



Service quality as a part of a customer satisfaction

Case: The Flying Pig Beach Hostel

Jessica Lustig

Bachelor's thesis

March 2023

Service Business

Lustig, Jessica

Service quality as a part of a customer satisfaction. Case: The Flying Pig Beach Hostel

Jyväskylä: Jamk University of Applied Sciences, February 2023, 47 pages

Degree Programme in Service Business. Bachelor's thesis.

Permission for open access publication: Yes

Language of publication: English

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to understand how customer satisfaction is created in the Flying Pig Beach Hostel and how the service quality supports customer satisfaction. The research was development research, and the purpose was to find out realistic targets for development in the hostel. Flying Pig Beach Hostel is the commissioner in this research, and it is located Noordwijk, the Netherlands. The hostel offers accommodation and bar services.

The goal of the research was to increase knowledge about how the hostel meets up with the service quality standards and dimensions. The research is based on literature, articles, internet sources, and statistics. The research was implemented through a feasible study gathered from the hostel's customers using the accommodation services. The feasibility study was a survey using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods. The feasibility study was to find out what the customer's expectations of the service were and how the service was experienced. The research also used qualitative methods by interviewing the organization's staff members. The interviews were implemented using theme interview method. The goals of the interviews were to find out how staff members view the service quality and how it is enabled and maintained in the hostel.

The hostel's current service quality was defined using the results of the research. The current level of service quality was built from the answers that dealt with customer satisfaction. The results showed that the service quality is high in the target organization, customers are satisfied, and they praised a good, friendly customer service and the cozy, homelike atmosphere in the hostel.

Development ideas formed from the results were that more activities could be arranged to make it easier for customers to interact with each other and add more value to the customer experience, which again improves the customer satisfaction even more. Another matter that arose was that the booking platforms could point out the house rules more visibly to avoid possible misunderstandings, which makes customers more satisfied.

Keywords/tags (subjects)

Customer satisfaction, customer service, gap model, service quality, hospitality

Miscellaneous (Confidential information)

-

Lustig, Jessica

Palvelun laatu osana asiakastyytyväisyyttä. Case: Flying Pig Beach Hostel

Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu, Helmikuu 2023, 47 sivua.

Palveluliiketoiminnan tutkinto-ohjelma. Opinnäytetyö AMK.

Julkaisun kieli: Englanti

Julkaisulupa avoimessa verkossa: kyllä

Tiivistelmä

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli ymmärtää, miten asiakastyytyväisyys syntyy Flying Pig Beach Hostelissa ja miten palvelun laatu tukee asiakastyytyväisyyttä. Tutkimus oli kehittämistutkimus, ja tarkoituksena oli selvittää hostellin realistiset kehittämiskohteet. Flying Pig Beach Hostel on tämän tutkimuksen toimeksiantaja, ja se sijaitsee Noordwijkissa, Alankomaissa. Hostelli tarjoaa majoitus- ja baaripalveluja.

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli lisätä tietoa siitä, miten hostelli täyttää palvelun laatustandardit ja -ulottuvuudet. Tutkimus perustuu kirjallisuuteen, artikkeleihin, internetlähteisiin ja tilastoihin. Tutkimus toteutettiin hostellin majoituspalveluja käyttäviltä asiakkailta kerätyn esitutkimuksen avulla. Esitutkimus oli kyselytutkimus, jossa käytettiin sekä laadullisia, että määrällisiä menetelmiä. Esitutkimuksella pyrittiin selvittämään, millaisia odotuksia asiakkailla oli palvelua kohtaan ja miten palvelu koettiin. Tutkimuksessa käytettiin myös kvalitatiivista menetelmää haastatteleamalla organisaation henkilökuntaa. Haastattelut toteutettiin teema-haastattelumenetelmää käyttäen. Haastattelujen tavoitteena oli selvittää, miten henkilökunta näkee palvelun laadun ja miten se mahdollistetaan ja ylläpidetään hostellissa.

Hostellin nykyinen palvelun laatu määriteltiin tutkimustulosten avulla. Palvelun laadun nykyinen taso muodostettiin vastausten perusteella, joissa käsiteltiin asiakastyytyväisyyttä. Tulokset osoittivat, että palvelun laatu on kohdeorganisaatiossa korkealla tasolla, asiakkaat ovat tyytyväisiä, sekä kehuivat erityisesti hyvää ja ystävällistä asiakaspalvelua sekä hostellin viihtyisää ja kodikasta ilmapiiriä.

Tuloksista muodostui kehittämisideoita, joiden mukaan hostellissa voitaisiin järjestää enemmän toimintaa, jotta asiakkaiden vuorovaikutus keskenään olisi helpompaa ja asiakaskokemukseen saataisiin lisää arvoa, mikä taas parantaa asiakastyytyväisyyttä entisestään. Toinen esiin noussut asia oli, että varausalustat voisivat tuoda majoituspalvelua koskevan informaation näkyvämmiin esiin mahdollisten väärinkäsitysten välttämiseksi, joka vaikuttaa positiivisesti asiakastyytyväisyyteen.

Avainsanat (asiasanat)

Asiakastyytyväisyys, asiakaspalvelu, gap-malli, palvelun laatu, palveluala

Muut tiedot (salassa pidettävät liitteet)

-

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Hostels in the Netherlands.....	4
2.1	Hospitality nowadays	6
3	The Flying Pig Beach Hostel.....	8
4	Customer satisfaction	9
4.1	Service quality	10
5	Research perspective	15
5.1	The provider gaps as determinants of service quality	16
5.2	Quality-satisfaction link.....	19
6	Booking platforms offering information for customers	20
7	Implementation.....	22
7.1	Feasibility study.....	23
7.2	Qualitative interviews	26
8	Results.....	28
8.1	Feasibility study.....	28
8.2	Interviews.....	31
9	Summary	36
9.1	Results compared to the theory	36
9.2	Development ideas	39
9.3	Reliability and ethics of the research	40
10	Conclusions	41
10.1	Reflection	42
	References	44
	Appendices	48
	Appendix 1. The feasibility study	48
	Appendix 2. Theme interview	50

Figures

Figure 1. Percentage of different bias creators in feasibility study.....	30
---	----

Pictures

Picture 1. Service quality five dimensions and their impacts. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, edited).....	15
Picture 2. Gap model. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, edited)	19
Picture 3. Quality satisfaction link. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, edited)	20

1 Introduction

The last couple of years have been very different from what the world has been used to. There have been many restrictions and recommendations one after another caused by Covid-19. Service sectors such as hospitality have been facing difficulties and some organizations in this industry have had to give up for the lack of resources, restrictions, and low amount of customers. After this tough period, the world is finally starting to open up and the service industry has its opportunity to rise again. People are now traveling and exploring the world more actively so the need for restaurants and accommodation services is current.

While the world has been closed, service organizations have faced new quality standards. Keeping distance from other people and hygiene being even more important than normal has led to totally new customer expectations. How are organizations developing their services for customers to feel safe and how can they find out what their customers want and need in a world that changes constantly, is total customer satisfaction even possible to achieve?

The goal of the research was to try to view the commissioner organization's understanding of the difference between what customers want and what they are receiving, are customers' wants and needs in line with the perceived service. Overall to increase knowledge about how the hostel meets up with the service quality standards and dimensions. Does the organization listen to customers when developing their services or how do they manage in that kind of situation? Does the organization know what its customers want, and if it knows, are the employees aware of that? This research's purpose is to dive into the commissioner organization's customer service, how it works, and if there is anything to develop from the customer's or the organization's point of view.

The commissioner of this research is The Flying Pig Beach Hostel in Noordwijk, the Netherlands. The Flying Pig Beach Hostel is located on the west coast of the Netherlands in a 44 thousand inhabitants town called Noordwijk (Noordwijk 2022). The hostel's main service is to offer accommodation

in dormitories and private rooms, but the hostel also offers bar services. The hostel identifies itself as a youth backpacker hostel. (That's why you should visit us 2021.)

2 Hostels in the Netherlands

First, the research is going to shortly dive into the history of the hospitality industry in the Netherlands. To understand where everything started and how it has developed to the point where it is now. Understanding the history of tourism in the area and surrounding areas is a big factor when trying to understand customers' movements and actions these days. An interesting perspective is to view the industry's maneuvers globally, because the customers are from all around the world, without forgetting to view those also locally. Looking into the closest and biggest competitors in the field reveals a lot about the hospitality industry's nature in the area.

The Netherlands

The research will briefly present the country and the surrounding areas of the hostel to get an understanding of where and in what kind of environment the hostel operates. The country of windmills and tulips, the Netherlands takes its place in Western Europe. The Netherlands is sharing a south border with Belgium and an east border with Germany, the north and west borders are in touch with the North Sea. The official name of the country is the Netherlands, but the country is also known as Holland. (Basic facts about Amsterdam n.d.)

Based on Richards (1996, 233 - 246) until the 1990s the Netherlands has been more like a country that tries to improve its own citizens' quality of life rather than a country that wants to live from the power of tourism. Before the 90s attracting tourists was not an acceptable goal for cultural institutions. The cultural audience and interest in Dutch culture started to rise already during the 70s and 80s because of the rising level of education. Slowly, tourism started to be seen as a solution, for example for funding cultural institutions and maintaining cultural heritage. Spreading culture and tourism geographically and socially helped with building national and regional identities. Richards points out that the weakness in Dutch tourism has been that there have not been that many "must-see" cultural attractions, so the tourism product has been more just the culture itself.

Amsterdam

Amsterdam is founded in 1275 (Amsterdam, Europeans museum capital n.d) and the best known for its canals, old buildings, and many museums. Located in the middle, a bit more to the west, it enables easy and fast traveling to everywhere around the country. (Amsterdam n.d.) Amsterdam the capital and the biggest city of the Netherlands is seen as a traditional Dutch destination for tourists. In the year 1993, there were already 35 museums in Amsterdam attracting tourists. (Richards 1996, 236.) Nowadays there are over 50 museums in Amsterdam (All museums n.d).

The hostel market in the Netherlands is offering more than 1,000 hostel beds only in Amsterdam, in 48 hostels where the average number of beds is 158. Outside of Amsterdam the average amount of beds per hostel is 112. (Amsterdam hostel chains indicate booming business in youth travel 2017.)

Noordwijk

Noordwijk, the town where the commissioner organization is located, is known as a floral seaside resort in Europe. Noordwijk's location by the sea enabled the area to be originally known as a hometown for fishermen, even though there is no harbor (Early fishing history n.d.) Later the town started to earn publicity as a known herb and flower producer. (History 2022.) The town is located on the west coast side of the Netherlands and is only 35 kilometers from the capital of the country, Amsterdam, and 30 kilometers from The Hague. These two big cities are attracting a lot of tourists but also offer possibilities for studying and working which are wide and popular.

Noordwijk is a town that consists of four areas, Noordwijk aan Zee by the beach, Noordwijk Binnen which is the old village center, Noordwijkerhout full of beautiful nature, flower fields, and woodland and the Zilk by the dunes (About Noordwijk n.d). Noordwijk aan zee also has landmarks from World War 2. The Atlantic wall and kilometers of bunker corridors were built by the Germans. The bunkers were used as an ammunition depot, residential bunkers, and firing locations when protecting and defending the coast. (Remains of World War 2 n.d.)

