
CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: IMPORTANCE PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Dr.Parikshat Singh Manhas

Associate professor
The Business School
University of Jammu, Baba Sahib Ambedkar Road, New campus
Jammu (J&K) India

Ramjit, Junior

Research fellow (UGC)
School of Hospitality and Tourism Management
University of Jammu, Baba Sahib Ambedkar Road, New campus
Jammu (J&K) India.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study is to identify the factors of importance service quality experience in luxury hotel industry in north India and to find out the difference between the specific and overall components of importance and actual stay experience of the customer in hotels.. A structured questionnaire was used to conduct this study with input from local hotel managers and individuals. Items were selected and customized based on the previous literature. The survey was conducted at various luxury hotels in north India. The findings of the study give us the idea about the importance score statistically significant to higher than the performance rating of the hotels. Overall, the results give us the idea that there was a significant difference between expectations of the guests and actual experiences, thus highlighting managerial implications for the Hotel industry.

Keywords: Service quality, Customer experiences, Brand image, Customer Satisfaction, Hospitality industry, India.

INTRODUCTION

“Quality tourism experiences” is a term repeatedly used by destinations and organizations involved in tourism and hospitality research, planning, policy, management, marketing and delivery. Its meaning is usually implicitly or tacitly assumed rather than defined (Jennings, 2006). Additionally, the assumed “taken for granted” meaning(s) may be further qualified, as exemplified in the following four industry sector-based texts. The first is from India regarding the hospitality sector, “the task on hand for the tourism industry and the government (in Karnataka, India) is to convert its strengths into marketable, easy to access, good quality tourism experiences” (Lakshman, 2002, p. 1). The second is from a Canadian government tourism agency, “The Ministry of Tourism supports delivery of high quality tourism and recreation experiences to Ontarians and visitors to Ontario” (Ministry of Tourism, Canada, 2008). The third is a joint construction between a United States government aid agency and an Armenian private sector association, “A simple, clear and concise strategy is required to guide and further develop Armenia’s tourism sector, aiming at: ensuring Armenia provides unique, high quality, high value tourism experiences that are regionally and globally competitive” (USAID and CAPS, 2007, p. 4). The fourth example furthers the concept high-value as opposed to quality and although it omits the word tourism it is implied since it is taken from the work ‘Higher value tourism experiences’ profiling two New Zealand tourism companies. This example notes, “it (tourism industry growth) is about developing . . . high-value experiences that people will happily pay more to enjoy” (Green, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, NZTE, in Harding 2006). While such qualifiers distinguish differences in the degree of quality being offered, that is, good quality, high quality, or high-value quality; definitions or criteria are not provided with which to understand what these qualifiers and indeed the phrase quality tourism experiences mean. With regard to the latter, implied in the four examples are service quality and hospitality sector service experiences; notions of excellence; the perceptions of getting value for one’s money; the matching of expectations with experiences; as well as links between expectations and satisfactions. Despite wide usage, quality tourism experiences remains a term, which eludes a definitive meaning. That is not to say that researchers, planners, policy-makers, managers, marketers and tourism industry providers have been deterred from using it or trying to understand it.

The survival of hospitality industry in the current competitive environment where most hotels have quite similar luxurious physical facilities much depends on delivery of service quality aiming to result in customer delight. Pallet et al. (2003) suggests that quality has to be visioned, initiated, planned, delivered, monitored and sustained. The researchers propose that quality problems and key staff issues in hotels often can be solved with a common “People and Quality” strategy which involves placing customer needs in the

heart of the whole process; seeking suggestions from staff; developing corporate quality and people philosophy; training and empowering staff; benchmarking and reviewing (Pallet et al., 2003).

Service experience can be defined as the subjective personal reactions and feelings that are felt by consumers when consuming or using a service. It can be contended that service experience has an important influence on the consumer evaluation of and satisfaction with a given service (Otto & Ritchie, 2000). Hence, a better understanding of experiential phenomena in tourism service is particularly important, and will permit the industry to better perform. Service quality has for long been recognized to play a critical role in a firm's competitive advantage (Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons, 1994). In recent years, companies have become convinced of the strategic benefits of quality (Phillips, Chang, and Buzzell 1983). As a result, many large companies have created quality-measurement programs that attempt to relate product and service attributes to customer evaluations of quality (Hauser and Clausing 1988; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry 1990). In many service industries, companies have created programs that include surveys to elicit customers' assessments of service quality; a feedback loop allows service changes to be implemented and then evaluated with subsequent survey data. Quality is understood to mean conformance to specifications, though more recently it is taken to mean meeting and /or exceeding customers' expectations.

