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# The Homeless Perception of Services

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The University of Southern Mississippi

The Homeless Perception of Services

by

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Abstract

This study, recognizing a lack of academic research into the homeless population's needs, approaches the problem of needs assessment of the homeless through the context of customer service. The literature points to a discontentment with the classic shelter model, and potential positives in newer, emerging alternatives. Using the "Gap Model of Service Quality", qualitative interviews were structured and scheduled with the homeless individuals in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. The study encountered many obstacles, including lack of participation. Due to these complications, it could not come to any meaningful conclusions; however, there are multiple avenues for further research that developed through the process.

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***The Perception of Services by the Homeless Population in Hattiesburg, MS***

A longstanding issue in the United States is the problem of poverty and homelessness. There is significant research on many aspects of homelessness, and recent research points to a growing concern that some services often offered to America's homeless population can cause significant negative consequences. This study identifies where these organizations have fallen short, as well as identify what services are in demand by the homeless population. It also assesses the needs of a population of homeless people to see where there may be disconnects between the needs and the services offered to them. Studies have been done that have viewed this problem from the point of view of the organization; however, this study attempts to view this issue through the perspective of the homeless themselves. By collecting first-hand accounts from those using the services, the research aimed to point to specific gaps where the perceived failures are manifested. The literature suggests that a relevant amount of the homeless population does not seek out any sort of service, and the cause of this is often correlated to frustrating past experiences. It is the intended purpose of this study to see what aspects of past services have caused frustration, as well as to identify aspects of current services that have positive effects.

It could be helpful to frame the issue at hand in the context of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This well-known psychologist theorized that human motivations could be categorized by type of need. At the lowest tier of the hierarchy, physiological needs like food and water motivate human actions. After those needs are satisfied, people seek to fulfill their safety needs, such as health and shelter. After safety needs are provided for,

people seek to satisfy social and self-esteem needs. Finally, individuals seek "self-actualization", which is expressed in a variety of ways, such as creativity. While most traditional services successfully provide for the physiological needs of their clients, they fail emphatically at offering the higher tiered needs. Some would argue that many shelters struggle to provide for the safety needs of the homeless men, women, and children that they serve. It is seemingly universal in the literature that the self-esteem needs of the homeless are rarely, if ever, met in the traditional shelter model. In actuality, many practices held by traditional shelters are a detriment to the acquisition of these needs by the homeless. (Maslow, 1943)

*A General History*

Homelessness has been a significant sociological issue in America since the late 1800's, when a rise in unemployment created an immense population of migrant workers who had no permanent means of support. While, at first, many of these men were Civil War veterans who had difficulty finding work after the war, the trend carried over into the early part of the 20th century (DePastino, 2003). In the 1970's, there was a significant rise in shelters when the rising rate of homeless persons was viewed as a temporary issue, both on a macro and micro level. In the 1980's, these shelters became a more permanent fixture in communities and have increasingly become more bureaucratic and institutionalized. (Deward & Moe, 2010)

*Hattiesburg, Mississippi*

Mississippi has seen a significant rise in homelessness over the past five years. According to MUTEH (Mississippi United to End Homelessness), a Point in Time count

is taken every two years to estimate the number of homeless people in each area of the state. The most recent counts have shown a 100% increase from 2007 to 2009. Also, according to the 2010 census, Mississippi has a poverty rate of 20.6%, higher than any other state.

In Forrest County and the city of Hattiesburg, these problems are even more intensified. In the Point in Time count, Forrest County had a homeless population second in the state to Hinds County. Also, Hattiesburg had a poverty rate of over 30% according to the 2010 census. This is 10% higher than the state average. It is for this reason, and as a matter of convenience, that this study will focus on the homeless population of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. ("Point in time count," n.d.) ("Hattiesburg (city) QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau," n.d.)

## *Purpose*

The purpose of the study is to identify how the homeless population of Hattiesburg perceives the homeless services available to them. The study is interested in personal experiences with different service providers, as well as current participation in any programs. It is also interested in the homeless person's perspective on needs that current services do not meet, as well as services that aim to meet needs that may not be as pressing as others. The study will determine potential areas of need that are not being met by the services providers in the area, and in conjunction, ways to improve upon these apparent strengths.

## Chapter II

## Literature Review

The literature on the problem of homelessness is in depth and covers a variety of topics. For this study, it important to note the issues that homeless populations have had with service providers, as well as how alternative models are emerging. Another topic of interest is "The Gap Model of Service Quality", typically used in for-profit scenarios, which will help shape the logic and methodology of the research.

