

EVALUATION OF THE SERVICE QUALITY FOR HOTEL INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF RESORT HOTELS

Author Name: ¹Mateen Yousuf, ²Dr. Mohit Sharma

Affiliation: Sri Venketeshwara University, Uttar pradesh, India

E-Mail: mateen.me2@gmail.com

DOI No. – 08.2020-25662434

Abstract

Tourist Satisfaction is the measure of a tourist's perception of service delivery. Diversity and sophistication in tourists' attitudes have led to a renewed interest in developing better models for measuring customer satisfaction as it is considered to be a critical factor of competitive advantage especially in hospitality sector. Existing literature have suggested various recommendations which have been successfully adopted by the hotel industry. This research was aimed at measuring customer satisfaction of tourists staying in selected resort hotels in Srinagar by comparing their expectations with the perceived delivery of service during their stay in the resort hotels in Srinagar. A sample size of 385 respondents was chosen using Non-Probability Convenience Sampling Technique. The model used in this research was the basic SERVQUAL scale designed by (Anathanarayanan Parasuraman et al., 1988) containing 5 dimensions over 22 variables measured before and after the service delivery. Statistical techniques like Cochran's Sampling Technique, Cronbach's Alpha reliability testing, Descriptive Analysis Technique, t-test, p-test, KMO and Bartlett's Test, Principal Component Analysis, Pearson's Correlation Technique and GAP analysis were employed to examine the statistics using SPSS software. The results provided an insight as to how the service quality of hotels was rated by the customers and also assessed customer satisfaction by identifying, quantifying and deliberating on service quality gaps. The findings indicated the service perceptions of tourists overall was higher than what they had expected. It meant the hotels in Srinagar had created very good infrastructure and provided best possible service and training to its staff which helped exceed the expectations of the tourists. The only dimension where hotels in Srinagar needed to improve was their responsiveness culture. Based on the empirical evidence, hotel managers were made aware of implications and improvements were suggested.

Keywords customer satisfaction, service quality, customer perception, SERVQUAL, hotels in Srinagar, customer expectation

INTRODUCTION

The association between superiority of provisions and fulfillment of clientele is a very important research topic in the 21st century especially after the boom in the service sector. "Yet the nature of their relationship is still not clearly defined yet" (Sureshchandar *et al.*, 2002). With the advent of the internet, service quality models had to be modified to e-service quality models to conform to the changed reality. With new concepts like AR, VR, AI, etc., service quality researchers are continuously modifying the existing models and relationships so as to be able to meet academic and industry requirements. "Single item scales have been employed by many management scientists while as other have made use of multiple item scales to measure customer satisfaction" (Sureshchandar *et al.*, 2002). Quality of services and fulfillment of customers are the factors which have been validated and reliably used in assessment by

researchers and it plays a very important role in purchase and re-purchase decisions of customers (Taylor & Baker, 1994). Satisfaction through the service is an important concept to create competitive advantage and customer loyalty (Iacobucci *et al.*, 1995). Service Quality has been found to considerably influence behavioral intentions (González *et al.*, 2007). Service quality measurement is useful to determine how service process and service outcomes are consistent with the quality of services and tourist's satisfaction evaluation. Patterns were examined between these four concepts (Yap & Kew, 2007). Service excellence and its relative effect bearing on approval are of immense importance to industry and every study could be framed in order to fill a research Gap or improve on an existing study. Customer satisfaction acts as an important factor which determines a relationship between delivery of service and customer loyalty.

SERVQUAL is a 5 dimensional service quality measurement construct published by (A. P. Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). It was first introduced in the year 1985. It was designed to measure perceptions and expectations of customers along 44 variables representing various dimensions of service quality. It was designed in a way which was considered in research parlance as the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, which means pre-delivery expectations are measured against post-delivery perception of service. Gap analysis measurement did not have a steep learning curve and thus could be used in academia, industry and student community without much difficulty.

The model of SERVQUAL has been continuously being modified by researchers many times over all over the world including many times by the principal authors themselves. With internet age and service delivery shifting online, the original research team developed e-SERVQUAL model to measure customer satisfaction online. Further modifications were carried out on the model itself. When the perception of service is equal or more than expectation, service quality is considered to be high and vice versa. SERVQUAL has been used by researchers all over the world to measure customer satisfaction in various kinds of service industries such as hospitals (Babakus & Boller, 1992), hotels (Bukhari *et al.*, 2013), "travel and tourism" (Fick & Brent Ritchie, 1991) and banks (Arun Parasuraman *et al.*, 1991) etc.

