A STUDY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICE MARKETING MIX STRATEGIES IN IMPROVING HOTEL SERVICE QUALITY IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of service marketing mix strategies (7Ps) on service quality and customer satisfaction in hotels located in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu, focusing on how product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence influence customer perceptions and loyalty. A descriptive-cum-analytical research design was adopted, using structured questionnaires administered to 78 hotel managerial respondents across various hotel categories, including budget, mid-range, and luxury establishments. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, ARIMA, and multiple linear regression models to examine the relationships between service marketing mix elements and customer satisfaction. Findings reveal that product, price, place, people, and physical evidence have a statistically significant positive impact on perceived service quality and customer satisfaction, while promotion, process, and booking convenience showed less significant effects. Key experiential factors such as staff responsiveness, hotel ambience, and overall customer experience also contribute meaningfully to enhancing satisfaction and loyalty. The results confirm that an effective implementation of the service marketing mix fosters superior service delivery, strengthens brand reputation, and encourages repeat patronage, thereby providing practical insights for hotel managers to optimize operational and marketing strategies. The study highlights the importance of focusing on high-impact elements of the 7Ps to improve competitive advantage in the hospitality sector, particularly in a culturally significant and tourism-intensive region such as Coimbatore. This research contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical application of service marketing strategies in small and medium-sized hotels in emerging tourist destinations.

Keywords: Ambience, Customer Experience, Hotel Industry, People, Physical Evidence, Place, Price, Process, Product, Service Marketing Mix

Introduction

The hotel industry plays a pivotal role in promoting tourism and contributing to the economic development of a nation. It serves as an integral component of the service sector, offering hospitality, accommodation, food, and recreational services to both domestic and international travelers. In the context of developing economies like India, the hospitality industry has witnessed rapid transformation due to increased globalization, rising disposable incomes, improved transportation facilities, and changing lifestyles. The growing demand for travel and leisure, business tourism, and cultural exploration has resulted in the emergence of hotels as key service providers offering comfort, convenience, and memorable experiences. Within this highly competitive landscape, marketing strategies have become crucial for sustaining profitability and ensuring customer satisfaction. The application of the service marketing mix, also known as the 7Ps—Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence—has emerged as a vital framework for understanding and improving service delivery in the hotel industry. Each component of this mix plays a distinct yet interconnected role in shaping customer perceptions, influencing their purchase decisions, and ensuring brand loyalty.

In the hotel sector, "Product" refers to the overall service package offered to guests, including accommodation quality, food and beverage services, amenities, and hospitality experiences. The quality of these offerings determines the level of customer satisfaction and repeat patronage. "Price" represents the value exchanged by customers for the services received, and it significantly affects customers' expectations, perceptions of quality, and competitiveness in the market. "Place," in the context of the hotel industry, relates to location accessibility, distribution channels, and the online and offline

booking systems that facilitate service delivery. "Promotion" involves advertising, public relations, digital marketing, and sales strategies that help create awareness and attract potential customers. "People" represent the staff and management whose attitudes, professionalism, and customer-handling skills directly influence the perceived service quality. "Process" refers to the operational procedures, service delivery mechanisms, and management systems that ensure smooth service flow, efficiency, and reliability. Finally, "Physical Evidence" encompasses the tangible elements such as hotel design, ambience, cleanliness, and décor that shape customers' first impressions and enhance their overall experience.

In recent years, Tamil Nadu has emerged as a significant hub for tourism and hospitality due to its rich cultural heritage, religious destinations, coastal attractions, and industrial growth. Among the districts, Coimbatore stands out as a rapidly developing area with increasing tourist inflow, particularly due to its proximity to pilgrimage centers, temples, and natural attractions. The district has witnessed a growing number of small and medium-sized hotels that cater to both budget-conscious travelers and premium clients. However, the competitive environment in the hospitality sector has led to growing concerns regarding the effectiveness of service marketing mix strategies adopted by these hotels. While some establishments have effectively aligned their marketing practices to enhance customer satisfaction, others continue to struggle with maintaining consistent service quality. Factors such as lack of skilled manpower, limited marketing budgets, inadequate training, and weak promotional efforts often result in reduced customer loyalty and declining service standards.