A seaside resort, Noordwijk aan Zee has been attracting tourists since 1866. The beach by the North Sea is 13 kilometers long and offers endless opportunities from family activities to water-sports. One of the most attractive things has been the calming and enjoyable feeling that the sea

and its waves are giving. In the early 19th century, the first hotel and catering organizations appeared in the area, Grand Hotel Huis ter Duin being the very first one. The hotels in Noordwijk are also popular for being used for business meetings. All in all, every year Noordwijk attracts 1 million people only for tourism. (Tourism in Noordwijk n.d.)

There are around 90 hostels in the Netherlands, in 23 cities, and only two of them are in Noordwijk. The other hostel in Noordwijk is one that belongs to the Stayokay hostel chain, and the other one is The Flying Pig Beach Hostel. (Hostels in Netherlands, Europe n.d.) In total there are three Flying Pig hostels, one on the coast in Noordwijk and two in the center of Amsterdam. The Flying Pig hostels have been voted “*the best hostel in the Netherlands*” in 2017 by TripAdvisor. (About us 2019.) In Noordwijk, there are around 20 different accommodation service providers and most of them are hotels (Noordwijk aan zee n.d).

Now, as the research is aware of the area where the hostel operates, it is time to view how hospitality looks nowadays in general and explain more about what hostels are and how they are different from hotels. Looking into current movements and trends helps to approach the development side of the research. What today’s trends are seeking from hospitality services and how the field of hospitality could answer to those expectations.

2.1 Hospitality nowadays

During the 21st century, new hostels have been built and opened throughout the Netherlands. Millennials have been consuming a lot of hostel services while traveling and in accommodation services, they are valuing affordability, trendiness, and communal areas for socializing and working. (Amsterdam hostel chains indicate booming business in youth travel 2017.) Das (2018) presents that traveling is no longer just booking flight tickets, hotel rooms, and going sightseeing. Consumers are seeking personalized value for themselves that fulfills their needs on a physical level but more importantly, on an emotional level. According to Das, fulfilling customers’ needs and creating unforgettable memories has always been important for consumers. As information is shared fast and for a wide range of consumers on social media, value creation, and customer satisfaction are very important factors if the organization wants to keep a positive image of itself. The world is open around the clock, consumers are demanding services more and more regardless of the time of the day.

Competitors in the field of hospitality are the other organizations and shared housing platforms such as Airbnb however, there is also new technology which has its place in the field. Virtual reality (VR) has found its way into hospitality and tourism and might be the next big competitor in the industries. VR means a computer-constructed three-dimensional environment and it can create a different kind of virtual environments, for example, seeing the world's most famous tourist attractions through the VR-glasses. (Roman, Kosiński, Bhatta, Niedziółka, Krasnodębski 2022.)

Taken together, these studies support the notion that customers in the hospitality field are looking for more unique experiences to fulfill their physical and emotional needs. How can the organizations on the field stand out from the crowd when they are not only competing against each other but also with the ever-changing technology?

Hostels as accommodation services

A hostel compared to a hotel is an informal and more communal accommodation service and is usually a cheaper option (Hietala, Venttola 2019). At first, hostels were created for students to stay in when they are on educational trips, and already from the start hostels were attracting young travelers and backpackers. The first hostel, which was a youth hostel, was opened in 1912 in western Germany. Hostels became popular all around the world. The concept of a hostel used to be different, people staying at the hostels helped with the daily tasks, reception, cleaning, and cooking, and for that, they got to spend the night. (Hostelling international 2011.) Savills world research (2016) shows that during the 2010s, branded hostel sector has kept expanding. Youth travelers are searching for value while traveling and shared hostel dormitories are offering that value, the possibility to socialize and meet new people is a big value creator.

Hostels are favored among backpackers that might have traveled a long way and are seeking a place that provides comfort and a homelike feeling for them (Wilson, Richards 2008, 187.) Having defined what is meant by a hostel, the research will now move on to introduce the hostel where this research was implemented, The Flying Pig Beach Hostel. The following chapter will discuss what this hostel is like, what it offers to its customers, and briefly opens the hostel chain that The Flying Pig Beach Hostel is a part of.

3 The Flying Pig Beach Hostel

The Flying Pig Beach Hostel was the commissioner in this research. The hostel takes place as a commissioner due to the researcher implemented an internship in the organization during the summer season of 2022. During the internship, a thought arose about carrying out this research in the hostel. The thought was discussed and approved by the organization.

The Flying Pig Beach Hostel is a youth hostel located in Noordwijk aan Zee and has been active for over 20 years. The hostel is only a couple minutes' walk away from the beach and close to the dunes. The hostel is known for its friendly and welcoming staff and the international, cozy, laid-back atmosphere. According to the hostel's web page: *"Our smiling, friendly staff will make you feel like you're staying with family."* (That's why you should visit us 2021.) As Savills world research presented earlier, nowadays travelers are seeking value that comes e.g., from socializing with other customers, The Flying Pig Beach Hostel's friendly atmosphere gives a good chance to be a source for that value.

Identifying as a youth hostel, in this case, means, that people over 40 years must be accommodated only in private rooms and people under 18 years old are not accommodated at all. The hostel is popular among backpackers and budget travelers from all around the world, multiple different cultures offer a great possibility to learn more about the world and its wanderers. The hostel also has a bar area that serves alcohol and hosts parties and other entertainment for its customers. (The Flying Pig Beach Hostel n.d.) Age policies that are defined above, are determined by the hostel and can be found on the hostel's website and different booking platforms.

The Flying Pig Beach Hostel is a part of St Christopher's Inn chain which is a youth hostel chain in Europe. There are two other Flying Pig Hostels in Amsterdam, The Flying Pig Downtown and the Flying Pig Uptown. The Beach Hostel is the smallest one of these three hostels. The Flying Pig Downtown is located right in the center and is known as a party hostel (Discover Downtown n.d). The Flying Pig Uptown identifies itself also as a party hostel and it is located too in the central area but a little bit further than The Flying Pig Downtown (Discover Uptown n.d). St Christopher's Inn has hostels in 10 different and biggest cities around Europe, for example in Rome and London, and London itself has eight different hostels that belong to the chain. The hostel chain's main values

are safety, security, having fun, and customers getting value for their money. (About St Christopher's Inns – Europe's best backpacker hostels n.d.)

In the next chapter, the research will move to discuss customer satisfaction and service quality in general. The following will clarify, what those terms mean, how they can be enabled, what are the effects, and why those themes are important in this industry. The next section starts with customer satisfaction and after that, it moves to service quality. The next section will also point out different characteristics of services and introduce different dimensions and criteria of services.

4 Customer satisfaction

Filenius (2015, 31, 34 - 35) thinks that customer satisfaction has a direct impact on an organization's success both positively and negatively. Filenius also highlights that positive customer experience can be shown in the profits and unsuccessful customer experiences are generating costs for the organization. Hansen and Christensen (2007, 95 - 96) presented that customer satisfaction is formed by many different factors. Only the customer's personality, attitudes, moods, and feelings are an effective part of how the customer feels about the perceived service. Everyone forms their expectations based on their earlier expectations and knowledge so there are many ways consumers are viewing, for example, different advertisements.

According to Hudson and Hudson (2017, 49), a customer's experience of the perceived service affects a lot how satisfied the customer is. The key factors experiencing the service are a unique combination of responses to human interaction dimensions and physical environment dimensions. Human interaction dimensions are more variable because it does not include only employees' actions but also other customers' acts. Customers themselves can affect the experienced service by their characteristics. Cultural background and earlier experiences can shape consumers' expectations of the service and that way the expectations might be very different in each consumer's mind.

The studies above all point out that each customer is an individual and experiences the service and even the advertisements differently. Environments and customers' expectations are constantly changing so organizations need to be ready for those changes to keep up with their satisfied customers. Customers' backgrounds and earlier experiences that affect their expectations are very

different from each other, which is why the organization needs to get to know its customers and their real needs.

The theory explained by Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1993) presents that customers expected service quality is shaped by desired and adequate service. Every customer forms a border for those areas by themselves, different factors affect where each person has drawn those lines. Big effectors that come from inside the customer are the zone of tolerance, but also personal needs are affecting desired service and perceived service alternatives, self-perceived service role, and situational factors for example that other customers are affecting adequate service. Things mentioned above are effectors that come inside the customer but effectors coming from outside are explicit service promises for example advertising, implicit service promises for example price, word of mouth, previous experience, and predicted service. (Zeithaml, Berry, Parasuraman 1993, 5.)

Filenius (2015) brings up that when talking about hostels, customer experience already starts with booking systems, how easy those are to use, and what kind of details are available from the service provider. Once digital service platforms have become more popular, the assumed service quality in the physical organization should be the same as promised on digital services. If the expectations of the service given by digital platforms are different from the reality when using the service, it might lead that the customer is not being satisfied and the customer experience is poor. Information about poor customer experience can be reported to other customers fast, thanks to digitalization. (Filenius 2015, 26)

Employees being a big part of producing and delivering service, need to know what the organization's quality standards and norms are. Employees who are working with customers need to be adaptive and understand what the customer needs and wants so the expectations can be filled and in the best-case scenario even exceeded. (Grönroos 1998, 98.)

4.1 Service quality

Service quality being part of customer satisfaction, it is important to first define what it means in this research. Services in general are defined as the following take from Grönroos (1998, 52) presents,

A service is a process consisting of a series of a more or less intangible activities that normally, but not necessarily always, take place in interactions between the customer and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems.

This definition points out that services are processes, which are experienced through interaction between a customer and the service provider. The services are different from the goods by their characteristics. The characteristics differencing can affect how the service is viewed and how the expectations about the service are built in the customer's mind. The characteristics of services are affecting also how the services should be presented in marketing. When taking notice of the different characteristics of services while planning marketing the expectations of the service are given correctly to the customer and the customer is more likely satisfied because the expectations are matching to reality.

Service quality can be considered good when it meets customers' expectations. Customers' expectations of the service are built from what they see from advertising, what they have heard about the service from other people, and as mentioned before their background and previous experiences. Service quality is shared in different dimensions that represent how customers are arranging and processing the service quality in their minds. Customers are judging the service through those dimensions, and that is why all of them should be considered important parts of the service provided.

Characteristic of services

Quality of the service can be experienced in many ways depending on both parties, the customer's, and the service provider's expectations. This chapter will explain what is meant by different characteristics of services, which can be causing those expectations. The different characteristics are tangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability. Looking into different characteristics of services is valuable for this research because it will be easier to understand the customers' and the organization's points of view when talking about customer satisfaction.

Services characteristics are different from tangible products as being more intangible. Services being intangible means that inventories cannot be done, services are hard to patent which can lead to that new inventions can be easily copied, and pricing services can be challenging. Intangibility is

caused by services being more actions and performances. As tangible products, services cannot be felt, seen, tasted, or touched which makes the service hard to price, because producing it might cost only time in some cases. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, 16). If producing a service costs only time for the service provider, how can someone's time or skills be priced? Time and skills can be worth different amounts of money, for example, according to the level and amount of education, social position in society or good marketing skills that make the value of the product look very high.

