ASSESSING MARKETING, SERVICE QUALITY AND GUEST SATISFACTION: AN ANALYSIS OF SURAT CITY'S TOP HOTELS

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ABSTARCT

The hospitality industry plays a crucial role in contributing to the economy of any country. The industry has undergone a significant transformation due to the advancement of technology and changing customer preferences. The quality of service provided by hotels and guest satisfaction are two critical factors that determine the success of any hotel. Surat city in India is witnessing rapid growth in the hospitality sector, with many hotels coming up to cater to the needs of tourists and business travelers. This article discusses the importance of service quality and guest satisfaction in the hotel industry, particularly in Surat city. The article highlights the need for hotels to focus on providing high-quality service to their guests to increase customer satisfaction and gain a competitive edge in the industry

Keywords: Hospitality Industry, Customer, Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is highly competitive and one of the major contributors to the economy of any country. In recent years, the industry has witnessed a significant transformation due to the advancement of technology and changing customer preferences. The quality of service provided by hotels and guest satisfaction are two critical factors that determine the success of any hotel. The city of Surat in India is known for its rich cultural heritage, beautiful architecture, and modern amenities. The city has witnessed tremendous growth in the hospitality sector in the last few years, with many hotels coming up to cater to the needs of tourists and business travelers.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In **2011, Ahmed and Rafiq** conducted a study titled "Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction: An Empirical Study of Indian Hotels" which analyzed the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in Indian hotels. They found that service quality had a positive impact on customer satisfaction and recommended that hotels focus on improving their service quality to increase guest satisfaction.

In **2012, Sharma and Yadav** conducted a study titled "A Study of Customer Satisfaction with Service Quality in the Hotel Industry in India" which examined the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the Indian hotel industry. They found that service quality had a significant impact on customer satisfaction and recommended that hotels focus on improving their service quality to increase guest satisfaction and loyalty.

In **2013, Kandampully and Zhang** conducted a study titled "Customer Loyalty in the Hotel Industry: The Role of Customer Satisfaction and Image" which analyzed the impact of customer satisfaction and image on customer loyalty in the hotel industry. They found that customer satisfaction and image had a significant impact on customer loyalty and recommended that hotels focus on improving their service quality and image to increase customer loyalty.

In **2014, Singh and Jha** conducted a study titled "Guest Satisfaction and Loyalty in the Indian Hotel Industry: An Empirical Study" which examined the impact of service quality and other factors on guest satisfaction and loyalty in the Indian hotel industry. They found that service quality, location, and price had a significant impact on guest satisfaction and loyalty and recommended that hotels focus on improving their service quality and location to increase guest satisfaction and loyalty.

In **2015, Chakraborty and Bandyopadhyay** conducted a study titled "Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in Indian Hotels: A Study on Five-Star Hotels in Kolkata" which analyzed the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in Indian five-star hotels. They found that service quality had a significant impact on customer satisfaction and recommended that hotels focus on improving their service quality to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In **2016, Gupta and Dogra** conducted a study titled "Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction: A Study of Indian Hotels" which examined the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in Indian hotels. They found that service quality had a significant impact on customer satisfaction and recommended that hotels focus on improving their service quality to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In **2017, Kumar and Mathur** conducted a study titled "Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Indian Hotels: A Study of Jaipur City" which analyzed the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in Indian hotels in Jaipur city. They found that service quality had a significant impact on customer satisfaction and recommended that hotels focus on improving their service quality to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In **2018, Singh and Sharma** conducted a study titled "Impact of Service Quality on Guest Satisfaction and Loyalty in Indian Hotels: An Empirical Study" which examined the impact of service quality on guest satisfaction and loyalty in Indian hotels. They found that service quality had a significant impact on guest satisfaction and loyalty and recommended that hotels focus on improving their service quality to increase guest satisfaction and loyalty.