It has suggested that attempt to have effective service quality management and experiences by the customer is the best way to achieve greater customer contentment Kandampull, Mok and Sparks (2001). It had showed that service quality can only be achieved if organizations empower their employees to underpin service quality dimensions Oakland (2005) and Kandampully, et al., (2001). These dimensions include tangibles (physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel); reliability (ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately); responsiveness (willingness to help customers and provide prompt service); assurance (knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence); and empathy (caring, individualized attention provided to customers). Quality of products and services is one of the competitive requirements in order to build up the brand image of the firms in the hospitality industry to survive. To enhance the customer satisfaction and facing the challenges, it is Compulsion for the hospitality service providers to offer the quality services to the customer and make their quality experiences memorable. (Hung,Huang and Chen, 2000). Service quality is characterised by the following aspects: It is multidimensional; has underlying quality dimensions, some of which change over time; is intangible, although it is often assessed through tangible clues; is the result of both service

processes and service outcomes; depends on the difference (gap) between customer expectations and perceptions

The aim of the study is

- To identify the factors of importance service quality experience in stars hotel in north India.
- To find out the difference between the specific and overall components of importance and actual stay experience of the customer in hotels and the

Hypothesis

- There is significance difference between expectations of the guests and actual experiences of the customer in luxury hotels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

With regard to marketing literature, since the late 1990s and into the early stages of the twenty-first century, "experience" and "experiences" have burgeoned as a specific focus. In particular, experience marketing has become a niche area in and of itself (see the works of O'Sullivan & Spangler 1998; Smith & Wheeler, 2002; Marconi, 2005; Gilmore & Pine, 2002; Lenderman, 2005). Additionally, it should be noted that the particular study and use of service quality measures have permeated tourism, hospitality as well as marketing since the 1980s with the work of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985). The latter three pioneered SERVQUAL (1988), which is predicated on an expectation / performance disconfirmation paradigm derived from gap theory (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1985). The concept of "quality" has been contemplated throughout history and continues to be a topic of intense interest today. Quality presently is addressed in numerous academic and trade publications, by the media, and in training seminars; it is perhaps the most frequently repeated mantra among managers and executives in contemporary organizations. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985, p.48) propose a formal definition of customer perception of service quality as "the degree and direction of discrepancy between customers' service perceptions and expectations. The service quality model, SERVQUAL based on the expectancy disconfirmation theory has been discussed in hospitality and tourism marketing research (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985, 1988), has been widely applied in the tourism and hospitality industry literature. However, Fick and Ritchie (1991) argue that SERVQUAL scale does not adequately address both affective and holistic factors which contribute to the overall quality of 'service experience'. In Otto

and Ritchie's (1996) study, differences between service quality and experience quality are discussed. Experience quality is subjective in terms of measurement while service quality is objective. The evaluation of experience quality tends to be holistic gestalt rather than attribute-based, and the focus of evaluation is on self (internal) but not on service environment (external). In addition, the scope of experience is more general than specific, the nature of benefit is experiential/hedonic/symbolic rather than functional/utilitarian, and the psychological representation is affective instead of cognitive/attitudinal. Experience quality can be conceptualized as customer affective responses to their desired social-psychological benefits. It also refers to a specific service transaction, such as contact with people who contribute to the actual experience (Chan & Baum, 2007). Otto and Ritchie (1996) develop an experience quality scale with four factors – i.e. hedonics, peace of mind, involvement, and recognition – using consumer survey data obtained from three tourism service sectors including hotels, airlines, and tours and attractions.

The plethora of studies regarding customers' attitudes toward services has focused on perceived service quality. Perceived service quality is defined as the customer's assessment of the overall excellence or superiority of the service (Zeithaml 1988). Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988) consider that a customer's assessment of overall service quality depends on the gap between expectations and perceptions of actual performance levels. Both Customer Satisfaction/Disconfirmation and perceived service quality are postulated to be influenced by the gap between expectations and perceptions of performance (i.e., disconfirmation). However, the Customer Satisfaction or Disconfirmation literature suggests a more elaborate model in which disconfirmation, expectations, and actual performance levels affect customer satisfaction, which, in turn, becomes an input to customers' perceptions of service quality.