Service is most of the time confluence of two or more individuals' interaction, the same words, feelings, and actions are hard to display the same way again, this is called heterogeneity. Heterogeneity can be seen among the customers too; two customers cannot be exactly alike. Heterogeneity can be an upside of the services' specialty but sometimes even the downside. For example, if the customer has liked the service perceiving it the first time but then the second time something changes because of the intangibility and humanity, they might not like the service that time as much. The changing thing can depend on the customer server's actions or even the customer's expectations or mood. Sometimes even uncontrollable things can appear positively or negatively and affect the perceived service, this kind of object can be for example weather. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, 16.)

Inseparability means that services are hard to produce beforehand or as mass production. Often services are used and produced at the same time, which adds more variables to the moment when the service is experienced, e.g., the other customers might affect the result of perceived service. Services are like real-time products which mostly include interactions between customers and employees. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, 17.) According to inseparability, it is also a bit of a customer's responsibility to understand the difference between what can be affected from the organization's side and what cannot be, e.g., other customers and their moods.

Perishability refers to the fact that most services are impossible to save, return, resold, or store. Exceptions are education- and entertainment-based services that can be captured for example to a video and that way replayed. Perishability can cause problems when the customer is unhappy with the result that the service created. If the customer is unsatisfied with the result, it is impossible to sell forward or even return as in the same situation with goods those would be possible.

(Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, 17.) Pleasing the customer is important for creating continuous customer relationships and in the world of services when the returning or reselling is hard, can the unsatisfied customer still be compensated for instance, with a gift card.

Service quality dimensions and criteria

The most important thing when talking about service quality is the customer that is experiencing the service. The important question is not if the quality of the service is good or not but why it is good, what makes the organization's service better than someone else's, or the opposite, why the service can't reach a high-quality mentality in the customer's mind. (Grönroos 1998, 62.) The five service quality dimensions are identified as service quality drivers. Quality drivers mean that if all the criteria are filled from the organization's side, the service has a full possibility to satisfy the customer.

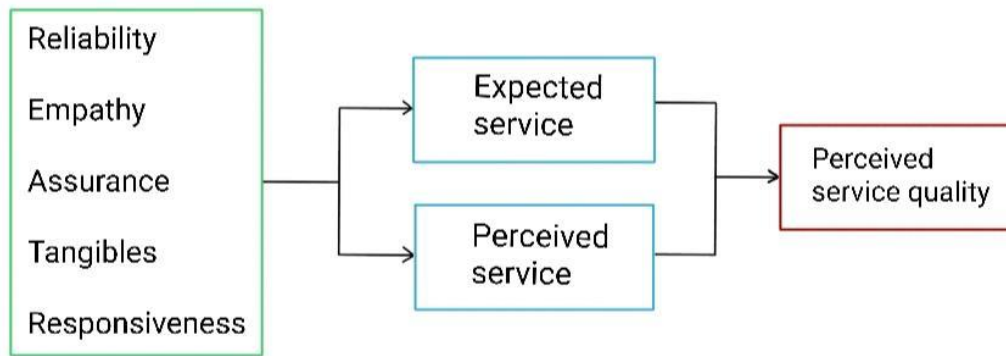
The first dimension reliability is one of the most important contributing factors as an insight into service quality. Reliability is about the expertise to present the promised service trustworthy and accurately, delivering the promises on every level. The second contributing factor is assurance. Assurance is about inspiring the customer toward purchase decisions by building a trustworthy and confident environment with the knowledge and courtesy of the employees. When employees succeed to deliver a professional and courteous image of themselves, they are drawing that image about the organization at the same time. The third dimension is tangibles. Service itself is intangible but still has some tangible parts such as the physical facilities and the environment where the service is experienced, websites, digital apps, and so on. Through these, the customers are evaluating the service beforehand and build expectations.

The fourth dimension is empathy. Empathy includes all the attention given to the customer, that the customers are treated as individuals, they are cared about, and they feel like the organization is attaching great importance to their opinions. It is important that the service is personalized enough so the customer can feel that they are special and unique, and their needs are recognized. Fifth and the last dimension is responsiveness. Responsiveness is built from a willingness to help a customer with all their problems, and requests, answering their questions and feedback. For responsiveness, it is important that the customer can get a response rapidly. Customers need fast

responses and if they need to wait too long, they might want to change the service provider to the one that gives them responses. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, 89 - 91.)

Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2021) presented five quality dimensions, then again Grönroos (1998) presented six criteria that are enabling a good quality of service. Grönroos is presenting all the same characteristics that services have, such as Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler. About service quality, Grönroos notes that it is just as good as the organization's customers think it is. According to the services five quality dimensions mentioned before, by Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler, Grönroos presents six criteria which are professionalism and skills, attitudes and behavior, accessibility and flexibility, reliability and trustworthiness, service recovery, reputation, and credibility. These six criteria are compiled from different research that are done before. The six criteria are explained in the following text.

Professionalism and skills are affecting the quality for that the customers understand that the employees have all the knowledge needed and they can answer the customers' questions and solve their problems using their professional skills. Attitudes and behavior are strengthening the quality by making the customers feel like the customer servers are interested in all the individual customer and their needs by giving attention and being friendly and willing to help. Accessibility and flexibility are important therefore the customers are feeling that the service provider, its location, opening hours, employees, and all the systems e.g., websites are working perfectly, and the service is easy to reach, and each customer's needs and wishes are received adaptively. Reliability and trustworthiness step in when something has already been promised to the customer. Promised service and timetable are followed and served according to the customer's interests. Service recovery, immediate acts are needed if something goes wrong while producing the service. When the service provider is ready to find new solutions or otherwise tries to keep the situation under control, can the quality still stay high even if something has gone wrong. Reputation and credibility are about having a clear picture of the organization as a trustworthy service provider that stands for strong performance and good values. (Grönroos 1998, 74.)



Picture 1. Service quality five dimensions and their impacts. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, edited)

Picture 1 presents the quality dimensions that Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2021) presented. Picture shows how perceived service quality is formed from expected service and perceived service. Expected and perceived service again are formed from the five dimensions which are reliability, empathy, assurance, tangibles, and responsiveness.

5 Research perspective

The following text is approaching the research perspective more precisely. What were the goals and purposes of the research, and how the research tried to fulfill those? The research viewed how customer satisfaction and service quality were met in The Flying Pig Beach Hostel. As mentioned in the beginning, this research purpose was to increase knowledge about how the hostel meets up with the service quality standards and dimensions that are opened in the chapter above. The research tried to find out what are the things that are enabling good service quality and satisfied customers in the hostel. This research was development research and tried to find areas for improvement in the hostel's service models and in along the customers' service path when they are using the hostel's services.

The research presents next the gap model, also known as provider gaps, that are used as a tool for understanding the current service quality. Through gap-model the research view at The Flying Pig Beach Hostel's service quality. The basic idea behind the gap model is that all the gaps should be closed for enabling flowing customer service, where the customer's expectations match with provided service. The term quality-satisfaction link appears also in the following text and is another

tool for viewing customer satisfaction in the target organization. Quality-satisfaction link opens more of the factors that are part of building customer satisfaction and how they are in relation to one another.

Through the gap model, the quality-satisfaction link and the five and six criteria of the service quality were tried to solve the relationship between the hostel's customers and customer service, do they go hand in hand or is there anything missing or something that could use some development. The research will also investigate the hostel's different booking platforms, and how those look for the customer. The research will next present the gap model and quality-satisfaction link.

5.1 The provider gaps as determinants of service quality

The research was viewing the hostel's customer service from the provider gap direction and concentrating on all the gaps and how they are fulfilled in the organization or if there is something missing. The gap model describes service quality, how it is provided and received, and how customers' expectations are understood and fulfilled. The provider gap's main problems are gap 1: not knowing what customer wants, gap 2: not selecting the right service quality designs and standards, gap 3: not delivering to service designs and standards, gap 4: not matching performance to promises and gap 5 is called the customer gap that closes all the gaps mentioned before if gap five is closed company's perceptions of consumer expectations are matching with customers expected service. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, 28-34.)

Gap 1, knowing customers' expectations

Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2021) present that gap 1 can form if an organization does not know what customer is expecting or the organization's beliefs about customers' expectations are wrong. An organization needs to be interested to interact with the customers and ask and listen to what they really want. The main reason that leads to the gap widening is deficient marketing research orientation, the organization might have information about the customers, but the information might have nothing to do with what the customers are expecting from the service. Another reason is the lack of communication inside the organization, if the organization does not communicate with the front-line employees and doesn't know what or how they communicate

with the customers the gap might get even wider. Closing the gap 1 organization needs to understand what kind of customers they have and then build up their strategies over those facts. Should the organization focus to gather more new customers or is the main customer base formed from already existing customers that keep coming back? (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, 28-29.)

Gap 2, finding right service designs and standards

Gap 2 can be found in if the service design and standards are not shaped by listening to the customer. Service design problems such as failures unclear service paths, lack of customer-driven service standards, and service design that doesn't meet customers' or employees' needs, or requirements are going to affect the gap closing negatively. Gap 2 can be closed by understanding what customers want, and how they want it delivered. Inside the organization, everyone must have the same vision of the service, its quality, and its possible problems. Again, listening to the customer and modifying the organization's services suitable for the customers is the key factor in closing the gap. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, 29-30.)

