants' demographic profile were distributed and asked to be completed. Afterwards the focus group discussion guide was taken into account and every question in the guide was asked to each participant orally. The replies were recorded in written notes and by videotaping. The assistant moderators took part in assisting the moderator with these operations and also warned the moderator by written notes where necessary. After the completion of the structured questions a period of 15 minutes was maintained for unstructured discussion among the participants and this discussion were also recorded. Completion of the participants' questionnaires, the discussion guide and the unstructured discussion period lasted in a total of 1 hour and 45 minutes.

e. Data analysis

After the discussion the moderator and the assistant moderators met to analyze the discussion briefly and to find out the common and conflicting points reached by the participants. Afterwards the data collected by the videotapes and as written notes are transcribed, coded and analyzed. Thus the moderator has identified the major outcomes of the discussion.

f. Overview of results

The sequence of the questions in the focus group discussion guide were prepared in a manner that it was aimed to receive the opinions of the participants on house and office moving industry, particularly, services provided by the house and office moving industry, the new developments in the industry, economic, social and environmental effects of the industry, the adequacy of regulations, factors effecting the determination of the quality of services, the adequacy of warehouses, trucks and equipments, the competency of the work force, the transportation insurance and transportation costs etc. In this manner **the initial question** was directly related to what services are provided by house and office moving companies and what services are received by the customers.

House and office moving consists of a series of processes. The initial point of the process is that the customer calls the carrier. Upon receipt of this call, the carrier sends a surveyor free of charge to address of the customer, considering the feature of the demand. The surveyor carries out a detailed investigation on such aspects regarding the carriage as the quantity of the items to be carried, the amount of the packaging materials to be used (e.g. crafts, barrels, hanging wardrobes, etc.), the plan to be designed on how to carry the items, and the freight to be charged for the carriage. Following the completion

of the contract, the transport staff detach the items to be moved, package them within the new packaging materials in as hygienic manner as possible, stretch, place them in the wardrobes with hangers, and using the relevant elevator move them out. The items of carriage then are loaded on the carrier to be taken to the destination where they are unloaded and reinstalled. In the meantime, the home and office items are stored in warehouses designed particularly for such items.

The primary points considered by the customers are receiving the service on time in compliance with the agreement and the period agreed on, getting justifiably compensated for the damage made on the items carried and on the home, being assured that no further amounts will be charged, during the shipment and no extra amount will be charged for the elevator to be used.

Still another point of consideration on the part of the customers is receiving proper surveying service. They state that such carriage is to be carried out by those companies with K3 certificates expertised exclusively in this field.

The second question was related to the most important developments/innovations recently introduced in house and office moving industry. Participants stated that elevators, packaging materials, expertise services, promotion through internet, employing furniture producers or carpenters within the companies, increase in the quality of the packaging materials, carriers' assurance in carriage risks and enhancement of organization skills in factory moving are the most important developments in the industry.

The third question was related to if house and office moving industry today manages the carriage and warehousing business more effectively, when compared with the conventional one. The service providers think that through providing surveying service free of charge, a considerable phase accomplished in favor of providing a better and faster home and office moving service. The vehicles, apparatus, and materials used now are a lot more modernized. They stated that the packaging processes are now much more better, safer and proper. Another plus favoring a more satisfying service is introducing the elevator within the system. Still another factor affecting and improving the customer satisfaction is the quality warehousing system, through which the items are stored outdoor in the warehouses or they are placed in certain exclusively deployed boxes or trunks.

The fourth question was related to the role of house and office moving industry and the stresses experienced by the service receivers. Professional house and office moving companies have diminished the carriage anxiety to a great extent. In most cases, the service receivers are not involved in the process, they are not required to get prepared for the carriage, the home and the office is moved by the company as a whole and the

furniture is replaced and reinstalled at the destination. The experience gained and the equipment used have decreased the stress on the part of the service receivers. Prior to reinstallation, in case of necessity, a house cleaner is provided by the carrier to clean the house.

The fifth question was related to economic, social, cultural and environmental effects of the industry. The participants think that the house and office moving industry provides a great deal of equipments and materials; e.g. trucks, auxiliary parts, fuel-oils, boxes, packing materials etc., from many other industries. This is a kind of economic contribution to the relevant country. Still another contribution to the economy is the taxes paid by this industry. Besides, the industry employs around 15 persons per each company, thus contributes to the employment. In terms of cultural contribution, however, house and office moving industry has not yet been popularized and favored to a satisfactory extent in Turkey. As a result of such unfortunate and inadequate fame of the industry, certain over aged trucks with no proper certificates used in house and office moving which consume lower quality fuel-oil cause environmental pollution.

