Customer satisfaction at Newton Park Hotel & Resort Ltd

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Obinna Okafor

Abstract

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Abstract

Within the burgeoning tourism industry in developing countries, hotel businesses represent a primary revenue source, prompting a surge in establishments seeking to capitalize on this lucrative market. Recognizing the pivotal role of customer satisfaction in sustaining competitiveness, this study focuses on evaluating the current level of customer satisfaction within Newton Park Hotel, a prominent four-star hotel situated in the bustling capital city of Abuja, Nigeria.

Employing the five dimensions of the service quality framework, this research undertakes a comprehensive examination of customer satisfaction levels. The study is structured into theoretical and empirical segments, encompassing an exploration of pertinent theories, objectives, research questions, and methodologies.

Drawing from established theories of customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and service quality, the research employs qualitative approaches, primarily utilizing online questionnaires and interviews as primary data sources. Analysis of the gathered data indicates a generally positive level of customer satisfaction at Newton Park Hotel, particularly regarding service quality.

 However, areas for improvement, notably facilities and internet services, are identified to sustain and elevate customer satisfaction levels.

By addressing areas of enhancement, Newton Park Hotel can further fortify its position in the competitive hospitality landscape, ensuring enduring customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Keywords
Customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, service quality, employee satisfaction.

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Appendix 1. Customer satisfaction survey conducted from January 31 to February 14, 2024.

Appendix 2. Questions of the Interview conducted on the 10 of February 2024.

1   Introduction

1.1   Background of the study

The modern business environment is marked by the significant impact of several tactics entrepreneurs use to draw in customers and obtain a competitive advantage. As a result, the conversation about customer satisfaction has become a crucial one, requiring a thorough investigation to identify customer preferences and develop creative strategies for improving the standard of service delivery. In today's intensely competitive corporate environment, a key factor in determining success is customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction is defined as a measurement that determines how happy customers are with a company's products, services, and capabilities. Customer satisfaction information including surveys and ratings, can help a company determine how to best improve or change its products and services. An organization's focus must be to satisfy its customers. This applies to industrial firms, retail and wholesale businesses, government bodies, service companies, non-profit organizations, and every subgroup within an organization (American Society for Quality 2019.)

To strengthen the foundation of this thesis, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive review of existing research on customer satisfaction, which is the primary variable in this study. This thorough analysis will provide an academic basis for the ongoing research.

The levels of customer satisfaction and services at Restaurant Nautilus were examined in Anna Burmistrov's (2022) bachelor thesis. According to the report, a key element driving business growth in the service sector is customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is a crucial statistic that may be described as the degree to which customers' expectations and actual experiences during the purchase of goods or services correspond. Measuring this indicator makes it easier to find process weaknesses in the business and implement solutions that increase customer loyalty. (Burmistrov 2022.)

Burmistrov's research discovered a high degree of customer satisfaction, and the restaurant's success can be attributed to the dexterous marketing department, superb food and service, unique design, cozy atmosphere, and advantageous location. The staff's coordinated efforts to deliver polite, on-time service with a welcoming attitude were recognized. The surveys did, however, also identify several areas that needed work, such as customer complaints regarding the restaurant's hygiene, instances of unprepared waiters, and a lack of product expertise. Considering these findings, Burmistrov suggested the implementation of imperative on-the-job staff training. Additionally, addressing the cleanliness concerns promptly was suggested to enhance customer service and satisfaction at Restaurant Nautilus. (Burmistrov 2022.)

Furthermore, Margarita (2015) conducted research on customer satisfaction at a Tampere apartment hotel. The researcher stressed that satisfying the needs and demands of customers is one of a company's main goals. In today's highly competitive economic environment, a business that cannot meet client demands risks going out of business. On the other hand, an organization that meets or exceeds client expectations with its goods and services is well-positioned for maximum expansion and advancement. According to Margarita (2015), unhappy customers are likely to tell colleagues and acquaintances about their bad experiences, which could result in a considerable loss of revenue for the business in the future.

Customers' perceptions of the reception, together with features about apartments, parking lots, and Internet access, were the main subjects of the study. The results showed that customers were generally rather satisfied with the company's services. Although the hotel successfully fulfilled the expectations of its guests, issues with internet access and the parking lot were brought up. Margarita (2015) proposed that by increasing internet bandwidth and streamlining parking arrangements, the hotel could improve customer satisfaction. This suggestion is the result of a methodical approach to addressing areas for development that the study revealed needed attention.