Gap 3, understanding of service delivery

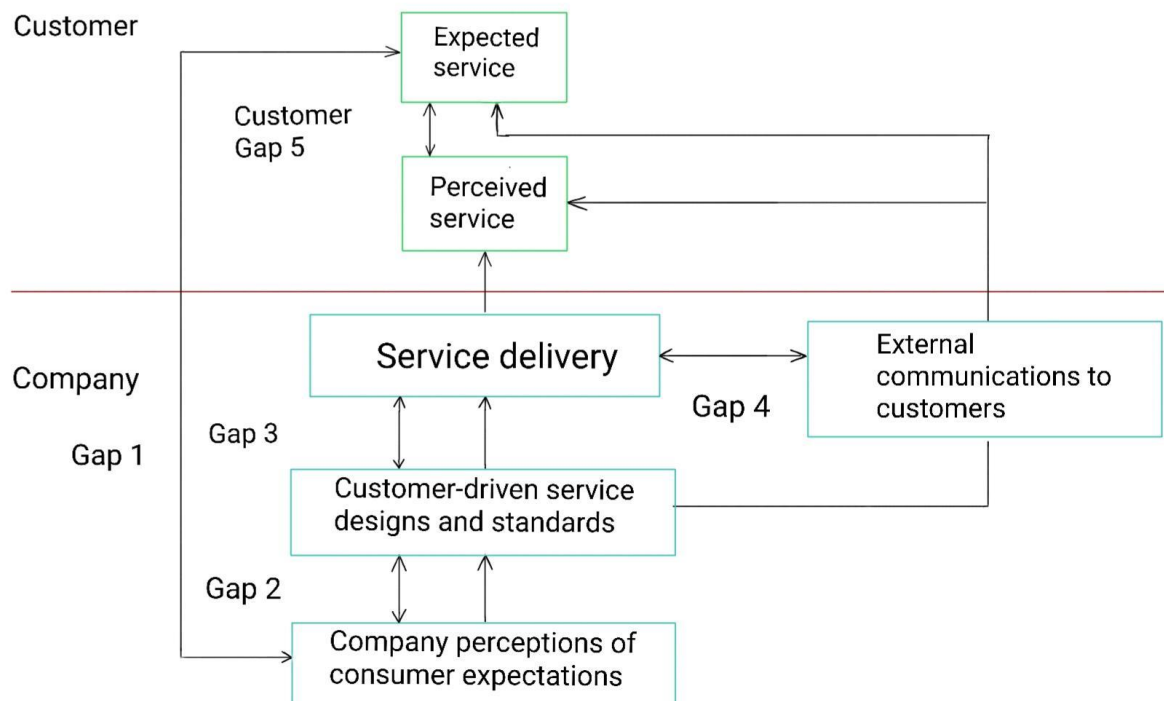
Gap 3 is about delivering high-quality services for the customers and ensuring that the service delivery by the organization's employees matches the customer-driven service standards. This means that even when the service standards are chosen correctly, the employees' performance might fail to support those standards. The biggest problems according to gap 3 are formed when the employee doesn't understand the roles inside the company, the human resource function doesn't understand what kind of employees are in need, or just all in all poor selection of employees. Lack of teamwork is showing up in situations like this. Sometimes service delivery can be destroyed also by the customer. If a customer doesn't understand their role, they might step on some other customer's feet for example by using the organization's resources that are meant for other customers. Service might otherwise be perfectly tailored for the customers, but then customers are out of their roles, so the outcome is critical. Gap 3 can be closed by checking that all the resources that are needed to achieve the goals are arranged correctly and the understanding inside the organization is up to date and the customer is clearly instructed what is their role. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, 31-32.)

Gap 4, performance matching with promises given

Gap 4 is formed when performance doesn't match promises given to the customer. Promises given to the customer might be promised in media advertising, face-to-face sales situations, and other external communications between the service provider and the customer. If employees don't understand the reality of service delivery, there is a possibility of failing to communicate what the organization can offer for the customer and what it can't. Overpromising in any kind of communication might lead to critical outcomes, customer might feel cheated. Gap 4 could be avoided by managing all communications to match the reality with provided service so that inflated expectations does not lead to any higher expectations. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, 33-34.)

Gap 5, customer gap

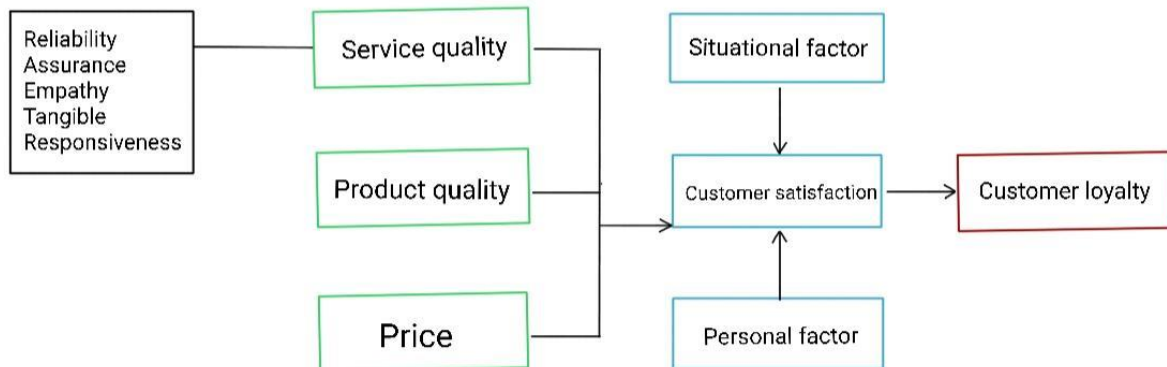
Gap 5 is closed when all the gaps from 1 to 4 are closed. Summed up that means that the expected service matches perfectly with the perceived service, the organization knows what the customer wants and can promise high-quality service and can provide it for the customer. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, 34,39.) Closing gap 5 is important for being able to construct long and lasting relationships with customers (Hudson, Hudson 2017, 119.) In the picture 2 below, can be seen how the gap model works and its progress in concrete.



Picture 2. Gap model. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, edited)

5.2 Quality-satisfaction link

An important perspective in this research is the quality-satisfaction link. Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2021) presented that service quality is part of customer satisfaction. Service quality reflects a customer's perception of reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. The perceived service quality is part of customer satisfaction as well as product quality and price, also situational factors and personal factors, for example, weather conditions and customer's mental state are affecting how customer satisfaction is perceived. Customer satisfaction again is the path toward customer loyalty. Customer loyalty means that the customer keeps choosing the organization's services time after time. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, 83.) Picture 3 is clarifying how the connection works between each component in quality satisfaction link.



Picture 3. Quality satisfaction link. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2021, edited)

6 Booking platforms offering information for customers

Booking platforms may be the first places where customers are gathering information about the organization or their services. Nowadays, most customers are booking their stay online. The importance of a sufficient amount of information is unavoidable. If there is enough information available, may it show the organization more as a trustworthy option, and comparing different accommodation service providers is easier for the customer.

This chapter will dive into booking platforms and views, and how the target hostel's booking platforms differ or not. What is pointing out in good and in bad, how could the booking platform possibly offer even more for the customer? The booking platforms viewed in this research are the organization's website, Booking.com, and Hostelworld. Those websites are the only ways to book a stay at the hostel online. Another way to do it is to walk into the hostel.

The Flying Pig Beach Hostel website

The organization's website (www.flyingpigbeach.nl) is also used as a booking source. The web page has a lot of information about the organization, its services, and tips on what to discover in

the area around while staying at the hostel. The organization's web page is full of pictures of the hostel, the surrounding area, and its activities. Compared to the other booking platforms there is more information on the own webpage and gathering more specific information for example about the history of the area is possible.

The only difference to the other platforms is that the reviews are not shown anywhere, therefore the other customers' voices cannot be heard when booking through the organization's webpage. Booking the stay at the hostel is done easily, in the start customer can find all the hostel's information, including address, phone number, email, and so on. Also, highlights of the Hostel and location are pointed out and clear directions to the hostel are displayed with different variations. Breakfast is always included in the price when booking through the hostel's webpage.

In the FAQ (a frequently asked question) & Terms section (FAQ and Terms 2021) is pointed out that "Please note that we do not allow guests under the age of 18 and guests aged 40 or above must book a private room..." Then again when booking a stay, the booking platform informs only that under 18 years old guests must be accommodated only in private rooms with their parent or a legal guardian. Therefore, the booking platform does not inform the guest about the current age policy and false or mistakenly done bookings are easier to do.

Booking.com

Booking.com is a platform offering different kinds of traveling options from flights to accommodation services and airport transportation from all around the world. Booking.com has gathered different producers under the same web page so they are easy to find for the consumer and comparing different options is possible. (About Booking.com n.d.) Booking.com's page about The Flying Pig Beach Hostel shows right away all the different room options that the customer can choose from. The top attractions and other nearby services are listed as well as all the services that can be found at the hostel.

Reviews and ratings given by other customers are appearing on the main page and a big number of pictures strengthen the image of the hostel that customer has in their mind. On booking.com the overall rate for the hostel is 8.4 based on 698 reviews.

When scrolling down the webpage, can be found the house rules and the fine print that might have some important information for the customer, what they should know about the hostel, or its rules and policies. House rules are telling the check-in and check-out times, child policies, that guests under 18 years old cannot be accommodated, also that pets are not allowed, and the payment methods that can be used. The fine print opens more the age policy, that guests over 40 years old must book a private room for their stay. The fine print tells that groups that have over 8 guests, must book a minimum stay of 5 nights, covid-19 policies, and that guests must be able to present an identification card. (The Flying Pig Beach Hostel n.d.)

Hostelworld.com

Hostelworld is an online travel agency that is focused on the hostelling category. Hostelworld has gathered hostel accommodations worldwide and offers group adventure tours focusing on hostel guests. (Our story n.d.) On Hostelworld's website of The Flying Pig Beach Hostel there are also a lot of pictures of the hostel and the reviews and ratings are clearly shown. The rate of the hostel on Hostelworld is 9.1 based on 3294 customer reviews. House rules, age, and group policies are clearly shown on the main page and all the important information including the map and house rules are easy to find from the introduction. Hostelworld's page about The Flying Pig Beach Hostel seems to be the most comprehensive. Only noticeable thing is that when searching for accommodation services, The Flying Pig Beach Hostel can be found only under Amsterdam's accommodation services and not under Noordwijk's.

From all booking platforms, the information about different policies and house rules is possible to find but on Hostelworld's page, those are pointed out clearest when compared to the others. Every booking platform has a wide list of things to do in the hostel or surrounding areas. One of the important things is the reviews and ratings that the hostel has gotten. That way the customers can form expectations and compare different options. The reviews and ratings are also a brilliant way to point out positive and attractive details about the organization.

7 Implementation

At this point, the research has introduced the tools it has used as a theory base. Now the research will present, how it moves on to getting some results from The Flying Pig Beach Hostel. Research

was implemented using qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative material can include interviews, observation, and written or recorded material (Eskola, Suoranta 1998, 15). In qualitative research, when the understanding continues through the research, it might be possible that the research plan varies too. The qualitative part of this research will be implemented via interview and part of the feasibility study used also qualitative methods.

Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods, a feasibility study has been implemented in August 2022. In this research, the feasibility study is used as a background material to possibly point out customers' thoughts about the perceived service. Feasibility study gathered answers from The Flying Pig Beach Hostels accommodation service users. The study was implemented as a survey, and it was held in a two-week period from starting the first week of August 2022.

The goal of the interviews was trying to find out how the employees view the organization's ways to operate with the customers. An important thing when interviewing employees is to build a connection where the interviewee is feeling comfortable and can trust the interviewer, that kind of set-up gives the best possible base for a good interview. (Eskola, Suoranta 1998, 87).

Interviews were implemented and recorded using the Microsoft Teams platform because the interviewees and the interviewer were in different countries. Interviews were analyzed by theming, grouping, and combining the results of the interviews. By grouping the results, the goal was to find out similarities between the interviews and possible differentiations. By grouping the answers, it is easier to compare the results to the gap model, quality-satisfaction link, and service quality criteria. Theming is part of the material-based analysis, and it helps to find the themes that were most important according to the goal of the research (Juhila n.d.)

7.1 Feasibility study

The feasibility study handles customers' expectations compared to reality. The study was implemented as a paper survey for the customers who used accommodation services at The Flying Pig Beach Hostel. The survey was built using quantitative and qualitative research methods. Mixing different methods in the survey was chosen for getting a good understanding of the basic features of customers, but also for hearing their own words and opinions. The basic feature in this case

means the age, room type where the customer stayed, and booking platform they used. Quantitative questions made the most sense for getting to know those features quickly and clearly, every attendant could answer those questions the same way. A quantitative survey tries to understand the research's results by using numeral research methods (Kvantitatiivinen tutkimus [Quantitative research] n.d). The goal of the quantitative survey is to build a typical picture of the target group, a generalized customer type. Answering the survey was voluntary and anonymous. The survey gathered altogether 40 answers, which is a narrow sampling, but still important according to this research for giving a direction from the point of view of what kind of expectations customers have formed about the services before using them and how the expectations changed during their stay.

