

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CUSTOMER'S EXPECTED STANDARD PROVIDED BY THE EMPLOYEES IN RZESZOW HOTELS

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ВІДМІННОСТІ СТАНДАРТІВ ОБСЛУГОВУВАННЯ КЛІЄНТІВ У ГОТЕЛЯХ МІСТА ЖЕШУВА.

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Анотація. Отримані матеріали дослідження будуть корисними для управлінського персоналу та відділів обслуговування готельного господарства. Дослідження проведено на прикладі функціонування Жешувських готелів. Результати цього дослідження є основою для поліпшення якості обслуговування співробітниками готелів, що ґрунтуються на ступені задоволеності клієнтів. Застосовано методологію дослідження з використанням запитальника обслуговувального персоналу, який раніше працював у готелях. Окрім цього, вивчено рівні задоволення клієнтів готелів якістю наданих послуг. Установлено, що сприйняття клієнтами готелів якості наданих послуги було вищим від очікуваного рівня.

Ключові слова: якість готельних послуг, обслуговувальний персонал, очікування, сприйняття.

ОТЛИЧИЯ СТАНДАРТОВ ОБСЛУЖИВАНИЯ КЛИЕНТОВ ОТЕЛЕЙ ГОРОДА ЖЕШУВА

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Аннотация. Полученные материалы исследования будут полезными для управленческого персонала и отделов обслуживания гостиничного хозяйства. Исследования проводились на примере функционирования жешувский отелей. Результаты этого исследования являются основой для улучшения качества обслуживания сотрудниками отелей, основанных на степени удовлетворенности клиентов. Применена методология исследования с использованием вопросника обслуживающего персонала, ранее работающего в отелях. Кроме этого, изучались уровни удовлетворения клиентов отелей от качества предоставляемых услуг. Установлено, что восприятие клиентами гостиниц качества предоставляемых услуг были выше ожидаемого уровня.

Ключевые слова: качество гостиничных услуг, обслуживающий персонал, ожидания, восприятия.

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Abstract. The material research was undertaken to be used as a valuable parameter for the hotel management, particularly for the employees in the service department in Rzeszow hotels. The result of this material research will be useful to improve the quality of service of the employees in the hotel which will meet the customers' satisfaction. Moreover, the methodology used to develop the questionnaire in the material was previously employed by hotels to improve their quality in various departments in the hotel. Furthermore, the satisfaction of the customer is reflected by the quality of service provided by the employees. The main conclusion is that the perceived quality of service provided by the employees is higher than the expected quality of services.

Keywords: quality, employees, expectation, perception.

Introduction. In recent years the number of hotels has been increased and there are new hotels developing all over the world to meet the higher demand. customer satisfaction is very important these days to meet the competition and survive in modern times. the simplest way to be successful continuously and ensure development of the hotel in the future is to not only meet the customer's expectations, but also surpass their expectations in every possible chance.

A good customer service is the foundation of any hotel. It provides a stage for continued growth and helps to build the hotel's reputation. New offers and reduction in prices may bring the hotel new customers but these policies will not be profitable in the long run without a good quality in the customer service. A good customer service always ensures business with the customers in the future so they will provide a positive opinion about the hotel and also recommend or communicate the services offered by the hotel to others.

The employees play a vital role in maintaining the quality of service in the hotel. An employee influences the customer's perception of the quality standard in a hotel. In other words, employees' experience with their service surrounding affects the customer's service experience. Positive employees reflect positivism in their quality of service.

The objectives of study were:

1. To evaluate the expected customer standard and perceived standard towards the quality of service of the employees based on these scopes: tangibility, assurance, reliability, empathy and responsiveness.
2. To examine the inconsistency gap in-between the customer's expected standard and perceived standard towards the quality of service of the employees in the hotel.

Discussion. The employees play a major role in the hotel. The receptionists always receive and greet the guests on arrival. The receptionists have to be in contact with the guests more than other employees in the hotel. However, the receptionists are supported by many employees including the manager, guest relations manager, cashiers, reservationist, telephone operators, auditor, attendants.

The general manager is responsible for administering and controlling all the functions in the hotel. The general manager is also responsible for monitoring the management policies of the hotel. Apart from this he has to oversee employee development which includes training and hiring new recruits to ensure quality. The reservationists are accountable for hotel pre-booking, reservations and booking through telephone, duplicate the personal information of the hotel guests as well. They also receive the guests upon their arrival. They are also responsible for the rooms that are not reserved in advance, the registrations, the room number, the room key, and the guest's luggage by coordinating with the attendants or other staff. Besides, they provide information, mail the letters, take message, take notes, and report the check-in and check-out statistics of the guests.

