

Impact of front office Staff Training on Customer Satisfaction

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Abstract - The front desk employees are responsible for a vital function in the hotel. The workforce consists of a front desk clerk, a cashier, a reservations clerk, a manager, a concierge, a night auditor, a telephone operator, bell crew, and elevator operation. According to "meeting and greeting" guests, providing information during their stay, and processing their departure, including payment, are the primary focuses of front office, which is taken to include those areas of activity that centre on the reception desk and its allied areas. The Internet, the Business Centre and Conference Room Facilities, Prompt Round-the-Clock Room Service with a Variety of Items on the Menu, and the Ambience and Menu Variety in the Restaurants are some of the highlights of this hotel. According to the findings of the study, there is a disparity between the expectations (importance) of guests and the satisfaction (performance) of guests regarding the Reception and Room facilities, Room Service, and Food and Beverage Outlets. This indicates that guests were not as satisfied as they had anticipated being with the hotels.

Keywords - Front , Office , Staff , Training , Customer , Satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

According to the information that was shown earlier, this has resulted in the significance of service quality being a growing topic of concern. When attempting to define service quality, think of it as the perceptions that arise as a result of contrasting the actual service performance with the expectations of the consumer. Others, such as, describe service quality in a manner that is analogous to this one. They define it as a perceived judgement that results from the assessment processes of customers, in which consumers compare the service they anticipate to have gotten with the service they believe they have received. Explain this in the context of the development of SERVQUAL, which included five aspects based on diverse statistical testing: tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

SERVQUAL was established as a measurement of service quality by Parasuraman et al. (1988), and it has since come to be utilised with very few modifications in a diverse range of contexts. For instance, it appears that front office services have the characteristics that are considered to be the most important, particularly in forming the following impressions of service quality: tangibility (how well the hotel staff are dressed); reliability (the ability to resolve problems encountered by guests); responsiveness (the convenience of making the reservation, the promptness of checkin/checkout process, hotel/tour guide information); assurance (the security and safety

of guests); and empathy (caring and individualised attention).

“Customer perception of Service Quality in Hotel Industry”

An study into the setting of Bangalore provides an experimental evaluation in the direction of resolving the test for the hotel executives, with the goal of determining the satisfaction level of service quality measurements and further developing their service quality levels. This will provide the owners of the hotel the ability to retain their current clients while also attracting new consumers at a lesser cost. Before we get into the specifics of this topic, we need to take a look at the hospitality business as a whole in India and get a feel for the atmosphere there. In order to make our evaluation credible, we also need to have an understanding of the hotel industry in Bangalore.

Bangalore Hotel Market

Over 7,794 hotel rooms are anticipated to be added in Bangalore over the next few years, with contributions from global hotels such as the Ritz-Carlton, Shangri-La, and J.W. Marriott among others. This bodes well for the city's hotel and tourism industry, both of which are expected to experience continued growth in the years to come. Because of the significant planned room additions, it is anticipated that habitations will level out

somewhere between 65 and 75% in the subsequent five years, with the day by day room charge average at Rs.16,000. The travel industry in Bangalore, which attracts more business explorers than relaxation vacationers from both the international and domestic markets, is poised for additional development as a result of the upgrades that have been made to the travel industry foundation and the continued development of inbound appearances.

Hospitality and Tourism Industry in India: Status

At the moment, the tourism industry in India is one of the country's most important economic sectors. It is an industry that begins with the sunrise, in addition to being a large source of employment and a strong promoter of international commerce. Following closely behind the production of pearls, adornments, and ready-made pieces of apparel is the tourism business as the third largest worker of unfamiliar trade. A flood in hotel yield insights, RevPAR (revenue per accessible room), and ARR was brought about as a direct result of the boom in the tourism industry, which had an immediate impact on the hospitality sector (normal room rates). Because of an increase in the purchasing power of middle-class and high-society segments, the hotel industry's business and leisure sectors appear to have a bright future ahead of them. This is owing to the fact that more people are travelling for business and pleasure.

