



THE IMPACT OF SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN HOSPITALITY: HOTEL SERVICE QUALITY

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Abstract

The hospitality industry is worth billions of dollars and encompasses a wide variety of businesses and activities. The hotel business, tourism services, event planning, and transportation are among the most important of these. This sector is one that is expanding rapidly and places a premium on providing high-quality services that put the needs of their customers first. No property in the hospitality industry will be able to thrive if it is not centered on the satisfaction of its customers, particularly in the areas of meeting their needs, requirements, and expectations in order to improve the brand's reputation. Because of the fundamental differences between providing a service and manufacturing a product, businesses that are in the hospitality industry face a unique set of challenges not shared by other types of businesses. When compared to product sales, the likelihood of failure is significantly higher in the service industry. It has become clear that the quality of the service is an essential component in the quest for a sustainable advantage in the market. In the hospitality industry, one of the most important factors is providing gratification to customers and keeping their business. In this day and age, more than ever before, satisfying the needs and requirements of customers is the most difficult task. In the hospitality industry, the customer is not only an active participant in the consumption process but also frequently brings predetermined expectations regarding both the level of service and the product's overall quality. Customers in the hospitality industry today are increasingly time-pressed, increasingly sophisticated, and increasingly demanding. The primary objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between high service quality and satisfied customers. The results of the study will demonstrate how different aspects of service quality influence guests' levels of satisfaction in hotel accommodations. A quantitative approach was taken to analyze the results of this study. A distribution and data-gathering strategy that uses a random sampling method. In total, 111 people gave their time to take part in this research. Based on the findings of this study, four of the five dimensions of service quality (empathy, responsiveness, assurance, and tangible) have been shown to have a positive relationship with customer satisfaction, while the fifth dimension, reliability, was shown to have a negative relationship with customer satisfaction.

Keywords—Quality of Service, Satisfaction of Customers, SERVPERF Rating, and Hospitality

INTRODUCTION

For decades, cutting-edge businesses in the hospitality sector have faced stiff competition, and things only look to get tougher in the years ahead (Abdullah & Othman, 2019). To thrive or even just make it in today's competitive market, the hospitality industry must ensure that customers view their experiences as satisfying (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). The tourism and hospitality industries are currently vital due to their status as major generators of national income. As a result, a lot of nations are putting forth effort to lure tourists to their shores so that they can improve the standard of living there (Gardi et al. 2020). Hotel establishments play a crucial role in the tourism industry because they provide for one of the most fundamental requirements of visitors: a place to stay (Prabhu et al. 2020). In addition to sleeping there, visitors can enjoy the hotel's other amenities like pools, saunas, tennis courts, restaurants, bars, and more. When it comes to running a successful hotel, having a well-trained and friendly staff is crucial (Anwar & Shukur, 2015). An obvious case in point is the potential for a hotel's business to suffer if its employees fail to provide the expected level of service to its customers. Instead, guests will have a good time and possibly return if the hotel staff provides them with excellent service (Sultan et al. 2020). As a result, it's crucial that the hotel's management keeps its staff happy (Abdullah & Othman, 2015).

According to Gardi (2021), hospitality refers to a certain dynamic between a host and a visitor. The hospitality industry in the Kurdistan region, and especially in Erbil, the region's capital, is expanding at a breakneck pace right now. Improvements in infrastructure and the building of brand-new hotels have led to a rise in the hospitality sector's investment, which in turn has led to higher standards of service provided to guests (Ismael et al. 2021). As a result, many people from all over the world have visited the Kurdistan region, and the city of Erbil in particular. Many hotel owners and operators now realise there is intense competition among hotels; as a result, they are focusing on boosting service quality to attract and retain guests (Anwar & Abd Zebari, 2015). In today's cutthroat business environment, it's more important than ever to provide your customers with excellent service. The quality of a hotel's services is measured by how closely they match the expectations of the hotel's guests (Top & Ali, 2021). The value of a hospitality service is often co-created with the patrons who experience it (Anwar & Surarchith, 2015). When evaluating various service providers, guests prioritise quality over cost. So, hotels need to set a standard of excellence that can be relied upon to satisfy their guests (Othman et al. 2019).