The cashiers are obliged to document the guest's payment by producing receipts or daily notices. They also obtain money from the guests as well and also take care of the money from all sections of the hotel. Telephone operators are answerable for the telephone contact and supervising the sound system in the hotel and the wakeup call. The auditor cross-checks the documented payment of the guests and also the services offered to guests upon their arrival and before their departure. Guest relation managers at all times are available to the guests near the reception to offer help and advice and solve problems of the guests. They have a very good knowledge of the products in the hotel and capable of providing exact guidance to the tourist sites in and around the city of Rzeszow. They are also capable of speaking in multiple global languages.

The attendants are mostly responsible for handling the guests belongings. They are obliged to take the guests to their respective room after they are assigned a room number and given the room key. At time they are also required to inform the guests about the services provided by the hotel. In total, the employees are also important in handling emergency situations like fire, threats and medical emergencies. An employee who is talented, polite and proficient can make all the guests have a pleasant experience in the hotel and guarantee the guests to return. As we can see, the employees play the most important role in the hotel. The employees should be able to get used to adapt with different kind of people and different kind of cultures. The employees are obliged to meet the following qualifications:

First and foremost, the employees should maintain a good personality, formally dressed and should be tidy. A well dressed employee suggests supremacy and significance in the hotel; hence, it creates a first impression that will help maintain the positive relationship between the customer and hotel. The employees must be presented as a flawless outer appearance to customers. Secondly, the staff should be knowledgeable. They should be capable of explaining about the products, rooms and other different things in the hotel. The employees should also be knowledgeable regarding all the services offered by the hotel including the type of rooms to the type of food served in the kitchen. Thirdly, the guests may have problems with their language as well as their accent since they are of different nationalities and it will be difficult for the reservationists and receptionists and operators who deal with customers in the phone. The receptionists and reservationists should be able to use alphabetical scheme which is related to the scheme used by travel agencies and airlines around the

world (Beckley, 1990). It is also encouraged to use an alphabet to be used, for example, A for Adam, B for Benny, C for Cathy. Moreover, It was also illustrated that when telephone operators answer the telephone, they should identify themselves, announce the name of the hotel, with the addition of "Good morning" or "Good evening" with the appropriate intonation. The additional words, May I help you? will give the impression of willingness to serve, which is all important in hotel (<http://www.forbes.com/2009/10/30/simon-cooper-ritz-leadership-ceonetwork-hotels.html> date).

Besides, the employees staff should be capable of handling certain problems, manage complaints or other problems in the hotel, when the guests confront the problems in the hotel. Good communication should be ensured by the employees in the hotel. Moreover the employees should make the guests feel content without any issues. The employees are one the critical factors which ensures the success of the hotel. They also imitate the image of the hotel to the guests, thus should have a clean sense to meet the expectations of the customers.

Service quality is the end result of the contrast that customers make between their expectations and perceptions of the approach the employees perform their services. Several experts describe the quality of service in many different ways. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry define it as the differences between customers expectation of services and their perceived service (Parasuraman. A., Zeithaml, V.A. & Berry, L.L. (1985 & 1988). If the expectation is greater than the service performance, perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence, customer dissatisfaction occurs. Some experts describe the quality of service as the degree to which a service meets the needs of a customer and their expectations.

The physical evidence of employees should include a individuality and manifestation of employees, outfits, and equipments used to provide the service. For example, hotel chains like Hilton, Meridian and Sheraton guarantee that their hotels are match to international standards no matter where their hotels are located. Yet, this research, is concentrated on how well-dressed the employees are when they provide services.

The hotel management must realize that pursuing customer satisfaction is a critical and strategic decision. It's not something an organization does simply to satisfy a standard or win an award: It is something an organization does to stay in business. Top management must embrace this reality by acknowledging, communicating, and acting upon three basic truths: Customer satisfaction is the ultimate goal. There's no higher achievement than satisfying the customers an organization has committed itself to serving. This doesn't mean that the organization should abandon its competitive business sense and become a non-profit institution. Financial control is needed, along with accountability and sound decision making. But customer satisfaction is the ball everybody must keep his or her eyes on. Revenues and profits are nothing more than the results of fulfilling customer needs and expectations. Customer satisfaction is an investment. This is important because customer satisfaction processes often don't produce results in the very short term. Payoffs more often are realized in the medium or long term. Resources must be applied to understanding customer requirements. Collecting data on customer perceptions, and analyzing it. The resources required for these activities constitute one of the most important investments an organization can make, and this fact should be clearly reflected in budget planning. Everyone must be involved in customer satisfaction. All personnel have the capability to influence customer satisfaction at some level. Top management must communicate exactly how personnel will be expected to contribute because it's often not intuitively obvious how this is possible, *figure 1*.