Satisfaction was typically described as a post choice evaluative judgment concerning a specific purchase selection (Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Oliver, 1980; Day 1984). Kotler (2000, p.36) stated that "Satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance or outcome in relation to his/her expectations". Customer satisfaction is the leading and one of the most important criterion for determining the quality that is actually delivered to customers through the product/ service and by the accompanying servicing (Vavra,1997), simply stated, customer satisfaction is essential for corporate survival in this modern competitive world. So many studies have given the idea and have found that it costs about five times as much in time, money and resources to attract a new customer as it does to retain an existing customer (Naumann, 1995). This creates the challenge of maintaining high levels of service, awareness of customer expectations and improvement in services and product. Furthermore, customer satisfaction is recognized as of great importance to

all commercial firms because of its influence on repeat purchases and word-of-mouth recommendations (Berkman and Gilson, 1986). Satisfaction reinforces positive attitudes toward the brand, leading to a greater likelihood that the same brand will be purchased again dissatisfaction leads to negative brand attitudes and lessens the likelihood of buying the same brand again (Assael, 1987, p. 47).

It has been observed that in today's hospitality environment, the true measure of company success lies in an organization's ability to satisfy customers continually, Gabbie and O'Neill (1996). Increasingly customers are demanding value for money in terms of both price and the quality of product/service being offered. In order to ensure market success, hospitality organizations of all types are being forced to stand back and take a long, hard look at the way they are currently doing business. As such, failure by management to interpret customer desires accurately can result in loss of business and possible bankruptcy for some. There has been some confusion regarding the differences between service quality and satisfaction (Storbacka, Strandvik, and Grönroos (1994). Satisfaction would, according to Liljander and Strandvik (1993), refer to an insider perspective, the customer's own experiences of a service where the outcome has been evaluated in terms of what value was received, in other words what the customer had to give to get something. According to Hunt (1977), satisfaction is an evaluation that an 'experience was at least as good as it was perceived to be'. One way to achieve strong relationships and, thus, long relationships is to ensure that customers are satisfied. The proposition is that dissatisfied customers will defect; the relationship ends. Several researchers have proposed that this is a simplification of the matter (Zeithaml, et al., 1993). Customers seem to have a zone of tolerance, which according to Zeithaml, et al., (1993) can be defined as the difference between an adequate and a desired level of service. According to Kennedy and Thirkell (1988), customers are prepared to absorb some unfavorable evaluations before expressing them in terms of net dissatisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the area of service quality, customer perceptions and their actual experience at different star categories of hotel felt by guests in north India. The study also offers a possibility to compare and contrast with other similar studies undertaken in different parts of the globe. The aim of the study is to assess the customer's common expectations and factors of importance service quality experience during their stay at various star hotels and Compare the actual customer service quality experience with service quality delivered by the hotels. Moreover, to give viable suggestions and recommendations to the hotel industry to make the customer's experience memorable

and in the process enhance their brand image in today's competitive market. The study was undertaken at different star hotels consenting to participate at Jammu, Chandigarh and Delhi in north India.

The methodology involved surveying consenting hotel guests in the hotel lobby or other convenient location within the hotel. A questionnaire was structured for this study with input from local hotel managers and individual items were selected and customized based on studies such as Lockyer (2000), Mohsin (2003) and Mohsin and Ryan (2005). The questionnaire comprised three sections. Section one gathered data on importance attributed to different features of front office, room service and in-house café-restaurant by guests pool area and gymnasium centre. Section two sought an evaluation of how the establishment performed in the opinion of guests, as per the listed features of front office, room service and in-house café/restaurant. Section three accumulated demographic details in terms of gender, age, type of trip (business or holiday) and country of residence. The study uses a Likert Scale of 1 to 5, where 5 represents highest importance or agreement with the statement and '1' represents lowest importance or unacceptable level of service offered; 3 represented no opinion. A useable sample of 400 participants resulted over a period of almost five months. And also uses for the measurement for the performance or to measure the actual performance of the hotels which also ranges from 1 to 5.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The tourists were selected randomly at convenient locations within the star category hotels of Jammu, Chandigarh and Delhi because these are the main destination among others in north India. The respondents included 46% (Females and 54% males. The majorities of the respondents were married and were travelling with family members. Majority of respondents, 43.5% were in the 20-35 years age group, followed by 24.2% in 36-50 years; 20.3% were below 19 years, and 50 years or above percentage was 12%. To check data reliability split half reliability measures were in excess of .916 while the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .785. Descriptive statistics was used for the importance and performance evaluation and factor analysis is used for identifying the factors for the importance items. To make a comparison of their means i.e. importance and performance test was used to determine the difference, if any, between importance-performance. The seven underlying factors which emerge from this analysis could be classified and named as but due to no highest loading on the seventh factor no consideration is given to this factor. Two attributes which have explained the variance less

than .50 i.e. the physical appearance of the hotel, Public area cleanliness like lobby, toilets, Banquets; therefore these two items are deleted. (Refer Table 2.)