The tourism and hospitality sectors, which were among the top fifteen categories that attracted the most foreign direct investment (FDI) for the period of April 2000 to September 2015, accounted for the lion's share of the world's highest levels of FDI creation. There will be a shortage of satisfying demand in the long run despite the fact that there are an estimated 170,000 hotel rooms as of right now, 60,000 additional hotel rooms to come up, and 40 worldwide hotel chains in future across portions within the next five years. This is because the economy is growing at a rate of 7 to 9 percent per year.

Service Quality Concept

According to Abdullah and Afshar (2019), the concept of quality is a theory that is capable of being characterised as an evasive and blurry theory. It is essential to make a distinction between commodities and services due to the fact that each one possesses a unique set of qualities. The former is more physical and takes the shape of an item, whereas the later is intangible and takes the form of real performance. The fact that a service is a process rather than an object is undoubtedly one of its defining traits, as well as one that cannot be matched by anything else. Therefore, service businesses do not have any products, but instead they focus on providing customers with an engaging experience. Due to the fact that services are intangible, it can be challenging for both the provider and the customer to quantify their value.

Because the provision of services in the hospitality industry invariably involves the participation of human beings, the industry as a whole ought to centre its attention 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 a hospitality business is dependent on the cumulative effect of individual client interactions with service personnel in which the customers actively participate. There are several significant definitions of service quality that have been presented by a variety of scholars. Service quality may be defined as the degree to which a client's expectations regarding a service provider differ from the client's evaluation of the services received.

The roles and qualifications of front office staff

The front office is an area of operation that sees a great deal of variation from one hotel to the next. The size, location, and primary target audience of a particular property all have an impact on this aspect of the business. The front office in terms of its function as the primary point of contact for visitors while they are staying at the hotel, regardless of the type of hotel being discussed. The front desk employees are responsible for a vital function in the hotel. The workforce consists of a front desk clerk, a cashier, a reservations clerk, a manager, a concierge, a night auditor, a telephone operator, bell crew, and elevator operation. When the amount of business warrants it, the front desk clerk at certain establishments also performs the duties of cashier, telephone operator, and reservations clerk in addition to those of desk clerk. According to "meeting and greeting" guests, providing information during their stay, and processing their departure, including payment, are the primary focuses of front office, which is taken to include those areas of activity that centre on the reception desk and its allied areas. Front office is taken to include all of these areas. It may also entail the pottering or concierge duty, along with operations in the back office such as reservations and accounts in certain smaller establishments.

Service Quality

This concept has just lately become apparent as a challenge that is of the highest relevance for those who work in the hotel industry. It has been acknowledged as one of the most effective tactics for bolstering the position of a firm in the market and improving the overall performance of an organisation as a whole. Members of a hospitality organisation are required to fulfil their primary responsibility, which is to provide customers with service that is of a very high standard. One definition of service quality states that it is the degree to which the requirements of a customer are satisfied and the degree to which the service provided lives up to the expectations of the client. Another definition of service quality states that it is the degree to which

the service exceeds the requirements of the customer.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study on Service Quality Concept
2. To study on the roles and qualifications of front office staff

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The research design provides a rough sketch of the framework within which primary research will be carried out or has already been completed. It is a specific kind of structure for conducting research enquiries, the primary goal of which is to eliminate the error or likelihood of gathering unfitting incidental implications of the data that has been gathered. In other words, it ensures that the evidence obtained from the data will make it possible for the investigator to evaluate the ideas in as clear and precise a manner as is feasible. When developing a design for a research project, it is critical to have a clear understanding of the kinds of evidence that will be needed in order to connect the design with the aims or questions of the research project at hand.

Insofar as this study is concerned, it is a mix of descriptive and explanatory research, qualitative research, and empirical research dealing with the factors that determine the level of customer satisfaction in the hotel sector.

Population and Sampling

The research is based on a select group of eighteen five-star deluxe hotels located in Delhi. In accordance with the standards of this study, all of the Managers, Supervisors, and Executives of these 5 Star Deluxe Hotels, along with their Guests, will be regarded to be the universe.

Sample Size Is Arrived

The calculator for the size of the sample supplied. Due to the limited size of the population, an online calculator was used to reflect all 18 hotels as the sample in order to achieve a confidence level of 95% while maintaining a margin of error of 5%.