Statement of the problem

Every day, customers experience issues with the quality of the services they pay for in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to: public transportation (when it's too crowded and you don't feel comfortable to reach your destination); retail (when a salesperson's behavior offends you); dining (when you're not happy with the service you received). Unhappiness can be found at a wide variety of service-based startups, and we can easily continue to find more of them. The quality of the service provided unfortunately does not always meet the demands, specifications, and expectations of the customer. Inadequate service quality, as reported by various guests, is the primary motivation for this paper's selection as a topic.

Objectives of the study

We've already established that making sure hotel guests are happy is a major priority for lodging establishments. No hotel or other property in the hospitality industry will succeed unless it focuses on its guests and strives to provide them with an experience that exceeds their needs, requirements, and expectations. In this study, we analyse customer feedback from a hotel in Erbil, Kurdistan, to see how different aspects of service affect guests' experiences and, ultimately, the hotel's reputation. The results of this research will be used to determine the worth of the guest in terms of the currently available service quality and customer satisfaction framework. The focus of this research was on the customer's decision-making process; therefore, the study examined how customer value is related to factors like price, perceived performance, service quality, satisfaction, and the likelihood that a customer will repurchase or recommend a business. By conducting this study, we can better understand what constitutes a satisfied customer and what aspects of service delivery contribute most to the happiness of our guests.

Investigative Queries

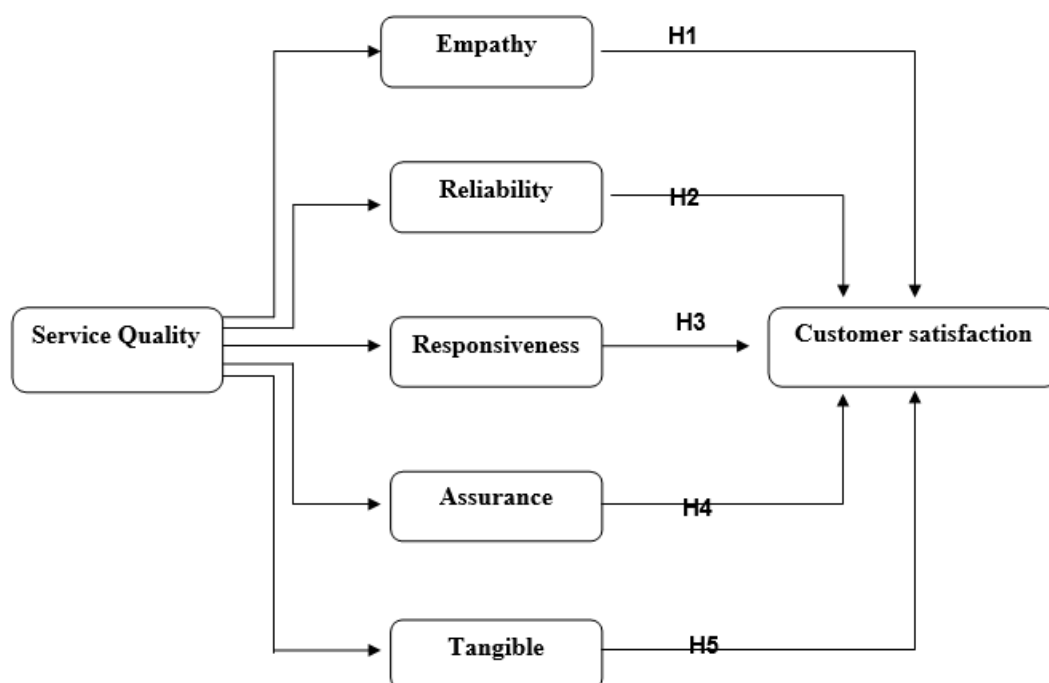
Both of these are important research questions:

1. What are the most important aspects of service quality that contribute to happy customers?
2. What factors influence a guest's decision to book a different hotel?

It is hoped that the answers to the aforementioned questions will contribute to research into the correlation between guest satisfaction and service quality, and thus reveal whether or not, in practice, there is a correlation between the two.

The Study Design:

The study's theoretical framework is depicted in the following diagram.



Speculations Based On Research

The researcher formed the following hypotheses based on the aforementioned framework:

A higher level of customer satisfaction is associated with a higher level of empathy (H1).