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Customer Satisfaction concept is a relatively older one used in marketing parlance and it means how a service delivery and execution is perceived by customers" (Professor, Administrative Management College, Bangalore & Rao, 2013). "It can help in developing customer trust and customer loyalty. Trust can act as a mediating variable between customer satisfaction and service quality" (Kundu & Datta, 2015). "Customer satisfaction is a significant antecedent of engagement and loyalty of a customer" (Abror *et al.*, 2019). "Customer satisfaction is calculated by using the functions of service delivery vis a vis expectations of the customers" (Professor, Administrative Management College, Bangalore & Rao, 2013). "Customer being the kind has the final say how a particular service ought to happen in the most satisfying manner" (Professor, Administrative Management College, Bangalore & Rao, 2013). "The concept of quality of services between a customer and his expectations determines the extent of his satisfaction" (Tessera *et al.*, 2016). "A customer will re-indulge in buying the same product or service only after taking into consideration his previous experiences of quality of goods and services delivered" (Tessera *et al.*, 2016). "Customer satisfaction is thus a person's experience of a performance of service with relation to what was expected out of the service" (Schiffman &

Kanuk, 2004). “Researches have shown that there is a direct relation between the worth of amenities and comparative satisfaction of customers. It also determines whether the customer will be loyal and what effect it will have on the revenues of the company in long-term”(Wilkins *et al.*, 2007). According to (Ananthanarayanan Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988), “service quality has been defined as how better a company can perform in comparison to the expectations customers have of their services. Service quality can be defined and expressed as how much of the customer’s expectations can be reached or exceeded by the company”(it can be the brand image of the company, the cost of the service or the previous encounters of the service delivery by the customer) in comparison with what the customers have perceived of the actual service delivery (Grönroos, 1993), 1984; (A. P. Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985); (Johnston & Heineke, 1998). (*Principles of Marketing - Philip Kotler, Gary M. Armstrong - Google Books*, n.d.)“Suggest that the two way paradigm of post purchase satisfaction and pre purchase expectations determines service quality in an actual measure”. “Some of the researches have concluded that quality of services lead to customer satisfaction while other researches have disagreed with this presumption”(Ting, 2004). The studies of (Lee, n.d.); and (Buttle, 1996)have suggested “the former in conformance with majority other scholars”.

“The hotel industry is a customer centric service industry where entire focus is on meeting the expectations of the customers. The focus should be on increasing customer satisfaction and providing value for money”(DilPazir & Amin, 2012).“There should be a continuous focus of total improvement in quality, they have to be served well, provided value for money, being courteous to and they should feel welcomed in your hotel at all times at a reasonable cost”(*Hospitality and Catering: A Closer Look - Ursula Jones, Shirley Newton, Pauline Dixon - Google Books*, n.d.). “In order to improve on customer relationship management, hotels are investing a lot of money in improving their service quality which eventually tips to increase in satisfaction and loyalty of customers and helps in attracting customers”(Brandon-Jones &Silvestre, 2010). “In a cut throat competition, only the hotels which can attract new customers, maintain their service quality and retain the existing customers has a chance of surviving in the market”(Choi & Chu, 2001). “The longer association of customers with an organization leads to more profitability for hotels in the long turn”(Ara, 2013). “Hotels have understood there is no space for delivering ordinary services to customers who have become very sophisticated in their needs for a better service”(Yen & Lu, 2008). “Customer relationship management with tourists has become a strategic asset to the hotels”(Gruen *et al.*, 2000).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the Study

1. To calculate the expectation and perception levels of tourists towards service quality in the hotels of Srinagar.
2. To measure the gap between the expectation and perception of tourists towards service quality in hotels.
3. Provide suggestions to hotels managers and owners how to improve their quality of services and increase satisfaction of customers.

HYPOTHESIS

H0: Service Quality had no impact on Customer Satisfaction in Hotels in Srinagar.

H1: Service Quality had a significant impact on Customer Satisfaction in Hotels in Srinagar.