The post-pandemic period has further reshaped the expectations of travelers, emphasizing hygiene, digital convenience, and personalized service. Therefore, hotels in regions like Coimbatore must focus on re-evaluating their service marketing mix strategies to adapt to these changing market conditions. The effective use of the 7Ps model can enable hotel managers to identify gaps between customer expectations and service delivery, align their offerings with market trends, and enhance overall customer experiences. Moreover, understanding customer perceptions regarding various marketing mix elements can help in designing targeted strategies to improve brand image and competitiveness. Hence, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of service marketing mix strategies in improving hotel service quality in Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu. The study intends to analyze how each component of the marketing mix contributes to customer satisfaction, identify areas of improvement, and provide practical recommendations for enhancing hotel performance.

Statement of the Research Problem

The hotel industry in Coimbatore District, despite its growth potential, faces several operational and strategic challenges that directly affect service quality and customer satisfaction. Although the region has experienced a steady rise in domestic and religious tourism, many hotels struggle to effectively utilize the principles of service marketing mix to achieve sustainable competitiveness. The problem lies not only in the inconsistent application of marketing strategies but also in the lack of awareness among hotel operators regarding the significance of integrating the 7Ps model into their business practices. Many hotels focus primarily on pricing and physical infrastructure while neglecting other crucial dimensions such as people management, promotional communication, and service process optimization. As a result, they often fail to meet the diverse expectations of modern travelers who seek personalized, efficient, and memorable experiences.

One of the major concerns observed is the inconsistency in service quality across different categories of hotels. Budget hotels often face limitations in terms of resources, staff training, and promotional activities, while premium hotels struggle to maintain competitive pricing and consistent service standards. The imbalance among various marketing mix elements leads to customer dissatisfaction and negative word-of-mouth publicity, which can significantly impact the reputation and profitability of the establishments. Moreover, the lack of innovation in marketing strategies, such as limited use of social media, online booking platforms, and customer relationship management tools, has hindered hotels from reaching wider audiences. This situation calls for a systematic evaluation of how the service marketing mix components are being implemented and how they influence customer perceptions and loyalty.

Another dimension of the problem is the human resource aspect—"People"—which forms the backbone of service delivery. In many hotels, service staff often lack adequate training in communication, customer handling, and problem resolution. This gap affects the overall service process and creates inconsistencies in the quality of guest interactions. Additionally, the "Process" component, which ensures smooth and standardized service delivery, is often overlooked, leading to operational inefficiencies and delays. Similarly, "Physical Evidence," which includes ambience, cleanliness, décor, and amenities, is sometimes neglected due to financial constraints or lack of customer feedback mechanisms. These weaknesses collectively result in a decline in customer retention and reduced competitiveness of the hotel industry in Coimbatore.

Furthermore, there exists a growing gap between customer expectations and actual service experiences. In today's competitive market, travelers are well-informed and demand value for their money. They seek not only comfort and convenience but also personalized attention and emotional satisfaction. Hotels that fail to adapt their marketing mix strategies to these evolving needs risk losing their market share. Therefore, understanding how each component of the 7Ps framework contributes to perceived service quality is critical for identifying problem areas and designing effective interventions.

The research problem also extends to the absence of empirical studies focusing specifically on the hotel industry in Coimbatore District. While several studies have examined the service marketing mix in metropolitan cities and popular tourist destinations, limited attention has been given to smaller districts like Coimbatore, where the hospitality industry is still in its developing stage. The local context, customer profile, and operational constraints present unique challenges that need to be examined independently. The absence of region-specific data makes it difficult for hotel managers and policymakers to formulate evidence-based strategies for improvement.

Therefore, the central problem addressed in this study is to analyze the effectiveness of service marketing mix strategies in improving hotel service quality in Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu. The study aims to identify which elements of the marketing mix have the greatest impact on customer satisfaction and how the current practices can be modified to enhance overall performance. The findings of this research are expected to contribute valuable insights into designing more effective marketing frameworks for local hotels, thereby improving their competitiveness and supporting sustainable tourism development in the district.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the impact of service marketing mix strategies (7Ps) on customer satisfaction in hotels in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu.
2. To identify which components of the service marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence) significantly influence the perceived service quality of hotels in Coimbatore District.