1.2 Newton Park Hotel (Case Organization)

Newton Park Hotels Ltd was established in 2013 at Plot 2175 Cadastral Zone A02, 8 Cape Town Street, Off IBB Way, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja-Nigeria, with a room capacity of 74 and 4 conference halls ranging from 15-400 sitting capacity.

Following a year of successful operation, Newton Park Hotels & Resort Ltd expanded its portfolio by acquiring the second brand, Newton Park Hotels Annex, located at Plot 24 Alexandria Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja, Nigeria. The newly acquired hotel features 64 rooms and a conference hall with a seating capacity of 350. In the year 2020, the company further diversified its offerings with the establishment of the third brand, Royal Continental Hotel and Apartment, situated in Wuse Zone 4, Abuja, comprising 40 rooms and 20 apartment units. (Onyebuoilse 2021.)

Newton Park Hotels & Resort Ltd, encompassing these three brands, maintains a total staff strength of approximately 310 individuals and presents a distinguished array of 196 tastefully furnished rooms equipped with state-of-the-art facilities. The conglomerate also boasts 8 functional event halls. However, the focus of this research centers specifically on Newton Park Hotel and Resort Ltd. (Onyebuoilse 2021.)

Newton Park Hotel collaborates with Bookings.com, wakanow.com, and hotels.ng, etc., for their reservations, although customers can make reservations on arrival. The hotel has hosted international customers from world-recognized NGOs like UNICEF, WHO, KPMG, and a host of others. The hotel offers special discounts during festive periods, and weekend discounts, however, there is a personalized discount for a long-stay guest, who stays more than one week uninterrupted.

The hotel accommodation is for all segments of customers, offering bed and complimentary breakfast, complimentary soap, shampoo, coffee, and 24-hour room services. The hotel offers palatable continental and intercontinental cuisine and pastries for its numerous customers.

Furthermore, in a bit to have a clearer understanding of the case organization, the author elaborated more about the organizational structure of Newton Park Hotel. At the pinnacle of the hierarchy is the chief executive officer, overseeing all operations. Directly below is the executive director, who serves as the heir-apparent and holds signatory authority for all hotel accounts. The executive director reports solely to the chief executive officer.

The principal consultant who oversees monthly staff training, and quarterly performance evaluation of the general staff is also a member of the Board of Directors but reports directly to the chief executive officer. The general manager holds authority over operations at Newton Park Hotel and retains the absolute power to convene management meetings every morning, excluding weekends. During these meetings, department heads provide comprehensive reports on their respective departmental activities, facilitating swift feedback and follow-up processes.

The human resources manager oversees staff welfare, staff uniform, recruitment, on-the-job training, melting punishment to the deserving staff, response to all letters and correspondence, conducting yearly performance appraisals, promoting or demoting the deserving staff, and reporting directly to the General Manager.

Newton Park Hotel consists of nine distinct departments, encompassing human resources, front office, sales and marketing, housekeeping services, accounting, transportation, security operations, food and beverage services, information communication technology (ICT), and maintenance.

The front office department comprises the front office manager, who reports directly to the Human Resources Manager, along with Front Office Supervisors, guest relations officers, guest service agents, and porters in hierarchical order.

The food and beverages department encompasses the food & beverage manager, supervisor, order takers, waiters, and waitresses who also fulfill roles as bartenders.

The kitchen department comprises the executive chef, sous chef, chef de Partie, pastry chef, cooks, and stewards. The accounting department is composed of the chief accountant, Income auditors, night auditors, night duty manager, outlet cashiers, storekeepers, and purchasers. Additionally, the maintenance department includes the Chief Engineer, maintenance supervisor, and technicians.