SAMPLING

This being an empirical research, we collected most of the data from primary sources. A survey questionnaire was used for this purpose. An aggregate of 385 surveys were distributed among the tourists residing at various guesthouses in Srinagar. The number was reached by using Cochran formula for huge population where the inconsistency in percentage is unidentified. Assuming $p=0.5$ (maximum variability), we anticipated 95% assurance level and $\pm 5\%$ accuracy.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 Pq}{d^2} = n = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(3.8416)(0.25)}{(0.0025)} = n = \frac{(0.9604)}{(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 384.16 \text{ or } n = 385$$

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

198 questionnaires were sent for final analysis after rejecting incomplete ones and post-adjusting various sampling errors. The sample represented a fair balance of various demographic factors. The sampling technique used was non-probability convenience sampling technique. The questionnaire comprised four segments. The first segment gathered respondents' demographic

statistics. The next two sections contained questions that measured expectations levels and perception levels according to the original SERVQUAL scale developed by (Anathanarayanan Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). Each section had 22 attributes. The last section asked for overall customer satisfaction rating of the hotel. The expectation and perception questionnaire asked customers to rate the service of the hotel on a 7 point Like RT Scale vacillating from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The same scale was used for measuring overall satisfaction of tourists with the service quality of the hotel. The five proportions were the independent variables whereas customer satisfaction was the dependent variable.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

1. Cronbach's Alpha (Consistency Analysis): It was used to fix the level of trustworthiness of data inside each dimension. 0.70 And above is considered as acceptable.
2. Descriptive statistics: Standard Deviation and Average mean was measured in every variable across the two questionnaires. Also an average mean was taken on each of the dimensions.
3. Paired Sample t-test: The paired t-test was checked to associate and give the t-value of "before-and-after observations" on the same question.
4. Factor Analysis: a. KMO and Bartlett's Test, b. Principal Component Analysis
5. GAP Analysis: The means of each of the 22 variables was derived by subtracting the mean of Perception minus the Expectation across the same questions and Gap score was obtained. If the gap score is equal or positive, the customer is satisfied with the service and Vice-Versa.
6. Pearson's Correlation Technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table1: Demographic frequencies

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	101	51.0
	Female	97	49.0
Marital Status	Married	171	86.4

	Single	27	13.6
Age	15-25	27	13.6
	25-35	38	19.2
	35-45	75	37.9
	45-55	25	12.6
	55 and Above	33	16.7
Purpose of Stay	Business	40	20.2
	Leisure	145	73.2
	Visit to Friend	13	6.6
Income Level	Below 10000	47	23.7
	10000-20000	56	28.3
	20000 and Above	95	48.0

Demographically, a total of 198 respondents were questioned in which 51% were male and 49% female. This validated our assumption that the ratio of gender of tourists in leisure hotels is almost same. 86% of the respondents were married stating that families or married couples were more likely to visit Srinagar for leisure and vacation. Regarding the distribution of age, the maximum number of the surveyed was in the age bracket of 25-45 years often accompanied by children or elderly of the family. The purpose of stay was very interesting as 3/4th of the respondents came on a leisure trip while only 1/5th was for business purposes. Around 50% of the respondents were having an income of Rs. 20,000 and above per month which validated our data of having genuine representation.

Table 2: Reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)

EXPECTED TANGIBILITY		PERCEIVED TANGIBILITY	
Alpha	N of Items	Alpha	N of Items
.981	4	.856	4
EXPECTED RELIABILITY		PERCEIVED RELIABILITY	
Alpha	No	Alpha	No
.962	5	.730	5
EXPECTED RESPONSIVENESS		PERCEIVED RESPONSIVENESS	
Alpha	No	Alpha	No
.772	4	.939	4
EXPECTED ASSURANCE		PERCEIVED ASSURANCE	
Alpha	No	Alpha	No
.967	4	.768	4
EXPECTED EMPATHY		PERCEIVED EMPATHY	
Alpha	No	Alpha	No
.970	5	.884	5

Cronbach's alpha reliability examination was conducted to check the validity of the variables in the survey. The average Cronbach's alpha across dimensions measured to be .88 which (Marley and George- 2003) suggest that the instrument was valid and data was very reliable.

Table 3: Factor Analysis

KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST OF EXPECTATIONS		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.905
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6219.542
	Df	231
	Sig.	.000

Table 4

Total Variance of Expectations Variables			
Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	12.240	55.638	55.638

2	2.777	12.623	68.261
3	2.324	10.562	78.823
4	1.098	4.989	83.812
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			

Table 5

Component Correlation Matrix (Expectations)				
Component	1	2	3	4
1	1.000	.416	.026	.684
2	.416	1.000	.064	.373
3	.026	.064	1.000	-.042
4	.684	.373	-.042	1.000
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.				

