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## INFLUENCE OF SERVICE QUALITY IN FRONT OFFICE AND ITS IMPACT ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

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**Abstract:** The express growth of the hospitality industry in the first decade of the 21st century forced the managers to evaluate the importance of service improvement in order to gain more customers in today's highly competitive market. In the hospitality industry improved service quality is essential to make guest happy, the main objective of this project is to study the influence of service quality factors like staff qualities in front office, complaint handling skills atmospheric factors and its impact on customer satisfaction. The current study evaluates the influence of service quality dimensions in front office on customer satisfaction in hotels through Correlation, Regression and ANOVA techniques.

**Keywords—** Service Quality Dimensions, Customer Satisfaction, Front Office, Hotel Industry

### INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction is a business term, is a measure of how products and services supplied by a hotel to meet or surpass customer expectation (A Burgers, 2000). It is seen as a key performance indicator within business in any service industry. The rapid growth of the hospitality industry in the first decade of the 21st century forced the management to evaluate the importance of service improvement in order to gain competitive advantage (ME Porter, 1985). All of the service businesses are trying their best to enhance and differentiate their service quality in order to make customers satisfied with their services, especially the hotel industry (JJ Cronin, 1992). Hotel management team now focuses more on the quality standards in order to meet the basic needs and expectations of the customers (LP Mey, 2006). Once customers and their requirements are clearly identified and understood, hotel front desk staff likely to anticipate and fulfill their customer requirements.

The main objective of this project is to study the influence of service quality factors like service qualities of staff in front office, complaint handling and atmospheric factors on customer satisfaction. Guest satisfaction is acknowledged as an essential factor to provide revenues and profits. Therefore, most of the literatures in the context of hotel industry



identified customer satisfaction as the critical component of the hotel industry's value position to guest. Similarly, service quality is recognized as a critical item to the success of hotel business as well as a prior condition to gain favorable purchase intentions. Purpose of this research is to analyze the result of previous research studies which examine the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction and attempt to suggest best method for giving better service to guest and improve the satisfaction of employees. The main purpose of the study is to understand how satisfied customers are with the services provided in front office. Customer satisfaction is defined as a result from confirmation or disconfirmation of individual expectations (EW Anderson, 1994). It is also a highly personal assessment. When we consider all type of business organization, customer satisfaction is the most important thing and considered as most reliable feedback, for the goodwill of business organization (LL Berry, 2000). If we set the customer satisfaction rating properly and measure on the same, will get all the linked operations corrected. The main objectives of this study were to identify the factors that influence customer satisfaction and determine their relationships with customer satisfaction.

In the hospitality industry improved service quality is essential to make customer happy. The rapid growth of the hospitality industry in the first decade of the 21st century forced the managers to evaluate the importance of service improvement in order to gain competitive advantage (Easvaralingam, 2011). Service quality is essential for the success of every hotel industry. Service quality determines an organizations success or failure. (Yadav, 2011). Customer is the king and it is very difficult to make this king happy. In the hospitality industry improved service quality is essential to make this king happy (Zairi, 2000). Customer Service quality can be defined as a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimensions (Oliver, 2010). The visitors assess the services of the staff and hotel atmosphere to evaluate the performance of the hotel and compare the same with the expectations set by them. If the expectations are met during the assessment stage the visitor has got high convenience. Customer Service quality is the stipulation of service that can meet the expectations of customers (Bednar, 1994). This study can donate to hospitality sector research by highlighting factors which determine service quality that influence customer satisfaction and support the hoteliers for suitable developments. This investigation can contribute to hospitality sector research by highlighting factors which determine service quality that influence customer satisfaction and help the hoteliers for appropriate improvements.

