CUSTOMERS EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE SERVICE QUALITY OF FRONT OFFICE STAFF AT THE HOTEL

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the expectations and perceptions of hotel guests in the Indore region, India, are analyzed. The data was gathered from 300 customers through a self-administered survey. Non-probability sampling procedures, such as simple and intentional methods, were utilized to choose participants in this study. Using a modified SERVQUAL scale to measure service quality was settled upon. Examples of service quality include tangibility, reliability and responsiveness as well as assurance and empathy. In all sections of the poll, customers' views of service quality were found to be poorer than predicted. Customers also put a high importance on tangibility when evaluating the kind of service, they get from hotels. Hotel management should modernize or replace all of the hotel's physical facilities, equipment, and communication materials in order to improve customer service according to the study.

Keywords:SERVQUAL, Expectation, perception, service quality, Hotel

INTRODUCTION

The hotel sector is always looking for new ways to improve the overall guest experience. The front desk of a hotel is an active aspect of the front office activity. Because it represents the customer's initial impression. In this age of competition, hotels have turned to novel methods of improving performance while also raising customer satisfaction.[1]

Expectations are more likely to be formed when a customer is actively involved in the delivery of a service. Some academics believe that measuring how well a service provider meets expectations is a good way to gauge the overall quality of that service. As a result of a range of information sources (such as word-of-mouth, publicity, expert opinion and communications), customers may make better judgments regarding their future service experiences with a particular business. [2]

Satisfaction is tied to a specific transaction, but consumer attitudes and perceptions of service excellence over time are what determine the perceived quality of service. Customer satisfaction studies in hospitality literature have focused on assessing service quality, which is considered as a consumer demand or want. [3]

The level of customer satisfaction may be determined by the quality of the service. A company's success is directly related to the satisfaction of its customers. High-quality products and services may help keep customers happy. The concept of service quality is a major issue in the service business. [4]

As a result, each individual consumer is handled as though he or she is the most important. It is necessary for any hotel to differentiate itself from the competition by using creative methods to attract more customers. Service quality is more complicated than product quality because of the features of services, particularly in the contact between the service provider and the consumer throughout the service process.[5]

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dr. V. Vijay Anand, Dr. C. Vijayabanu, Dr. V. Rengarajan, M. Mohamed Riyaaz, S. Nandhu, G. Icewarya, S. Monisa Kamatchi, (2018)The study's primary focus is on ensuring that customers are happy and that high-quality goods and services are provided. The study's goal is to identify the variables that differ between demographic variables and independent variables. The independent elements have been taken into consideration by the researchers, who drew their conclusions from both primary and secondary sources. There is also an association between these unrelated variables and demographic variables. The questionnaire was used to collect primary data, which was then analysed using statistical processes such as descriptive analysis, chi-square test, correlation and multiple regression. [6]

Nurul Alia Hassan (2018)Research at Hotel Putra Regency sought to determine the link between staff dependability, assurance, and empathy for the hotel's guests' needs. Customers of the Hotel Putra Regency were asked to complete a questionnaire developed by SERVQUAL, which was then sent to 100 people. Customers' satisfaction levels were measured using descriptive statistics and regression analysis, which revealed a link between the quality of the service provided and their level of happiness. [7]

Mukhles M. Al-Ababneh (2016)The SERVQUAL approach will be used to gauge hotel staff perceptions of service quality at Jordan's four- and five-star properties. A Likert scale of five points was used to evaluate the information acquired for this investigation. As a result, the SERVQUAL instrument was used to measure the level of service provided. The SPSS programme was used to analyses 238 responses from ten four- and five-star hotels in Jordan, and descriptive statistics were used. Five-star hotels in Jordan were found to provide better customer service than four star hotels, according to a recent survey.[8]

Mr.R.Satheesh Kumar, Dr.T.Vetrivel (2015)With the study's objectives, the tangibility, dependability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy of customer expectations and perceptions of service quality are all examined in five different ways. It is crucial for hotel management to evaluate the findings of the research and put the recommendations offered into practice in order to improve front desk service. If corrective steps on the tangibility and dependability dimensions are adopted, customer satisfaction and service quality will rise. [10]

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Consumer opinion on service quality and expectations was gathered using sampling and assessment procedures in order to aid hospitality authorities in developing service-improvement initiatives. To develop a consumer opinion survey, the study employed a descriptive research design that relied on secondary research in the form of existing data. Descriptive statistics were also employed in the survey to evaluate and report data. For the purpose of collecting data from the target samples, a questionnaire was developed.

Among the three portions of the survey are questions pertaining to the respondent and the customer's holiday goals, questions regarding the responder's expectations for the holiday, and questions about their overall holiday pleasure. The survey participants were asked to score the effectiveness of the facilities and services described in the survey using a 7-point Likert performance scale. The study relied on a broad indicator of customer satisfaction with the experience of the site visitors.