- Total Variance KMO value** was .90 which was greater than .60 which was acceptable. Bartlett's test was significant as sig. =.001 was less than .05. Therefore the factor analysis was appropriate for our data.
- Analyzing Co-Relation matrix:** there were numerous co-relations above .30, so we met the assumption.
- Explained table:** 83.735 was the cumulative percentage of variance explained by the 4 components which was acceptable. Majority of the variance is explained by our components. Number of components had been reduced from 22 to 4 which were more interpretable and meaningful.
- Component variance:** All the four components have strong inter-relationship with each other with 1st and 2nd components having the highest and strongest inter-relationship between these items. It confirmed our four factor component. Confirmed our components were most appropriate to work with.
- Pattern matrix:** 9 items were loading above .3 on component 1. 4 items were loading above .3 on component 2. 4 items were loading above .3 on component 3 and 9 items were loading above .3 on components 4. Determined the strongest relationship between 4 components. The highest loading on component 1 was Items 19 and 18. Highest loading on component 2 were 1 and 3. The highest loadings on component 3 are 13 and 10 and highest loading on component 4 are 5 and 7.
- Component Correlation Matrix:** Determines all our 4 components are strongly co-related with each other.
- Communalities:** Values were well above .5 with the highest being .95 and lowest being .51. This proved that high number of variance in each item was explained. This means there was no need of removing any item from the scale.

Table 6

KMO and Bartlett's Test Perceptions		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.891
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3010.003
	Df	231
	Sig.	.000

Table 7

Total Variance of Perception Variable			
Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loading		
	Total	% of Variables	Cumulative %

1	8.404	38.201	38.201
2	3.443	15.651	53.852
3	1.680	7.635	61.487
4	1.265	5.735	67.235
5	1.066	4.846	72.081
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis			

Table 8

Component Correlation Matrix (Perception)					
Component	1	2	3	4	5
1	1.000	-.005	-.427	-.461	.319
2	-.005	1.000	-.050	.058	-.027
3	-.427	.058	.355	1.000	-.270
4	-.461	.058	.355	1.000	-.270
5	.319	-.027	-.324	-.270	1.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

1. KMO value was .89 which was greater than .60 which was acceptable. Bartlett's test was significant as sig. =.001 was less than .05. Therefore factor analysis was appropriate for our data.
2. Analyzing Co-Relation matrix: there were numerous co-relations above .30, so we met the assumption.
3. Total Variance Explained table: 72.081 was the cumulative percentage of variance explained by the 5 components which was acceptable. Majority of the variance was explained by our components. Number of components had been reduced from 22 to 5 which were more interpretable and meaningful.
4. Component variance: All the five components had strong inter-relationship with each other with 1st and 2nd components had the vast and strongest inter-relationship between these items. Confirmed our four factor component. Confirmed our components were most appropriate to work with.
5. Pattern matrix: 7 items were loading above .3 on component 1. 4 items were loading above .3 on component 2. 4 items were loading above .5 items are loading on component 5. It determined the strongest relationship between 3 out of 5 components. Highest loading on component 2 were Items 13, 12, 11 and 10.
6. Component Correlation Matrix: Determined all our 4 components were strongly co-related with each other.
7. Communalities: Values were well above .5 with the highest being .95 and lowest being .51. This proved that high number of variance in each item was explained. This means there was no need of removing any item from the scale.

PEARSON'S CO-EFFICIENT

Table 9

Pearson's Co-efficient Correlations (Service Quality And Customer Satisfaction)		
	Service Quality	Customer Satisfaction
Service Quality Pearson Correlation (Independent Sig. -2 Tailed Variable) N	1	.828
	198	.000
		198
Customer Satisfaction Pearson Correlation (Depend Sig. - 2 Tailed) Variable N	.828	1
	.000	
	198	198

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H0: Service Quality does not have any impact of Customer Satisfaction.

Pearson's Correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction. Pearson Co-relation came at 0.82 which meant there existed a relationship between the two variables. $R(196)=.82$, $P=0.001 < 0.05$ meant there was a significant positive relationship between Service quality and Customer Satisfaction in hotels in Srinagar. Thus, null hypothesis was rejected. It was observed that dependent variable significantly correlated with dependent variable as more than 80% of independent variables were able to explain customer satisfaction.

*Customer Satisfaction was calculated by asking all 198 respondents to rate overall satisfaction from their stay in hotel on a 7 point Like rt scale.