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

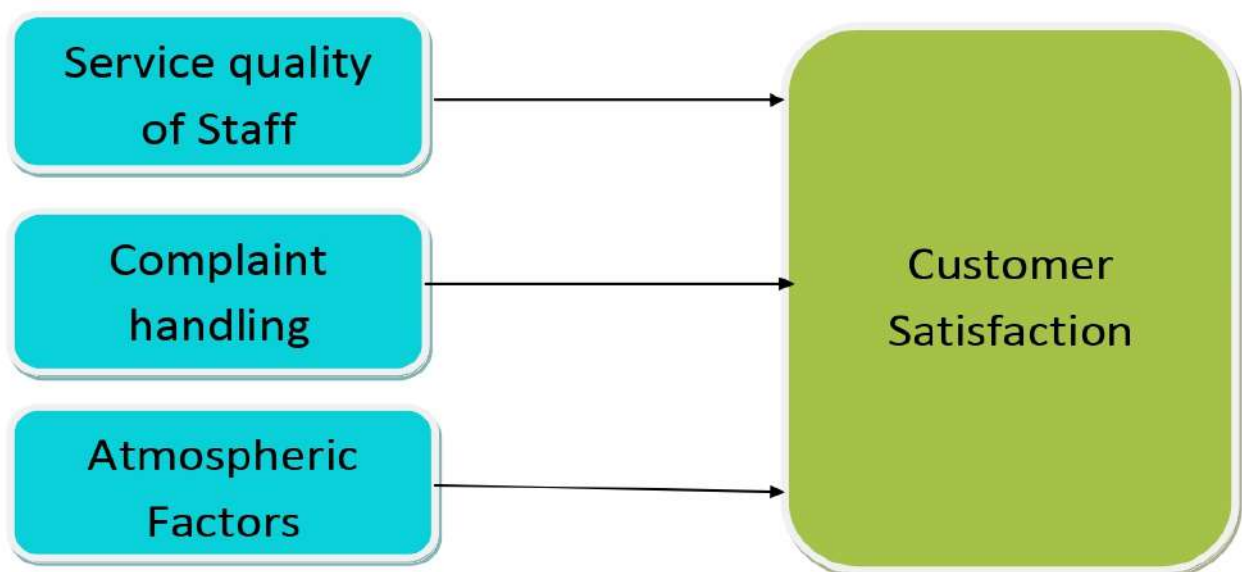
The investigator has framed three main objectives for the study as follows;

- To analyze the influence of service quality of staff on customer satisfaction in front office.
- To explore the efficiency of complaint handling on customer satisfaction in front office
- To evaluate the atmospheric factor on customer satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

This research is focused on customer satisfaction in hotel industry. The study area of this research is the Hotel Holiday Inn, Cochin. Data collected from the guest who stayed in this hotel from 7-th October 2020 to 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The main source of data collection is questionnaire and direct interview. 32 questions were asked to the guest for this research. The questionnaires were divided in to 3 sections. Section A tested the independent variables (service quality of staff, complaint handling, and atmospheric factors) and section B tested the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) and Section C included demographic factors. Respondents were asked to tick the answers in 7 point scale in terms of poor, very poor, below average, average, above average, good, very good. Convenience sampling method is used to select sample. Total number of sample was 48.

Model of the study:





VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

The researcher has identified four main variables for the study. Customer Satisfaction is the dependent variable with seven items following seven-point Likert scale. Service quality of staff s with nine items, complaint handling with six items and atmospheric factors with six items is the independent variables in the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

The research scholar has used Karl Pearson’s Correlation Analysis as a tool to find the relationship between the variables under the study.

HO1: there is no significant relationship between Service qualities of staff in front office on customer Satisfaction in hotel industry

HO2: there is a no significant relationship complaint handling and Customer Satisfaction

HO3: there is no significant difference between Customer Satisfaction with atmospheric factors in hotel.

Objective 1: To analyze the influence of service quality of staff on customer satisfaction in front office.

Table 1
Relationship between Service Quality of Staff and Customer Satisfaction in Front office

Table with 4 columns: Variable, Correlation Type, Satisfaction, Service. Rows include Pearson Correlation and Sig. (2-tailed) for both Satisfaction and Service.

The table shows that there is a significant correlation between services quality of staff and satisfaction. Here the correlation coefficient is .647. The significance value is .000 which is less than .01. Hence, the value is significant at .01 levels. Since the correlation coefficient is positive there is a positive correlation between customer satisfaction and services. This means when the service quality of staff increases then the satisfaction of the customers also increases.





