

Effect of responsiveness and problem resolution on guest experience

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Abstract: Taking into account the ever-evolving expectations about service, the objective of this study is to investigate the connection that exists between the quality of customer service and the level of satisfaction that is experienced by visitors who are staying at three-star hotels that are situated in metropolitan areas. As the hospitality industry continues to recover and adapt in the wake of the epidemic, there has been an increase in the amount of pressure placed on mid-tier hotels to provide service quality that is in accordance with both digital and personalised standards. Within the context of this particular market sector, the objective of this research is to study which factors of service quality—specifically, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and tangibility—have the greatest impact on the amount of enjoyment that is experienced by visitors. The findings of this study have practical relevance for hotel managers who are interested in enhancing the quality of their interactions with customers and increasing their competitiveness in urban hospitality marketplaces. This study draws on the outcomes of prior research by making use of several models and empirical data that are now available.

Keywords-Three-Star Hotels; Urban Hospitality; SERVQUAL; Hotel Management; Mid-Range Accommodation.

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of consumer expectations and competitive positioning has been seen to be shifting in urban hospitality industries, particularly in hotels that fall into the mid-range price bracket. It is becoming more difficult for three-star hotels to compete with upmarket facilities as well as affordable alternatives, such as Airbnb, since the tourist industry throughout the world is seeing a revival. As a consequence of this, the quality of service has evolved into a defining element in determining the level of satisfaction and retention of guests. The views of service delivery, comfort, communication, and dependability all play a role in shaping the concept of guest pleasure, which is complicated and varied. The customer service quality component is the primary emphasis of this article, which undertakes an analysis of the correlation between certain s In urban hospitality businesses, particularly in hotels that fall into the mid-range pricing category, it has been observed that the landscape of customer expectations and competitive positioning is evolving. This is particularly the case in places

like hotels. Because the tourism sector all over the world is experiencing a renaissance, it is becoming increasingly challenging for three-star hotels to compete with facilities that are more expensive as well as alternatives that are more affordable, such as Airbnb accommodation. As a direct result of this, the quality of service has developed into a defining component that plays a role in determining the level of satisfaction and retention of guests. A complex and multifaceted notion of guest satisfaction is formed by the perspectives of service delivery, comfort, communication, and reliability. Each of these factors plays a part in the formation of the concept. The quality of the customer service is the primary focus of this article, which conducts an investigation into the relationship between particular service features and the degree of satisfaction experienced by customers. The objective of this project is to provide insights that will aid urban hotels of a mid-tier level in enhancing the experiences of its guests through the implementation of innovative service delivery method service characteristics and levels of satisfaction. The purpose of this project is to provide insights that will assist mid-tier urban hotels in improving their guest experiences via smart ways of providing service.

Changing Dynamics of the Hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry has undergone a profound transformation over the past few decades, evolving from a service sector primarily focused on providing accommodation and food to one that emphasizes holistic and memorable guest experiences. This shift has been largely driven by globalization, technological advancement, and changing consumer expectations. Today's guests are more informed, connected, and discerning, with access to a vast array of options and real-time information through digital platforms. As a result, the traditional determinants of success—such as location, pricing, and physical infrastructure—are no longer sufficient to sustain competitive advantage. In the contemporary hospitality landscape, experiential value has become a central focus. Guests now seek personalized, seamless, and emotionally engaging experiences that go beyond functional service delivery. The integration of digital technologies, including online booking platforms, mobile applications, and artificial intelligence, has further reshaped service expectations by promoting immediacy and convenience. Moreover, the proliferation of online review platforms and social media has created a transparent environment where guest experiences are publicly shared and scrutinized. Positive reviews can significantly enhance a hotel's reputation, while negative feedback can quickly damage brand image. Consequently, hospitality organizations are compelled to adopt a guest-centric approach, prioritizing service excellence, responsiveness, and proactive

engagement. This transformation has also increased the importance of intangible service elements, particularly interpersonal interactions between staff and guests. In this context, responsiveness and problem resolution have emerged as critical components of service quality that directly influence guest satisfaction and organizational success.