The sales and marketing department consists of the sales and marketing manager and sales executives. The security department comprises the chief security officer, security supervisor, and guards. The ICT department is composed of the ICT Manager, business center operatives, and trainees. The human resources manager oversees one administrative officer, while the transport manager supervises all hotel drivers. The structural organogram is clearly shown in Figure 1 Below.
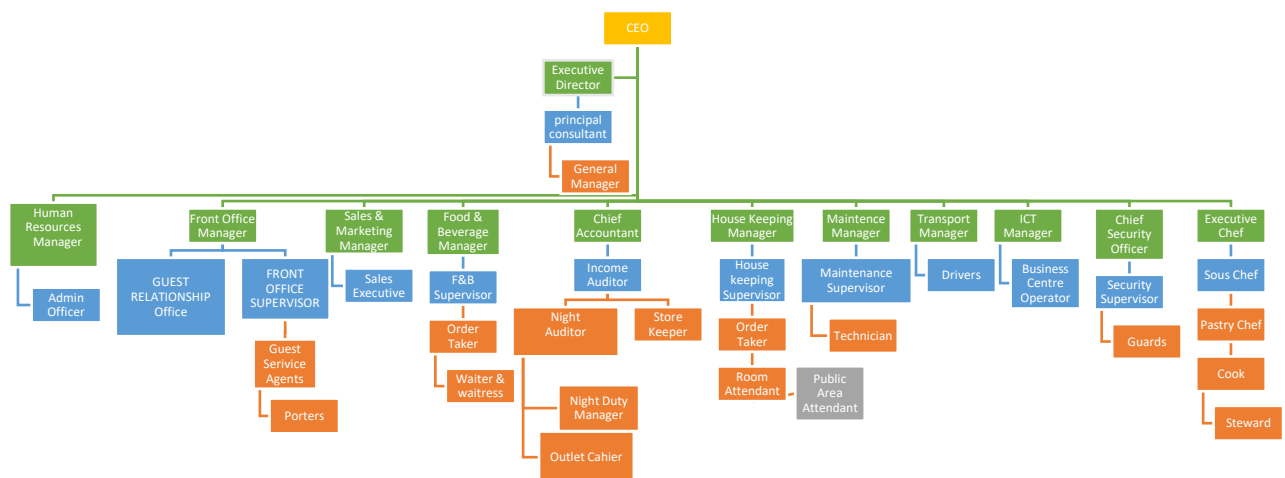

Figure 1. Newton Park Hotels' Organizational structure

1.3   Objectives, and Delimitations

The objective of this study is to identify the current level of customer satisfaction in Newton Park Hotel & Resort Ltd using a customer satisfaction survey as a compass, also getting a fundamental understanding of the concept in the service application especially when it comes to lodging services. The five dimensions of service quality were used as a guide in constructing the customer satisfaction survey to ascertain the current level of customer satisfaction in Newton Park Hotel.

The author identifies various limitations that could hinder the seamless progression of this research. Primarily, Newton Park Hotel operates three branches, offering a range of services in the hospitality industry, encompassing a restaurant, bar, outdoor and recreational services, a business center, spa facilities, shuttles, and other hospitality-related services.

Hence, a deliberate delimitation was implemented to refine the research and improve accuracy. Subsequently, the researcher opted to focus exclusively on the accommodation services offered by Newton Park Hotel and Resorts Ltd. Additionally, this research does not consider the nationality of the customers. This intentional restriction of the study's scope ensures a concentrated and thorough investigation within the specific area of interest.

1.4   Research questions

 To maintain the objectives of this research work, the thesis will be answering the following questions:

What is the current level of customer satisfaction at Newton Park Hotel?

Sub question 1: What is the employees' role in customers' service quality?

Sub Question 2: What are the key factors that contribute to or hinder customer satisfaction, focusing on room quality, staff attitude, and room amenities?

1.5   Research methods

The method adopted for this research work is a qualitative case study. The case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. In this method, the researcher has the role (no control) of observer for the case. (Lecture note 2023.) The case study for this research work is Newton Park Hotel and Resorts Ltd, and the target group is its customers, who patronize the hotel solely for lodging services.

The empirical research is conducted using a qualitative research method to meet the thesis' goal. The qualitative research method is an approach that allows a researcher to examine people's experiences in detail by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, surveys, visual methods, and life histories or biographies. (Hennink et al. 2020, 10.)

The qualitative research method has been instrumental in allowing researchers to identify issues from the perspective of the study participants and understand the meanings and interpretations that they give to behaviour, events, or objects. The target group is always chosen carefully with specific criteria. In contrast, the purpose of qualitative research is to seek a contextualized understanding of phenomena, explain behaviours and beliefs, identify processes, and understand the context of people's experiences. (Hennink et al. 2020, 10.)

1.6   Data collections

Data collection is a systematic process of gathering observations or measurements. Whether you are performing research for business, governmental, or academic purposes, data collection allows you to gain first-hand knowledge and original insights into your research problem. (Bhandari 2020.)