The feasibility study also included qualitative questions. Those questions were an important part of the survey for getting more information from the hostel's customers and what they are thinking. Quantitative questions gave more overall information about the customers and by the quantitative questions research was looking for more detailed information. Using qualitative questions where the customers were allowed to determine the content of the answer themselves, gives the customer the opportunity to present their own feelings and opinions.

The feasibility study was implemented to gather more information on the hostel's customers for the upcoming research. At that point, this research was not perfectly formed its shape, the idea of the research, and what it will be at the end, was not totally known while the feasibility study was implemented. The feasibility study was implemented by the researcher in the hostel during an internship. The final appearance and implementation method was formed with the idea of getting as much information from the customers and their opinions as possible, in a short and succinct way.

The survey was gathering only accommodation services using guests' answers. This way the survey made sure that the expectations were still clearly in customers' minds. The survey was built with nine short questions so the interest in the survey was kept along while answering. Some of the questions were easy to answer only by circling the answer, however, some of the questions had an open field where the surveyee was able to use their own words and describe their own experiences. The possibility to answer the survey was offered to customers when they were doing their

check-outs. At the check-out, the stay at the hostel is clearly in the customers' minds and their experience with the place has come to an end at that point.

The survey started with quantitative questions; the first question was about the customers' age. Ages were divided into three sections, 18-30 years old, 31-40 years old, and 41 years old and older. The ages were starting from 18 according to the hostel's age policy. Age was asked so it is possible to view if there are different expectations among the younger and older travelers. The second survey question was about booking sources and the survey stated which one did the customer use while booking a stay at the hostel. Options at this point were Booking.com, Hostelworld, The Flying Pig Beach Hostel's website, or walk-in. The second question was important for finding out if there are similarities in expectations when the booking is done using the same website or if there are big differences between the expectations while booking from a different source. The next question in the survey was about the type of room. Options in this question are only dorm rooms and private rooms according to what the hostel is offering. A question was asked for finding out if the expectations vary between dorm rooms and private rooms.

After quantitative questions, the survey moved to qualitative ones. The fourth question was an open question about what kind of expectations did the customer have before their stay at the hostel based on social media, advertisements, or the internet. This question had some keywords next to it helping the customer to direct their answer according to the hostel and not possibly about the town or the beach. The keywords were atmosphere, location, rooms, facilities, and staff. The next question was a smooth continuation of the earlier question because it was simply asking what platforms gave those expectations to the customer. This question has keywords too, for helping the customer to understand the question better. The keywords were Instagram, Facebook, source of booking, and word of mouth.

Questions six and seven were linked together when question six was about which expectations matched with reality and which did not and question seven continued asking if the expectations were not matching, how did they change during the stay, and what was different according to the expectations positively or negatively. The second to last question tried to find out what the best part of the customer's stay was. The answers to this question are important to know in case something new that was not mentioned earlier rises, as for instance, the facilities or other things that

are mentioned multiple times but might not be advertised enough. This question can help the research to give some guidelines for the organization about the content for their marketing. The last question wanted to know if there was anything at the hostel to improve to make the customer's stay even better. The last question as well as the second to last is for developing the organization's services and facilities, answers to this question can be used in this research and, for forming possible guidelines for the organization.

Because the feasibility study was about customers, the research needed to hear the voice coming from inside the organization too. The next part of the research will be introducing the qualitative interviews, what are the themes chosen for those, and why these themes are important to discuss with the organization's staff members.

7.2 Qualitative interviews

An interview is a social situation where two or more participants are discussing by possible questions the interviewer has, with the aim of gaining information. Because an interview contains different individuals, it is hard to perform the same kind of interview situation again. An interview starts to live from its participants and is developing all the time to the direction where the participants are controlling it. In this research, the method used was a theme interview. Interviewing the organization's staff members, the research will get a wide understanding of how the organization is building customer satisfaction and how customer-oriented the services really are.

Using a theme interview means that the interviewer has chosen themes for the interview beforehand (Eskola, Suoranta 1998, 87). In theme interviews, there are no precise questions made and the structure of the interviews can be different compared to each other. The interviewer has the responsibility that all the themes are handled during the interview. An interviewer can have a list of core terms to support the progression of the interview. (ibid., 87.) The themes are going to guarantee that every interview is going to have opinions and discussions about the same topics that are important for the research.

Theme interview is implemented from a point of view that highlights more experience rather than facts. This kind of implementation focuses on the fact that in services there's not only one truth. The experience of the provided service is always different and variable depending on the person

producing the service and the one who's receiving the service. (Kallinen, Kinnunen n.d.) Theme interview is built over themes that are known in advance for both parts that are included in the interview. Through the themes, the conversation flows without a strict and structured plan, and things that might have not been thought of before the interview may arise. (Saaranen-Kauppinen, Puusniekka 2006). Overall, the interview was chosen as an implementation method for its nature to look at specific details and take them even further by questioning the interviewee. Qualitative interview could possibly give more information than a quantitative option in this research.

Themes

The themes for the interviews are the organization (The Flying Pig Beach Hostel), customers, customer experience, customer satisfaction, promises given to the customer, customer-oriented development, and communication in the organization. These themes were chosen for supporting the gap model.

Theme organization is selected as a theme because the interview is good to start with an overall discussion about the organization to get to know a little bit about the interviewees and how they view the organization from their point of view. The rest of the themes can be gone through in any kind of order, wherever the conversations are flowing in the moment to keep the interview as conversational as possible. When going through the theme customers, from the research's point of view it is important to find out what is the most common customer group, why they are interested in the organization or the area around and whether they are active all year round or if there are more specific seasons to travel to Noordwijk.

Customer experience and customer satisfaction are linked to each other's. Without a customer's successful experience with the organization, it is hard to have satisfied customers. For research, it is important to understand the customers' path, and what they are experiencing while using the organization's services, in this case starting from the booking platforms and going all the way to the checkout. The research tries to find out how customer satisfaction is created in the organization, and how it is enabled and taken care of.

Promises given to customers are also linked to the customer experience and satisfaction. If promises given to customers are unrealistic, the customer might be very unsatisfied because the service

is something different, or if important promises are missing, the customer might choose a different service provider. Research is interested in what kind of promises the target organization is giving to its customers for example in booking platforms and in social media and how the organization is matching its performance to those expectations and promises.

Customer-oriented service development is a keyword when trying to understand what customers want and need. In the target organization, how the organization develops its products and services, and more importantly, how do they find out what customers want and need, and are they ready to answer for those needs? Theme communication in the organization is very important for understanding how the organization works, are the employees updated about the quality standards and do they know what customers expect? Is the information reaching employees the way it should, so the best possible service quality can be guaranteed?

8 Results

This part of the research will be presenting the results that arose from the feasibility study and the interviews. Results from the feasibility study were gone through question by question, pointing out the common trends in the answers and the rare ones. The feasibility study results will be presented using both, percentages and amounts of the answerers. Results from the interviews are grouped based on the themes that were used in the interview because those themes emerged a lot during the interviews.

8.1 Feasibility study

The feasibility study as a paper survey was gathered in all 40 answers. 62 % of the answerers belonged to the first age group which was from 18 to 30 years old. 28 % of the answerers were aged 31-40 and 10 % were 41 or older.

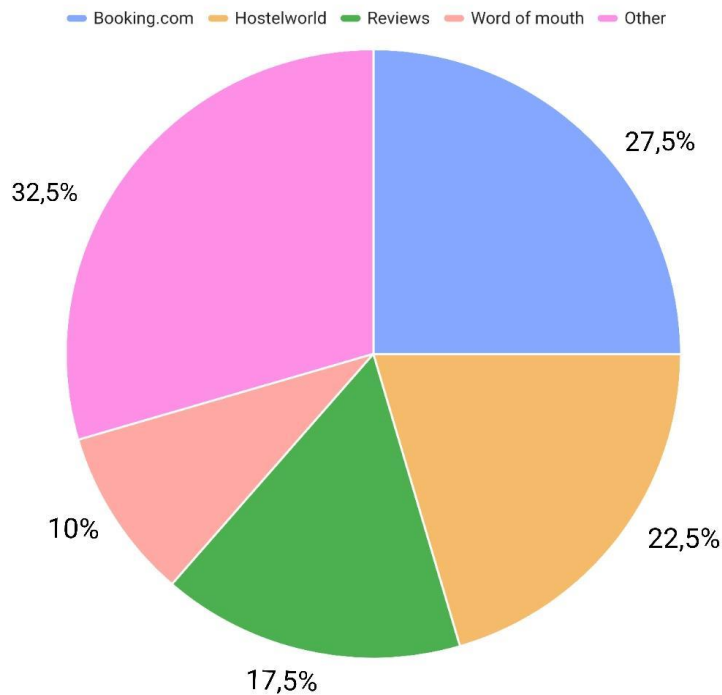
Of the 40 answerers, 53 % used Booking.com as a booking source and the results showed that all the answerers over 30 years old used Booking.com for booking their stay at the hostel. Hostelworld, which was favored by 28 % of the answerers was more common among younger than older travelers. The Flying Pig Beach Hostel's website was used only for 18 % of the bookings and only one answerer booked their stay walking into the hostel without an earlier reservation.

As the hostel has more dormitories than private rooms, predictably, most of the answerers were staying in the dormitories. Dormitories were favored by 85 % of the answerers but there were still 6 people that stayed in the private rooms. Parting the answers to two sections by the rooms, there was not seen any correlation between the answers and the room types. This could be because of the low number of answers or that the rooms, facilities, and services are alike even when staying in different rooms.

Answerers have a wide range of different kinds of expectations about the hostel and the close environment. The most common expectations are that the place has a chill, laidback atmosphere, is located close to the beach, is a good place for meeting new people and other travelers, and the hostel has nice and friendly staff and good breakfast. Other things that were mentioned are alternative style and nicely decorated rooms and public areas, beach party kind of place, a place to meet young people, good accommodation services, touristy small town, clean rooms, and good facilities. One answerer was not sure if the place was just right for them for its atmosphere and one answerer had a picture in their mind, that the hostel would have been more like a hotel, only with private rooms. These expectations were based mostly on what Booking.com or Hostelworld offered, mostly mentioned pictures and reviews from guests that have stayed earlier. Also mentioned was word of mouth, if a friend or family member had stayed before, Tripadvisor, The Flying Pig Beach Hostel website, Google Maps, own experiences before, other online websites for example The Broke Backpacker and TikTok. The Broke Backpacker is a website that cheers people to travel more, shares tips for cheap traveling, and overall denotes that discovering the world is more than just traveling (Ahoy! Welcome to The Broke Backpacker! 2022.) And TikTok is an online social media platform for creating and sharing short videos, TikTok's goal is to wake up creativity and share the joy (Our mission 2022.)