Concept of Guest Experience

Guest experience is a multidimensional construct that encompasses the totality of a customer's interactions with a hospitality service provider throughout the service journey. It begins at the pre-arrival stage, including online search and booking, continues through the actual stay experience, and extends to post-departure engagement such as feedback and reviews. This holistic perspective highlights that guest experience is not limited to a single moment but is shaped by a series of touchpoints that collectively influence perception. From an academic perspective, guest experience includes emotional, cognitive, and sensory responses to service encounters. Emotional responses—such as comfort, satisfaction, or frustration—play a particularly significant role in shaping overall evaluations. Cognitive aspects involve the guest's assessment of service efficiency, reliability, and value for money, while sensory experiences relate to physical ambiance, cleanliness, and environmental factors. A positive guest experience contributes significantly to customer loyalty, repeat patronage, and brand advocacy. Satisfied guests are more likely to recommend the service to others, thereby generating positive word-of-mouth and enhancing the organization's market position. Conversely, negative experiences can lead to complaints, unfavorable reviews, and loss of future business. Importantly, research suggests that guests tend to remember service failures more vividly than routine satisfactory experiences, making it crucial for organizations to manage both service delivery and recovery effectively. Therefore, understanding the determinants of guest experience—particularly service quality dimensions such as responsiveness and problem resolution—is essential for designing strategies that enhance customer satisfaction and long-term engagement.

Responsiveness in Service Delivery

Responsiveness is widely recognized as a fundamental dimension of service quality, reflecting the readiness and willingness of employees to provide prompt assistance to guests. It is closely associated with speed, attentiveness, and the ability to anticipate and address customer needs in a timely manner. In the hospitality industry, responsiveness manifests in various forms,

including quick check-in and check-out processes, immediate handling of guest requests, and timely communication. In today's fast-paced environment, guests expect near-instantaneous responses, influenced by their experiences with digital services such as e-commerce and on-demand platforms. As a result, delays in service delivery can significantly impact guest perceptions, leading to dissatisfaction and negative evaluations. Even minor delays, if perceived as neglect or inefficiency, can undermine the overall experience. On the other hand, high levels of responsiveness create a sense of attentiveness and care, enhancing the guest's emotional connection with the service provider. When staff respond promptly and effectively, guests feel valued and respected, which positively influences their perception of service quality. Furthermore, responsiveness is often linked to proactive service behavior, where employees anticipate guest needs before they are explicitly expressed. From an operational perspective, achieving high responsiveness requires efficient communication systems, adequate staffing, and well-defined service protocols. It also depends on employee empowerment, allowing frontline staff to make quick decisions without unnecessary bureaucratic delays. Thus, responsiveness is not only a behavioral attribute but also an outcome of organizational culture and management practices.

Importance of Problem Resolution

Problem resolution, often referred to as service recovery, is a critical aspect of hospitality management that addresses guest complaints, service failures, and unexpected disruptions. Given the intangible and variable nature of services, errors are inevitable; however, the way these errors are managed determines their impact on guest experience. Effective problem resolution involves a systematic approach that includes identifying the issue, acknowledging the guest's concern, taking corrective action, and ensuring follow-up. A key component of problem resolution is empathy, which requires staff to understand and validate the guest's feelings. Guests are more likely to respond positively when they perceive that their concerns are taken seriously and handled with genuine care. Communication also plays a vital role, as clear and transparent interaction helps manage expectations and build trust. Additionally, accountability—where the organization takes responsibility for the issue—is essential for restoring confidence. The concept of the “service recovery paradox” suggests that guests who experience a problem that is resolved effectively may become more loyal than those who did not encounter any issues at all. This highlights the potential of problem resolution as a strategic tool for enhancing customer satisfaction. However, ineffective handling of complaints can

have the opposite effect, exacerbating dissatisfaction and leading to negative word-of-mouth. Therefore, hospitality organizations must develop robust service recovery systems, including staff training, standardized procedures, and feedback mechanisms. By doing so, they can not only mitigate the impact of service failures but also turn challenging situations into opportunities for strengthening customer relationships.