### Issues with the Traditional Shelters

A study conducted in the late 1980's surveyed a significant homeless population in Birmingham, Alabama. The goal of this study was to determine the differences, if any, between homeless people who preferred to live on the streets (alleys, bridges, parks, etc.) and those who sought out some form of shelter. The study found some significant differences in the two populations. First, they found that those living in the shelters had higher satisfaction with their environment, but a higher level of dependency. They found that those in the shelters were often more likely to have a past of addiction and abuse, while the "street homeless" were more likely to have been jailed. The authors determined that shelters often restricted their users, stating "traditional shelters may be desirable for the most vulnerable homeless... but it robs them of their autonomy". The street homeless view shelters as "lack[ing]... a suitable, autonomy-granting environment" which "may encourage them to use the street, in spite of its less that inviting conditions". For these reasons, it was the opinion of the authors that the development for "autonomous settings" to meet the needs of the homeless without creating dependency is of utmost importance. (La Gory, Fitzpatrick, & Richey, 1990)

This lack of autonomy is a recurring trend in other research. Deward suggests that homeless shelters operate as total institutions, leading to a "deterioration of personhood" and "loss of autonomy". In a qualitative study, focused on residents of one particular shelter, the research showed that many individuals serviced by the shelter felt a lack of control of their environment. Without a feeling of control, homeless individuals can develop a pattern of dependency on the shelters. Ironically, the organizations that attempt to empower create an effect that is counterproductive to their cause. The findings of this study suggest that many traditional shelters fail at effectively serving the residents. In fact, many practices of these shelters may trap residents in a cycle that is difficult to recover from. (Deward & Moe, 2010)

*Possible Alternatives*

One study examined an organization operating in Virginia that works with homeless families to help them along in the process of home ownership. The study showed a two-thirds success rate among participating families. The program, HomeBuy5, uses a selective screening process, followed by five years of mentoring programs to help families become self-sustaining. The organization's goal is to take families, especially single mothers, from homelessness to home ownership. The program was relatively small, but had a large success rate. The research determined that this was an organization working outside of the typical emergency needs to provide sustainable benefits to its participants. (Davey & Ivery, 2009)

One option to replace the traditional shelter is home sharing, although there are some significant obstacles to this method. In many cases, according to one study, if two

individuals that receive housing subsidies from the government were to move in together the cost that they would incur in lost subsidies would be significantly more than they would gain in benefits. This discourages individuals from sharing homes, which has positive psycho-social benefits. This implied tax on shared housing discourages those at risk of homelessness, essentially those receiving government assistance, from living together and creating a positive social structure. (He, O'Flaherty, & Rosenheck, 2010)

Another study suggests that there are many factors that contribute to the levels of success of homeless services. The factors that are discussed in the research are community relationships, the built environment, and characteristics of service delivery. It is the general point of the authors that there are no standard "best practices" for all homeless services. Many variables, such as location and environment, contribute to effective service. This is important to note that what works in one particular area, may not be as successful in another. (Walsh, Graham, & Shier, 2009)


*The Gap Model*

Disconnects between service providers and their clients can be analyzed by looking at "Gap Model of Service Quality". This tool is typically used in the context of for-profit businesses looking to provide the products and services that their target market demands, however the theoretical framework of the gap model can be beneficial to help us see where the breakdown occurs in the provision of services to homeless. The terminology will be adjusted a small bit to fit the context of homeless services. For example, the terms "company" and "customer" will be changed to more appropriate terms such as "service provider" and "homeless population". The gap model suggests that