Table 1: Total Variance Explained (Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis)

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	16.330	36.922	36.922	16.330	36.922	36.922	7.345	19.660	19.660
2	4.321	11.078	48	4.321	11.078	48	4.808	13.628	33.388
3	3.863	9.905	57.905	3.863	9.905	57.905	4.376	11.221	44.609
4	3.084	7.908	65.813	3.084	7.908	65.813	4.368	11.20	55.781
5	2.860	5.874	71.687	2.291	5.874	71.687	4.313	11.06	66.101
6	1.596	4.092	75.779	1.596	4.092	75.779	4.043	10.366	76.467
7	0.999	2.561	81.741						
8	0.876	2.246	83.986						
9	0.764	1.958	85.944						
10	0.651	1.67	87.614						
11	0.633	1.622	89.236						
12	0.531	1.362	90.599						
13	0.449	1.151	91.75						
14	0.4	1.026	92.776						

15	0.359	0.919	93.696						
16	0.334	0.856	94.551						
17	0.303	0.776	95.327						
18	0.239	0.614	95.941						
19	0.212	0.543	96.484						
20	0.185	0.474	96.957						
21	0.169	0.434	97.391						
22	0.149	0.583	97.774						
23	0.125	0.521	98.095						
24	0.101	0.458	98.653						
25	0.087	0.423	98.876						
26	0.084	0.414	99.09						
27	0.07	0.379	99.269						
28	0.059	0.351	99.421						
29	0.04	0.302	99.653						
30	0.036	0.292	99.745						
31	0.026	0.266	99.81						
32	0.022	0.202	100.001						

Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix (Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis).

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Quick confirmation on reservation.	0.860				
Simplicity of making a reservation	0.776				
Helpful and friendly staff.	0.693				
First contact with the hotels employees	0.762				
First notion of the hotel.	0.759				
Your first not ion or Impression of the hotel.	0.757				
The check in and out of the hotel	0.747				
Furnishing in the room	0.733				
Reception area	0.668				
Dealing with complaints	0.659				
The overall Quality of food		0.906			
choice of the food on menu card		0.868			
Choice of selection of beverages		0.864			
Ambience of restaurant and bars		0.852			

Quality of restaurant food	0.809			
Prompt room service	0.741			
The value for money of the hotel		0.877		
Value for money for room service		0.859		
Value for money of the restaurant Service		0.814		
Value for money of the housekeeping services		0.808		
Value for money of the recreational activities		0.602		
Hotel location			0.890	
Interior design			0.854	
The décor of this hotel is stylish and attractive			0.829	
A secure safe is available in the room of this hotel			0.819	
Hotel's atmosphere			0.670	
The quality of service				0.890
Timely service				0.872
The appearance of the staff				0.843
Product Knowledge of the staff				0.828

The willingness and ability of the personnel to. Provide service					0.809
Quality of service compared to other hotels of The same category					0.690

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. A. Rotation Converged In 8 Iterations

Factor - 1 Front Office Operations -This factor shows highest factors loading on these attributes Quick Confirmation on Hotels Reservation (0.860), Simple and ease to Making a Reservation (0.776), Helpful and Friendly Staff (0.693), First contact with the hotel employees (0.762), First notion of the hotel (0.759), Your first notion or Impression of the hotel.(0.757),The check in and out of the hotel (0.747), Furnishing in the room (0.733), Reception area (0.668) and Dealing with Complaints (0.659). Further the variance explained for this factor was 19.66 %.

Factor - 2. Food and Beverage Services quality - This factors shows highest loading on these attributes overall Quality of food (0.906) , choice of the food on menu card (0.887) , choice of selection of beverages (0.864), Ambience of restaurants and Bars (0.852), Quality of Restaurant Food (0.809), Prompt Room Service (0.741) and variance was explained for this factor was 13.628%.

Factor - 3. Value for the hotels Products and Services – This factors shows highest loading on these attributes ,The Value for Money of the Hotel (0.887), Value for money for Room Service (0.859), Value for Money of the Restaurant Service (0.814) , Value for money of the Housekeeping Services (0.808). Value for money of the Recreational Activities (0.602) and variance was 11.221%.