GAP ANALYSIS

Table 10

	EXPECTED MEAN	PERCEPTION MEAN	GAP
T1	6.2525	5.2626	0.99
T2	6.202	5.2727	0.93
T3	6.3384	5.3131	1.03
T4	6.303	5.2374	1.07
TANGIBILITY	6.273975	5.27145	1.005
RE1	6.3586	5.4091	0.95
RE2	6.2929	5.303	0.99
RE3	6.3687	5.4899	0.88
RE4	6.4242	5.2778	1.15
RE5	6.3081	5.3788	0.93
RELIABILITY	6.3505	5.37172	0.98
RS1	5.3636	6.3636	-1
RS2	5.4394	6.3889	-0.95
RS3	5.4242	6.2487	-0.82
RS4	5.4343	6.2778	-0.84
RESPONSIVENESS	5.415375	6.31975	-0.9025
EM1	6.3838	5.5202	0.86
EM2	6.2475	5.4798	0.77
EM3	6.3737	5.4747	0.9
EM4	6.3232	5.3737	0.95
EMPATHY	6.33205	5.4621	0.87
AS1	6.2677	5.4394	0.83
AS2	6.1465	5.4444	0.7
AS3	6.2475	5.5202	0.73
AS4	6.1313	5.303	0.83
AS5	6.2879	5.5303	0.76
ASSURANCE	6.21618	5.44746	0.77
TOTAL	6.11	5.57	0.54

The total average Gap of all the 198 respondents across 5 dimensions was 0.54 which showed that the hotels in Srinagar not only matched the expectations of the tourists but also exceeded them. This analysis showed that the resort hotels in Srinagar provided quality services to the visitors.

Table 11

TANGIBILITY	Paired Differences				
	Perception Mean	Expectation Mean	t test	Sig. (2-tailed)	GAP Score (P-E)
1. The Hotel will have modern looking equipment	6.2525	5.2626	-6.895	.000	0.99

1. The Hotel had modern looking equipment					
2.The Hotel will have visually appealing buildings 2.The Hotel had visually appealing buildings	6.202	5.2727	-6.022	.000	0.93
3.Staff at the Hotel will have a neat and tidy appearance 3.Staff at the Hotel had a neat and tidy appearance	6.3384	5.3131	-7.419	.000	1.03
4. Materials associated with the service will be beautiful and attractive 4. Materials associated with the service was beautiful and attractive	6.303	5.2374	-6.886	.000	1.07
Total	6.273975	5.27145			1.005

Table 11 showed that overall satisfaction from the physical appearance and cleanliness of the hotels in Srinagar was highest at 6.27. The Positive gap between perception and expectation at 1.005 indicated that service delivery exceeded the expectations of tourists staying there. Tourists were satisfied with the overall tangibility of hotels in Srinagar. V4 had the highest satisfaction (1.07) while V2 had the lowest satisfaction within the dimension.

- V1. Positive Gap indicated that the hotels had invested in the latest equipment's installed inside the hotels.
- V2. Positive Gap indicated that the hotels had maintained the overall appeal and appearance of the structure of the hotel including furnishing, interior decoration and grandeur.
- V3. Positive Gap indicated that the hotels had the staff dressed professionally taking care of personal cleanliness.
- V4. Positive Gap indicated that the hotel had maintained amenities and luxuries and invested in their décor

Table 12

RELIABILITY	Paired Differences				
	Perception Mean	Expectation Mean	t test	Sig. (2-tailed)	GAP Score(P-E)
* The hotel will always perform the services which they had promised in their marketing communication * The hotel always performed the services which they had promised in their marketing communication	6.3586	5.4091	-7.324	.000	0.95
* The Hotel will show a sincere interest in solving the problems of customers * The Hotel showed a sincere interest in solving the problems of customers	6.2929	5.303	-7.839	.000	0.99
* Right service at the right time will be performed by the hotels * Right service at the right time was performed by the hotels	6.3687	5.4899	-7.225	.000	0.88
* The Hotel will provide the service on time * The Hotel provided the service on time	6.4242	5.2778	-8.704	.000	1.15
* The Hotel always focused on error free records in order to increase the transparency	6.3081	5.3788	-7.735	.000	0.93

9. The Hotel always focused on an error free records in order to increase the transparency					
Total	6.3505	5.37172			0.98

Table 12 showed that overall satisfaction from the reliability factor of the hotels in Srinagar was highest at 6.35. The Positive gap between perception and expectation at 0.98 indicated that service delivery exceeded the expectations of tourists staying there. Tourists were satisfied with the overall reliability of hotels in Srinagar. V9 was most satisfactory to tourists while V7 had the lowest satisfaction within the dimension.

V5. Positive Gap indicated that the hotels acted responsibly by performing all promised services in time.

V6. Positive Gap indicated that the hotels made sincere effort in solving the problems of the tourists.

V7. Positive Gap indicated that the hotels didn't experiment with service delivery and took the customer's convenience seriously.