To calculate true sample:

$$\text{True Sample} = (\text{Sample Size} \times \text{Population}) / (\text{Sample Size} + \text{Population} - 1)$$

Where, sample size suggested by above online calculator i.e., 18

$$\text{Population (total number of 5 Star Deluxe Hotel in New Delhi)} = 18$$

$$\text{True Sample} = (18 \times 18) / (18 + 18 - 1) = 9.25$$

Therefore, 10 Hotels has been taken as sample for hotels.

Validity and Reliability Of Data

Reliability is synonymous with dependability, stability, consistency, predictability, and accuracy. Reliability may be measured in terms of all of these qualities. Berkowitz, Wolkowitz, Fitch, and Kopriva define reliability as "the degree to which test findings for a collection of test takers are consistent over multiple applications of a measurement method and, as a result, are inferred to be trustworthy and repeatable for an individual test taker" (2020). Cronbach's Alpha was utilised in order to get an idea of the amount of internal consistency. It is a metric that indicates how trustworthy something is. The vast majority of the time, it is utilized as a gauge for the purpose of assessing the internal consistency or reliability.

DATA ANALYSIS

Compare Customer Expectation of Service Quality between Chain Hotels and Standalone Hotels

Table 1 Presentation of the Hotel Group Statistics

Hotel	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Presentation Chain	300	44.6550	6.50983	.46031
Standalone	300	42.8167	9.02744	.52120

• **Independent Samples Test**

		t-Test for Equality of Means									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances										95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
Presentation	Equal variances assumed	1.621	.204	2.481	498	.113	1.83833	.74085	-.38275	3.29399	
	Equal variances not assumed			2.644	494.92	.008	1.83833	.69537	-.47209	3.20451	

The average rate at a chain hotel was \$44.655 per night, and the standard deviation was \$6,509.00. The average rate of a standalone hotel was 42.816 dollars per night, with a standard deviation of 9.0274 dollars. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference between the service quality expectation of presentation of the hotel held by customers of standalone hotels and customers of chain hotels through the use of an independent samples t-test.

Since the p-value (sig.) for the Levene's test is greater than .05, it is reasonable to believe that the variances are identical. According to the results of the test, there is not a statistically significant difference between customers of standalone hotels and customers of chain hotels ($t = 2.481$, $df = 498$, $p > .05$). Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the service quality expectations of Presentation of the Hotel between Standalone Hotel Customers and Chain Hotel Customers is accepted. This means that the customers of Standalone Hotels have the same expectations as those of Chain Hotels.

Table 2 Facilities of the Hotel Group Statistics

	Hotel	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Facilities of the Hotel	Chain	200	52.3550	8.36173	.59126
	Standalone	300	49.8633	11.35228	.65542

• **Independent Samples Test**

		t-test for Equality of Means									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances										95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
Facilities of the Hotel	Equal variances assumed	10.612	.001	2.660	498	.008	2.49167	.93682	.6510	4.3322	
	Equal variances not assumed			2.823	493.051	.005	2.49167	.88271	.7573	4.2260	

The average rate for chain hotels was 52.355 dollars per night, with a standard deviation of 8.361 dollars. The average rate at a standalone hotel was 49.863, and its standard deviation was 11.352 points. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference between the service quality expectations of customers who stayed at standalone hotels and those who stayed at chain hotels by using an independent samples t-test. Due to the fact that the p-value (sig.) for the Levene's test is less than .05, it cannot be assumed that the variances are equal. According to the results of the test, there is not a statistically significant difference between customers of standalone hotels and customers of chain hotels ($t = 2.823$, $df = 493.05$, $p > .05$). Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the service quality expectations of facilities of the hotel between standalone hotel customers and chain hotel customers is accepted. This means that the hypothesis states that the standalone hotel customers have higher expectations.

• **Dimension – Hotel Front office:**

There is no significant difference between service quality perceptions related to Hotel front office of Standalone and Chain Hotels.