Interrelationship Between Responsiveness and Problem Resolution

Responsiveness and problem resolution are inherently interconnected dimensions of service quality that collectively shape guest experience. While responsiveness focuses on the speed and willingness to address guest needs, problem resolution emphasizes the effectiveness and quality of solutions provided. Together, they form a comprehensive framework for managing both routine service interactions and unexpected service failures. The relationship between these two elements is particularly evident in situations involving complaints or service disruptions. Prompt acknowledgment of a problem is the first step toward effective resolution. If a guest's concern is ignored or delayed, the issue may escalate, leading to increased dissatisfaction and frustration. Conversely, timely response creates a sense of reassurance, even before the problem is fully resolved. Moreover, the effectiveness of problem resolution is often influenced by the level of responsiveness. A quick but inadequate solution may fail to satisfy the guest, while a well-executed solution delivered promptly can significantly enhance the experience. This highlights the need for a balanced approach that combines speed with quality. From a managerial perspective, integrating responsiveness and problem resolution requires coordinated efforts across different levels of the organization. Frontline staff must be trained to respond quickly and empathetically, while management must ensure that systems and processes support efficient problem-solving. The use of technology, such as real-time feedback systems and customer relationship management tools, can further enhance coordination and efficiency. Ultimately, the synergy between responsiveness and problem resolution determines the overall effectiveness of service delivery. Their combined impact influences guest perceptions of reliability, professionalism, and trustworthiness, making them essential components of a successful hospitality strategy.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative survey-based strategy was utilised for the goal of gathering information from individuals who stayed at three-star hotels in five major metropolitan centers located in

different regions (including New York, London, Mumbai, Seoul, and São Paulo) between the months of January and June. The objective of this technique was to accomplish the gathering of information. The use of a technique known as stratified random sampling was employed in order to ensure equitable representation across all demographic categories and geographic regions. The SERVQUAL components were incorporated into a structured questionnaire that was used for conducting the research. A Likert scale with five points was utilised to collect responses, and the scale was then used to quantify general satisfaction as well as judgements regarding the quality of the service. The data were examined using multiple linear regression in order to determine the prediction value of each service quality metric. This was done in order to determine the value of the prediction.

Table 1: Distribution of Survey Respondents by Traveler Type

Sample Profile	Frequency (n=400)	Percentage (%)
Business Travelers	150	37.5
Leisure Tourists	190	47.5
Others (e.g., medical)	60	15.0

Discussion

The findings lend credence to the idea that the quality of customer service has a significant influence on the level of satisfaction that guests having a stay in three-star urban hotels feel, particularly with regard to factors that are associated with trust and efficiency. This shows that guests of urban hotels place a larger value on experiences that are swift, clear, and certain than they do on experiences that are personalised or beautiful. On the other hand, qualities such as the décor, the uniforms, or the personal attention are associated with a lower level of influence. There is a hypothesis that has the potential to be deemed reasonable, and that is the time-sensitive character of urban transportation. When it comes to business travellers and guests who are only staying for shorter periods of time, it is extremely usual for them to place a higher premium on the simplicity of logistics rather than the immersion service. As a result of this, they are differentiated from guests who are staying in resort or country hotels, which place a higher emphasis on the significance of emotional engagement and surroundings. Additionally, the context of digitally mediated service, which includes self-check-in kiosks, app-based

requests, and real-time feedback, has re-calibrated guest expectations toward automation and immediacy, hence diminishing the perceived value of conventional service forms. This is because the environment has re-calibrated guest expectations toward automation and immediacy.

Limitations and Recommendations

Limitations: It is possible that this research will not be able to capture changes in service culture that are distinctive to different regions because it only includes five sites around the world. This research has a limited geographical reach because it only covers five locations. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design does not allow for the measurement of long-term changes in customer happiness or loyalty. This is a limitation of the design. It is also possible that response bias will be introduced as a result of the inclusion of self-reported levels of satisfaction. Despite the fact that efforts were made to ensure that a diverse sample was collected, it is recommended that future studies include objective behavioural data (such as booking frequency and complaint logs). This is because the sample was not representative of the population.

