

Measuring service quality in the hotel Industry: An Assessment of the SERVQUAL Model

**Tushar Ashok Tingote
(PhD Scholar)**

Department of Tourism Administration.

**Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad,
Maharashtra, India.**

Abstract : Service quality is found to be one the most vital component of successful business in the hotel industry through the globe. The Contemporary and future trend of complete service quality management in the hotel industry ensures the achievement of any hotel in comparison with the competitive advantage of the hotel company. The concept and the theoretical model of service quality are crucial if one wish to understand the origin of service quality and potential gaps in the service quality. The aim of this paper is to show the importance of the service quality in the hotel industry through the desk research through a secondary data which consists of reviewing of various literatures on service quality and to elaborate the SERVQUAL model and how this can be applied in the hotels. With this the also paper describes the most common criteria for measuring service quality, namely the model SERVQUAL. Thus, the findings of the study can be used as a platform for hotel managers, hotel owners and staff to improve the crucial quality attributes and enhance service quality which will ultimately lead to the business performance.

Key words: Quality, Service, Hotel industry, SERVQUAL.

Introduction

India is one of the most attractive tourist destination for the tourist globally because of its ultimate and incredible rich heritage. Maharashtra is one amongst the third largest state in the country of India both in area and population. The state of Maharashtra too abounds a number of the tourist attractions ranging from the ancient caves to the famous and pristine beaches. Hence there is huge tourist traffic of both national and international in this state across the year.

The enlargement of tourism has influenced the expansion of hotel industry. Hotel industry is becoming more and more challenging in the view to the quality of service of the hotels. (Gazija, 2012). To cater the needs of the Tourist, Hospitality Industry is always ready on their toes. Hotels play the role of providing

guests (Tourist) a home away from home. A hotel refers to a commercial establishment providing lodging and meals on temporary basis to its customers. Hence, the hotel organization has to endorse the training of its workforce to broaden their knowledge and skills, re-orient their culture and values, and encourage individuals to become ideal champions. This can only be possible with proper measurements of the service quality through the guest satisfaction.

The objective of the research is to study the service quality of hotel industry using SERVQUAL scale by measuring five basic dimensions i.e., Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. In order to examine the dimensionality of SERVQUAL instrument in hotel industry qualitative analysis is applied for the study. SERVQUAL instrument has been applied in various service related industries, including tourism and hospitality. Basically SERVQUAL scale was used to assess service quality perceptions from the point of domestic and international tourists. In most of the researches the SERVQUAL model was modified to suit the features of a specific service (Markovi ć and Raspor 2010)

Review of literature:

Particularly the hospitality industry displays individual factors that are not compared in any manufacturing industry. Many hospitality organizations are profit-earning such as hotels, restaurants, and retail stores etc (Yang 2004). The standards of the service delivery in the hospitality sector play a vital role in the process of service quality (Wyllie, 2000), The concept of Service quality is found to be one of the key elements for operational efficiency and business performance. Achieving Guest loyalty through improved service quality has become most important for service sector to survive in this increasingly competitive business world (Mattoo et al., 2012).

SERVQUAL model was introduced by a team of academic researchers in 1988, its development help to understand the concept of service quality in a deep manner (Saleh and Ryan, 1991). The author has related SERVQUAL mode to investigate how well the service delivered matches guest expectations. Providing a proper quality service means meeting the requirements of the guest expectations on a consistent basis. SERVQUAL is a fundamental model that is still used in the research to determine service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985). According to Parasuraman *et al.* (1988), service quality can be defined as an overall judgment similar to attitude towards the service and generally accepted as an antecedent of overall customer satisfaction (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996). Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) have defined service quality as the ability of the organization to meet or exceed customer expectations. It is the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1990). BAUM 2002 stated that skills in services are a core section of a hotel industry, more than in any business,

the employees in the hospitality industry must have developed skills in all essential as per the standard service. SERVQUAL is one of the most recognized gap assessment tool to access the service quality in any service industry which specially deals with the guest satisfaction. The model is based on the guest expectations (before visit to the hotel) and perceptions (post visit experience of a service) stated by Sharma 2014. Parasuraman et al (1988) founded the guest's recognized quality by comparing expectations to performance and evaluate the quality of the service in five major dimensions. Likewise Gržinić (2007), stated that the SERVQUAL model is used to find out the deviations between the guest expectation and perceived service quality of the guest as a reason to measure the bridge gaps.