there are five "gaps" where miscommunication can interfere with the provision of products or services to consumers, or in our case, the provision of services to the homeless.
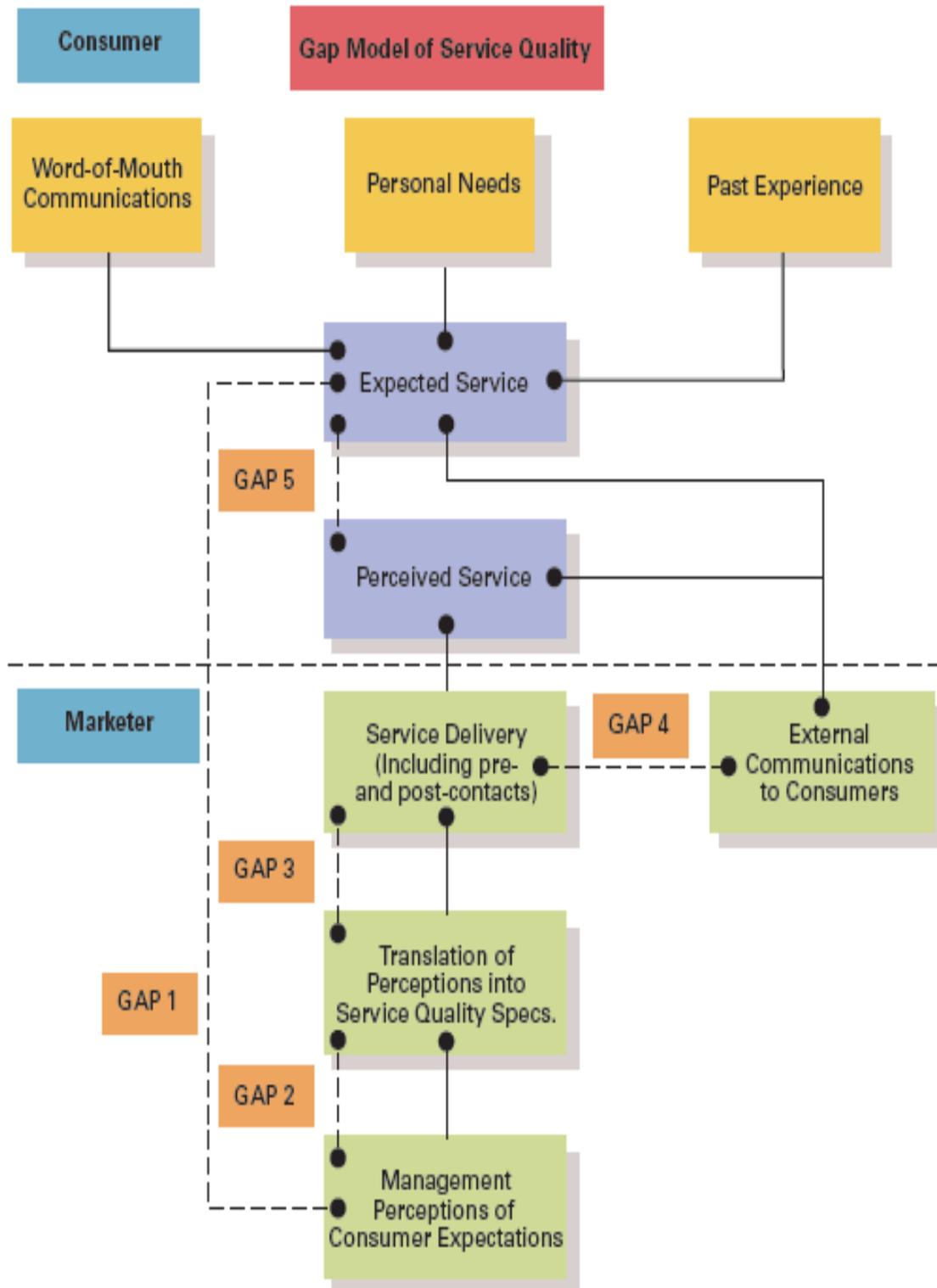
The Gap Model of Service Quality

As seen in the illustration of the Gap Model, there are three key inputs to what a person expects from a service. This "expected service" is constructed in combination by word-of-mouth communications, personal needs, and past experiences. According to this theory, conversations amongst the homeless population about certain services will affect their expectations of the services. For example, if another homeless person tells them positive information about the service, they are more likely to expect a positive interaction with the service provider. The specific needs of the homeless person will also contribute to the "expected service". If they are currently in need of job placement, the services they seek will be expected to fill this need is some way. The third factor, and an extremely important factor for the study, is personal experience. If a homeless person has interacted with a service provider previously, he or she has significant expectations of the services they offer. This could be positive or negative, and their personal experience may be atypical of the service provider generally. Either way, it is a pivotal contributor to personal expectations.

The rest of the chart explains the "gaps" that are between the homeless person's expectations and the services provided to them. The first gap is the gap between what the homeless person wants, and what the management of the service providers thinks that the homeless person wants. This gap can be caused by a misinterpretation of the needs of the homeless population.  Service providers must conduct market research to fill in this gap, and a lack of research creates problems from the very beginning of the process. By fully understanding the needs and expectations of the homeless populations, service providers can better tailor their services to meet these needs and expectations. In reality, every possible break down in the service provision hinges on the first gap in the

model. If an organization knows what the population it serves actually demands, then it can offer these services more effectively.