It has been shown that there is a correlation between reliability and high levels of customer satisfaction (H2).

It has been shown that responsiveness has a positive correlation with high levels of customer satisfaction (H3).

A positive correlation exists between Assurance and the degree to which customers are satisfied(H4).

The answer to this question is yes, as there is a correlation between Tangible and happy customers (H5).

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Concept of Service Quality

According to Abdullah & Afshar, (2019) A theory that can be characterized as evasive and blurry is a theory that deals with quality. It is essential to make a distinction between goods and services due to the fact that each possesses a unique set of characteristics. The former is more palpable because it takes the form of an object, whereas the latter is intangible because it refers to an actual performance.

Abdullah & Rahman, (2015). The fact that a service is a process rather than a thing is without a doubt one of the most important and distinctive features of this industry. Therefore, service businesses do not have any products, but instead they focus on providing customers with an interactive experience. Due to the fact that services are intangible, it can be challenging for both the provider and the customer to measure their value.

(Ali et al. 2021). Because the provision of services in the hospitality industry invariably involves the participation of human beings, the industry should place a primary emphasis on the management of people, and more specifically on the interactions that take place between customers and employees, which are referred to as service encounters. The success or failure of an organisation in the hospitality industry is dependent on the cumulative impact of individual service encounters in which customers play an active role.

Abdullah, (2018). Various scholars have proposed a number of useful definitions of service quality. The quality of a service is the extent to which it satisfies the needs of the customer as opposed to those of the service provider (Saleh et al. 2021). One alternative definition holds that service quality is the gap between customers' expectations before an encounter and their actual experiences with the service. Last but not least, according to (Abdullah & Othman, 2016), Gefan (2002) defines service quality as "the specific appraisal made by consumers."

Abdullah & Othman, 2021). Since different researchers have come up with different statements about what constitutes quality, defining it is a bit trickier than defining consumer satisfaction. Because of this consumer-centric lens, quality is defined as whatever the individual purchasing the good or service considers to be of high quality (Abdullah & Abdul Rahman, 2015). According to, consumer expectations and quality standards are two

factors that shape how people perceive a product or service. When we talk about what customers can expect to receive from a service, we are referring to their expectations.

Dimensions of Service Quality

The quality of the service being provided has recently become a major focus of concern among specialists. When looking at the various definitions of service quality, it can be seen that it is the result of the correlation that customers make between their expectations and what they actually get from the related service provider. This can be seen as an aftereffect of the various meanings of service quality (Anwar & Abd Zebari, 2015). Several studies have been conducted in an effort to determine the aspects of service quality that most significantly contribute to the fundamental quality assessments that take place within the service encirclement. It is essential to identify proof of the factors that determine service quality because this will assist in measuring, controlling, and ultimately improving the apparent service quality provided to customers (Anwar & Surarchith, 2015). It was determined by Parasuraman and colleagues that there are ten different dimensions of service quality (1985). These dimensions work well as a service quality field, which is where these items that make up the SERVQUAL model were obtained. According to Anwar (2017), the dimensions are as follows:

Parasuraman et al. (1988) revised the aforementioned dimensions and developed a total of five dimensions with which to assess service quality (Anwar, 2016):

- Tangibles
- Reliability
- Responsiveness
- Assurance
- Empathy

Tangibles - Are "the outward manifestation of an organization's structure, resources, and personnel," The outward appearance of something includes not only how it looks but also how its components look. The cleanliness of the rooms, restaurants, and other areas, the neatness of employees' uniforms, the use of disposable gloves, and so on are all examples of tangible cleanliness (Abdulla et al. 2017). Customers place the most importance on tangibles, even above the other five dimensions.

Reliability - Whether or not a service provider delivers as promised, and how much value can be found in the results. One of the most crucial factors is responding quickly to customers' requests (Hameed & Anwar, 2018). The reliability of a service "indicates the extent to which the service can be relied upon and carried out accurately by the provider." According to Berry and Parasuraman (1991), "doing it right the first time" is a critical aspect of customer satisfaction (Anwar & Ghafoor, 2017). In particular, dependability implies that the company follows through on its promises regarding delivery, service provision, problem resolution, and pricing policy.