Table 1 shows the different expectations in percentages. Most popular ones that are mentioned in the text above and can be seen in the table as their own percentages are Booking.com, Hostelworld, reviews and word of mouth. Other part includes Tripadvisor, The Flying Pig Beach Hostel website, Google Maps, own experiences before, other online websites for example The Broke Backpacker and TikTok. The figure shows that people are gathering expectations from all around. Expectations forming from different channels proves that people are seeing the service from many different angles so all of them need to be up to date and informative for customer.

Figure 1. Percentage of different bias creators in feasibility study.



The survey asked what parts of the customer's stay matched with reality and which did not. Most of the answers had a message that said everything matched perfectly. If the matching expectations were more opened, the most common ones were the chill atmosphere, location, and especially the location by the beach, friendly staff, and meeting new people. Other things mentioned that matched are decoration, breakfast, and bar. Only a couple of things were lifted from the point of view that something did not match. One answerer felt that the friendliness of the staff was not as good as it should have been. Three answerers said that meeting new people and getting to know them was harder than they had thought it would be. One answerer replied that the hostel was more international than they thought but positively and two answerers thought that the overall atmosphere, rooms, and décor were nicer in real life than in the pictures on the booking platforms or in other advertisements.

The expectations changed quite a lot in this case or to be more precise, the expectations were more fulfilled positively after visiting the hostel. Hospitality overall was experienced better than expected, the hostel was also felt more as a party hostel than as a chill-out place, breakfast was

bigger and better than expected, the hostel bar area was more popular among locals and as mentioned before, the hostel had international guests more as expected and people overall were nicer. One answerer noted that the rooms were smaller than they thought, and it was again pointed out that it was hard to get to know other people.

When asked about highlights of the stay at the hostel, responders had many different things in their mind, which would be interpreted to mean that they liked their stay, and many things gave them joy and a successful accommodation experience. The most mentioned highlight was the friendly staff, then right after that meeting other nice people from all around the world. A lot of liked things were also the beach and the fact that it is located so close. Also, the hostel's lounge and outdoor areas as a socializing places were much liked. The only thing that was pointed out based on the age was that the people over 30 years old were the only ones mentioning that the décor and colors were nice. Many people also mentioned as a highlight the overall happiness and the chill vibes. Breakfast, nice rooms, a bar, and the restaurants by the beach were liked as well.

The last question in the survey was if there was something to improve at the hostel to make the stay possibly even better. Most of the answers at this point just said that everything was perfect. But there was a couple of improvement too, and one of the most mentioned was that the customers would like to have more activities for entertainment and for meeting more and easier new people. One thing mentioned a couple of times was that maybe nicer and more accurate pictures on booking platforms especially of the bedrooms would be nice, the comments for this were mentioning that the size of the room would be easier to visualize and the other one said that the rooms were nicer in real life than in the pictures. Other things that were mentioned only once were bigger bathrooms, more sockets to rooms for charging phones, a broom to wipe out the sand off from feet after being on the beach, fresh veggies for breakfast, and advertising the hostel more as a youth hostel.

8.2 Interviews

There were two interviews implemented for this research. Interviews were held in October 2022 and each of them was around 30 minutes long. Both interviews implemented for this research were flowing forward well and each participant found important topics that were linked to the themes. The interviews were transcribed from the recordings afterward. In the following text, the

interviews are opened and grouped under the themes that were present in both interviews. Interviewees are presented as interviewee A and interviewee B. The discussion in both interviews was similar, the contents are supporting each other, and conflicts were not found.

Theme organization as a starting point in both interviews. Interviewees were told about who they are and what they are doing in the company, what is their role and what are the other staff members' roles. Interviews showed that all the staff members are trained to work with different work tasks in the hostel so they have a wide knowledge of how everything works and how everything should work. Being able to handle work shifts from cleaning to working in reception is important so the staff members understand the customer's point of view as well as possible. There are different work shifts at the hostel which are breakfast shift, cleaning shift, reception, and bar shifts. All the shifts are important from a customer service point of view and every shift includes co-operation with customers and other staff members.

Together with the theme of the organization was also discussed about teamwork. Interviewees told that teamwork is the main reason why the atmosphere stays positive in the organization among the staff members and customers. One important thing that arose, was the hostel's characteristics. The hostel attracts travelers for its personality. Interviewee B said that "*The Flying Pig has a really special vibe.*" The atmosphere is described as very friendly and familiar as the website already told. Interviewee B thinks that having a friendly atmosphere is good from the travelers' point of view especially when they are traveling alone. The friendly and familiar vibe is present because the staff members are interacting with the customers a lot and trying to make them feel like being at home.

Theme customers' purpose was to find out what type of customers are the most common ones and when are the customers usually traveling on the coast side of the Netherlands. The most common group of customers are young backpackers aged 18 to 30 years old. Also, during the summer, a lot of Germans are spending their holidays by the beach. Travelers from all around the world come to make new experiences and meet new people. Usually, the Pig is just one stop during their long trip. The busiest season on the coast side of the Netherlands is summer because the location close to the beach attracts people to come to spend their holidays there. Weather and the beach are big creators of the busy summer season.

Hostel attaches great importance to customer experience. The customers' experiences of the hostel and its services, especially customer service are the most important ones. Customers are the ones that are giving feedback if something is good or if something needs development, they have the power for writing reviews, and that way the power to affect future customers' expectations. Welcoming the customer to the hostel starts with the confirmation letter that they receive after booking their stay at the hostel. The confirmation letter includes the rules of the hostel and welcomes the customer warmly. When the customer finally arrives at the hostel they will be checked in and during the check-in, the rules and all the facilities at the hostel are cleared out and explained to the customer so their stay could be as easy and pleasant as possible. Besides the rules that the hostel has, the timing of the breakfast, bar opening hours, and nearby area and its facilities are explained to the customer while checking them in.

The staff members' job is to make the customers find the things they like in the area and make them enjoy their trip by helping them and answering their questions in any case. Staff members are always happy to answer customers' questions and if the answer is not available right away, more information will be searched. Most of the customers want to connect with other customers and usually, the staff members are a good bridge from one customer to another for recommending some activity to do together or just starting a talk. Interviewee B says *"So, you want that the customer have the feeling that they are home."* The hostel's bar area attracts a lot of local users, which makes it possible to get familiar with the local culture and get to know and connect with local people too. Locals are also the best ones to give some tips about the area or suggestions on what to do. Checking customers out is an important part to close the customer's stay positive way and welcoming them back again. During the check-out, it is also natural to ask if everything was okay during their stay or if there was something to improve. Easy way to get feedback and ideas for developing services or facilities.

Possible customers may hear about the hostel through word of mouth e.g., friends recommending the hostel based on their stay before. Interviewee B thinks that the customers are gathering most of their information about the hostel from reviews left in different booking sources, especially the ratings of staff are pointing out good rates. Instagram is mentioned as a good source of information, there customers can find out what is happening at the hostel, schedule different theme nights, and so on. Interviewee A notes that the sheer power of high rankings in Booking.com and

Hostelworld is a key to why customers are finding and then choosing the Pig as one of their stops during their trip.

Interviewee A states: *“So, if you look for youth hostels, nice places to nice atmosphere next to Amsterdam or in the Netherlands, you find us on the top searches so that is I think the main way they find us.”* When looking for the different booking sources, The Flying Pig Beach Hostel has good rates, and reviews are positive and prominently laid out. When the organization has good reviews and the comparison to other providers looks good, it is more likely to attract new customers.

Customer satisfaction, almost like customer experience is even more about happy customers. Staff members' positive attitude is a big part of creating satisfaction for customers. Staff members make the place feel like home with continuous communication, they are making sure that everyone feels included and if someone seems lonely, they are trying to fix it just with general chatting and asking if everything is well or suggesting some activities.

Understanding what makes customers satisfied and finding out what customers want comes from talking with them very actively from day to day. Customers are different and their suggestions might not be realistic always but most of the time customers are understanding their role and the role of the hostel, thus conflicts are easier to avoid. Both interviewees told that customers have been so satisfied that they have come back or extended their stay, which is a big thing in this industry because traveling is not that cheap and there are so many different options to choose from.

Most of the time the staff members can answer all the requests that customers may have because the customers understand the role of the organization and their role as a customer. But sometimes some customers might not understand the capacity of the organization or how the services are work. In that kind of situation, it is just explained to the customer what kind of services the hostel can offer and what are the rules. Still, most of the time hostel and its workers are very adaptive and always on the customer's side when the customer is following the guidelines and rules that the organization has set for guaranteeing a positive and safe stay for all the customers.

Promises given to the customers are mostly connected to the overall atmosphere and the facilities. The promises that the interviewees mentioned are bar services, home alike atmosphere, the

services nearby, a great location, theme nights, and a lot of different activities to do in the close area. Interviewee A says that “I guess we promised that there is a bit for everyone”. The Pig promises to be a safe place for customers and Interviewee A comments on the safety with the following words “literally whatever reason they can come to us and explain us, and we will help them as best as our possibilities allow us.”

Theme customer-oriented development has been opened already in the themes above, but the interviewees opened it a bit more. Interviewees tell that talking with the customer while their stay is a big part of developing hostels products and services. Also checking reviews actively from booking sources and discussing with the staff openly about the things that need development. Customers' product suggestions are taken seriously but also developed ideas from inside the organization are welcomed.

The overall mindset that the staff members share with customers about making new connections and wanting to meet new people helps the staff members to look at service from the customer's point of view. Interviewee A thinks that involving customers for example the bar selection renewing simply by asking what they would like, is the best way to get the customers satisfied and get them to feel like their opinion matters and their thoughts are heard.

The last of the themes was communication. Inside the organization, communication is the main effector when trying to deliver to customers what they want and maintaining quality standards. Staff meetings are a great place to go through the positive and negative things that are in a need of improvement and for setting goals for the future. Also, an online platform for sharing important instructions and guidelines is actively used inside the organization.

Discussions about seasonal changing and focusing on different areas when it gets quieter during the winter are gone through in the staff meetings. Meetings are also used for openly discussing the feedback that has come from customers, not always to the booking platforms but maybe during the check-out, so everyone stays on track with what customers are in a need of and what is going well. The negative situations dealing with customers or staff members for example violation of the rules are discussed openly with both parties. Customers' safety and equity are always the most

important priorities. Problems are always tried to be solved as fast as possible and communicating all the time with both parties. Fast reactions enable fast solutions.

9 Summary

This part of the research summarizes all the information gathered through the feasibility study and the interviews. The research compares the results to the perspectives that are chosen for this research, which are the gap model, quality-satisfaction link, and criteria of service quality. The reliability and ethics of the research are explained as well as all the development ideas that may rise after comparing results to the theory.

9.1 Results compared to the theory

Results showed that The Flying Pig Beach Hostel is prepared to understand customers and provide service that makes the customer satisfied by communicating with the customers. Communication is an important part when talking about customer satisfaction and in this research the gap model. Many problems can be solved by good communication between the customer server and the customer, the customer server and the supervisors, and other management in the company. Results show that all the gaps are closed or close to closing in The Flying Pig Beach Hostel. This allows the organization to have satisfied customers. Of course, not all the customers can be satisfied in the same way. And for that the hostel tries to offer something for everyone as was brought up in the interviews. As traveling is a cultural phenomenon and customers' needs are changing all the time, organizations in the hospitality field must be awake and prepared to answer those needs.