Table 3 Hotel Front office Group Statistics

	Hotel	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Hotel Front Office	Chain	200	39.9050	5.84244	.41312
	Standalone	300	40.0067	6.03834	.34862

• **Independent Samples Test**

		t-test for Equality of Means									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances										95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
Hotel Front office	Equal variances assumed	240.624	.000	-.187	498	.852	-.10167	.54415	-1.17077	.96744	
	Equal variances not assumed			-.188	436.138	.851	-.10167	.54056	-1.16410	.96074	

The average rate at a chain hotel was 39.905, while the standard deviation was 5.842 points. Standalone hotels had a mean of 40.006, and their standard deviation was 6.038. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the level of service that customers of standalone hotels vs. customers of chain hotels perceived to get from the front desk staff of hotels. Since the p-value (sig.) for the Levene's test is more than .05, it is reasonable to believe that the variances are identical. The results of the test indicated that there is a difference between customers of standalone hotels and customers of chain hotels that is statistically significant ($t = -.187$, $df = 498$, $p > .05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is not a substantial difference in the customers' impressions of the level of service provided by hotel front offices, regardless of whether they stayed in a standalone hotel or a chain hotel. Hotel front offices at standalone hotels are rated as having a better quality (mean = 40.006, standard deviation = 6.038) than those at chain hotels (mean = 39.905, standard deviation = 5.842).

Table 4 Mean of Individual Items under Hotel Front office

	Chain	Standalone
1. Check in & check out process	8.12	8.23
2. Bell desk service	8.18	8.18
3. Travel desk service	7.55	7.91
4. Billing accuracy	8.10	8.12
5. Airport service offered by the Hotel	7.97	7.57
Overall	7.98	8.00

Standalone hotels have been perceived to be much better than Chain Hotels when it comes to the services provided by the front office. For example, in the criterion "Check in & check out process," Standalone hotels have scored higher, receiving a score of 8.23 compared to the 8.12 scored by Chain hotels. If we compare the services provided by the front office of Chain hotels and Standalone Hotels, we find that Standalone Hotels have been perceived to be much better. Again, when it comes to "Travel desk service," Standalone hotels have scored higher than Chain hotels, with a score of 7.91 compared to a score of 7.55 for Chain hotels. Also, in the category of "Billing accuracy," Standalone hotels had a higher score, 8.12, compared to the score of 8.10 earned by Chain Hotels. In the category of "Bell desk service," both categories of hotels received scores that were similar to 8.18. The visitor has had a favorable experience with both.

The sole criterion on which Chain Hotels performed exceptionally well was "Airport service supplied by the Hotel." Chain hotels earned 7.97 out of a possible 10 points, in contrast to the 7.57 points that Standalone hotels scored. The guests have the impression that the airport services offered by Chain Hotels are superior to those offered by Standalone Hotels. If we look at the "Overall" scoring of front office services provided by Chain Hotels and Standalone hotels, we can see that Chain Hotels have performed poorly or that guests have perceived Standalone hotels as being better by giving a score of 8.00 as compared to Chain Hotels, which have received a score of 7.98.

CONCLUSION

The current study investigated the level of pleasure felt by hotel guests staying in five-star deluxe properties in the city of Delhi. It was discovered that hotel guests rank "Cleanliness, Furnishing, and Comfort of the Room" as the most important factor in experiencing satisfaction from their hotel stay. This is in comparison to other features, such as the ease of making a reservation and receiving a confirmation, the smoothness of the check-in and check-out procedures, and the convenience of the location. The Internet, the

Business Center and Conference Room Facilities, Prompt Round-the-Clock Room Service with a Variety of Items on the Menu, and the Ambience and Menu Variety in the Restaurants are some of the highlights of this hotel. According to the findings of the study, there is a disparity between the expectations (importance) of guests and the satisfaction (performance) of guests regarding the Reception and Room facilities, Room Service, and Food and Beverage Outlets. This indicates that guests were not as satisfied as they had anticipated being with the hotels. There is a perceived gap between hotel personnel and hotel customers regarding the level of satisfaction that is received from the services and goods provided by the hotel. The personnel of the hotel had a higher sense of how satisfied hotel customers were than the actual satisfaction levels of hotel guests. Online Input and Guest Comment Cards were reported to be the most popular means of gathering feedback from customers by staff. It was discovered that the Comments Form and Staff Interaction were the two most well-liked ways for guests to provide their feedback.

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