Furthermore, Simplilearn (2023) describes data collection as the process of collecting and evaluating information or data from multiple sources to find answers to research problems, answer questions, evaluate outcomes, and forecast trends and probabilities. It is an essential phase in all types of research, analysis, and decision-making, including that done in the social sciences, business, and healthcare. (Simplilearn 2023.)

Primary data collection was used during this research work. This involves the collection of original data directly from the source or through direct interaction with the respondents. This method allows researchers to obtain first-hand information specifically tailored to their research objectives. (Simplilearn 2023.)

The techniques for primary data collection for this research were surveys and Interviews. Researchers design structured questionnaires or surveys to collect data from individuals or groups. These can be conducted through face-to-face interviews, telephone calls, mail, or online platforms. (Simplilearn 2023.)

Harmon (2001) described questionnaires as any written questions that participants are asked to respond to in writing, often by checking or circling responses. On the other hand, Interviews involve direct interaction between the researcher and the respondent. They can be conducted in person, over the phone, or through video conferencing. Interviews can be structured (with

predefined questions), semi-structured (allowing flexibility), or unstructured (more conversational). (Simplilearn 2023.)

Semi-structured interviews which were used in this research work can be described as a qualitative research method used to gain an in-depth understanding of the respondent's feelings and beliefs on specific topics. As the interviewer prepares the questions ahead of time, they can adjust the order, skip any that are redundant, or create new ones. Additionally, the interviewer should be prepared to ask follow-up questions and probe for more detail. (Heath 2023.)

1.7   Data analysis

LeCompte and Schensul define data analysis as a researcher's process to reduce data to a story and its interpretation. data analysis is reducing large amounts of collected data to make sense of them. Patton indicates that three things occur during analysis: data are organized, data are reduced through summarization and categorization, and patterns and themes in the data are identified and linked. (Kawulich 2004, 3.)

LeCompte and Schensul suggest that data analysis can be done as data are collected in the field, as soon as possible after the data have been collected, both while the researcher is still in the field, and later, when the researcher is no longer in the field. The authors describe in-the-field analysis as including inscription, description, and transcription. (Kawulich 2004, 3.)

The purpose of the analysis is to interpret and, hence, convert the data into a story that describes the phenomenon or the participants' views, using the emic perspective. The process typically involves collecting data that will inform the study, breaking down the data into various categories, making connections between these categories in terms of relationships among them, then visually displaying the interpretation and writing it up for dissemination. (Kawulich 2004, 3.)

Transcription and Thematic analysis were data analysis methods used in this research work. A transcript is used to record and represent the rich, detailed, and complex data collected during qualitative studies such as interviews, focus groups, or observations. (Hecker 2004.)

 Without transcriptions, it would be challenging for researchers to dissect, understand, and interpret the in-depth experiences, perceptions, and opinions shared by the participants. Most research involving audio recordings of interviews requires recordings to undergo the transcription process for qualitative data analysis to proceed. (Hecker 2004.)

Data transcription can be done manually or with the assistance of transcription software. Manual transcription involves the researcher or a transcriptionist listening to the recording and typing out the conversation. This method is time-consuming but can lead to a higher level of accuracy and deeper immersion in the data. (Hecker 2004.)

Automated transcription software, on the other hand, uses automatic speech recognition (ASR) technology to transcribe audio recordings into text. While this method is faster and can handle large volumes of data, it may not be as accurate, especially when dealing with poor audio quality, heavy accents, or technical jargon. (Hecker 2004.)

Braun et al. (2006) Describe thematic analysis as a qualitative research method that can be widely used across a range of epistemologies and research questions. It is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set. (Nowell et al. 2017.)

Braun et al. (2006) opined that thematic analysis provides a highly flexible approach that can be modified for the needs of many studies, providing a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data. As thematic analysis does not require the detailed theoretical and technological knowledge of other qualitative approaches, it offers a more accessible form of analysis, particularly for those early in their research career. (Nowell et al. 2017.)

Furthermore, Thematic analysis is a good approach to research where you're trying to find out something about people's views, opinions, knowledge, experiences, or values from a set of qualitative data – for example, interview transcripts, social media profiles, or survey responses. (Caulfield 2019.)