The sixth question was related to regulations and compensation of the damages related to house and office moving industry. The participants believe that the regulations pertaining to house and office moving are adequate. According to these regulations, these companies with K3 certificate are authorized to carry out house and office moving. Along with such companies with K3 certificates, however, there are many other ones having no such certificate but carrying out this job. Such companies are not unfortunately inspected to a satisfactory extent, benefit from an unjustified competition through low quality service they provide and lower prices they offer.

Regarding the carriage contracts, carriage agreements are issued for the carriages fulfilled by the the companies with K3 certificates. In accordance with the agreement requirements, the carriers are responsible for any damages caused. In case of having no such agreement, however, the customer has no legal rights to claim for any compensation. Carriers meet those damages stated within the agreement clauses only.

Customers are not well informed about the contents/clauses of the carriage agreements. Unless the carriers provide the customers with such agreement forms, no agreement is issued and in case of suffering any damages, customers are vulnerable and unable to claim for any compensation. In terms of protecting the rights of the customers, the Chamber of Truck Drivers have no legal power on making the carriers compensate the damages caused during house and office moving.

The seventh question was related to the factors determining the quality of service provided in house and office moving industry. The expertise service provided, the equipment used, the personnel and the elevator are the seen the main determinant of quality.

The eighth question was related to the standards of warehouses, trucks, equipments and the competency of the employees. The participants think that there has been no problem about the physical competency of the professional companies with K3 certificate. The trucks and the warehouses of such companies are in good condition provided with proper equipment. Their packaging materials are quality and adequate.

According to the Road Transport Regulation Article No. 17, the age of the trucks to be used by the new entrants to the industry for house and office moving should not exceed 22. When trucks of these companies already working in the industry reach at the age of 22, they are to pass the visa investigation procedures, if they are to be kept in working at house and office moving. At present, the trucks being used in city to city house and office moving are relatively young and mostly 2006-2007 model. Those working in the intracity transports are around 10-15 years old, equipped with isolated cases, which are as important as the trucks themselves and are quite costly.

Professional companies working in this industry have permanently employed competent and professionally specialized personnel. Throughout the whole industry present an overall picture revealing that those with K3 certificate have qualified personnel.

On the other hand, however, within this industry there have been a great number substandard companies with no K3 certificate. The employees of such companies, with inadequate and incompetent vehicles and equipment, are temporarily employed and unqualified ones.

The ninth question was related to transportation insurance and transportation prices. Participants state that all customers want to be provided with insurance certificates. Such certificates, however, are issued for intercity transports but not for those intracity ones; the damages caused during the latter, nevertheless, are met by carriers. The clauses of the insurance policies are not usually carefully examined by the customers. The insurance companies compensate not all types of damages but only those caused during carriage while the relevant truck is on route.

There appears an unfair competition within the industry between the companies owning K3 certificate with those who do not have it. The overall profit rate earned in this industry is around 5-10%. Those with no K3 certificates usually tend to offer lower prices. For instance, while the cost of an intracity moving carried out by a company with K3 certificate is about 600 TL, another company which do not have this certificate can offer to do the

same carriage for 300 TL. Such an unfair competition prevents the certificated companies from doing their job.

The tenth question was related to the companies which officially carry out the house and office moving activities in Turkey. It is stated that such activities are carried out by the companies with K3 certificates in Turkey.

The eleventh question was related to advertising and promotion activities for house and office moving industry. The participants indicate that the companies usually carry out their advertising activities through internet or through certain printed brochures. Another means of advertising is done through daily paper ads and stickers. Still another means made use of in accessing the potential customers is the recommendations of the existing customers. The attitudes and performances displaced by the company personnel on job could also be another source of advertisement particularly for the potential customers who observe such attitudes and performance at work.

Receiving a trade mark within the industry is said to be rather difficult, particularly for too great number of the companies included in the industry. Nevertheless, most companies tend to have their trade mark marks registered, have their own logos, receive ISO 9001 quality certificates and refer their customers to certain carriages they have previously fulfilled. Such a tendency is a step towards accomplishing trademark.

The twelfth question was related to elimination of the problems caused in the intracity traffic by house and office moving industry. The participants state that narrow roads prevent large trucks from entering certain roads. Before the transport truck enters a road, the cars parked along that road are taken away. Transport trucks are permitted to enter certain places at certain time periods and they are to receive special permission to enter certain places. Therefore, the drivers of such trucks are to be careful about such permitted time and they have got to receive the required permission in time. Besides, in order not to block the roads for a long time, the loading/discharging operations must be carried out rapidly. In order to do this, the elevator must be used effectively and the items to be loaded must be prepared for loading beforehand. Furthermore, house and office moving should not be carried out at night and at the rush hour for the residents involved.

