

## REFINEMENTS IN GAP ANALYSES

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### ABSTRACT

Gap analyses are now an integral part of the services marketing literature (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985) and numerous studies have addressed gap analyses in the context of outcomes assessment (for examples, see Davis, Misra, and Van Auken 2002; Giacobbe and Segal 1994; Lundstrom and White 1997; Nordstrom and Sherwood 1997; Winer 1998). In all of these outcome studies, the research has involved the identification of areas of under- and overemphasis, weaknesses and strengths, and areas of under- and overpreparation. Such assessments may then be used for curriculum refinements and subsequent assessments as to the efficacy of course content modifications.

Given the continued use of gap analysis, enhancements are necessary in the analysis of gap results. This study thus develops a protocol for conducting a gap analysis that not only embraces the depth but also the breadth of course topic coverage. It also provides insights into the analysis of recent and nonrecent graduates with respect to both depth and breadth of course topic coverages and comparisons between them on the depth issue.

The presented analysis reveals insights into program quality and provides a platform for continuous improvement. While depth of coverage measures the gap between the normative and descriptive, breadth of coverage assessments reveals differences in course topic *constructs* between the "should" and what "actually is," thus revealing the perceptual framework of respondents. To help improve a program, the use of this perceptual framework is advocated. Further, the framework considers both recent and nonrecent graduates and their differences. Limitations and future research directions are also developed.

### REFERENCES

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