There were two parts to the data gathering process. The first step was to use an inductive, qualitative method to discover the SERVQUAL concerns that matter most to those in the hospitality sector. Additionally, articles from the press, hotel brochures and other relevant information from the Internet were utilized to gather secondary data in the study.As a consequence of the data gathering, a simple poll of customer opinions now includes many quality concerns. To gather information on the relative significance of aspects relating to housing, food service, and service attitude, the survey was created so that participants could administer it themselves.

Sections 1 through 4 make up the body of the survey. The first section of the survey was designed to examine customer expectations of service quality using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" (7) to "strongly disagree" (0). (1). In the second part of the study, customer satisfaction with service quality is gauged using a 7-point Likert scale. Customer satisfaction was rated on a 7-point Likert scale based on the overall quality of the service they got (1). In the fourth section, we gathered information on the respondents' socioeconomic status. The polls were conducted between May and July of 2005. The SERVQUAL tool's revised questionnaire was used to extract the items in this survey.

Interviews are a crucial part of gathering data for the study. We can get the most up-to-date information about the company via the interview. Personal interviews were selected as the form of contact since the interviewer was able to meet face-to-face with the respondents. Customers of hotels were interviewed to get an understanding of the expectations and perceptions that were significant to them while choosing hotels.

Sample

Six Taj hotels were used to compile the data. There are two hotels in Mumbai: the Holiday Inn and the Taj." In order to get an accurate image of Taj's quality, it was necessary to choose a variety of hotels in a variety of various locations. Male and female hotel visitors over the age of 18 were included in the study's sample. Each hotel visitor received one of the 300 surveys that were handed out to them. The number of people who may participate was capped at 50 per hotel. A simple random sample selection approach ensured that each hotel guest had an equal probability of being selected for an interview. Self-administered surveys were given to each member of the test group, and the results were gathered as soon as they were finished.

ANALYSIS

Demographic Findings

The initial set of data was analyzed using objective statistics pertaining to the most significant individual and societal characteristics. Only 210 out of the 300 surveys submitted had a response rate of 70 percent. 55.1 percent of the responders were female,

according to Table 1. Ages 35-44 (21.1 percent) and 55-64 (55.6 percent) were the most common ranges for responses (17.7 percent). Three-fifths of the people who took the survey were either now employed or retired (24 percent). In terms of tourist arrivals, Russia, the United Kingdom, and Germany took the top three spots. The majority of respondents (69.4%) said that their travel was for "leisure," while "business" and "seeing friends/relatives" accounted for just 19.6% and 11%, respectively. For obvious reasons, the most popular lengths of stay in this city are seven and fourteen days.

Table1contains details from thisanalysis.

Gender	Male	44.9%
	Female	55.1%
Age	18-24	15.4%
	25-34	15.7%
	35-44	21.1%
	45-54	15.3%
	55-64	17.7%
	65 or above	14.8%
Occupation	Student	10.0 %
	Retired	24.0%
	Housewife	14.0%
	Staffs	35.0%
	Manager	14.0%
	Others	3.0%
Nationality	British	30%
	Russian	32%
	Germany	14%
	Finish	8%
	French	3%
	Arabic	4%
	Norway	2%

	Others	7%
Purpose of traveling	Business	19.6%
	Leisure	69.4%
	Visiting; friends & relatives	11.0%
Length of slay	Less than 7days	15%
	7days	31%
	14days	35%
	21days	10%
	Over 21days	9%

Expectations Vs Perceptions

As a pilot research, findings may not be as significant as they may be because of inherent limitations in technique. But the findings show that SERVQUAL and HOLSAT might be useful in assessing vacation contentment. Excessive expectations, perceptions and gaps in service quality are all shown in Table 2 of this report. According to the findings, hotel guests had high expectations that "staff will never be too busy to reply" (mean=6.52). For items pertaining to convenient hours of operation, they indicated low expectation ratings (means=5.06).

Note that each service attribute's perception score fell below its expectation score in this survey, indicating that service quality was lacking in all areas. "Employees are never too busy to reply to customers' demands" (gap score=-2.21) had the biggest gap score. Customers' complaints may have been ignored since workers weren't inspired to take action.

Table2"*Diztribuiiao*ofservicequalityvaluesbetweenconsumer'sexpectationsand perceptions of hotel indiistry3n=300)"