Furthermore, thematic analysis is a systematic method of breaking down and organizing rich data from qualitative research by tagging individual observations and quotations with appropriate codes, to facilitate the discovery of significant themes. The process involves systematically organizing and interpreting open-ended feedback to uncover meaningful insights and identify underlying patterns within the data. Tools such as text analysis software help you automatically perform analysis and identify themes and patterns. The analysis approach enables you to contextualize experiences, understand participants' perspectives, and explore the hidden meaning behind their behaviour. (Rosala 2022.)

There are three common methods of conducting thematic analysis, which include using software, journaling, and using affinity diagramming techniques. The thematic analysis method adopted for this research work is (Google Form) software usage. Researchers often use data-analysis software for analyzing large amounts of qualitative data. Researchers upload their raw data (such as transcripts or field notes) into the software and then use the software's features to code the data. (Rosala 2022.)

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a cumulative construct that is a function of service expectations and performance perceptions in any given period. Performance here refers to the customers' perceived level of service quality relative to the price they pay as well as other elements such as area coverage. (Abu- El Samen et al. 2013.)

Lager (2008) opined that customer satisfaction is a business philosophy showing the responsibility and ability to meet customers' needs, managing and forecasting their expectations, and highlighting the importance of creating value for them. Mendoza et al. (2007) suggested that customer satisfaction may be defined as an individual's perception of either discontent or pleasure by comparing the perceived performance of a product concerning one's expectations. (Hossein et al. 2018.)

Yilmaz et al. (2005) state that because hotels are not able to compete effectively without meeting their customers' expectations, so, customer satisfaction is the secret and the determinant of success in the hospitality industry. Therefore, if hotel managers want to improve and develop their businesses, they should clearly understand the factors that provide higher value for customers. (Hossein et al. 2018.)

In the study conducted by Kim (2008), it was determined that customer satisfaction metrics provide information for hotel managers which is necessary to understand and identify the real needs and requirements of customers, so they can have high value for improving this understanding. Hotel performance and competitiveness are significantly dependent on their ability to satisfy customers efficiently and effectively. (Hossein et al. 2018.)

The idea that the customers' expectations are satisfied because of the products or services they receive is known as customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers feel that their needs and desires have been met or exceeded, and they perceive value in the products or services received. The exhibition of a higher customer lifetime value and contribution to the growth and profitability of a business can be called customer loyalty, and this cannot be achieved when the customer is unsatisfied, hence, business owners should devise a means to measure the level of the satisfaction of their various customer to retain customers' loyalty. (Singh 2023.)

Customers frequently switch providers because they are dissatisfied with some aspect of the service they have received; however, if a business can consistently deliver excellent service, customers will become more loyal, their relationships will stay cordial, and they will be more likely to stick together. Customers' satisfaction is the most important factor and is succeeded by their satisfaction with the service as a whole. (Singh 2023.)

Prentice (2013) stated that due to the transient and immaterial nature of services, customers may be wary of investing in them for fear of poor service or unfavorable outcomes; conversely, satisfying customers' needs through the delivery of high-quality services can alleviate their concerns and improve the quality of their relationships with businesses. (Singh 2023).

Joudeh et al. (2018) state that businesses can build a devoted customer base, boost customer retention, and obtain a competitive edge in the market by consistently tracking and enhancing these factors. Organizations frequently deploy a variety of instruments and strategies, such as mystery shopping, employee training and development, customer feedback surveys, service audits, and continuous improvement projects, to guarantee and enhance the quality of their services. (Singh 2023.)

Additionally, Stock's (2005) empirical research has shown that satisfied customers are less price-sensitive and willing to pay a higher price premium. Through premium prices and customer loyalty, the author believes that a company with satisfied customers can obtain higher revenues from its existing customers and reduce its dependence on costly marketing communications programs, thus improving its advertising and promotion efficiency. This discussion suggests that customer satisfaction generates more future sales at a given level of advertising and promotion costs or saves future communication costs at a given level of sales. (Luo et al. 2007, 136.)

 Zeithaml (2000) opined that published research also offers evidence that customer satisfactions/ or service quality perceptions positively affects the intentions to behave positively- praising the firms, preferring the firms above others, increasing the volume of purchase, or agreeably paying a price premium. Also, Anderson and Sullivan (1993) analyzing data from the Swedish customer satisfaction Barometer, found that stated repurchase intentions were strongly related to stated satisfaction across virtually all product categories. (Zeithaml 2000, 11.)