V8. Positive Gap indicated that the hotel provided service on time.

V9. Positive Gap indicated that the hotel was honest in their financial dealings. They didn't indulged in overcharging, false advertising, and cooked up expenses.

The significance value was $p < .001$ which was less than .005. Evaluating the t-test, we rejected the null hypothesis as we had found enough evidence that service quality had significant impact on customer satisfaction across all variables of Reliability.

Table 13

RESPONSIVENESS	Paired Differences				
	Perception Mean	Expectation Mean	t test	Sig. (2-tailed)	GAP Score(P-E)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timing of the services will be conveyed to the tourists beforehand The timing of the services was conveyed to the tourists beforehand 	5.3636	6.3636	8.728	.000	-1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Prompt services will be provided to the guests by the staff * Prompt services was provided to the guests by the staff 	5.4394	6.3889	8.528	.000	-0.95
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Staff will always beat the service of guests in the hotel * Staff was alwaysat the service of guests in the hotel 	5.4242	6.2487	6.787	.000	-0.82
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Staff will always respond to guests' queries and requests * Staff always responded to guests' queries and requests 	5.4343	6.2778	7.817	.000	-0.84
Total	5.415375	6.31975			-0.9025

Table 13 showed that overall satisfaction from the responsiveness factor of the hotels in Srinagar was average at 5.41. The Negative gap was calculated to be - 0.90 which indicated that delivery of services was less than what was expected by tourists staying there. Tourists were not satisfied with the overall responsiveness of staff of hotels in Srinagar. V10 was most

unsatisfactory to tourists while V12 was the lowest unsatisfactory within the dimension. Communication was the main problem encountered by the tourists in hotels in Srinagar. V10. Negative Gap indicated that the hotels didn't give a proper itinerary of their plans. V11. Negative Gap indicated that the hotels did not have the right staff available at the right time. V12. Negative Gap indicated that the hotel's staff was busy with too much of work. V13. Negative Gap indicated that the hotel even though responded but were overburdened.

Table14

EMPATHY	Paired Differences				
	Perception Mean	Expectation Mean	t test	Sig.(2-tailed)	GAP Score(P-E)
10. The staff behavior will seem extremely confident to the tourists 14. The staff behavior seemed extremely confident to the tourists	6.3838	5.5202	-7.136	.000	0.86
15. The Hotel will provide safe and secure stay to its guests 15. The Hotel provided safe and secure stay to its guests	6.2475	5.4798	-6.092	.000	0.77
16. The Staff will be consistently courteous with Guests 16. The Staff was consistently courteous with Guests	6.3737	5.4747	-7.360	.000	0.9
17. The Staff will have the knowledge to answer all the queries of the customer 17. The Staff had the knowledge to answer all the queries of the customer	6.3232	5.3737	-8.089	.000	0.95
Total	6.33205	5.4621			0.87

Table 4 showed that overall satisfaction from the empathy factor of the hotels in Srinagar was highest at 6.33. The Positive gap between perception and expectation at 0.87 indicated that service delivery exceeded the expectations of tourists staying there. Tourists were satisfied with the overall feel good factor of hotels in Srinagar. V17 is most satisfactory to tourists while V15 had the lowest satisfaction within the dimension.

V14. Positive Gap indicated that the staff acted responsibly and made tourists comfortable and confident with their behavior.

V15. Positive Gap indicated that the hotels felt safe for tourists to come and stay in a place like Srinagar. The staff was very comforting.

V16. Positive Gap indicated that the staff of the hotels never misbehaved with the tourists and were very well cultured and mannered.

V17. Positive Gap indicated that the staff was well trained.

The significance value was $p < .001$ which was less than .005. Evaluating the t-test, we rejected the null hypothesis as we have found enough evidence that service quality had significant impact on customer satisfaction across all variables of Empathy.

Table 15

ASSURANCE	Paired Differences				
	Perception Mean	Expectation Mean	t test	Sig. (2-tailed)	GAP Score(P-E)

18. Staff will give individual attention to guests 18. Staff gave individual attention to guests	6.2677	5.4394	-6.622	.000	0.83
19. The hotel will have convenient working hours and will be accessible 19. The hotel had convenient working hours and will be accessible	6.1465	5.4444	-5.841	.000	0.7
20. The Hotel will have Staff who will give personal service to guests 20. The Hotel had Staff who gave personal service to guests	6.2475	5.5202	-5.968	.000	0.73
21. The Hotel will have Guests' best interest at heart 21. The Hotel had Guests' best interest at heart	6.1313	5.303	-6.780	.000	0.83
22. Staff of the Hotel will individually recognize the needs of the tourists 22. Staff of the Hotel will individually recognize the needs of the tourists	6.2879	5.5303	-6.096	.000	0.76
Total	6.21618	5.44746			0.77

Table 15 showed that overall satisfaction from the Assurance factor of the hotels in Srinagar was highest at 6.22. The Positive gap between perception and expectation at 0.77 indicated that service delivery exceeded the expectations of tourists staying there. Tourists were satisfied with the overall intentions and behavior of the hotel staff. V18 and v21 were most satisfactory to tourists while V19 had the lowest satisfaction within the dimension.