The more employees understand their roles in customer satisfaction the more they'll be able to participate. In the above examples it's very clear what employees' roles are in driving customer satisfaction.

Customers expectation is what the services are expected to provide which are desired by the customer. From the range of different definitions in the expectation we can conclude that expectation includes uncontrollable factors like previous experience, publicity, consumers, and awareness at the purchasing time, conditions, thoughts and product's image. Besides, the influences of other customers, expectations in the pre purchases, verbal communications, personal needs, familiarity with the product, and other personal feelings. Different customers have different expectations based on the

customers' knowledge of a product or service. Guests are the judges of service quality. Their expectations of services greatly influence their resulting level of satisfaction. It is far easier to please guests with lower expectations than those with higher expectations.

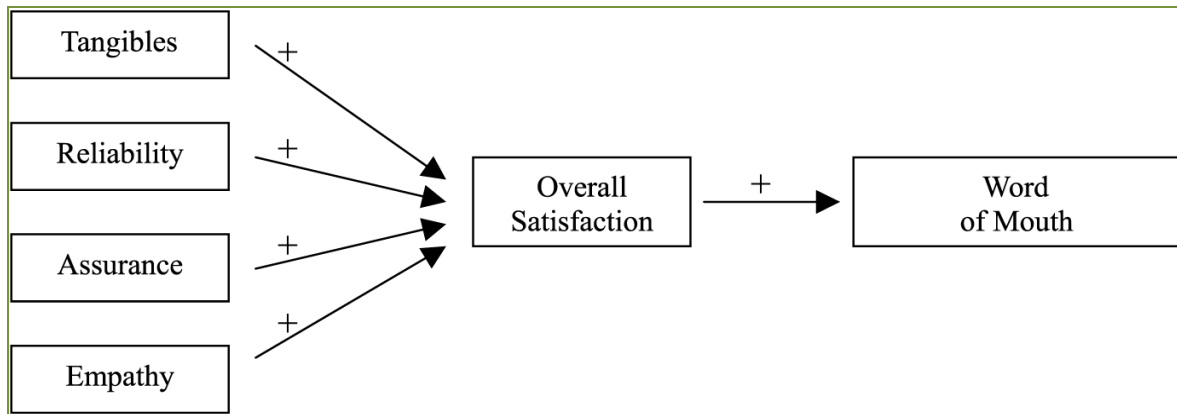


Figure 1. Overall satisfaction of the scopes

Source: http://www.emeraldinsight.com/content_images/fig/1080150103001.png date 24.03.14

Consequently, an understanding of guests' expectations is critical. Expectations in services can be classified in three levels: essential, expected, and optional. Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman include three similar levels in their conceptual model of customer service expectations: predicted, adequate, and desired. Essential services are those which are the essence of the service business. These services meet the fundamental requirements to continue operations. For example, tourism, hospitality, and leisure service providers must maintain reasonable business hours, admit or check-in guests, inform guests of service details, and acknowledge complaints. Guests predict or believe these services will be performed.

Expected services are those which guests assume the service provider should offer in order to provide adequate service. Expected services go beyond the essential services required for the company to stay in business. However, because of guests' expectations, such services need to be offered in order to be competitive.

Services such as convenient operating hours, payment options, reservations, and reasonable information pertaining to the services, facilities, and locale are expected by most guests. It is also important to note that as guests are provided with additional services, these services soon become commonplace. Over the years, expected services increase. Guests become more demanding, requiring the service provider to move beyond what is commonplace, *figure 2*.