Problem area:

The hospitality industry represents an important profession within the global agendas and modern development trends (Pavia et al., 2014). Hospitality industry, have witnessed in increasing competition for high service quality Hotels, as being a service industry it is very important to provide a quality service to the guest. Service quality has a strong positive relationship with guest satisfaction and high service quality has an impact on hotel's productivity like improving profitability, marketing, and probability of purchase (Brady & Cronin, 2001).

Service delivery occurs during there is an encounter between staff and guest, attitudes and behaviors of the contact staff can influence guests' perceptions of service quality (Schneider and Bowen, 1985). Therefore periodic evaluation of service quality is necessary. After doing extensive review of literature, researcher identified that SERVQUAL is the most common technique to measure service quality. Therefore the present research work is studying the SERVQUAL method in detail. Hotel guests determine the perceived value of service based on their experience with the service delivered hence for studying the SERVQUAL method, research papers which have applied the method earlier were studied.

Objectives:

- To Study the SERVQUAL method.
- To study the use of SERVQUAL in the Hotel industry.

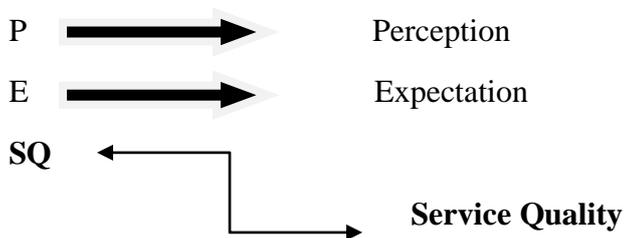
Methodology:

SERVQUAL model consists of five major dimensions i.e. reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. These SERVQUAL dimensions help to identify the actual gap which is the difference between what guest expectation of a service and what they actually receive.

For each tangibles of the SERQUAL model provides a score for the guest expectation (E) likewise a score for the guest's perception (P) of the hotel performances. Guest expectations are basically the wants and requirements which they carry in their mind before the consuming a service, what the guest actually want should be identified by the hotels and accordingly these are considered as a service aspect or standards (Miller, 1977)

In the SERVQUAL method the differences between the expectations of the guest that is the pre service experience and the perception about the service that is the post experience is the basic criteria to identifying the gap. The service quality of hotel is said to be high if the perceived quality is greater to the expected quality of the service (Parasuraman, 1985). According to Parasuraman, the difference between the two scores is service quality (SQ).

- **P- E = SQ (P substrate from E)**



As given bellow, when the guest perception is greater than the guest expectation the service quality is high, which means that the particular hotel has a good service quality.

$$P > E = SQ \uparrow$$

As given bellow, when the guest expectation is greater than the guest perception the service quality is low/down, which means the particular hotel has a poor service quality.

$$P < E = SQ \downarrow$$

Conclusion and Suggestions

Hospitality & Tourism Industry faces a great mismatch of business income and expenditure as the economy needs more 'quality' in the service. In fact, the majority of the budget hotels remain almost disconnected with the requirements of the workplace. Gap factor may prove productive as well as challenging depending upon the proper implementation of the action plan. Studies have proved that the gaps can only be reduce by indentifying them, and trying to put up them with a good service quality by the management. SERVQUAL is the mechanism model to identify the gap according to the studies.

Existing SERVQUAL instrument/ model of service quality represents the right way of identifying inconsistency between perception a Hotel has and perception guest have when the quality of service process is concerned. SERVQUAL assisted and is very helpful for the hotel to identify reasons of poor service quality and take suitable measures for the improvement of the same. The study suggested that SERVQUAL model is a suitable instrument for measuring the service quality in the hotels. SERVQUAL has been designed as a generic measure that could be applicable across a broad range of services. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, in various researches had identified and elaborated SERVQUAL as a gap model during the period between 1985 and 1994, focusing measures "gaps" between quality service expectations between the service process and perception of service quality after the service process. It is the best Service mechanism for the owners and managers of the hotels to find and analyze information about the specific requirements, and perceptions of their guest about the hotel services.

Continuous examination of guest's perceptions and expectations is needed to know what actually they want, and that subsequent measures be employed addressing the guest's desired needs and demands which ultimately improves the service quality.

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