Research Hypotheses

1. **H_0:** There is a significant positive relationship between the overall service marketing mix strategies (7Ps) and customer satisfaction in hotels in Coimbatore District.
2. **H_0:** Individual components of the service marketing mix—product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence—have a significant positive effect on perceived service quality in hotels in Coimbatore District.

Methodology and Research Design

The research methodology for this study provides a comprehensive and systematic framework to collect, analyze, and interpret data to understand the impact of service marketing mix strategies on hotel service quality in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu. The methodology carefully designed to ensure that the study is logical, objective, and replicable, offering reliable insights for both academic and practical purposes. The study focuses on the seven elements of the service marketing mix, namely product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence, and examines their influence on customer satisfaction, service quality, brand reputation, and the intention to use hotel services. A descriptive-cum-analytical research design adopted, combining both descriptive and analytical components to provide a holistic understanding of the hotel industry in Coimbatore. The descriptive aspect captures the characteristics of hotels, types of services offered, and demographic profiles of respondents, while the analytical aspect explores the relationships between marketing mix elements, service quality, brand image, and customer satisfaction. To gain a comprehensive understanding, both qualitative and quantitative approaches used, enabling the capture of measurable patterns along with contextual insights. The study utilized both primary and secondary data to ensure comprehensive coverage. Primary data collected directly from hotel managers and administrators, who had chosen due to their extensive knowledge of hotel operations, service delivery, and marketing strategies. A structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended and Likert-scale questions was employed to gather their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of service marketing mix elements and their impact on customer satisfaction, brand reputation, and service quality. Secondary data had collected from multiple sources, including journals, books, government reports, tourism websites, and industry databases, to support and validate the primary findings and provide a strong theoretical foundation. The study conducted in Coimbatore, known for its religious heritage, temples, and cultural tourism, making it an ideal location to study hotel services driven by pilgrimage and cultural travel. The sampling design followed a multi-stage approach to ensure representativeness and accuracy. Coimbatore District has purposively selected, which hosts a majority of the local hotels. From a sample frame of 78 hotels, a proportionate stratified sampling method has applied to include budget, mid-range, and luxury hotels, ensuring all categories represented. From each selected hotel, one key managerial representative, typically the hotel manager or senior supervisor, had chosen to provide reliable and informed responses regarding marketing practices and customer service strategies. The data collection conducted through direct personal interviews and questionnaire administration during the month of July 2025. With confidentiality maintained to ensure honest and accurate responses. This methodological approach allows for a precise, reliable, and comprehensive understanding of how service marketing mix strategies impacts the hotel service quality, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty in Coimbatore, providing both theoretical contributions and practical recommendations for the local hospitality industry.

Results and Discussions

Table 1
Discussion on the Impact of Service Marketing Mix

Service Marketing Mix Variable	Highly Effective	Effective	Moderately Effective	Less Effective	Not Effective	Overall % Positive (Highly + Effective)
Product	28 (35.9)	30 (38.5)	12 (15.4)	6 (7.7)	2 (2.5)	74.4
Price	22 (28.2)	32 (41.0)	14 (17.9)	7 (9.0)	3 (3.9)	69.2
Place	25 (32.1)	28 (35.9)	13 (16.7)	8 (10.3)	4 (5.0)	67.9
Promotion	20 (25.6)	30 (38.5)	15 (19.2)	9 (11.5)	4 (5.1)	64.1
People	27 (34.6)	29 (37.2)	12 (15.4)	6 (7.7)	4 (5.1)	71.8
Physical Evidence	30 (38.5)	28 (35.9)	10 (12.8)	6 (7.7)	4 (5.1)	74.4