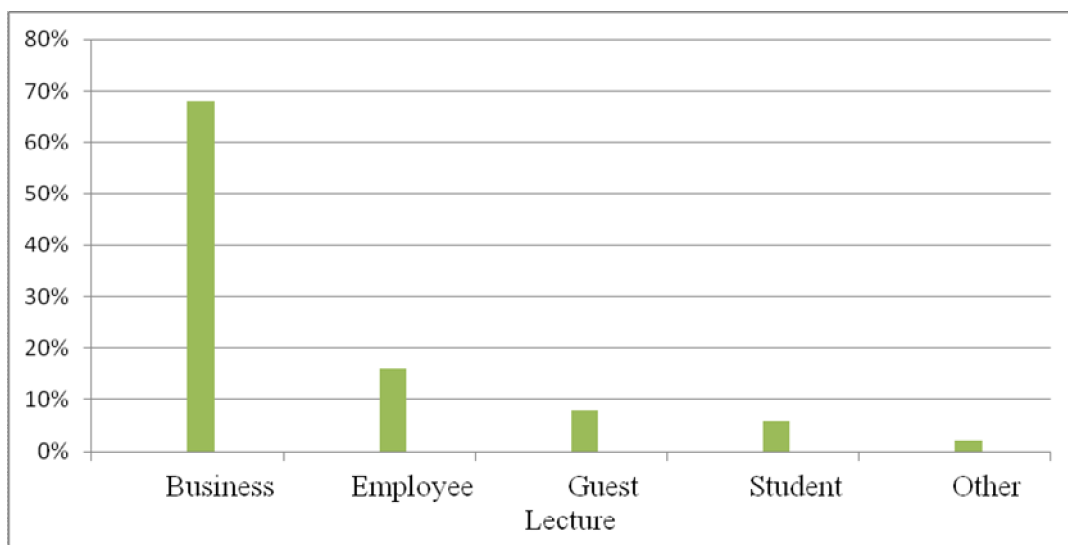


Figure 2. Personal information of respondents

Source: Author's work

Other services are considered optional or desired. Guests consider these services an added bonus that enhances the value of their visit. Optional services express the uniqueness of the service provider and contribute to its competitive edge. Today, the trend in optional services is toward indulgence, including ambiance, convenience, and unobtrusive service. However, because guests generally do not expect optional services, they ordinarily will not fault the service provider if such services are not available. To effectively provide optional services, it becomes essential for the service provider to recognize the true desires of the targeted guests. Service quality management in hospitality, tourism, and leisure (Kandampully J., p. 51 – 52).

Research analyse. From Table we can see that the general satisfaction of expectation towards tangibility is high (3.88). Clean uniform and impeccable appearance of staff both received high ranking at 3.98 and 3.89 respectively. In order to make a positive impact on the customer the employees should be dressed appropriately and should be more confident with their personality which will be reflected on their service, *table 1*.

Table 1

The satisfaction of the customer regarding the scope of tangibility

Scope of Tangibility	Expectation of Customer			Satisfaction of Customer		
	Mean	S.D	Standard	Mean	S.D	Standard
a) The Employees are dressed appropriately	3.98	0.65	High	4.82	0.35	Maximum
b) The Employee looks hygienic	3.88	0.45	High	4.73	0.45	Maximum
c) The employees are welcoming with a smile	3.78	0.53	High	4.57	0.33	Maximum
d) The employees have a nice persona	3.89	0.60	High	4.62	0.22	Maximum
Total Average Score	3.88	0.55	High	4.69	0.34	Maximum

Source: Author's work

The scope of assurance refers to the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence including proficiency, politeness and integrity, *table 2*.

Table 2

The satisfaction of the Customer regarding the scope of assurance

Scope of Assurance	Expectation of Customer			Satisfaction of Customer		
	Mean	S.D	Standard	Mean	S.D	Standard
e) Employee's have good knowledge about products	3.76	0.34	High	4.47	0.23	Maximum
f) Employee's are qualified to provide service	3.88	0.43	High	4.31	0.27	Maximum
g) Employee's can be trusted	4.13	0.24	High	4.53	0.22	Maximum
h) Employee's make you feel safe	3.83	0.42	High	4.28	0.36	Maximum
Average Total Score	3.90	0.36	High	4.40	0.27	Maximum

Source: Author's work

The scope of reliability refers to the capability of the hotel employees to provide the services consistently and precisely. The expectation of the customers should be met by the reliable services provided. The services provided should be proficient and delivered at the right time without any inconsistency which will create a good impact on the customer on the hotel, *table 3*.

Table 3

The satisfaction of the Customer regarding the scope of reliability

Scope of Reliability	Expectation of Customer			Satisfaction of Customer		
	Mean	S.D	Standard	Mean	S.D	Standard
i) Employee's provide service as promised	3.78	0.76	High	4.56	0.34	Maximum
j) Employee's provide correct information	3.65	0.72	High	4.28	0.35	Maximum
k) Employee's provides right service at the right time	3.72	0.68	High	4.37	0.43	Maximum
l) Employee's offers to help	3.8	0.65	High	4.3	0.21	Maximum
Average Total Score	3.74	0.70	High	4.38	0.33	Maximum

Source: Author's work

The scope of empathy signified the stipulation of consideration and personalised attention to every customers including approachability or accessibility and maintain simplicity of contact, efficient communication, and sympathy towards the customers.