Statement	Expectation	Perceptions	Gap means
1. The holiday would be good value for money.	5.48	**4.96**	-0.52
2. The destination would be safe and secure	5.57	4.13	-1.44
3. The destination would have a variety of nightlife.	5.53	4.77	-0.76
4. The would have convenient perating hours	5.06	4.42	-0.64
5. The destination would have a variety of	6.64	4.45	-2.19

restaumntsanA'or bars			
6.Employeeswouldneverbetoobusytorespond	6.52	4.31	-2.21
7. The restaurants and bars would be cheap.	6.32	4.10	-2.22
8.Iwouldbeabletosamplelocalfoodanddrink.	6.54	4.52	-2.02
9. The shops would be cheap.	S.27	4.33	-1.94
10. The nightlife would be cheap.	5.87	3.70	-2.17
11. The hotel staff would be friendly.	5.79	4.19	-1,60
12. The room would have quality furnishings.	6.00	4.16	-1.84
13. Facilities in the rooms would be function properly.	5.76	4.49	-1.27
14. Hotel meals would be of aNgh quality.	6.03	4.0D	-2.03
15. Laundry service would be good.	6.18	4.22	-1.96
16. I would be able to mix and tak with Cypriot pepple.	6.13	4.40	-1.73
17.Iexpectedthegoodweatherconditionsinthe area	h.13	4.35	-1.78
18. I would be able to learn more about Taj	5.57	3.98	-1.59
19. 1 would be able to visit museums and archaeological sights.	5.2 l	4.33	-.0.88
20. t would be able to use local transports.	5.44	3.97	-1.47
21. The beach and ocean would be clean.	5.79	4.20	-1.59
22.Efficiencyofcheck-inandcheck-outat accommodation	5.69	4.92	-0.77
23.Employees would be neat employees	5.65	5.25	-0.40

Note: Gap-mean score is defined as: Gap-mean= Perception mean - Expectation mean.

Based on factor analysis results, five components (or dimensions) comprising 23 variables from the original variables were abstracted for interpretation (Table 3). Response and assurance, reliability, empathy and the company's corporate image were found to be the five aspects.

Table 3

Item No	Service quality items and dimensions	Factor loadings	Eigen value	Cronbach Alpha
P28	**Empathy** Employees of this hotel understand customers' specific needs	0.763	11.29	0.89
P29	This hotel has operating hours which are convenient to customers' requirements (e.g., pool, gym, and food and beverage outlets)	0.757		
P30	Employees of this hotel give customers individual attention	0.725		
P27	Employees of this hotel have the interests of their customers at heart	0.613		
P24	The behavior of employees in the hotel instills confidence in customers	0.540		
P23	Employees of this hotel anticipate their customers' needs	0.519		
P25	The employees of the hotel are always courteous to guests	0.468		
P26	Employees of this hotel show genuine care and concern when giving customers personal attention	0.463		
P22	This hotel has knowledgeable staff to answer questions about local attractions, shopping and major events	0.435		
P2	**Tangibility** This hotel is a comfortable place to stay	0.667	1.86	0.79
P8	This hotel has public areas which are visually appealing, inviting and comfortable	0.625		
P6	This hotel has facilities such as a pool, spa and gymnasium	0.624		
P7	This hotel has a good choice of food and beverage outlets (e.g., a café/bistro, a dining room, room service)	0.582		

P4	The bedrooms and bathrooms of this hotel are bright, airy and spacious	0.559		
P3	The accommodation rooms in this hotel are quiet and provide the utmost privacy for guests	0.556		
P1	This hotel has immaculately clean bedrooms, bathrooms, and living areas	0.529		
P5	The employees of this hotel are always neat in appearance	0.497		
P15	**Reliability &Responsiveness** When the hotel staff promise to do something by a certain time, they do so	-0.78	1.55	0.88
P16	When hotel customers have a problem, this hotel shows a sincere interest in solving it	-0.762		
P9	Employees of this hotel promptly solve any problems I might have	-0.707		
P14	This hotel delivers services promptly, once promised	-.690		
P12	Front desk employees of this hotel ensure that the check-in and check-out service is conducted quickly and without delay	-0.683		
P11	Employees of this hotel give prompt service to customers	-0.610		
P10	Employees of this hotel are always willing to help customers with their queries or requests	-0.602		
P17	This hotel performs the service right the first time	-0.569		
P18	The hotel presents bills that are error free	-0.440		
P21	**Assurance** This hotel ensures the security and safety of their customers	0.629	1.03	0.74
P20	This hotel provides acceptable solutions to customers' problems	0.531		
P19	The employees of this hotel have in-depth knowledge	0.400		

of the hotel and its services			

Source: Author's computation using SPSS 20, 2017

Table 2 shows the mean scores for the five variables based on the findings of factor analysis, including expectation, perception, and gap. When it comes to this issue, clients got the biggest gap score (-1.99), meaning they were the most dissatisfied with their hotel experience. The shortage, on the other hand, may indicate that personnel were unable to meet their promises of outstanding service. There was the least difference between hotels in terms of tangibility (-0.91), which may indicate that most hotels are able to offer computerized check-in/check-out and ensuring that their personnel are clean and tidy, therefore typically satisfying their customers' expectations.

CONCLUSION

There will be a lot of pressure on hospitality managers to provide excellent service in the new century. Success in the rapidly developing, highly competitive, and global hospitality sectors will depend on the ability to adapt. While it is simple to see and agree on the future necessity of providing high-quality hospitality services, doing so poses some challenging and exciting management concerns.

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