Customer satisfaction has been associated as a precursor of quality employees; Spencer et al. (2004) found that superior levels of customer satisfaction may also have beneficial effects that are driven by customer behaviors. For example, firms with higher customer satisfaction are more attractive employers and thus can often hire better people (because they signal financial success); as a result, such firms can enjoy superior human capital performance. (Luo et al. 2007, 136.)

Lovelock and Wright (2007) stated that customer satisfaction is dynamic and relative. Only the idea "customer-centric" can help companies improve satisfaction and keep customers truly, conversely, if competitors improve customer satisfaction, then it may lose corporate customers. While improving customer satisfaction, customer expectations should be noticed. Service quality, product quality, and value for money have a direct positive impact on customer satisfaction. (Khadka et al. 2017.)

Employee satisfaction is equally important before achieving customer satisfaction. If employees have a positive influence, then they can play a big role in increasing customer satisfaction levels. Satisfaction is a dynamic, moving target that may evolve, influenced by a variety of factors. Particularly when product usage or the service experience takes place over time, satisfaction may be highly variable depending on which point in the usage or experience cycle one is focusing on. (Khadka et al. 2017.)

Furthermore, Tao (2014) found that customer satisfaction is influenced by specific product or service features and perceptions of quality. Satisfaction is also influenced by customer's emotional responses, their attributions, and their perception of equity (Zeithaml & Bitner. 2003, 87-89.) Increased customer satisfaction can provide company benefits like customer loyalty, extending the life cycle of a customer expanding the life of merchandise the customer purchase and increases customers positive word of mouth communication. When the customer is satisfied with the product or service of the company, it can make the customer purchase frequently and recommend products or services to potential customers. A business organization cannot grow up in case the company ignores or disregards the needs of customers. (Khadka et al. 2017.)

Kotler (2000) defined satisfaction as "a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) about his or her expectations". Gursoy et al. (2007) further stated that it is a key focus of research in many tourism studies due to its importance in determining the success and continued existence of the tourism business and the benefits it brings to organizations. (Ali et al. 2015.)

Customer satisfaction is deemed an effective response to a product or service (Yuan et al. 2005). Previous research has demonstrated that satisfaction is strongly associated with re-purchase intentions (Cronin and Taylor, 1992.) Customer satisfaction also serves as an exit barrier, helping a firm to retain its customers (Amin et al. 2013; Liang and Zhang 2012.) In addition, customer satisfaction also leads to favourable word-of-mouth, which provides a valuable form of indirect advertising to an organization (Park et al. 2005). Shin and Elliott (2001) concluded that, through satisfying customers, organizations could improve profitability by expanding their business and gaining a higher market share as well as repeat and referral business. (Ali et al. 2015.)

2.1.1 Effect of customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction does have a great positive effect on an organization, especially on profitability. According to Hoyer et al. (2001) satisfied customers form the foundation of any successful business as customer satisfaction leads to repeat purchases, brand loyalty, and positive word of mouth. Coldwell (2001): "Growth Strategies International (GSI) performed a statistical analysis of customer satisfaction data encompassing the findings of over 20,000 customer surveys conducted in 40 countries by InfoQuest. The conclusion of the study was a satisfied customer contributes 2.6 times as much revenue to a company as a somewhat satisfied customer. A satisfied customer contributes 17 times as much revenue as a somewhat dissatisfied customer, also, a dissatisfied customer decreases revenue at a rate equal to 1.8 times what a Satisfied Customer contributes to a business. (Singh 2006, 3.)