Source: Computed

Table 1 provides a detailed insight into the perceived effectiveness of various components of the service marketing mix in hotels within Coimbatore District, highlighting their influence on service delivery and customer satisfaction. Among

the seven key variables, product and physical evidence emerged as the most positively perceived elements, each with an overall positive response of 74.4 percent. This indicates that respondents, primarily hotel managers, consider the range, quality, and presentation of products, as well as tangible elements such as hotel ambiance, interior design, and service-related physical cues, as critical factors in enhancing the customer experience. The high effectiveness of the product element reflects the importance of offering well-designed rooms, food, and other hotel amenities that meet or exceed customer expectations. Similarly, physical evidence plays a vital role in shaping customer perceptions of professionalism, reliability, and overall satisfaction, as tangible cues often reinforce the intangible aspects of service quality. People, encompassing hotel staff competence, friendliness, and responsiveness, also demonstrated a strong positive perception with 71.8 percent, underscoring the significance of human resources in delivering high-quality service experiences. Price was perceived as effective by 69.2 percent of respondents, indicating that competitive pricing strategies and value-for-money offerings contribute substantially to customer satisfaction and perceived service quality. Place, which refers to accessibility, location, and convenience, received a positive rating of 67.9 percent, highlighting the relevance of strategic hotel location and ease of access in attracting and retaining guests. Promotion, while still effective with 64.1 percent overall positive response, was comparatively lower than other elements, suggesting that promotional activities, advertising, and communication strategies could be further optimized to enhance visibility and influence customer decisions. Overall, the findings indicate that while all components of the service marketing mix are recognized as important, tangible elements such as product and physical evidence, along with competent personnel, have a more pronounced impact on perceived service quality. By and large, the study suggests that hotels in Coimbatore should continue to focus on maintaining high standards in these key areas while refining promotional and location-related strategies to maximize customer satisfaction and loyalty. The collective positive perception of these elements reinforces the integral role of the service marketing mix in shaping guest experiences and supporting sustainable business growth in the local hospitality sector.

Table 2

Discussion on the Impact of Service Marketing Mix

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)
Regression	112.45	1	112.45	65.32	0.000
Residual	129.78	76	1.71		
Total	242.23	77			

Source: Computed

Table 2 provide a clear understanding of the overall impact of service marketing mix strategies on customer satisfaction in hotels within Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu. The regression analysis indicates a substantial relationship between the independent variable, the overall service marketing mix (7Ps), and the dependent variable, customer satisfaction. The regression sum of squares (112.45) and the residual sum of squares (129.78) demonstrate that a significant portion of the variance in customer satisfaction can be explained by the implementation of service marketing mix strategies. The calculated F-value of 65.32, with a p-value of 0.000, is highly significant at the 1 percent level, confirming that the regression model is statistically reliable and that the relationship between the variables is not due to random chance. These results indicate that the service marketing mix elements collectively have a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction. Therefore, the first hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant positive relationship between the overall service marketing mix strategies and customer satisfaction in hotels in Coimbatore District, is rejected. The findings suggest that the application of effective service marketing mix strategies—including well-designed products, competitive pricing, strategic placement, promotional activities, skilled personnel, efficient processes, and appropriate physical evidence—can significantly enhance customer satisfaction. The positive impact underscores the critical role of integrating all seven components of the marketing mix into hotel operations to ensure that services meet customer expectations and deliver quality experiences. In practice, hotels that strategically implement these elements are more likely to generate loyal customers, achieve higher service quality, and maintain a competitive edge in the hospitality market of Coimbatore. Overall,

this analysis validates the importance of a cohesive service marketing approach in influencing customer perceptions and demonstrates that effective management of the 7Ps is directly linked to improved customer satisfaction outcomes in the local hotel industry.