Responsiveness –"willingness to assist" is shorthand for a company's openness to resolving customer complaints and providing prompt assistance. A request from a customer that is not answered quickly enough can easily turn

into a complaint if the business does not care about its customers. Major customers view punctuality as a fundamental component of service quality from the providers they rely on.

Assurance - demonstrates "the employees' ability to gain trust and confidence through their knowledge and manners." The hotel must demonstrate that it is reliable and worthy of the customer's money. Any time a customer uses a hotel's services, he or she should feel safe and secure (Anwar & Louis, 2017). Consumers need to feel secure in all financial transactions, according to (Cronin& Taylor, 1992), so businesses should hire reliable people to work there.

Customer Satisfaction

It's clear that many academics are debating the concept of happiness at the moment. Many of the above-mentioned proposals place a premium on meeting or exceeding customers' expectations in terms of product or service quality by ensuring that they receive exactly what they've asked for in terms of features and functionality (Anwar & Abd Zebari, 2015). These days, a satisfied clientele is the only thing that matters. An unsatisfied customer will not use your service again. If a guest checks out of the hotel feeling dissatisfied, it doesn't matter how much the hotel tries to improve service quality. Meeting customer needs is more difficult than ever today (Anwar & Surarchith, 2015).

METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study is to examine the connection between service quality and guest satisfaction at hotels in the Kurdistan city of Erbil. The goals of the methodology section are to provide an explanation of the research methodology, define the measurements used in the planning of the instrument, detail the steps involved in collecting data, and detail the steps involved in analysing the data. One of several quantitative approaches used to examine research data. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect data for this analysis. The survey was broken up into two parts, the first of which asked basic demographic questions like the respondent's age, gender, country of origin, marital status, occupation, annual income, education level, frequency of visits, and motivation for taking the trip. The second section of the survey focused on five aspects of service quality. The first section measured empathy with 3 questions, the second section measured reliability with 5 questions, the third section measured assurance with 5 questions, the fourth section measured responsiveness with 4 questions, and the fifth section measured tangibles with 8 questions. One question was used to assess customer satisfaction as the dependent variable.

The purpose of the sample design is to clearly define the set of objectives. The sampling method will be random sampling, where nearly all hotel guests in the Kurdistan region's Erbil city will have an equal chance of being chosen for the sample. The researcher collected 124 questionnaires, but only 111 were correctly completed, leaving 13 invalid. 111 participants will be the study's target population.

The researcher came up with the idea for the questionnaire, which consisted of questions with a number of different answer options. It was requested of the participants that they mark each item on a five-point scale that ranged from totally agree to not at all agree with the statement. This research instrument has been validated by

earlier researchers as being appropriate for measuring the guests' perceived performance of the hotel that they stayed in. Guests were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the hotel.

DATA ANALYSIS

Factor analysis

Table 1-Factor analysis

Factor	Questions	Factor loading%	Reliability Statistics Cronbach's Alpha	Nu. Of item
Tangible	The hotel has modern looking equipment	.863	.771	4
	The hotel provides clean and comfortable rooms	.756		
	The hotel has swimming pool, sauna and health club	.631		
	The hotel has adequate fire safety facilities and instructions	.925		
Empathy	The hotel gives its customers individualized attention	.926	.822	3
	Staff of the hotel understand the specific needs of their customers	.935		
	Staff of the hotel have customers' best interest at heart	.718		
Reliability	Staff of the hotel are able to provide service as promised	.801	.895	3
	Staff of the hotel are dependable in handling customers' service	.966		

	problems			
	The hotel keeps customers informed of the performance of services	.957		
Assurance	Staff at the hotel are consistently courteous and friendly with customers	.828	.794	3
	The hotel provides a safe environment to stay in	.899		
	Staff of the hotel have the knowledge to answer customers' Requests	.832		
Responsiveness	Staff at the hotel are ready to respond to customers' requests	.936	.872	2
	Staff at the hotel are always willing to help customers	.936		

During the process of data reduction, factor analysis is utilised to classify a limited number of variables in order to explain the majority of the perceived variance in a larger number of visible variables. Table 1 displays the five service quality dimensions as independent variables. Concerning the tangible factor, there are four items, and the reliability statistics Cronbach's Alpha value is .771. Concerning the empathy factor, there are three items, and the reliability statistics Cronbach's Alpha value is .822. Concerning the reliability factor, there are three items, and the reliability statistics Cronbach's Alpha value is .895. Concerning the assurance factor, there are three items, and the reliability statistics Cronbach's