Factor - 4. location and Ambience of Hotels - This factors shows highest loading on these attributes, counts for Hotel location (0.890) , Interior design (0.854) , The decor of this hotel is stylish and attractive (0.829), A secure safe is available in the room of this hotel (0.819), Hotel’s atmosphere (0.670) and Variance was explained by this factor was 11.20 %.

Factor - 5. Product knowledge and Presentation- This factors shows highest loading on these attributes, The Quality of Service (0.890), Timely Service (0.872), The appearance of the Staff (0.843), Product Knowledge of the Staff (0.828), The willingness and ability of the personnel to Provide Service (0.809), Quality of Service compared to other hotels of The same Category (0.690) and Variance was explained by this factor was 11.06 %.

IMPORTANCE PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

The importance-performance technique has been widely used in tourism academic literature. It is defined as a model of reasoned action by Sheppard, Hartwick and Warshaw (1988). Major parts of the survey in the current study include sets of Importance - Performance type questions. The mean has been compared to determine the difference, if any, between importance performance factors. The Importance Performance Analysis was conducted on the factors derived above, based on the services being provided by the star rated hotels under study viz a viz these factors the following results were achieved.

Table no 3. Means differences Between Importance and performance.

Quality variables	Mean-Difference between-Importance and Performance score	t- Value
<i>1.Front office operations</i>		
Quick confirmation on reservation	1.21	1.33**
Simple and Ease to Making a Reservation	1.17	1.32**
Helpful and Friendly Staff	1.11	1.25**
First Contact with the Hotel Staff	1.05	1.20**
First notion of the Hotel	0.95	1.06**
First notion/impression of your with the hotel	0.94	1.05**
The check in and out of the Hotel	0.92	1.04**

	0.90	1.02**
The Physical appearance of the Hotel	0.90	1.02**
Reception Area	0.88	1.00**
Dealing with complains		
<u>2,Food and Beverage services</u>		
the overall Quality of food	1.32	1.45**
choice of Food on menu card	1.28	1.40**
Choice of selection of Beverages	1.26	1.41**
Ambience of Restaurant and bars	1.25	1.37**
Quality of Restaurant Food	1.17	1.30**
Prompt room service	1.13	1.27**
<u>3.Value for the Products and Services</u>		
Value for money of the hotel	1.16	1.30**
Value for money for Room Service	1.13	1.25**
Value for money of the Restaurant Service	1.01	1.13**
Value for money of the Restaurant Service	0.86	0.96**
Value for money of the Recreational Activities	0.86	0.96**
<u>4.Hotel Location and Ambience</u>		
Hotel location.	1.17	1.30**
Interior design	1.13	1.27**
The decor of this hotel is stylish and attractive	1.01	1.16**
A secure safe is available in the room of this hotel	0.82	0.94**

Hotel's atmosphere	0.82	0.94**
<u>5. Product Knowledge and Presentation.</u>		
The Quality of Service Timely Service	1.28	146**
The appearance(presentation) of the staff	1.17	126**
Product Knowledge of the Staff	1.13	1.19**
The Willingness and ability of the Personnel to Provide Service	1.01	1.12**
Quality of service compared to other Hotels of the same category	0.88	1.00**

Note: * t-test two tail probability <0.05, ** t-test two tail probability <0.01

The factor one Front office operation shows the statistically difference among all the items. Which are shown as follows in descending order according to their mean differences. The variables which were having more than '1' mean difference indicated the larger disparity between the expectation and performance of the hotels and demanded for extra efforts to meet with the expectation of the customers. Quick confirmation on reservation (mean difference 1.21), Simple and Ease to Making a Reservation (mean difference 1.17) Helpful and Friendly Staff (mean Difference 1.11), First Contact with the Hotel Staff (mean difference 1.05), First notion of the Hotel (mean difference 0.95), First notion/impression of your with the hotel (mean difference 0.94), The check in and out of the Hotel (mean difference 0.92), The Physical appearance of the Hotel (mean difference 0.90), Reception Area (mean difference 0.90), Dealing with complains (mean difference 0.88).

Factor second Food and beverage service shown that there was statistically difference among all the variables like the overall Quality of food (mean difference 1.32), choice of Food on menu card (mean difference 1.28), Choice of selection of Beverages (mean difference 1.26), Ambience of Restaurant and bars, (mean difference 1.25), Quality of Restaurant Food (mean difference 1.17), Prompt room service (mean difference 1.13) and implicated on the hotels to improve and work on the above variables so that the guests or customers feel satisfied and their experience can be crafted as memorable one in hospitality industry.

