

LOCAL GUEST' SATISFACTION LEVEL IN FIVE STAR HOTELS IN SRI LANKA

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Introduction

The tourism industry has been steadily growing with the amount of tourists' arrival to Sri Lanka increased from 18,969 in 1966 to 1,000,000 in 2012 (Sri Lanka Tourist Board 2012). World Travel and Tourism Council's report (WTTC) 2013 reveals that travel and tourism economy of Sri Lanka was ranked in 76th place and 94th in relative contribution to national economies out of 186 countries. According to the sources, not only foreigners but also the amount of domestic tourists has gone up. Thus, there should be adequate accommodation facilities for tourists. 20.8% of rooms were provided by five star hotels in 2013 and it was the highest percentage in star category. Therefore the tourist board has already taken steps to improve service quality in the five star hotels. More empirical researches on this industry have become a pet of the stakeholders as to come up with proper solutions for hidden problems yet to be identified in the hotel industry as it functions as a bridge of both internal and external business environmental forces (Karunasekara & Thushara-2013). This

study facilitates to find out the level of satisfaction of Local guests who have stayed in five star hotels in Sri Lanka using the world wide used model; SERVQUAL to measure the service quality in different industries.

Methodology

Primary data were collected from a sample of 200 local guests through a field survey by the researcher playing the role of participant as observer. The study used the cluster sampling method as the local guests stayed only in Colombo five star hotels taken into account. Gap Analysis to find the gaps between expectations and perceptions of the local guests and SERVQUAL model to find those gaps using the five dimensions of this model were used as the techniques of the study.

Experimental Results

According to the Table-1, the dimension and total reliabilities of SERVQUAL scores were more than 0.70 except the expected value of the product dimension. This means there is a high level of internal consistency for the scale (George and Mallery, 2003, p.231) Corrected item-total correlations

were also studied; that is, the scores for an item and the summated scores of the rest of the items comprising a subscale (e.g., the subscale measuring the reliability dimension of service quality) were correlated. The total reliability scale of 0.953 indicated that the overall reliability factor slightly same to that of Parasuraman et al., (1988) study which had been 0.92. As the reliability value of the study is very close to 1.0 means that the items of the six dimensions of SERVQUAL model are accepted for

analysis. Among the reliability coefficients of all six dimensions, expected product (.686) was slightly below 0.7. This might have due to some items under each dimension seemed too similar and there are only two items under this dimension. However all the other dimensions showed coefficients higher than 0.7, revealing that these dimensions comprising of various items show a true measure of service quality.

Table 1: Reliability Coefficient

Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha for dimension-Expectation	Cronbach's alpha for dimension- Perception
Tangibility	4	.889	.823
Reliability	5	.886	.875
Responsiveness	4	.868	.872
Assurance	4	.882	.823
Empathy	5	.873	.881
Product	2	.686	.748

The table -2 shows that mean values of local guests' expected and perceived items were around 5 and 6. The most expected item of the local respondents was the quality of the good (PR2) with a mean value of 6.44 and the lowest mean value was 5.55 with the location of the hotel (EM3). The highest perceived mean value (5.91) also was with the quality of the good (PR2) and the least mean value (5.15) was with employees of the hotel had the knowledge to answer guests' questions. While the highest individual gap (-81) was with the behavior of employees in five star hotels instilled confidence in guests (AS2) and the least gap (-0.27) was with employees gave guests

personal service (EM4). Among the dimensions, local respondents highly expected product, assurance and tangibility with the mean scores of 6.25, 6.07 and 6.07 respectively. Comparatively highly satisfied dimensions were product (5.70), tangibility (5.65) and reliability (5.42). The least gap of -0.41 was with tangibility. The highest gap was with assurance with the value of -0.71. The results of the chi-square test, which compares the expected and the perceived values of Local guests stayed in five star hotels- Sri Lanka. In this case all the items were statistically significance.

Table 2 : Summary of means of local guests' expectations and gap scores

Dimension	Statement	Expected score (E)	Perception Score (P)	Local guests' satisfaction Gap(P-E)	Chi-square	Significance
Tangibility	TA1	5.81	5.36	-0.45	122.661	.000
	TA2	5.97	5.54	-0.43	59.661	.000
	TA3	6.18	5.87	-0.31	89.604	.000
	TA4	6.34	5.82	-0.52	196.706	.000
Reliability	RL1	5.95	5.50	-0.45	104.076	.000
	RL2	6.02	5.37	-0.65	83.902	.000
	RL3	6.09	5.47	-0.62	129.762	.000
	RL4	5.98	5.37	-0.61	136.245	.000
	RL5	5.96	5.37	-0.59	87.420	.000
Responsiveness	RN1	5.83	5.37	-0.46	64.773	.000
	RN2	5.93	5.27	-0.66	292.019	.000
	RN3	6.09	5.31	-0.78	107.690	.000
	RN4	6.01	5.29	-0.72	100.594	.000
Assurance	AS1	5.96	5.23	-0.73	207.501	.000
	AS2	6.25	5.44	-0.81	249.749	.000
	AS3	6.14	5.44	-0.70	177.792	.000
	AS4	5.92	5.33	-0.59	183.367	.000
Empathy	EM1	5.82	5.15	-0.67	189.584	.000
	EM2	5.87	5.29	-0.58	199.343	.000
	EM3	5.55	5.17	-0.38	36.532	.000
	EM4	5.72	5.45	-0.27	83.935	.000
	EM5	5.80	5.21	-0.59	81.922	.000
Product	PR1	6.05	5.49	-0.56	90.900	.000
	PR2	6.44	5.91	-0.53	95.912	.000

Guests' satisfaction is very important in the hotel industry like all other businesses. Using SERVQUAL dimensions in hotels, policy makers of the industry could spot where the loop holes are. The study found out the highest individual gap of -0.81 with guests' safety in staying in five star hotels and doing transactions with employees. Therefore managers should convince and ensure their guests that their hotels are safety enough. The least gap -0.27 of the dimensions were from

the EM 4: five star hotels have guests' interests at their heart. The average gap of all the dimensions was -0.57. In terms of dimensions, each dimension has average values like: tangibility - 0.43, reliability-.058, responsiveness-0.66, assurance-0.71, and empathy - 0.50 and product-0.55. The strategy makers of the five star hotels should concern about a way to increase the confidence of their guests on the employees and the venue in terms of safety while increasing the knowledge

and cultural awareness of the operation level employees to address the cultural diversity and individual guests' preferences within a short period of time.

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