V18. Positive Gap indicated that the staff gave individual attention to the needs of every tourist and customized their products according to their needs.

V19. Positive Gap indicated that the hotels welcomed tourists even late into the night and every service was available all the time.

V20. Positive Gap indicated that the staff was always ready to help tourists with specific demands of tourists outside of the package too.

V21. Positive Gap indicated that the tourists were genuinely and wholeheartedly welcomed by the hotel staff with utmost courtesy and treated with utmost sincerity.

V22. Positive Gap indicated that the staff was well trained and understood the unique needs of each tourist.

The significance value was $p < .001$ which was less than .005. Evaluating the t-test, we rejected the null hypothesis as we had found enough evidence that service quality had significant impact on customer satisfaction across all variables of Assurance.

CONCLUSION

Every hotel aims at maximum customer satisfaction so that they can aim to market themselves to new customers and develop loyalty in existing ones. The customer in every service business is considered as the king, whose needs and preferences define the standards of service delivery. Customer satisfaction results into a loyal customer and a loyal customer means repeat business. Every customer perceives service in different ways. Nowadays hotels in a competitive market like Srinagar need to understand the customer customization in service delivery.

We tried to assess whether tourists staying in hotels in Srinagar found the quality of service of the hotels satisfactory or close to their expectation's level. It would have helped the hoteliers determine their strengths and weaknesses on various variables. Thus, they will be able to modify their service delivery according to the needs of the customer. The findings indicated the service perceptions of tourists overall was higher than what they had expected. It meant the hotels in Srinagar had created very good infrastructure and provided best possible service and training to its staff which helped exceed the expectations of the tourists. The only place where hotels in Srinagar needed to improve was their responsiveness culture. Otherwise, it was highly unlikely that the service delivery of hotels should have exceeded the expectations of tourists by

such a huge gap. Because in service industry, it is often found that the customer is never satisfied and a modern customer being a sophisticated one with his/her complexities' demands more out of the service provider. The hospitable culture of Kashmir contributes to the single most satisfaction factor among tourists. One factor which was lacking in previous studies was tangibility of the hotels, which hotels in Srinagar seemed to have improved substantially. The reason may be a prolonged shutdown which enabled old hotels to renovate and hire new staff. Also, many students who have completed professional studies in Hospitality and Tourism have been inducted in the industry, thus improving service quality to tourists.

Management of hotels should train staff on the job and conduct special workshops from experts within and outside the industry. Tie-ups should be made with more business and hospitality institutes so that trained and skilled manpower is introduced who will bring new concepts to the industry. Skilled manpower is mannered, cultured, knowledgeable, confident and forward looking and serves what is demanded by the modern customer.

The limitations of study included that the sample for the study was collected only from 11 centrally located hotels around Dal Lake in Srinagar with 3 star rating. Future research needs to examine a wider range of the sample with a bigger number of respondents. The study was undertaken when the tourist season was in shambles in Kashmir, so we could not get a reliable sample representation.

According to Pearson's Correlation, there was a significance of $p > 0.005$ which meant our null hypothesis that there is no impact of dimensions of service quality on satisfaction of customers was rejected. GAP analysis also determined the positive service gap between perceived qualities of service along with the expected service quality which also reject our null hypothesis.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Abror, A., Patrisia, D., Engriani, Y., Evanita, S., Yasri, Y., & Dastgir, S. (2019). Service quality, religiosity, customer satisfaction, customer engagement and Islamic bank's customer loyalty. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print), Article ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-03-2019-0044>
2. Ara, A. (2013). *GUESTS' SATISFACTION IN HOTELS OF KASHMIR VALLEY: AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT*. 2, 13.
3. Babakus, E., & Boller, G. W. (1992). An empirical assessment of the SERVQUAL scale. *Journal of Business Research*, 24(3), 253–268. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963\(92\)90022-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963(92)90022-4)
4. Brandon-Jones, A., & Silvestro, R. (2010). Measuring internal service quality: Comparing the gap-based and perceptions-only approaches. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 30(12), 1291–1318. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01443571011094271>
5. Bukhari, S. M. F., Ghoneim, A., Dennis, C., & Jamjoom, B. (2013). The antecedents of travellers' e-satisfaction and intention to buy airline tickets online: A conceptual model. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, 26(6), 624–641. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEIM-07-2013-0040>
6. Buttle, F. (1996). SERVQUAL: Review, critique, research agenda. *European Journal of Marketing*, 30, 8–32. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090569610105762>
7. Choi, T., & Chu, R. (2001). Determinants of hotel Guests's satisfaction and repeat patronage in the Hong Kong hotel industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 20, 277–297. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0278-4319\(01\)00006-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0278-4319(01)00006-8)