Again in the third factor the statistically difference found in all the items but more than one were value for money of the hotel (mean difference 1.16), Value for money for Room

Service (mean difference 1.13), Value for money of the Restaurant Service (mean difference 1.01).

The importance and performance analysis had shown the statistical difference between the expectation and performance of the hotels on the variables like Hotel location. (1.17) Interior design (1.13), the decor of this hotel is stylish and attractive (1.01) which indicates the mean difference more than one '1' again left a managerial implications for hotel industry to work on these items in order to feel the customer happy an aesthetic satisfied.

At last again the factor product knowledge and presentation included the variables which were having more than '1' mean difference and indicated that there were disparity among the perception of the guests and performance of the hotels. The Quality of Service Timely Service (1.28), The appearance (presentation) of the staff (1.17), Product Knowledge of the Staff (1.13), The Willingness and ability of the Personnel to Provide Service (1.01) and put the implications on the management of the hotel industry to conduct the regular classes and training sessions for their staff in order to get possess with detail product knowledge and improve their presentation when dealing directly to the guests.

As per above discussion of each factors it was found that each factors factors had shown the statistically significance difference between expectations of the guests and actual experiences of the customer in luxury hotels. Hence, the hypothesis accepted (Refer Table No.3).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to identify the factors of importance service quality experience in stars or luxury hotel in north India; to find out the difference between the specific and overall components of importance and actual stay experience of the customer in hotels and hypothesized that there was a significance difference between expectations of the guests and actual experiences of the customer in luxury hotels. We know that quality management is a one of the most important and critical issues so, all the hospitality and tourism organizations in fact service industry worldwide consider and give priority and importance to service quality because it helps them to create high standards and build up their image in the modern competitive world. The brand image of the offerings is further improved by this act and the perception of the customers regarding such brands is enhanced. Quality management can be strategic and tactical tool and is has

a positive impact on the related areas such as employee morale, reduction in working costs and waste and time management.

The present study depicted the idea regarding the influence of customer service experience on the brand image and how it is positioned in the mind of consumers while choosing their hotel brand. The analysis had shown the statistical differences between importance and performance evaluation of the guests in every area like front office operations, food and beverage service, value for the quality services, Hotel design and ambiance and products knowledge and presentation. There was not a single item which is having the mean value which exceeded the importance area.

This study highlights that there is a serious and severe problem in management and control of the service and experiential quality in the hospitality industry in India. To identify the factors which are really important in order to get the satisfaction and getting the repeat business and building their brand image in the competitive market factor analysis was applied. It identified six factors front office services, Food and beverage services, Value for the products and services, Hotel location and Ambience, Product knowledge and presentation, Brand experience, image and loyalty. Overall the results indicate statistically significant differences in importance and performance evaluation responses of the hotel guests. These differences left a managerial implication for the hotels managers recognize these differences and paln appropriate actions to improve upon. Such an approach will help them to build customer loyalty and get repeat business. Providing the services according to the commitment / standards of the hotel industry viz a viz service quality is often a challenge faced by many service organizations. Studying customers' attitude, seeking feedback and accumulating that information to analyze helps to identify areas of disparity through importance performance evaluation, thereby helping to develop appropriate actions and strategy which can address differences if any and build their brand image today's competitive world. This study attempts to facilitate such process. Managers should work on the important features like online reservation, accessibility/ease of the reservations, giving proper training to employees at the regularly intervals to make them more professionally oriented so that they can understand the needs of the customers and make them comfortable and happy during their stay in the hotels. They should be given advance training and development programmes should be conducted regularly to increase their product knowledge and efficiency in order to deliver the quality services to the customers. Moreover, the customer should be charged according to the value services being provided by the hotel. To provide excellent quality service should be motto of the hotel industry. Things should be worked upon in the food and beverage service areas too, choice and quality of the food from the different cuisines like Indian continennetal, Chinese and others international cuisines should be provided.

The research has some significant value as it contributes a lot to the previous literature and support, provides to other local and international researchers for a comparative study of service quality perceptions of various chains and star category hotel guests across the world. Most luxury hotels worldwide can easily compete with physical evidence and comforts, but, it is the service in the hotel which makes the difference which really matters a lot in building up their brand image in this cut throat business in hospitality where there are different hotels players are working . It needs to be explored how hotels are working to achieve customer satisfaction or meet with the expectation of the hotel guests and improve their brand image. This is possible through continuous research and contribution to literature and this is something this study has attempted to undertake. Further study with a larger sample size accumulated from different cities and location of other parts of India is suggested.

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