Table 2: ANOVA table between Service Quality of Staff and Customer Satisfaction in FO

| Satisfaction   | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|------|
| Between Groups | 4.380          | 3  | 1.460       | 22.740 | .000 |

Here ANOVA is done to analyze the influence of staff services for giving customer satisfaction. ANOVA result is significant at 0.01 levels shows staff services and satisfaction is significantly differing. Dependent variable satisfaction significantly differs based on the independent variable staff services.

Objective 2: To explore the efficiency of complaint handling on customer satisfaction in front office

TABLE 3  
Relationship between complaint handling and Customer Satisfaction in Front office

| Correlations |                     |              |           |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------|
|              |                     | Satisfaction | Complaint |
| Satisfaction | Pearson Correlation | 1            | .635**    |
|              | Sig. (2-tailed)     |              | .000      |
| Complaint    | Pearson Correlation | .635**       | 1         |
|              | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000         |           |

The table shows that there is a significant correlation between staff Complaint handling and customer satisfaction. Here the correlation coefficient is .635. The significance value is .000 which is less than .01. Hence, the value is significant at .01 level. Since the correlation coefficient is positive there is a positive correlation between complaint handling and customer satisfaction.

Table 4: Regression table between complaint handling and Customer Satisfaction in FO



Regression

| Variable     | R    | R square | Beta | F      | Sig  |
|--------------|------|----------|------|--------|------|
| Satisfaction | .635 | .403     | .635 | 20.923 | .000 |

Regression analysis done to check the significance found in correlation. In regression analysis also it was found that there is a significant relation between complaint handling and customer satisfaction. Here the p value is 0.000 which is significant at 0.01 levels .R square value shows that the strength between two variables .Here R square value is 0.403 which means that 40.3% of customer satisfaction is due to handling the complaint. There is a positive relation between efficiency of complaint handling and customer satisfaction.

Objective 3: To evaluate the atmospheric factor on customer satisfaction

TABLE 5  
Relationship between atmospheric factor and Customer Satisfaction in Front office

| Correlations |                     |              |             |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------|
|              |                     | Satisfaction | Atmospheric |
| Satisfaction | Pearson Correlation | 1            | .470**      |
|              | Sig. (2-tailed)     |              | .006        |
| Atmospheric  | Pearson Correlation | .470**       | 1           |
|              | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .006         |             |

This correlation table shows that atmospheric factors have significant relationship with satisfaction of guest. Correlations are significant at 0.01 levels.

Table 6: Regression table between complaint handling and Customer Satisfaction in FO

Regression

| Variable     | R    | R Square | Beta | F     | Sig  |
|--------------|------|----------|------|-------|------|
| Satisfaction | .470 | .221     | .470 | 8.806 | .006 |

The regression table reveals that R square value is .221. It means that model strength between the restaurant services and satisfaction is 22%. Beta value is 0.470. It means that one unit



change in independent variable atmospheric factors will result in 47% change in dependent variable satisfaction. Here p value is 0.006. It means that relationship is significant at 0.01 levels.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study tried to find out the influence of service quality dimensions in front office on customer satisfaction. Service of staff has a strong influence on guest satisfaction. Service of staff mainly like quality of staff, efficiency of services, neat appearance, multi-lingual skills, understanding of guests request, politeness, helpfulness are positively influence on satisfaction. Present atmospheric factors are not able to satisfy the guest. Improvement in the atmospheric factors is needed to get satisfied customers and which leads to revisit behaviour.

Some suggestions are there in this research study. Variables like politeness, helping mentality of front desk staff can be improved. So, management should give special attention to the development of helping mentality and politeness in such a way that they can improve customer satisfaction more effectively. If the management focus on increase the service quality, automatically customer satisfaction index will get improved. Service of staff, front office services, complaint handling, atmospheric factors have significant role for giving customer satisfaction. So management should be careful about the service quality of staff. Staffs should get some training on service etiquette. Multi-lingual skill of the employees is essential. Services that get from front office determine the satisfaction level of guest. Many guests are not happy with lobby music and complained on the same so management should consider this. Satisfaction of guest is essential plays a crucial role for the success of hospitality industry. So management should be aware of the factors that determine the satisfaction of guest. For this purpose many studies are required.

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