The next two gaps occur within the organization, and do not involve direct miscommunication with the homeless population. The second is the gap between what the service provider believes the homeless population wants and their plan to provide the services. This gap is generally caused by miscommunication within the organization. If the plan they develop is not consistent with the assessed needs, then potential problems in the provisions will occur. If the needs that were assessed are misdiagnosed, then these problems can be compounded. The third gap is between the service plan and what actually is carried out. This occurs when management fails to properly communicate the strategies down the chain of command. This may be manifested in lack of training for staff, or inefficient allocation of funds. If the previous gaps have not been filled, this problems associated with the third gap are exacerbated.

The fourth is the gap between what the organization provides, and what they communicate to the homeless about the services provided. This is a key flaw in the service provision that is pertinent to the study. Since the study is focused on the homeless population's perception of services, it is especially interested in the communication between the service provider and the individual receiving the services. If the services offered are different than what the service provider tells the homeless population to expect, this could result in frustration and distrust. To close this gap, service providers must be very intentional with their external communication. Honest, accurate communication is important to avoid problems resulting from gap four.

Finally, there is the gap between what the homeless receive and what they want. This is where the model comes back to the original point. The last gap, Gap 5, is the really accumulation of the previous four. It is the fifth gap that the study seeks to address by way of addressing the other aspects of the model, specifically the "expected service" of the participants and their perception of Gap 4. While the focus is on the homeless person's perception, the model clearly shows how all of the gaps affect satisfaction with service providers. (Lamb, Hair Jr., & McDaniel, 2012)

*Chapter III*

*Methods*

*Sample and Interviews*

The data for this study was gathered from a sample of homeless individuals from

Hattiesburg, Mississippi. A small sample of 10-15 individuals was identified with

assistance from an established organization operating the city, Hope House Ministries.

After the sample was established, the individuals were asked to participate in a

confidential, qualitative interview covering several topics. First, basic demographic data

was recorded, including age, race, and gender, as well as any other pertinent information.

Then, some specific questions of particular interest to the study were to be discussed,

such as recent employment history and estimated income, duration of homelessness, as

well as circumstances leading to the person's homelessness. The participant was also

asked to discuss his perceived level of social support, including any recent interaction

with family or friends.

After that foundation, the participant was asked to describe his experience with

homeless services as well as the factors contributing to his current situation. In this

portion of the interview, the researcher identified several "service providers" with which

the participant has had experiences. It was expected that Hope House Ministries would be

a constant in these groups, which will offer a point of comparison. After identifying these

service providers, the participant was asked to explain the experiences that he has had

with the organizations. Then, the participant was asked to explain what they have heard

about the organization from others, whether positive or negative. These questions are

consistent with the logic that past experience and word-of-mouth communications are

key factors in forming one's "expected service". In addition, the participant was asked to elaborate on the communication that he receives from service providers. Then, he was asked to identify any inconsistencies that he feels exist between these communications and the services provided. This will essentially be the participant's perception of Gap 4.

Following those questions, the participant will be asked to identify his needs. He will be asked to list a number of services that he would like to be offered to him. It was made clear to him that these services may or may not already be offered. The needs on the list were needs that he would like an organization to provide to him. This will help determine the services that are demanded by the participant. This is essentially a needs assessment that will help create a better understanding of the participants' "expected service", in accordance with the Gap Model.

### *Potential Complications and Limitations*

There were a few issues that were expected to arise in the process of conducting the interviews and analyzing the research. First, the study would only be able to address Gap 4 and some factors contributing to Gap 5. The first, second, and third gaps are difficult, if not impossible to analyze through interviews with homeless participants. Another issue was the sample size. In an ideal world, the study would contain interviews with hundreds of participants. However, for the project to be feasible, only a small number of interviews were conducted.

*Chapter IV*

*Analysis and Suggestions for Further Research*

For period of several months, I visited Hope House on Saturday mornings and observed and participated in many conversations. While there were many complications with the data collection process, I was able to make some progress and establish a foundation for further study in a variety of directions.