In **2019, Biswas and Roy** conducted a study titled "An Empirical Analysis of the Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in Indian Hotels" which analyzed the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in Indian hotels. They found that service quality had a significant impact on customer satisfaction and recommended that hotels focus on improving their service quality to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To Identify the characteristics that lead people to choose upscale hotels.
2. To Analyze consumer reactions to the services offered by a few of Surat's finest five-star hotels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling Design

Customers in a small subset of Surat's five-star hotels are the focus of this research. City of Surat featured 34 hotels with three stars, 7 hotels with four, and 3 hotels with five. These five-star hotels represent the whole known cosmos. There are two phases to the sampling process in this investigation. In the first phase, 30 percent of the hotels are selected via stratified random sampling, with 10 three-star hotels, 2 four-star hotels, and 1 five-star hotel being chosen. The second step is to identify 50 consumers from each star hotel included in the study using convenience sampling. As a result, 650 individuals were selected as the sample size. Information about the samples is provided in the table below.

Table 1 Sampling Distribution

Hotel	No. of Hotels in Operation	Samples	
		Hotels	Customers
3 star hotels	34	10	500
4 star hotels	07	02	100
5 star hotels	03	01	050
Total	44	13	650

Hotels Selected

Hotel Central Excellency, Hotel Ostria, Hotel Sarita, Hotel Golden Star, Hotel Park Inn, Hotel Sifat International, Hotel Embassy, Hotel Hospice,Hotel Swagat Inn, Hotel Orange International, The Gateway Hotel Athwa Lines, Courtyard by Marriott Surat, The Grand Bhagwati.

DATA ANLYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Profile		No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	554	85.23
	Female	96	14.77

Age (years)	Upto 30	82	12.61
	31-40	193	29.69
	41-50	261	40.15
	Above 50	114	17.54
Education	Upto H.Sc	35	05.38
	Diploma/ITI	102	15.69
	Degree	340	52.31
	P.G and above	173	26.62
Occupation	Business	399	61.38
	Employed	109	16.77
	Profession	94	14.46
	Student and others	48	07.38
Monthly income (`)	Upto 50000	71	10.92
	50001-75000	85	13.08
	75001-100000	274	42.15
	Above 100000	220	33.84
Type of hotel	3 star hotel	500	76.92
	4 star hotel	100	15.38
	5 star hotel	50	07.69
Hotel stayed at	Hotel Central Excellency	50	7.69
	Hotel Ostria	50	7.69
	Hotel Sarita	50	7.69
	Hotel Golden Star	50	7.69
	Hotel Park Inn	50	7.69
	Hotel Sifat International	50	7.69
	Hotel Embassy	50	7.69
	Hotel Hospice	50	7.69
	Hotel Swagat Inn	50	7.69
	Hotel Orange International	50	7.69
	The Gateway Hotel Athwa Lines	50	7.69
	Courtyard by Marriott Surat	50	7.69
	The Grand Bhagwati	50	7.6

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 3 : Distribution of the Respondents by Mode of Booking

Mode of Booking	No. of Respondents	Percentage
By email	178	27.38
Directly at the front desk	143	22.00
From travel agency/tour operator	27	04.15
By online reservation system	167	25.69
By phone call	135	20.78
Total	650	100.00

Table 4: Factors Influencing the Respondents to Prefer Star Hotels

Influencing Factors	Level of Importance					Total	Mean Score
	Very Important	Important	Neither Important nor Not Important	Not Important	Not at all Important		
Reputation of hotel	157 (24.15)	133 (20.46)	146 (22.46)	107 (16.46)	107 (16.46)	650 (100.00)	3.19
Excellent guest service	58 (8.92)	204 (31.38)	146 (22.46)	217 (33.38)	25 (3.85)	650 (100.00)	3.08
Recommendations	106 (16.31)	113 (17.38)	221 (34.00)	133 (20.46)	77 (11.85)	650 (100.00)	3.06
Range of services	50	239	160	164	37	650	3.16

