

Chapter 8

Exploring the Indicators of Hotel Customer Experiences on Service Quality Approach

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ABSTRACT

In the intensely competitive hospitality sector, the quality of customer experience is a critical determinant of a hotel's success. As customers become more selective and their expectations evolve, hotels must continuously assess and enhance their service quality to remain competitive. This chapter aims to explore various indicators of hotel customer experience from a service quality perspective. Secondary data was utilized, with 434 hotel reviews collected from Tripadvisor.com, a prominent customer review site. Among these reviews, 268 were from domestic customers and the remainder from international travelers. Qualitative analysis was conducted using R software and Bigram analysis to identify recurring words and phrases. The study identified seven key dimensions based on repeated phrases, including hotel rooms, food quality, staff behavior, overall stay experience, and service quality. The research provides insights into these indicators and suggests that future studies could explore big data related to customer experience across different geographical areas.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since last many years, the service sector has emerged as the leading component of the economy. Studies indicate that top class quality of service is very much needed for the survival and success in today's competitive hotel market, leading to a marked increase in interest in this area (Ghobadian et al., 1994). Research demonstrates that excellent service quality fosters customer loyalty, attracts new customer, generates positive feedback, boosts employee commitment and satisfaction towards the organization, enhances image of company, reduces the operational expenses/ costs, and improves the performance of any service business (Berry et al., 1989). Service quality is a critical factor in determining organizational success, with delivering top-notch service being a key strategy for achieving this. In the Indian hotel industry, the need to enhance service quality has become a focal point due

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to intense competition, as hotels employees need to face a lot of challenges to provide the quality of service. Providing excellent service not only leads to profitability but also motivates employees to reach their full potential in meeting challenges. By offering high-quality service, hotels can maintain customer assurance and hold and secure a good position over their competitors.

In the service industry, particularly in the hotel sector, acquisitive and improving quality of service is essential for maximizing customer experiences and achieve to sustain and hold the customer in that particular hotel. Service quality, as articulated by Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990), is a multifaceted concept that includes key elements vital for guest satisfaction, such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These aspects play a crucial role in shaping how guests perceive their stay and are vital for assessing how effectively a hotel meets or surpasses their expectations. The importance of service quality is highlighted by its direct influence on customer satisfaction, which subsequently affects customer loyalty and repeat business (Oliver, 1999). Customer experience most important and essential indicators—including guest satisfaction, the efficiency of service delivery, the quality of facilities and amenities, staff conduct, perceived value for money, and the degree of personalized service provide crucial insights into how guests perceive and evaluate service quality. Guest satisfaction, typically assessed through surveys and feedback, indicates how well a hotel's service meets guest expectations and can profoundly affect the hotel's reputation and market position (Kwortnik & Thompson, 2009). The efficiency of service delivery, including the effectiveness of check-in and check-out processes, significantly influences customer perceptions of reliability and responsiveness (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The state and quality of physical facilities and amenities are also crucial in shaping how customer perceive value and satisfaction, as demonstrated by research on the impact of tangible elements on service quality (Bitner, 1992). Additionally, staff behavior, which includes professionalism, friendliness, and competence, plays a key role in the guest experience; positive staff interactions can greatly enhance satisfaction, while negative experiences can lead to dissatisfaction and unfavorable reviews (Heskett et al., 1997). Perceptions of value for money, which are determined by the quality of services relative to the cost, affect overall guest satisfaction and the likelihood of recommending the hotel (Zeithaml, 1988). Finally, the extent to which hotels personalize and customize their services to align with individual guest preferences can greatly enhance the guest experience and build long-term loyalty (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994). By thoroughly analyzing these indicators, hotels can pinpoint their strengths and identify areas for improvement, allowing them to adjust their services to better meet guest expectations and elevate the overall experience. A deep understanding of these service quality indicators equips hotels with the insights needed to exceed guest expectations and gain a lasting competitive edge in a dynamic market (Atilgan et al., 2003). Implementing a systematic approach to these indicators enables hotels to refine their service strategies, boost customer satisfaction, and drive success in an increasingly competitive industry.

1.2 Concept of Customer Experience

Customer experience has become a central element in contemporary hospitality business strategies, profoundly impacting how hotels interact with their guests and influencing their overall success. This concept encompasses the full spectrum of interactions a guest has with a hotel, from the initial contact through to post-stay follow-ups. It recognizes that every interaction—whether with a product, service, or staff member—plays a crucial role in shaping the guest's overall perception of the hotel brand. As competition intensifies and customer expectations elevate, hotels are increasingly prioritizing the enhancement of customer experience to stand out in a saturated market. This emphasis on customer experience mirrors a larger shift toward customer-centric approaches, where hotels strive to understand and cater to the individual needs and preferences of their guests in a personalized and impactful manner (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

In today's hotel industry, guests expect far more than merely high-quality products and services; they seek interactions that are seamless, personalized, and emotionally engaging. This shift is fueled by greater access to information, an abundance of choices, and elevated service standards, requiring hotels to adapt to these advanced

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