While the initial sample size was intended to be 10 to 15 individuals, there was an unanticipated lack of interest in participation. Because of this, I was only able to have complete, worthwhile interviews with 4 of the men that are regular attendees at Hope House's Saturday morning meeting. In addition to the lack of participation, all of the individuals declined to answer much of the demographic data (such as current income).

My initial goal of finding strengths and weaknesses in the services provided in Hattiesburg was not met, however I believe that even with the full intended sample size, the project would still remain incomplete. Despite the small number of interviews, a large variety of issues were addressed by each of the individuals. I plan to discuss those findings in detail, as well as suggest a number of ways to build on the data collected here for further use.

*Interviews*

With the first interviewee, a history of alcoholism and military service led to an inability to hold a job. After several attempts at recovery and subsequent relapses, he now finds himself without a home or job. Currently, he has a strong social network of other homeless individuals living in camps. He falls into a category of individuals that have a demand for basic material needs, but have a greater need for what may be considered higher tiered services (i.e. job placement, housing assistance, etc). There were two

organizations with which this participant had substantial contact: Hope House Ministries and Salvation Army.

When discussing the Salvation Army, he stressed that the services offered were minimal. However, the main point that he made about the organization was its inconsistency. He told me that depending on the time of day, the communication that he received from the management was very different. Specifically, the daytime management was accommodating and welcoming, but the nighttime staff would often turn him away hungry. This speaks directly to Gap 4 of the Gap Model, the gap between what is communicated and the services provided. By becoming inconsistent in their service, the Salvation Army creates negative experiences and distrust with the homeless of the city.

Discussing Hope House Ministries, he first mentioned many material services that the organization provides. He listed showers, laundry, meals, among the beneficial services offered. Those seemed negligible compared to another benefit that he received from participation in the meetings. This key benefit was the sense of community and fellowship. He told me that he feels like the ministry on Saturdays brings their community together, creating a strong social support system in a group that typically lacks that support. In a moment of profound eloquence, he said, "I may be a shithead myself, but you got other shitheads like me."

The next participant was forced out of New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina and has been in Hattiesburg ever since. He had recently gotten a job with a construction contractor, and also had experiences with both Hope House and Salvation Army. He spoke at length about his experiences with the Salvation Army, and there are many points that he made that are consistent with the literature. In his interaction with the Salvation

Army, he said that he was often disappointed. He expressed frustration with the fact that they allow people to stay for a limited amount of time, but then throw them back to the streets in the same position that they were before. He also shared that there was one person within the organization that "sits himself up on the throne" and dictates who can and cannot eat. This was similar to the previous individual who noted stark contrasts between management within the same service provider. On a positive note, he expressed that in times of crisis, such as during Hurricane Katrina, he was able to receive food and water from Salvation Army. Further describing the organization, he said that he feels that the Salvation Army is concerned with the "big picture" and "being seen", but tends to neglect certain individuals. He felt that staying at the shelter was like a "penitentiary" and that he did not have "the freedom to think". These comments point to the lack of autonomy that leads many individuals to reject service providers altogether.

This individual drew the sharpest distinction between Hope House and Salvation Army of those that were interviewed. He appreciated the environment and the community that Hope House offers. When asked about the communication that he has had with others about the organizations, he mentioned that he is mostly disconnected from others. It is my opinion that this suggested lack of social support may draw him and others like him to an organization like Hope House that provides for that need of social interaction. He discussed two issues that he had with Salvation Army that can be analyzed through the Gap Model. First, he was dissatisfied with the inconsistency of communication, which points to issues in Gap 4. Second, he felt that Salvation Army did not provide for his needs. This breakdown could be in a variety of places, but nonetheless there is a discrepancy between this individual's personal needs and the organizations services.

Of the many services that were discussed, he put the most emphasis on job placement. He used the old adage "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime." He said that even though he had recently found temporary work, he is "constantly looking for a job". And that if he had consistent work he would be able to pick himself up.

The third interviewee has lived in Hattiesburg his entire life, creating an interesting interpretation on the services of the city. As with the previous two, he had experiences with Hope House and Salvation Army. In addition to those, he had also used services provided by Christian Services. Of those interviewed he was the most positive about each of the organizations.

When discussing Christian Services, he said that the services offered were minimal, but that it was not necessarily a bad thing. He stressed the value of free food, and said that it was welcome by the community even if the service was incomplete. He expressed that Christian Services does what they say they will do, which is to provide for the basic material needs of the homeless. All in all, he was satisfied with his experiences with Christian Services. At this point we see anecdotal evidence of the importance of clear communication. Even though the services offered by Christian Services are similar, if not lesser than, Salvation Army, a clear communication of what should be expected affects satisfaction positively. In this case, Gap 4 was almost non-existent, which greatly affected the participant's satisfaction with the organization.