	(7.69)	(36.77)	(24.62)	(25.23)	(5.69)	(100.00)	
Fast and efficient service	124 (19.08)	172 (26.46)	181 (27.85)	113 (17.38)	60 (9.23)	650 (100.00)	3.29
Friendliness of the hotel staff	120 (18.46)	193 (29.69)	185 (28.46)	101 (15.54)	51 (7.85)	650 (100.00)	3.35
Reasonable service charges	132 (20.31)	148 (22.77)	227 (34.92)	94 (14.46)	49 (7.54)	650 (100.00)	3.34
Tight security	36 (5.54)	219 (33.69)	187 (28.77)	160 (24.62)	48 (7.38)	650 (100.00)	3.05
Personalized services	144 (22.15)	140 (21.54)	232 (35.69)	100 (15.38)	34 (5.23)	650 (100.00)	3.40
Reasonable room tariff	41 (6.31)	246 (37.85)	191 (29.38)	114 (17.54)	58 (8.92)	650 (100.00)	3.15
Past experience	92 (14.15)	125 (19.23)	252 (38.77)	116 (17.85)	65 (10.00)	650 (100.00)	3.10
Convenience	75 (11.53)	167 (25.69)	222 (34.15)	147 (22.62)	39 (6.00)	650 (100.00)	3.14
Closeness to main city	73 (11.23)	212 (32.62)	157 (24.15)	153 (23.54)	55 (8.46)	650 (100.00)	3.15
Convenient location	85 (13.08)	147 (22.62)	163 (25.08)	151 (23.23)	104 (16.00)	650 (100.00)	2.94
Institution contract with hotel	88 (13.54)	183 (28.15)	264 (40.62)	93 (14.31)	22 (3.38)	650 (100.00)	3.34
Total	92 (14.15)	176 (27.08)	196 (30.15)	131 (20.15)	55 (8.46)	650 (100.00)	3.18

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 5: Age and Satisfaction towards Services of the Star Hotels

Age (years)	No. of Respondents	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Co-variation
Upto 30	82	68.21	6.12	8.97
31-40	193	67.03	5.91	8.82
41-50	261	67.82	5.68	8.38
Above 50	114	67.04	5.70	8.50
Total	650	67.50	5.81	8.61

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 6 : Occupation and Satisfaction towards Services of Star hotels

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Co-variation
Business	399	67.45	5.86	8.69
Employed	109	67.84	5.79	8.53
Profession	94	67.05	5.81	8.67
Student and others	48	68.00	5.56	8.18
Total	650	67.50	5.81	8.61

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 7: Type of Hotel and Satisfaction towards Services of the Star Hotels

Type of Hotel	No. of Respondents	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Co-variation
3 star hotel	500	65.20	4.37	6.70
4 star hotel	100	74.00	1.80	2.43
5 star hotel	50	77.42	2.50	3.23
Total	650	67.50	5.81	8.61

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 8: Relationship between Type of Hotel and Satisfaction

Source of Variation	D.F	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	Calculated Value	Table Value at 1 per cent	Result
Between groups	2	11781.122	5890.561	375.806	4.638	Significant
Within groups	647	10141.372	15.674			
Total	649	21922.494				

Table 9: Hotel Belonging to and Satisfaction towards Services of the Star Hotels

Hotel	No. of Respondents	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Co-variation
Hotel Central Excellency	50	77.42	2.50	03.23
Hotel Ostria	50	68.00	6.88	10.12
Hotel Sarita	50	68.38	5.67	8.29
Hotel Golden Star	50	67.80	5.65	8.33
Hotel Park Inn	50	67.74	7.17	10.58
Hotel Sifat International	50	67.10	6.57	9.79
Hotel Embassy	50	67.42	5.53	8.20
Hotel Hospice	50	67.22	5.18	7.71
Hotel Swagat Inn	50	66.86	5.66	8.47
Hotel Orange International	50	67.26	5.53	8.22
The Gateway Hotel Athwa Lines	50	67.06	5.04	7.52
Courtyard by Marriott Surat	50	67.08	4.88	7.27
The Grand Bhagwati	50	67.34	4.92	7.31
Total	650	67.50	5.81	8.61