Table 4

The satisfaction of the Customer regarding the scope of empathy

Scope of Empathy	Expectation of Customer			Satisfaction of Customer		
	Mean	S.D	Standard	Mean	S.D	Standard
m) The Employees can communicate in English	3.88	0.34	High	4.23	0.23	Maximum
n) The Employees are effective in their communication	3.90	0.41	High	4.54	0.28	Maximum
o) The Employees are attentive and caring	3.68	0.65	High	4.34	0.3	Maximum
p) The Employees provide appropriate assistance	3.74	0.53	High	4.38	0.26	Maximum
Average Total Score	3.80	0.48	High	4.37	0.27	Maximum

Source: Author's work

The *Table 4*. proves that the expecting standard regarding the scope of empathy was scored high (3.80). The employees are expected to communicate effectively by the customers and are rated

high (3.90). Effectively communicating with customer are very important for the employees. A hotel can be very successful if the employees can communicate effectively. The receptionist dealing with customers also serve as the information centre of the hotel. They must inform the housekeeping and kitchen divisions of guest information, and also receive feedback. For example, if the housekeeping informs any damages in the rooms then it can be fixed and returned to service for the customers and more rooms can be sold by the management Customer satisfaction is one for the major contributing factor that influences higher customer satisfaction.

The scope of responsiveness entails the enthusiasm to assist the customers and provide the services punctually. It is very important that the employees are eager and capable of helping the customers and provide them services punctually and are able to meet the expected standard of the customer.

As show above in the *Table 5* the average expectation of a customer regarding the standard of responsiveness are rated high (3.74). The employees responding according to the customers expectation of the service was rated the maximum at 4.42. The customers are able to achieve maximum satisfaction if they receive a rapid response from the employees of the hotel. The employees should be swift to respond to a customer when they are making a request, for example, customers who visit the hotel for the first time should be supported by the employees to find the directions in the hotel. It creates a feeling that the employees are enriched with service mentality to the ustomers and it'll make sure that the customer will be confident to ask for new services. It shows that the customer received proper assistance at the time of necessity. The capacity to act in response to the customers' requests implied to the satisfaction of the customer.

Table 5

The satisfaction of the Customer regarding responsiveness

Scope of Responsiveness	Expectation of Customer			Satisfaction of Customer		
	Mean	S.D	Standard	Mean	S.D	Standard
q) The Employee provides exact guidance	3.68	0.67	High	4.24	0.45	Maximum
r) The Employees provide services swiftly	3.76	0.62	High	4.33	0.34	Maximum
s) The Employees act according to your request	3.78	0.53	High	4.42	0.32	Maximum
t) The Employees help you without contempt	3.72	0.43	High	4.25	0.36	Maximum
Average Total Score	3.74	0.56	High	4.31	0.37	Maximum

Source: Author's work

Table 6 shows that overall satisfaction of expectation towards the five scopes was at a high level (3.79). Also from Chart 4.1.7. the result of customers expectation showed that assurance dimension was at the high level (3.90), followed by tangibility (3.88), empathy (3.80), reliability (3.74), and responsiveness (3.74). Almost all customers accepted that the cashier and receptionists should to be trustable because they are accountable for the expenses of the hotel and also gathering money from the guests of the hotel.

Table 6

The Total average standard regarding the quality of service

Scopes	Expectation of Customer			Satisfaction of Customer		
	Mean	S.D	Standard	Mean	S.D	Standard
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>
Tangibility	3.88	0.56	High	4.69	0.34	Maximum

Ciąg dalszy tabeli 1

1	2	3	5	6	7	8
Assurance	3.90	0.36	High	4.40	0.27	Maximum
Reliability	3.74	0.7	High	4.38	0.33	Maximum
Empathy	3.8	0.48	High	4.37	0.27	Maximum
Responsiveness	3.74	0.56	High	4.31	0.37	Maximum
Total Average Score	3.81	0.53	High	4.42	0.32	Maximum

Source: Author's work

Conclusions. Customer demand for high quality services are highly increasing from the 20th century. The research focused further on the gap between the expected and perceived standard of the customer towards the quality of service of the employees at the hotel.

The results showed that the average total score of the perceived standard was higher than the expected standard in all scopes. Hence, we can conclude all the customers were satisfied with all the scopes of the quality of service.

In this research, the results showed that most of respondents perceived the scope of tangibility to be the most important factor. Moreover, their perceived standard in the quality of service provided by the employees surpassed their expected standard.

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