That being said, this interviewee had very few negative comments about Salvation Army. He said that he had stayed one night, and had received food from them a couple of times. He mentioned that the organization best served those with immediate pressing

needs. For those who could not take care of themselves on the streets or in the woods, the shelter provided the necessary security. Summing that sentiment up, he said, "they are helpful, not for myself, but for those in desperate need."

He went on to further discuss the problems faced by elderly and disabled homeless individuals. He said that one of the biggest problems that the city's homeless population faces is a lack of places to go during the day. He told the story of an older friend of his on oxygen who recently passed away. Although he had a place to stay at night, he was forced out into the heat every day. He usually had to walk to Wal-Mart or some other air conditioned building that would allow him to sit inside. While he did not say that this was the direct cause of his death, one can gather that miles of walking in the heat could have numerous negative effects for an elderly man in his condition. He said that he understands that shelters need to have rules, but he added that rules sometimes hurt the people they are designed to help. He said that these issues need to be dealt with on a case by case basis.

When discussing Hope House, he did not discuss the aspect of immediate material needs, nor did he emphasize the importance of community. He focused on Hope House's efforts to get individuals into homes by helping them raise the money for deposits and initial costs. He also said that the organization works with people once they are in the houses to make sure they stay there. They work with individuals through every step of the process, which may include placement in rehabilitation facilities, job placement, and housing placement.

The fourth, and final, noteworthy interviewee has lived in Hattiesburg for almost 8 years now. He lost his home in his former city after a DUI charge left him incarcerated

for 6 months. He moved from city to city until he finally landed in a rehabilitation facility. After a few months of sobriety, he relapsed and was kicked out of rehab. Recently, he has been mugged and has his wallet stolen. He said that the lack of identification has made it difficult for him to get a job or receive government assistance. He also has some physical problems that make finding work challenging. In his time in Hattiesburg, he said that he has had interaction with Christian Services, Salvation Army, and Hope House. He added that there were not many options for people in his situation.

He discussed Christian Services in great detail, providing names of individuals that were very helpful. He described the meals that he receives from them on a weekly basis. He talked about his level of satisfaction with their service, as well as mentioning others that are also satisfied with Christian Services. He knew the specific times and places that they served meals, and the exact details of their clothing voucher programs, knowledge that implies clear communication from the organization.

When discussing Salvation Army, the theme of inconsistency arose again. On one hand, he mentioned specific people that have offered to personally help him with his identification issues. On the other hand, however, he felt that specific individuals that turn him away from services without reason. His opinion was that if Salvation Army was without these certain individuals, they would be much more effective.

He was not without praise for Hope House. He rattled off names of people inside the organization that he felt worked genuinely for the homeless community. These individuals, whom he described as "beautiful people", were organization leaders, weekly volunteers, and even people who only come every month to serve food. He seemed most

grateful for the food, showers, and laundry, as well as the other material needs for which Hope House provides on occasion.

When asked to discuss services that he would want to be provided in the city, he talked quite a bit about the problems that the homeless have faced with the police of the city. He mentioned that he is frequently harassed, and is often put in what he described jokingly as "my favorite cell". He said that he is not sure what they would like for him to do to fix his situation, and that it is not his choice to live on the streets or in the woods. Similar to issues that have been brought up with shelters, arresting and releasing the homeless of the city for vagrancy does essentially nothing but exacerbate the problem at hand.

*Summary*

There were two main recurring themes of my interviews, conversations, and observations; each is directly related to the theoretical framework of the "Gap Model of Service Quality". The first was Gap 4 and external communication. When the individuals were expressly told what to expect from the service provider, and the provider's service was consistent with that expectation, they were satisfied. Even if the service was not what was desired, if communication was effective, they were understanding and made no negative comments. The problematic issues arose when the communication did not line up with the service. For instance, they were expecting food based on what they had been told by one person in the organization, but another turned them away. Communication between the organization and its clients is stressed by the Gap Model. "External Communication" is a key contributor to both the "expected service" and the "perceived service" of the client. Naturally, as organizations seek to close the gap between the two,

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communication is an important aspect of reaching that goal. Accurate and consistent communication can be effective at closing the gap, while poorly conveyed and inconsistent communication can cause a myriad of problems between the organization and the homeless population.