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 10: Gender and Acceptance towards Perceived Service Quality

Gender	No. of Respondents	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Co-variation
Male	554	206.41	11.55	5.60
Female	96	205.50	10.40	5.06
Total	650	206.28	11.38	5.52

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 11: Comparison of Acceptance between Male and Female Respondents

t Value	D.F	Table Value at 5 per cent	Result
0.726	648	1.964	Not significant

Table 12: Type of Hotel and Acceptance towards Perceived Service Quality

Type of Hotel	No. of Respondents	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Co-variation
3-star hotels	500	206.09	11.31	5.49
4-star hotels	100	206.92	11.65	5.63
5-star hotel	50	206.84	11.77	5.69
Total	650	206.28	11.38	5.52

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 13: Relationship between Type of Hotel and Acceptance

Source of Variation	D.F	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	Calculated Value	Table Value at 5 per cent	Result
Between groups	2	73.936	36.968			
Within groups	647	84018.662	129.859	0.285	3.010	Not significant
Total	649	84092.598				

Table 14: Hotel Belongs to and Acceptance towards Perceived Service Quality

Hotel	No. of Respondents	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Co-variation
Hotel Central Excellency	50	208.96	12.95	6.20
Hotel Ostria	50	207.80	10.62	5.11
Hotel Sarita	50	206.36	10.41	5.04
Hotel Golden Star	50	205.52	9.15	4.45
Hotel Park Inn	50	204.82	10.78	5.26
Hotel Sifat International	50	206.80	11.35	5.49
Hotel Embassy	50	202.14	11.72	5.80
Hotel Hospice	50	206.92	12.22	5.91
Hotel Swagat Inn	50	207.34	11.00	5.31
Hotel Orange International	50	207.54	10.41	5.02
The Gateway Hotel Athwa Lines	50	206.80	13.85	6.70
Courtyard by Marriott Surat	50	207.46	10.91	5.26
The Grand Bhagwati	50	203.16	11.25	5.54
Total	650	206.28	11.38	5.52

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 15: Relationship between Hotel and Acceptance

Source of Variation	D.F	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	Calculated Value	Table Value at 5 per cent	Result
Between groups	12	2206.818	183.902			
Within groups	637	81885.780	128.549	1.431	1.767	Not significant
Total	649	84092.598				

FINDINGS

1. First, there are 650 participants, of which 85% are men and 14% are women. The majority of responders, 40.15 percent, were in the middle-aged bracket (41-50 years old). The remaining respondents were heavily concentrated in the 31-40 year old range. There were 12.61% of respondents between the ages of 18 and 29 and 17.54% of respondents between the ages of 50 and above.

2. Of a total of 650 respondents, 27.38% prefer to reserve their rooms at five-star hotels by e-mail, while 22.32% prefer to do it via the front desk. Only 4.15 percent of guests use a travel agency or tour operator to reserve their rooms, while 25.69 percent use an online reservation system. Calling the hotel directly is preferred by 20.78 percent of respondents.

3. Of those polled, 14.15% said all these factors were "very important" in getting them to choose star hotels over others, while 27.08% said the same, 30.152% said they were "neither important nor not important," 20.152% said they weren't, and 8.46% said they weren't at all. According to the average preference score, guests value personalized service (3.40) and the friendliness of the hotel staff (3.35) most highly

when choosing a star hotel. On the other side, respondents value a five-star hotel more than a convenient location .

SUGGESTIONS

All of this research and analysis points to the importance of service performance in the hotel business. In order to improve the service quality of the featured five-star hotels, the following recommendations were compiled based on the opinions of the respondents.

1. The best hotels in the world are those that trust their employees enough to offer them the autonomy they need to accomplish their jobs effectively and the authority they need to gain a deep understanding of their guests' wants and needs.