Recommendations: The findings suggest that the management of the hotel should provide training and resources in order to enhance the responsiveness and dependability of the establishment. The implementation of staff scheduling systems, automatic response technology, and transparent service norms are all potential means by which these enhancements could be implemented. It is possible that putting more of an emphasis on these characteristics would result in rapid rises in the number of repeat customers as well as ratings of customer satisfaction. It is suggested that additional research be carried out in order to understand the ways in which hybrid service models, which incorporate both digital and human elements, influence the perspectives of guests. Additionally, it is proposed that the SERVQUAL model be re-examined in relation to its applicability in high-tech service contexts.

Results and Analysis

According to the findings of the regression analysis, it was demonstrated that the elements of responsiveness ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$), reliability ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$), and assurance ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$) played a major role in facilitating the degree of enjoyment that guests experienced. In spite of the fact that there was a positive association between empathy and tangibility, there

was no statistically significant relationship between the two. It appears from the findings of this research that the characteristics that contribute to customer satisfaction in urban three-star hotels are not aesthetic aspects or even emotional connection; rather, it is operational efficiency and staff professionalism that are the factors that contribute to customer pleasure. Despite the fact that this is in line with previous studies, it highlights the importance of placing an even greater emphasis on the quality of functional service. It is possible that concerns regarding safety in the aftermath of the event have contributed to this.

pandemic as well as the preferences of guests for service that is smooth and predictable.

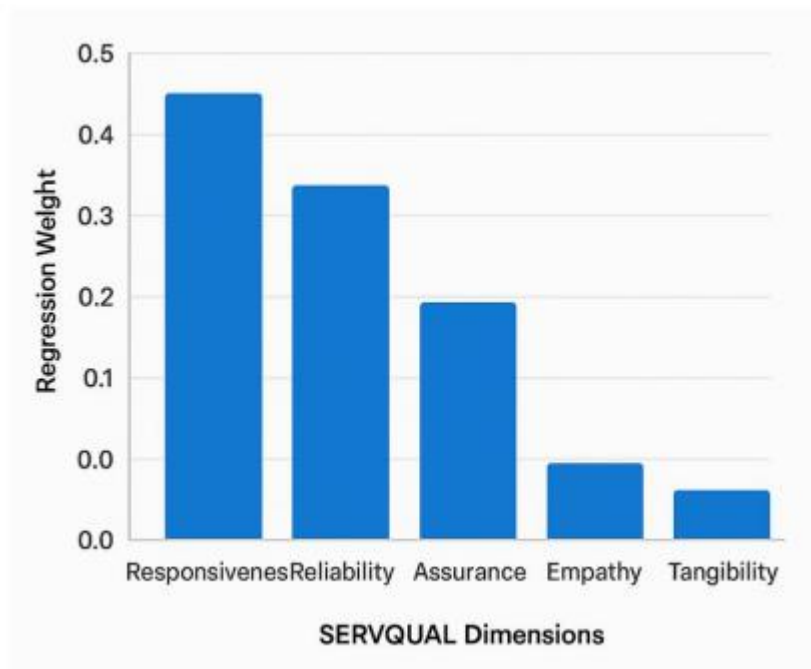


Figure 1: Regression weights of SERVQUAL dimensions on Guest Satisfaction

Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the extent to which each SERVQUAL feature contributes to the overall satisfaction of guests staying in urban three-star hotels. These guests are surveyed about their overall pleasure with the hotel. When it comes to the positive effects, it appears that responsiveness has the most significant impact, followed by reliability and certainty. As evidenced by the fact that empathy and tangibility have less significant and less effective impacts, guests place a higher value on service that is dependable and efficient than they do on traits that are emotional or physical.

CONCLUSION

In metropolitan hotels with three stars, the quality of customer service continues to be an essential component in determining the amount of happiness that guests experience. This is especially true in the post-pandemic context, which is driven by efficiency. The outcomes of this research indicate that the elements that have the most impact on the level of pleasure experienced by customers are responsiveness, reliability, and assurance. Alternately, typical service aesthetics and customisation have a tendency to play a secondary part in the overall experience. These insights could be beneficial to mid-range hotels that are striving to preserve their competitive edge in rapidly evolving urban hospitality marketplaces. These hotels could benefit from implementing these insights into their service approach.

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