When comparing results to the gap model the common trend is positive for closing the gaps. Closing the gaps enables forming of long and lasting relationships with customers. Results show that gap 1 is closed because the organization actively asks for feedback from the customers but also has discussions inside the company about the services and developing them. Asking customers what they want, and need is important so the organization can match their actions to those wants and needs. Research shows that the hostel is working regularly with customer feedback. Every feedback gives important information and is taken seriously because it is understood that accommodation service users are different, not only one similar target group.

As well as closing gap 1, closing gap 2 the importance of communicating with customers is important. While gap 1 wanted to know what customers need and want, gap 2 wants to find out how those wants and needs can be delivered with high quality, using correct designs and standards. The answer to closing gap 2 in the organization is communication. By asking the customers the organization tries to understand how customers want the service delivered. The organization also communicates not only with customers, but they are having staff meetings too. Staff meetings are used for sharing experiences with different customers so everyone can stay on track with what customers want and how. Staff meetings are also used for setting goals for the team and giving feedback on how they are doing.

Gap 3 is about different parties understanding their roles and delivering the service how customers want to have it delivered. Gap 2 wanted to understand how the customers want the delivery and gap 3 wants to know if the delivery matches the expectations that customers have about the delivery. Interviews showed that customers usually understand their roles. If there is misunderstandings with roles, the situation is communicated as soon and as clearly as possible, so no more misunderstandings can form. Staff members are also understanding their roles and if any misunderstandings or misbehavior occurs it is treated the same way as with customers, fast and clearly with both parties. Again, communication with customers and inside the organization is important for avoiding misunderstanding with roles. Gap 3 also highlights the importance of teamwork. Interviews showed that teamwork is the key term when thinking about the overall atmosphere at the hostel. The positive atmosphere built with teamwork attracts travelers as well as local users. Teamwork also enables high reviews from customers. The interviews showed that the reviews highlighted a lot of the cozy, homelike atmosphere as a positive thing.

Gap 4 is about customer promises and how the promises given to customer match with reality. The organization does not over-promise anything and reality matches with promises. For example, there can be seen a lot of pictures of the hostel, its room, and different services on the booking platforms. The hostel's house rules are presented on every booking platform. What might cause misunderstandings is when the hostel has an age policy, but the house rules and policies are a little bit hidden as they are on Hostelworld. The booking platform Hostelworld also showed the hostel only under Amsterdam's accommodation services and not in Noordwijk's which might cause confusion.

Gap 5, the customer gap is closed when all the gaps above are closed. The interviews revealed that the organization is interested in its customers and their opinions. Overall, the happiness of the customers' can be seen as they have come back or extended their stay. Through that the organization can form long and lasting relationships with customers. In that way all the gaps are considered closed.

Quality-satisfaction link as a theory and based on the feasibility study and interviews showed that each customer is unique and differently pleased. Sometimes it is not even in the organization's hands if the customer is happy or not. Customer's personal factors such as mood and other situational factors e.g., weather, or other travelers might affect to customer's overall satisfaction positively or negatively. Based on the feasibility study, the hostel's customers have a lot of similar expectations but then again of course variability too.

Comparing results to the six service quality dimensions, which are professionalism and skills, attitudes and behavior, accessibility and flexibility, reliability and trustworthiness, service recovery, and reputation and credibility. Professionalism and skills are also known as assurance, which could be said that is followed in the hostel well. As the interviews showed, the staff members are instructed about different parts of the services that the hostel provides. Attitudes and behavior, and empathy also rose as themes during the interviews. The interviewee indicated that the hostel offers something for each customer, meaning that there are plenty of ways to spend their time while staying in the hostel. This way the customer could feel that they are individuals. Customers' opinions and experiences about the hostel and the time they spent there are asked before they leave. Therefore, the customers' feelings are cared about, and their opinion matters, because the answers are discussed in the staff meetings. Accessibility and flexibility stand for that customers have easy access to the hostel physically. Websites are easy to use, answers for the questions are answered and the overall environment is pleasing for the customer. The feasibility study results pointed out that customers liked the overall atmosphere, and the decorations were also mentioned a couple of times. The location by the beach was liked among the customers that attended the feasibility study. There was no mention of websites in the feasibility study or the interviews, just the source of booking was asked, but no discussion after in addition to this. Like already mentioned, staying at the hostel is possible to book from three different sources, which gives variability to the customer. Reliability and trustworthiness as discussed before with the gap model are

considered reliable and trustworthy. The hostel does not overpromise anything and all the promises given are delivered. If not, then they react fast to the deficiencies. Service recovery as just mentioned, the hostel tries to react fast to deficiencies or other grievances. Interviews also convinced that customers' questions, requests, and feedbacks are always answered fast and if the answer is not known, it will be searched for. The last part, reputation and credibility amplify that the organization is known as a trustworthy service provider whose performance from service to service is strong and it has good values. Could be said that the hostel fills this in, as well. The interviews and feasibility study told that the customers have chosen the place for its good reviews, recommendations, and earlier experiences.

9.2 Development ideas

Based on the results of the feasibility study, interviews, and comparing those results to the gap model, quality-satisfaction link, and service quality dimensions, the hostel observes its customers and is interested in them. The hostel tries to make each customer's stay as positively memorable as possible. For the nature of this research to be development research, this chapter presents a few ideas that formed from the results of the feasibility study, interviews, and studying the booking platforms. Development ideas are presented in the following text.

The feasibility study revealed that customers want to interact more with each other. The hostel arranges different theme nights, but it could add even more value to the customer's stay if there would be more activities where customers feel easier approaching one another. Possible ideas for the activities could be different board games, music bingos, or games where you get to know each other. Those activities could be easy to arrange in a bar environment and customers are offered the possibility to get to know other travelers or just have fun.

When searching for information on the booking platforms, it was found that the house rules and policies of the hostel might be a bit hidden. The house rules and other policies could be presented more visible and in a bigger font for avoiding misunderstandings. Especially when the hostel has an age policy, it could be important for customers to see it right away when considering different accommodation services. Being clear with house rules and policies might save customers time while making the purchase decision and, in that sense, make the possible customer more satisfied.

On the booking platform page Hostelworld, the hostel could be presented also under Noordwijk's accommodation services, as opposed to only under Amsterdam's. It could be clearer for the customer to get the correct information about the location, that, the hostel is not precisely located in Amsterdam. Making it obvious to the customer, where the hostel is located, could have a major impact on customer satisfaction. If a customer does not find out where the hostel is located exactly, they might face a big disappointment when they are trying to navigate to the destination, and it is further than planned. Presenting all the information about the accommodation service clearly affects the customer's experience towards the service positively.

9.3 Reliability and ethics of the research

The goal of the research was to provide as reliable results as possible. The reliability of the feasibility study might be considered not that strong for the low attendance but the results from that are also considered only as a guideline more as clear facts. Participation in the feasibility study was voluntary and the participants were informed what the answers are and how those are used in the future. Participants or other people cannot be identified from the answers. The feasibility study was implemented before getting to know the theory of the research or even before the final form of the research was found. If the feasibility study would have been implemented after getting to know the theory better or even the final goals of the research, the survey might have been formed differently. Forming the survey differently might have given more accurate answers e.g., to how customers understand the quality of the service and what drives them to form that kind of expectation.

This research might have benefitted if the feasibility study could have included also interviewing customers. By interviewing the customers, the feasibility study could have gotten an even wider range of understanding of the customers' minds and opinions and the current low number of attendances could have been kept even more valuable for this research. In further research customers' voices could be important to hear even more.

The reliability of the interviews was considered a strong source for its characteristics to be more opinionated and experience based. Interviewees were informed beforehand what the interviews are and how the outcome will be presented. Interviewees had all the rights to withdraw from the interview or not to answer questions if they did not want to. The interviews were anonymously

implemented, and the interviewees and other people mentioned during the interview are unrecognizable from the answers. The atmosphere during the interviews was open and trustworthy. Interviews were recorded and all parties were informed about the recording. The language used during the interviews was English. Because the interviewees and the interviewee are not citizens of the same country and the language spoken during the interviews is not any of the participant's native language, there is a possibility for misunderstandings and misinterpretation.

Reliability considering the chosen point of view according to the gap model and service quality definition can be trusted, for those being based on various research made before. Even though the models are trustworthy, the outcome and the emphasis vary. For example, the six criteria of service quality that Grönroos (1998) presented might be current for other fields differently and the emphasis changes, which one is the most important and which one is least important, based on what kind of service is provided. However, in this research, all the research used as theory was considered as equals compared to each other and are analyzed from the point of view that has risen from the feasibility study and interviews.

Research is following national data protection law. The data collected, paper surveys, and recordings from the interviews were destroyed after answers were analyzed and the research was done. Data collection was explained to all the participants, and they agreed to that and were informed about how and when data will be destroyed.

10 Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to find out how The Flying pig Beach Hostel creates customer satisfaction. Service quality is a big part of customer satisfaction, so the research approached the hostel's customer satisfaction creation from the service quality point of view. The research found that service quality is high in the hostel. The quality was considered high for the continuous communication inside the organization and because the staff members' genuine desire to serve and help customers was evident from the interviews. For the nature of this research to be development research, development ideas were formed based on the literature, the hostel's booking platforms, feasibility study, and interviews.

In an ever-changing world and increasingly competitive markets, businesses must try to stand out in one way or another to stay afloat. The Flying Pig Beach Hostel stands out from the crowd because of its amazingly cozy and home-like atmosphere, without forgetting friendly customer service. The hostel seems to understand what its customers are looking for, which has been made possible by interacting with customers as much as possible during their stay. The research found that the hostel can answer its customers' wants and needs because the staff members are aware of customers' wishes for the service.

10.1 Reflection

For this research there was a couple of different results, the results that gave development ideas and the results that answered to the questions research had in the start about hostel's service quality and awareness of its customers. The results that were opened above in the conclusions, were formed using to the gap model – how all the gaps were closed, quality-satisfaction link – how the customer satisfaction is built and the different dimensions of service quality – how those appear in The Flying Pig Beach Hostel.

The reliability and ethics chapter were discussing the things that might have affected the results of the research. Reflection will next present a couple more contributing factors that possibly have changed the outcome of the results. The first affecting factor is location. The Flying Pig Beach Hostel is located in a small town, and the competition is smaller, as mentioned before, there are only two hostels in Noordwijk, and The Flying Pig Beach Hostel is the other one of them. As the competition is smaller, so is the possible customer base. The fact that the hostel is quite small, might affect the customer service to be more interactive because there are fewer customers to interact with. The location also makes the environment calmer than in a big city. Calmer location could attract different customer types than the busy, big city center.