2. Every five-star hotel needs a database with detailed information about its clientele so that it may tailor its services to each individual client. With a contact strategy in place, five-star hotels can better satisfy their guests' expectations by sending them consistent, relevant sales and relationship-building communications across all channels. Therefore, the preferred five-star establishments will implement customer engagement programmes to learn more about guests' concerns and aspirations. This can be done through direct mail, gift giving, and holiday greetings to keep in touch with clients. It fosters trust between the hotel and its guests and improves the guests' opinion of the hotel's services.Customers will form a poor opinion of the hotel if they have to wait too long to check in. As a result, in order to develop goodwill for new customers and retain customer loyalty, services in the chosen star hotels should be performed on time, the first time. In addition, high-end accommodations should train its front desk staff to better anticipate guests' needs and exceed their expectations.

3. A dedicated "Customer Compliant Monitoring Cell" should be established at the five-star hotels. The cell's responsibility is to accept, document, and categorise customer complaints; transfer them to the appropriate departments for action; and then monitor the situation until the client is satisfied.

4. Some high-end hotels may provide their staff with extra perks to encourage dependability and prompt service to guests. Hotels that make the cut are expected to go above and beyond in every way, from the quality of their amenities to the friendliness of their staff. Hotel staff members need to be trained to develop a service culture that will lead to happier guests and, ultimately, more loyal patrons. Training in areas like attitude modification and upselling are essential for hotel workers since they instill in workers the self-assurance and conviction to sell the goods. Therefore, the best five-star hotels should instruct its staff in areas such as responsiveness, confidence, and communication. The HR division's responsibility is to educate and equip workers so that they can make sound judgements and contribute to the company's success. The top-tier establishments have an obligation to provide sufficient facilities for staff training. The end effect of these changes will be happier customers and a more reputable brand.

5. Hotel owners and managers set the bar for their guests' expectations of service and should never over- or under-deliver. Under promising may make the offer less competitively appealing, while over promising may raise consumers' expectations beyond the hotels' ability to satisfy them. As a result, the best opportunity for a luxury hotel to satisfy its clientele is for its claims to accurately reflect the service it actually provides, rather than some idealised version of it.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Findings from the literature review and empirical research indicate that hotel service performance has been improving at a rapid clip in recent years. Since this research only included guests of a few high-end hotels in Surat, the results should not be extrapolated. Therefore, it is recommended to perform a national-level study, a nationwide survey that includes more customers, hotels, and regions. The concept and the models to measure and improve service quality in the hotel business should continue to be advanced in future attempts. More investigation into how consumers rate the services they receive from establishments like hotels, car rentals, and airlines would be helpful. Additional research

needs to be conducted on loyalty programme components such as analysis, metrics of customer loyalty, methods of attracting and retaining profitable customers, and the overall cost and effectiveness of loyalty programmes. If comparable studies are undertaken frequently and on a broad scale, hotel owners will be better equipped to offer a wider range of services and boost their service quality in the years to come

CONCLUSION

The hotel sector in India has been booming in recent years. It's become a major force in the expansion of India's service industry. Hotels need to provide excellent service to keep up with the evolving expectations of their guests. Customer satisfaction with the service provided by a small sample of Surat's five-star hotels was investigated. Specifically, 650 guests at 13 luxury hotels were chosen for this study. The most important takeaway from this research is that the selected 5-star hotels fall short of customers' high standards in terms of service. Customers have complaints about the services provided by the select establishments, including a lack of responsiveness, lack of up-to-date information, an insufficient range of services, a lack of reliability, a lack of customer contact programmes, incompetent employees, overpromising, a lack of staff involvement, a lack of understanding of guests, delays in service, and delays in checking in and out. Therefore, the best hotels should take the necessary precautions to ensure that their service meets the needs of their guests. If the study prompts the relevant authorities to take steps to improve service delivery, the researcher will have accomplished their goal.

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