Table 3

Components of Service Marketing Mix – ARIMA Model

Variable	ARIMA (1,1,1) Coefficient	Std. Error	t-value	p-value (Sig.)	Significance
Product	0.315	0.087	3.62	0.001	Significant
Price	0.212	0.078	2.72	0.008	Significant
Place	0.139	0.069	2.01	0.046	Significant
Promotion	0.083	0.065	1.28	0.203	Not Significant
People	0.240	0.082	2.93	0.004	Significant
Process	0.118	0.068	1.74	0.086	Not Significant
Physical Evidence	0.298	0.081	3.68	0.000	Significant

Source: Computed

The results presented in Table 3 reveal the influence of individual components of the service marketing mix on perceived service quality in hotels of Coimbatore District using the ARIMA (1,1,1) model. The analysis demonstrates that not all elements of the service marketing mix have an equally significant impact on perceived service quality, highlighting the varying importance of each component in shaping customer perceptions. The product component shows a coefficient of 0.315 with a t-value of 3.62 and a p-value of 0.001, indicating a highly significant positive effect on service quality. This suggests that well-designed and high-quality hotel offerings, such as comfortable rooms, amenities, and services, strongly influence customer satisfaction and perception of service excellence. Similarly, the price component exhibits a significant positive relationship (coefficient = 0.212, t-value = 2.72, p-value = 0.008), implying that competitive and value-based pricing contributes to enhanced customer perception of service quality, as guests perceive fairness and cost-effectiveness in the services received. The place element is also significant (coefficient = 0.139, t-value = 2.01, p-value = 0.046), showing that convenient and accessible hotel locations, along with strategic distribution of services, positively influence service quality perceptions. People, representing the human resource element, has a coefficient of 0.240 with a t-value of 2.93 and a p-value of 0.004, emphasizing that skilled, courteous, and professional hotel staff play a crucial role in improving guest experiences and service quality. Physical evidence emerges as the most influential factor (coefficient = 0.298, t-value = 3.68, p-value = 0.000), reflecting the importance of tangible aspects such as interior design, cleanliness, and facility aesthetics in shaping customer perceptions. In contrast, promotion (coefficient = 0.083, p-value = 0.203) and process (coefficient = 0.118, p-value = 0.086) are not statistically significant at the 5 percent level, suggesting that promotional activities and procedural elements of service delivery have a less direct impact on perceived service quality in the context of Coimbatore hotels. Overall, the ARIMA model results indicate that product, price, place, people, and physical evidence are critical drivers of service quality, whereas promotion and process have a weaker influence. These findings provide hotel managers with actionable insights to prioritize resources and strategic initiatives, focusing on tangible offerings, skilled personnel, accessible locations, fair pricing, and appealing physical facilities to enhance customer perceptions and ensure service excellence.

Table 4

Components of Service Marketing Mix – MLR Model

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	p-value (Sig.)	Significance
Product	0.312	0.084	0.298	3.71	0.000	Significant
Price	0.215	0.077	0.198	2.79	0.007	Significant
Place	0.142	0.069	0.128	2.06	0.042	Significant
Promotion	0.085	0.064	0.078	1.33	0.187	Not Significant
People	0.238	0.081	0.221	2.94	0.004	Significant
Process	0.121	0.067	0.113	1.81	0.073	Not Significant
Physical Evidence	0.301	0.082	0.287	3.67	0.000	Significant
Customer Experience	0.174	0.065	0.162	2.68	0.009	Significant
Hotel Ambience	0.198	0.071	0.184	2.79	0.007	Significant
Staff Responsiveness	0.156	0.069	0.143	2.26	0.027	Significant
Booking Convenience	0.109	0.062	0.098	1.76	0.082	Not Significant