The introduction of this research was curious if organizations nowadays can keep up with the changing quality standards that covid-19 might have caused. After all, nothing related to covid-19 appeared in this research. May be that different questions in the survey or different themes in the interviews could have given also answers related to covid-19, but that could be something to search for in further research. One reason why covid-19 might have not appeared at all in the discussion was that the hostel's customers are more travelers exploring the world or spending their holidays they are more interested in the cultures and other people than restrictions. That kind of

traveling is after all individual's own decision, so for that reason, the hostel's customers might have not been afraid of covid-19 anymore, they might have been seeking a disease-free world.

The results of this research could be used directly in The Flying Pig Beach Hostel, the development ideas have been created to adapt to their services. In the future the hostel could also benefit from the results, especially if developing their services or when inducting new staff or increasing knowledge among the already existing staff, to explain what is done and why. Other organizations might benefit from the process of how the service quality was determined using the gap model.

References

- About Noordwijk. N.d. Noordwijk info. Accessed on 05.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.noordwijk.info/en/discover-noordwijk/visit-noordwijk/about-noordwijk>
- About St Christopher's Inns – Europe's best backpacker hostels. N.d. st-christophers.co.uk. Accessed on 06.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.st-christophers.co.uk/about-us>
- About us. 2019. Flyingpig.nl. Accessed on 20.09.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.flying-pig.nl/about-us>
- Ahoy! Welcome to The Broke Backpacker!. 2022. The Broke Backpacker. Accessed on 30.11.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.thebrokebackpacker.com/start-here/>
- All museums. N.d. iamAmsterdam.com. Accessed on 28.09.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.iamsterdam.com/en/see-and-do/things-to-do/museums-and-galleries/museums>
- Amsterdam hostel chains indicate booming business in youth travel. 2017. Staywyse.com. Accessed on 15.09.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.staywyse.org/2017/05/19/amsterdam-hostel-chains-indicate-booming-business-in-youth-travel/>
- Amsterdam, European museum capital. N.d. Amsterdam.org. Accessed on 03.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://amsterdam.org/en/amsterdam.php>
- Amsterdam. N.d. Holland.com. Accessed on 03.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.holland.com/global/tourism/destinations/amsterdam.htm>
- Basic facts about Amsterdam. N.d. Amsterdam.info. Accessed on 03.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.amsterdam.info/basics/>
- Das, S. 2018. Destination future: Trends and predictions for travel & hospitality. Accessed on 06.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.forbesindia.com/blog/travel/destination-future-trends-and-predictions-for-travel-hospitality/>
- Discover Downtown. N.d. Flyingpig.nl. Accessed on 06.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.flying-pig.nl/downtown-hostel/>
- Discover Uptown. N.d. Flyingpig.nl. Accessed on 06.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.flying-pig.nl/uptown-hostel/>
- Early fishing history. N.d. Noordwijk.info. Accessed on 03.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.noordwijk.info/en/discover-noordwijk/visit-noordwijk/about-noordwijk/new-page>
- Eskola, J. Suoranta, J. 1998. Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen [An introduction to qualitative research]. 2nd edition. Gummerus kirjapaino.

FAQ and Terms. 2021. Flyingpigbeach.nl. Accessed on 07.11.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.flyingpigbeach.nl/faq/>

Filenius, M. 2015. Digitaalinen asiakaskokemus, menesty monikanavaisessa liiketoiminnassa [Digital customer experience, succeed in multichannel business]. Docendo Oy.

Flying Pig Beach Hostel. N.d. Hostelworld.com. Accessed on 07.11.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.hostelworld.com/pwa/hosteldetails.php/Flying-Pig-Beach-Hostel/Amsterdam/650?from=2023-01-06&to=2023-01-10&guests=1&origin=microsite>

Grönroos, C. 1998. Nyt kilpaillaan palveluilla [Now competing on services]. 5th edition. Suomen ekonomiliitto and WSOY.

Hansen, F. Christensen, S. 2007. Emotions, advertising and consumer choice. 1st edition. Samfundslitteratur.

Hietala, M. Venttola, E. 2019. Hotellitermien merkitykset selkokielellä [The meanings of hotel terms in plain language]. Accessed on 15.09.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.rantapallo.fi/hotellit/hotellitermien-merkitykset-selkokielella/>

History. 2022. Noordwijk een verademing. Retrieved from <https://www.noordwijk.info/en/discover-noordwijk/visit-noordwijk/about-noordwijk/history>

Hostelling International. 2011. A brief history of Hostelling International. Accessed on 15.09.2022. Retrieved from <http://blog.hihostels.com/2011/05/brief-history-of-hostelling/>

Hostels in Netherlands, Europe. N.d. Hostelworld.com. Accessed on 03.10.2022. Retrieved from https://www.hostelworld.com/st/hostels/europe/netherlands/?source=ppc_goads_non-brand_dsk_search_ds_en_eucatchall&network=g&campaign_id=15103225356&ad-group_id=132082443107&criteria_id=kwd-307394299587&creative_id=559655712652&location_physical_id=1005684&location_interest_id&adposition&uniqueclickID=3209616733384589381&sub_keyword=hostel%20netherlands&sub_ad=e&sub_publisher=ADW&gclid=Cj0KCQjwKQZBhDNARIsAACsbFK36TD9pYqXEKQ4FKxzahaSaTV5I5pu75xURDj2fF67gXIIDgkbT7AaAlLqEALw_wcB

Hudson, S. Hudson, L. 2017. Customer service for hospitality and tourism. 2nd edition. Goodfellow Publishers Ltd.

Juhila, K. N.d. Teemoittelu [Themeing]. Laadullisen tutkimuksen verkkokäsikirja. Tampere: Yhteiskuntatieteellinen tietoarkisto. Accessed on 9.2.2023. Retrieved from <https://www.fsd.tuni.fi/fi/palvelut/menetelmaopetus/kvali/analyysitavan-valinta-ja-vleiset-analyysitavat/teemoittelu/>

Kvantitatiivinen tutkimus [Quantitative research]. N.d. Tilastokeskus. Accessed on 11.11.2022. Retrieved from https://www.stat.fi/meta/kas/kvanti_tutkimus.html

Noordwijk aan zee. N.d. Booking.com. Accessed on 03.10.2022. Retrieved from https://www.booking.com/searchresults.en-gb.html?ss=Noordwijk+&ssne=Noordwijk+aan+Zee&ssne_untouched=Noordwijk+aan+Zee&label=noordwijk-aan-zee-DBYlc0VJ*eVoMoJZouLfpwS392850261741%3Apl%3Ata%3Ap140%3Ap2%3Aac%3Aap%3Aneg%3Afi%3Atikwd-2373960381%3Alp1005684%3Ali%3Adec%3Adm%3Appccp%3DUM-FuZG9tSVYkc2Rllyh9Yf5EcukO1MOGLS-SAuld8ToA&sid=3e67a0d73cdf59e0c8e6c65204e665ad&aid=303948&lang=en-gb&sb=1&src_elem=sb&src=searchresults&checkin=2022-11-15&checkout=2022-11-16&group_adults=1&no_rooms=1&group_children=0&sb_travel_purpose=leisure

Noordwijk. 2022. Citypopulation.de. Accessed on 22.09.2022. Retrieved from https://www.citypopulation.de/en/netherlands/admin/zuid_holland/0575_noordwijk/

Our mission. 2022. TikTok. Accessed on 30.11.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.tiktok.com/about?lang=en>

Our story. N.d. Hostelworld.com. Accessed on 03.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.hostelworldgroup.com/about-us/our-story>

Remains of World War 2. N.d. Noordwijk.info. Accessed on 03.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.noordwijk.info/en/discover-noordwijk/visit-noordwijk/about-noordwijk/new-page>

Richards, G. 1996. Cultural tourism in Europe. Cab international.

Roman, M. Kosiński, R. Bhatta, K. Niedziółka, A. Krasnodębski, A. 2022. Virtual and Space Tourism as New Trends in Travelling at the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Article. Accessed on 06.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/2/628/htm>

Savills World Research. 2016. European tourist hostel report. Accessed on 15.09.2022. Retrieved from <http://pdf.euro.savills.co.uk/european/european-hostel-report-2016-final.pdf>

That's why you should visit us. 2021. Flyingpig.nl. Accessed on 22.09.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.flyingpig.nl/beach-hostel/>

The Flying Pig Beach Hostel. N.d. Booking.com. Accessed on 06.10.2022. Retrieved from https://www.booking.com/hotel/nl/the-flying-pig-beach-hostel.en-gb.html?aid=356980&label=gog235jc-1DCAsoqQFCG3RoZS1mbHlpbmctcGlnLWJlYWNoLWVhvc3RlbgZWA-NoSlgBAZgBCBgBF8gBDNgBA-gBAYgCAa-gCA7gC4bf6mQbAAgHSAiQ4NWWViZGVlZS1kOTFILTQxYjQtOGI2ZS03M2E1MzlhZWJkYjPYAgTgAgE&sid=3e67a0d73cdf59e0c8e6c65204e665ad&dist=0&keep_landing=1&sb_price_type=total&type=total&

Tourism in Noordwijk. N.d. Noordwijk.info. Accessed on 03.10.2022. Retrieved from <https://www.noordwijk.info/en/discover-noordwijk/visit-noordwijk/about-noordwijk/new-page>

Wilson, J. Richards, G. 2008. Suspending reality: an exploration of enclaves and the backpacker experience. *Current Issues in Tourism*. Vol. 11 No. 2. P 187-202.

Zeithaml, V.A. Berry, L.A. Parasuraman, A. 1993. The nature and determinants of customer expectations of service. *Journal of academy of marketing science*, 21(1), 1-12.

Appendices

Appendix 1. The feasibility study

Survey is about customer experience in the Flying Pig Beach Hostel.

Goal of the survey is trying to understand customers service path, expectations, and experience in the hostel. Survey is part of thesis that will be implemented for Jamk - University of applied sciences, Jyväskylä, Finland.

The answers of the survey are gathered and stored trustworthy and used only for the thesis. Answers are totally anonymous so the answerers identities cannot be identified.

Age: 18-30 31-41 41+

Source of booking:

Hostelworld Booking.com Flying Pig website Walk-in

Stayed in: Dorm room Private room

Expectations you got from social media/advertisements/internet before your stay? (For example about location, atmosphere, rooms, facilities, staff):

Which platform gave you these expectations? (For example Instagram, Facebook, source of booking, word of mouth):

Which expectations matched with reality and which did not?

If not, how did the expectations change during the stay? (+/-)

What was the highlight of your stay at the hostel?

Was there something you would improve in the hostel to make you stay even better?

Appendix 2. Theme interview

Structure of the theme interviews

1. Theme: Organization

Organization from the interviewee's point of view, services that the organization provides

2. Theme: Customers

Who, why, when, what interests customers

3. Theme: Customer experience

Starting possibly from booking platform – how goes forward, typical customer path

4. Theme: Customer satisfaction

How is it found out what customers really want, is customer satisfaction measured somehow, is the organization able to deliver customers what they want

5. Theme: Promises given to customer

Advertising, what are the promises about, does the performance match to those promises

6. Theme: Customer oriented development

Product/service development process,

7. Theme: Communication in organization

Organization's quality standards and how those are followed, does customers understand their roles and organizations roles, do staff members understand their, organization's and customers roles