8. DilPazir, D., & Amin, I. (2012). *A STUDY OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS HOTEL INDUSTRY IN KASHMIR VALLEY*. 8.
9. Fick, G. R., & Brent Ritchie, J. R. (1991). Measuring Service Quality in the Travel and Tourism Industry. *Journal of Travel Research*, 30(2), 2–9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004728759103000201>
10. González, M. E. A., Comesaña, L. R., & Brea, J. A. F. (2007). Assessing tourist behavioral intentions through perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(2), 153–160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2006.10.014>
11. Grönroos, C. (1993). A Service Quality Model and Its Marketing Implications. *European Journal of Marketing*, 18, 36–44. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM00000000004784>
12. Gruen, T., Summers, J., & Acito, F. (2000). Relationship Marketing Activities, Commitment, and Membership Behaviors in Professional Associations. *Journal of Marketing*, 64. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.64.3.34.18030>
13. Iacobucci, D., Ostrom, A., & Grayson, K. (1995). Distinguishing Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction: The Voice of the Consumer. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 4(3), 277–303. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp0403_04
14. Johnston, R., & Heineke, J. (1998). Exploring the Relationship between Perception and Performance: Priorities for Action. *The Service Industries Journal*, 18(1), 101–112.
15. Kundu, S., & Datta, S. K. (2015). Impact of trust on the relationship of e-service quality and customer satisfaction. *EuroMed Journal of Business*, 10(1), 21–46. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EMJB-10-2013-0053>
16. Lee, H. S. (n.d.). *Major Moderators Influencing the Relationships of Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty*.
17. Parasuraman, A. P., Zeithaml, V., & Berry, L. (1985). A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and its Implication for Future Research (SERVQUAL). *The Journal of Marketing*, 49, 41–50. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251430>
18. Parasuraman, Ananthanarayanan, Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). Servqual: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perc. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12.
19. Parasuraman, Arun, Berry, L. L., & Zeithaml, V. A. (1991). Refinement and reassessment of the SERVQUAL scale. *Journal of Retailing*, 67(4), 420.
20. *Principles of Marketing—Philip Kotler, Gary M. Armstrong—Google Books*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 25, 2020, from https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Principles_of_Marketing.html?id=qYbPtgAACAAJ&redir_esc=y
21. Professor, Administrative Management College, Bangalore, & Rao, P. S. (2013). Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in Hotel Industry. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, 18(5), 39–44. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-1853944>
22. Sureshchandar, G. S., Rajendran, C., & Anantharaman, R. N. (2002). The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction – a factor specific approach. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 16(4), 363–379. <https://doi.org/10.1108/08876040210433248>
23. Taylor, S. A., & Baker, T. L. (1994). An assessment of the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the formation of consumers' purchase intentions. *Journal of Retailing*, 70(2), 163–178. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-4359\(94\)90013-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-4359(94)90013-2)
24. Tessera, F. A., Hussain, I. A., & Ahmad, N. (2016). *Service Quality and Hotel's Customer Satisfaction: An Empirical Evidence from Ethiopia*. 1(1), 9.



25. Ting,

- D. H. (2004). Service quality and satisfaction perceptions: Curvilinear and interaction effect. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 22, 407–420. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02652320410559330>
26. Wilkins, H., Merrilees, B., & Herington, C. (2007). Toward an understanding of total service quality in hotels. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2006.07.006>
27. Yap, S. F., & Kew, M. L. (2007). Service quality and customer satisfaction: Antecedents of customer's re-patronage intentions. *Sunway Academic Journal*, 4, 59–73.
28. Yen, C., & Lu, H. (2008). Effects of e-service quality on loyalty intention: An empirical study in online auction. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, 18(2), 127–146. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09604520810859193>