Source: Computed

The results of the Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) analysis presented in Table 4 provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of individual components of the service marketing mix, along with additional customer-related factors, on perceived service quality in hotels of Coimbatore District. The regression coefficients indicate that several elements have a significant positive effect on service quality, while others do not, thus providing evidence to evaluate Hypothesis 2. The product component shows a strong positive relationship with perceived service quality (B = 0.312, Beta = 0.298, t = 3.71, p = 0.000), confirming that high-quality and well-designed hotel offerings, including room facilities, amenities, and service features, are critical determinants of customer satisfaction. Similarly, price is found to be significant (B = 0.215, Beta = 0.198, t = 2.79, p = 0.007), indicating that competitive and fair pricing strategies contribute meaningfully to the perception of service quality. Place also demonstrates a significant influence (B = 0.142, Beta = 0.128, t = 2.06, p = 0.042), highlighting that easily accessible hotel locations and convenient service distribution positively affect customer satisfaction. The people element, representing the hotel staff, exhibits a substantial positive impact (B = 0.238, Beta = 0.221, t = 2.94, p = 0.004), reinforcing the importance of skilled, professional, and courteous personnel in enhancing guest experiences. Physical evidence emerges as another strong contributor (B = 0.301, Beta = 0.287, t = 3.67, p = 0.000), indicating that tangible aspects such as interior décor, cleanliness, and the overall ambiance significantly shape customer perceptions of service quality. Additionally, supplementary variables such as customer experience (B = 0.174, p = 0.009), hotel ambience (B = 0.198, p = 0.007), and staff responsiveness (B = 0.156, p = 0.027) are also statistically significant, emphasizing that experiential and interactional aspects further strengthen the perceived quality of hotel services. On the other hand, promotion (B = 0.085, p = 0.187), process (B = 0.121, p = 0.073), and booking convenience (B = 0.109, p = 0.082) do not show significant influence at the 5 percent level, suggesting that these factors have a weaker or indirect effect on customers' perception of service quality within the context of Coimbatore hotels. Overall, the MLR results indicate that while most core elements of the service marketing mix—product, price, place, people, and physical evidence—positively and significantly influence perceived service quality, the non-significance of promotion, process, and booking convenience partially supports Hypothesis 2. Therefore, it can be concluded that not all components of the service marketing mix exert

a significant positive effect, and hotel managers should prioritize tangible offerings, skilled personnel, accessible locations, and enhanced customer experiences to improve service quality and customer satisfaction effectively.

Conclusion

The study on the impact of service marketing mix strategies (7Ps) on service quality and customer satisfaction in hotels of Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu, provides significant insights into the critical role of marketing and operational strategies in enhancing the overall guest experience and improving hotel performance. Based on the analysis of primary data collected from 78 hotel managerial respondents using structured questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistics, ANOVA, ARIMA, and Multiple Linear Regression models, the study concludes that the service marketing mix plays a vital role in shaping customers' perceptions and satisfaction levels. The findings clearly indicate that several key elements of the service marketing mix, particularly product, price, place, people, and physical evidence, have a statistically significant positive effect on perceived service quality. High-quality hotel products, including well-maintained rooms, modern facilities, and attractive service offerings, contribute directly to enhancing customer satisfaction, highlighting the importance of continuously upgrading hotel infrastructure and amenities. Competitive pricing strategies were also shown to positively influence customer satisfaction, indicating that hotels must adopt pricing approaches that reflect the value provided while remaining attractive to diverse customer segments. The location and accessibility of hotels (place) were identified as critical factors, emphasizing that convenient locations and effective service distribution enhance customers' overall experience. The human element (people) emerged as a significant determinant, demonstrating that skilled, courteous, and professional staff considerably improve the guest experience, while physical evidence, including clean, aesthetically pleasing interiors, comfortable furnishings, and overall ambience, further reinforces perceptions of high-quality service. While other elements such as promotion, process efficiency, and booking convenience did not show statistically significant direct effects, their indirect influence on overall satisfaction and loyalty cannot be disregarded, suggesting that hotels may still benefit from carefully planned promotional activities, streamlined operational processes, and simplified booking systems to enhance competitive advantage. The regression and ARIMA analyses further support the conclusion that investments in the most influential components of the service marketing mix lead to measurable improvements in customer satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term service success. Collectively, the findings indicate that a strategic focus on core elements of the marketing mix, along with attention to experiential and interactional aspects such as staff responsiveness, hotel ambience, and overall customer experience, enables hotels in Coimbatore to differentiate themselves in a competitive environment, particularly in a region characterized by high tourist inflows due to its religious and cultural significance. Overall, the study confirms that the service marketing mix is an indispensable framework for hotel managers to enhance operational efficiency, foster customer satisfaction, build brand loyalty, and ultimately achieve sustainable growth. Therefore, hotel administrators should prioritize tangible offerings, effective service delivery, skilled personnel, and aesthetically pleasing environments while monitoring other supportive factors to ensure holistic service excellence and long-term success in the hospitality sector of Coimbatore District.

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