CORRELATIONS

Table 2-Correlation analysis

Factors	Pearson Correlation	Customer satisfaction
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.822(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	111
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	.665(**)

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	111
Assurance	Pearson Correlation	.779(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	111
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.262(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	111
Tangible	Pearson Correlation	-.255(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	111

It's statistically significant that there's a correlation between these two variables (2-tailed).

Table 2 displays the results of a correlation analysis showing a statistically significant relationship between empathy and satisfied customers ($r=.822^{**}$, $p0.01$). The connections between dependability and another key variable, customer happiness. The study's correlation analysis showed that confidence significantly correlates with clients' happiness ($r=.665^{**}$, $p0.01$). Relationships between assurance as an independent variable and the outcome of interest (customer happiness) The study's correlation analysis revealed that confidence is significantly correlated with clients' happiness ($r=.779^{**}$, $p0.01$). A look at the relationships between how quickly issues are addressed and how happy the customer is with the service they receive. Research found that responsiveness is significantly correlated ($r=.262^{**}$, $p0.01$) with customer satisfaction. Correlations were also found between tangible as an independent factor and customer satisfaction as a dependent variable. Researchers found that a tangible factor significantly correlates with customer happiness ($r= -.255^{**}$, $p0.01$).

CONCLUSIONS

This section's goal is to ascertain whether or not the study's aims were met, whether or not its questions were clarified, whether or not its hypotheses were borne out, and whether or not it made any useful contributions. For that reason, we'll start with a summary before moving on to our recommendations and finally, our future suggestions. The purpose of this study is to examine the connection between service quality and guest satisfaction in the hospitality sector. Questions like "what are the most important aspects of service quality that contribute to guest satisfaction?" and "what are the factors that influence a customer's decision to choose a different hotel?" guided the study. This study's methodology yielded unexpected, albeit intriguing, results. It appeared that there were discrepancies between the results of the two approaches. Therefore, the results of this study would determine whether or not the research objective was accomplished and whether or not the research questions were answered. The descriptive analysis shows that the research questions have been resolved. This research has ramifications not only for business but also for the academic field. To accomplish this, it was

proposed to conduct theoretical research into the history of customer satisfaction and service quality dimensions using SERVQUAL to examine the effect of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction. Hotel management can benefit from a better understanding of the connection between service quality and guest satisfaction in order to better define the significance of various service quality dimensions for both guests and the hotel. Based on the results of this study, it appears that most of the dimensions of service quality have a positive impact on customer satisfaction, with the exception of the reliability factor, which has a negative impact on guest satisfaction. As a result, the results of this research may provide useful information to hotel managers in their efforts to maximise revenue and minimise expenses while providing excellent customer service. The results also demonstrate the value of strategic planning in the hotel business. In order to better meet the needs and expectations of their guests, hotels can conduct investigations into the causes of guest complaints. Managers need to make constant adjustments in these areas to provide their guests with the best possible experience, and to identify the most important dimensions on which to focus in order to boost service quality and, in turn, customer satisfaction. Specifically, the findings have implications for the categorization of marketing studies and consumer surveys. The need for customer satisfaction studies has grown in recent years as more and more companies seek to expand their clientele by focusing on the happiness of their existing clientele. All of this is possible if the hotel satisfies its guests by giving them what they want.

CONTINUING STUDIES POSSIBLE FURTHER STUDIES

In this research, there are only a few issues that need to be researched further, and they are all related to the cost or the limited amount of time. Even though this study focused on how guests perceive the quality of service they receive and how that relates to their overall satisfaction in the hotel industry, the sample size that was considered was extremely limited. It's possible that the findings aren't very applicable because the participants came from a variety of different backgrounds, including educational levels, ages, income levels, marital statuses, and so on. In order to investigate the service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction across the various contexts or businesses, empirical studies should be conducted moderately with other hotels or other industries. These measurements could be useful for future growth and enhancement. In addition, the sample size of any future research should be increased.

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