In terms of communication at Hope House, I observed a very intentional focus on "fellowship". The founder of the organization explicitly states on a weekly basis what those who come to Hope House should expect. While showers, laundry, and coffee are mentioned, his main focus is conversation, community, and "living life together". "Volunteers" is a word that hardly applies to those who are not in need of Hope House's services. Volunteers eat the meals with the homeless, and the homeless serve each other along with volunteers. There is a sense of an equality that is very apparent. I found that even in those that were not interviewed, eating a common meal and discussing sports over coffee seemed to be appreciated. In this way, Hope House communicates to the homeless that they should expect their social and esteem needs to be addressed, and because of an intentional focus on these practices, the homeless individuals feel that those needs are being met.

The second recurring theme could have easily been predicted from the literature. Personal needs, as they affect the "expected service", were very important in shaping the participants' opinions of the organizations. While this study did not analyze the gaps that exist internally within the organization, it was clear that there exists a disconnect between the needs of these individuals and what some organizations seek to provide. It is also important that individuals' needs must be addressed as if they are unique. While there are general trends in homelessness, and there are common reasons why people may fall into

poverty, there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. Therefore, the intention of this study was not to prove one organization is better than another. While Christian Services and Salvation Army arguably may not provide for social and esteem needs as well as Hope House, they have the infrastructure to more effectively reach people with food and clothing. For effective service provision, organizations must be aware of the variety of individuals that they are looking to serve, and also be aware of the variety of needs that each of those individuals has. In accordance with the model, personal needs significantly contributed to the "expected service" of each participant. As organizations better understand the "expected service" of their clients, they can more effectively align their services with the clients' needs, thereby closing Gap 5.

*Suggestions for Further Study*

　　While, admittedly, my study did not reach the full scope or the results that I initially intended, I feel that it opens up many different avenues for further study. From my perspective, there are two different categories of studies that need to be pursued. The first pertains to the problem of homelessness and more effective service provision. The second involves the Gap Model of Service Quality and its implementation in other non-profit contexts.

　　I believe that the study, with improvements to the interview structure, could be recreated in other cities dealing with the issue of homelessness. I believe that it can provide a solid foundation for more feasible studies of the broader population. Specifically for the city of Hattiesburg, I do not think that this study by itself has any direct implications. However, I think that recurring issues and services could be drawn

out and inserted in a more quantitative survey focused on high participation. Essentially, asking a few people to name specific services that they would like to see offered is much easier than asking the entire homeless population of the city. However, knowing that a few would like to see more job placement services, it is easier to ask a large number if they would utilize the service. Instead of dealing with a variety of answers across hundreds of individuals, analyzing the data is as simple as counting the number of "yes" and "no" answers. This would provide a more reliable picture of the homeless population of the city as a whole, and it would have much greater policy implications.

Almost more importantly, the Gap Model of Service Quality fit naturally into the non-profit context. It could be a valuable tool for organizations to assess their impact, and to identify ways to improve their services. In this particular study, the focus was on the consumer side of the model (the "expected service" of the homeless population), but the model could be more fully utilized to diagnose internal problems in organizations. One specific aspect of the model that could warrant its own individual study is the effects of communication between an organization and its target demographic. While this model lends itself easily to non-profit contexts, it may be interesting to identify other traditionally for-profit tools that may be applicable to non-profit organizations.

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**Appendix A.**

Interviews will be conducted orally by the researcher and recorded via digital audio. The following survey indicates the structure of the interview.

**Basic Demographic**

Age_____        Race_____Gender_____

**Recent Employment History**

Job                                                    Duration

_____    _____

Current Estimated Income _____

Duration of Homelessness _____

Describe the circumstances leading to homelessness:

_____

Describe recent interaction with family or friends

_____

"Service Providers" with which the participant has experiences:

_____

_____

_____

_____

These questions will be asked for each organization with which the participant has experiences.

Organization: _____

Participant:   _____

Explain the experiences that participant has had with the organizations:

_____

Explain what the participant has heard about the organization from others:

_____

Elaborate on the communication that the participant has received from the organization:

_____

Identify any inconsistencies that the participant feels exist between these communications and the services provided:

_____

Identify the participant's needs, or any services that they would want provided to them by an organization. These may already be offered and very helpful. They may also not be available even though the need exists

_____