The thirteenth question was related to the efforts to improve the quality and the customer satisfaction in house and office moving industry. The participants believe that in terms of enhancing the quality service, the primary factors are using new and adequate truck and equipment along with quality packaging material. More important, however, is the competency and reliability of the personnel carrying out the job. It might be image damaging to appoint for such moving incompetent personnel who are likely to make

undesirable and unacceptable impressions. Another point which causes the customers dissatisfied is the differences between agreed price and prices asked during the loading of the truck. Some transportation companies increase the price while loading the items by claiming that number of items is more than they expected. Also some firms send small trucks which can not take all items and for remaining cargo another truck is appointed and extra money is requested. This is also a point which dissatisfies the customers.

In terms of increasing customer satisfaction, reliability seems to be one of the most important criteria. Those employees who lack work discipline and whose wearing style does not comply with the work carried out causes a dissatisfaction on the customers. Besides, having received ISO 9001 and ISO 18001 certificates seem to be important in terms of improving the service quality. Still in this regard, another important point in improving the service the service quality is the questionnaires conducted to assess the service quality.

g. Service quality determinants in house and office moving Industry

By carefully analyzing the focus group study results, 29 service quality determinants have been extracted. These are given as follows:

- High quality hygienic packaging materials
- New and adequate equipment
- Specially designed elevators
- New vehicle and adequate vehicle capacity
- Good warehouses and storages equipped with necessary equipments
- Having K3 certificate
- Having a trade mark and logo
- Having ISO quality certificates
- Giving surveying/expertise service
- Insuring the items
- Giving turn key services
- Giving house cleaning services
- Better, safer, proper packaging process
- Planning the moving operations very carefully from beginning to the end
- Having organizational skills in factory moving
- Reliability of the moving company
- Supplying the service on time
- Complying with period of transportation
- Competency of the personnel carrying out the job
- Reliability of the personnel carrying out the job

- The external appearance and clothes of the employees
- Making moving contracts and complying with agreement
- Compensating the damages
- Assuring that only the amounts stated in the contract will be charged
- Assuring the customer against carriage risks
- Using all kind of media in reaching to the customer
- Not giving harm to the environment by consuming low quality fuel-oil
- Preparing questionnaires conducted to assess the service quality
- Price

5. Discussion

While the literature on service quality is reviewed, it is seen that two schools of thought dominate the extant thinking. One is the North American school of thought based on Parasuraman et al.'s five dimensional SERQUAL model. And the other is the Nordic school of thought based on Grönroos's two-dimensional model. SERQUAL model consists of five dimensions as follows (Rahaman et al., 2011): Tangibles which includes physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel. Reliability includes ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Responsiveness means willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Assurance includes including competence, courtesy, credibility and security; knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. Empathy means caring and individualized attention that the firm provides to its customers. When comparing the results of the study with the dimensions of the SERQUAL model, it is seen that all the quality determinants can be categorized within the tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy dimensions of the SERQUAL model.

On the other hand, Grönroos' model suggesting that service quality consists of three dimensions, technical, functional and image. Technical quality refers to the result or the outcome of the service, while functional quality refers to the process or the way the service has been delivered (Lien and Kao, 2008: 528) and image functions refers to a filter in service quality perception. The results of the study shows that the quality determinants came up in the study match with mainly functional and image functions of the Grönroos' model.

6. Conclusion

House and office moving activities have been carried out for years and almost every person experienced it at least once in his/her life. Although it is seen an happy event for

some people if the people move to better place, it can sometimes creates headache if it can not be done properly. For avoiding the problems, it is necessary to have the home and office moved by the companies which supply high level of services. In other words, the service quality of the company must be satisfactory. In order to understand if a companies' service level high or not, the service quality determinants must be known and according to these determinants service quality is evaluated. Although in many sector, service quality has been studied and many thoughts have been developed like Parasuraman et al's and Grönroos, no study has been encountered on service quality in house and office moving industry. In order to fill this gap and determine the service quality variables, a qualitative study namely focus group has been carried out by house and office moving service providers and service takers. The study showed that the only authorized parties deals with house and office moving business is the parties which have K3 Certificates. However, besides these companies some other companies are carrying out the job illegally in Turkey. The results reflect that this industry is in its beginning stage in Turkey and will develop by the years. The most important part of the study is the determinants of service quality in house and office moving industry. 29 variables have been extracted from the focus group study. Some of them are: High quality packaging materials, new and adequate equipment, using special elevators, Having K3 certificate, giving expertise service, reliability of the company, supplying the service on time, competency and reliability of the personnel, compensating the damages etc. The variables stated here will be valuable for the researchers who will make similar studies.

When we looked the industry from the point of logistics, it is seen that house and office moving industry serves all logistical services to customers. From order booking to concluding service contract, from transportation to warehousing, from packaging to loading/unloading and stuffing, from insuring to damage compensation. Therefore, house and office moving industry can be seen as a logistics service provider industry.

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