Furthermore, many factors affect customer satisfaction. According to Hokanson (1995), these factors include friendly employees, courteous employees, knowledgeable employees, helpful employees, accuracy of billing, billing timeliness, competitive pricing, service quality, good value, billing clarity, and quick service. This is shown in Figure 2 below. (Singh 2006, 3.)
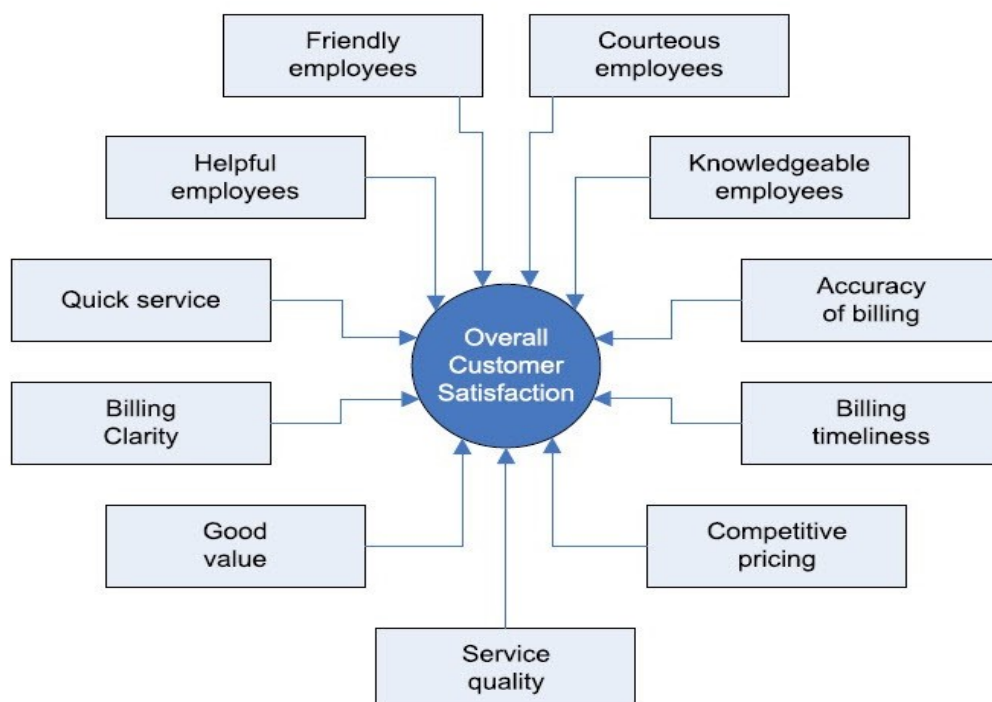

Figure 2. Factors that affect customers' satisfaction (Van Haaften 2023)

2.1.2   Consequences of low customer satisfaction

The consequences of not satisfying customers can be severe. According to Hoyer and MacInnis (2001), dissatisfied consumers can decide to discontinue purchasing the good or service, complain to the company or a third party, and perhaps return the item, or engage in negative word-of-mouth communication, etc. Customer satisfaction is important because, according to La Barbera and Mazursky (1983), "satisfaction influences repurchase intentions. whereas dissatisfaction has been seen as a primary reason for customer defection or discontinuation of purchase (Singh 2006, 4.)

Furthermore, Griffin (1995) postulated that a loyal customer may have an emotional attachment to the hotel. Loyal customers are the principal drivers of profits as they continue to stay at a brand's properties. (Sim et al. 2006.)

Tideswell et al. (2004) reported that guests who fit into the extremely loyal cluster have a high attitudinal attachment to the hotel, so many are prepared to change the timing of their visit to ensure they can stay at their preferred property. They are also not as sensitive to pricing issues and are willing to pay more to stay in their favorite property rather than go elsewhere in favor of cheaper room rates. (Sim et al. 2006.)

Kotler et al. (1998) found that brand loyalty customers also reduced marketing costs associated with attracting new customers. In addition, these customers say positive things about a company to others and frequently pay premium prices. (Sim et al. 2006.)

Barsky et al. (2004) reported that in the luxury hotel segment among leisure travelers, overall satisfaction was significantly higher among repeat guests. This suggests that satisfying leisure travelers can pay off handsomely with higher rates and more repeat guests. Oh (2002) postulated that Industry executives continue to emphasize "customer loyalty" as a key to sustaining long-term business success. (Sim et al. 2006.)

Many scholars have supported the idea that customer satisfaction is a significant determinant of customer loyalty (Loureiro 2010.) Chitty et al. (2007) postulated that satisfaction with the services provided may result in loyal customers. Kao et al. (2008) also tested and confirmed the significant impact of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty in theme parks. Much research showed that customer satisfaction and loyalty have meaningful and positive relations with each other, and they impact the company's performance. (Hossein et al. 2018.)

2.2 Service quality

Parasuraman, Valarie A. Zeithaml, and L. Berry defined service quality as "the delivery of excellent or superior service relative to customer expectation. The term service quality is an association of two different words: ''service" and quality. Service means "any activity or benefits that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything". Quality has come to be recognized as a strategic tool for attaining operational efficiency and better performance of business. (Ramya et al. 2019, 38.)

According to Zeithaml et al. (1990), service quality refers to the extrinsically perceived attribution based on customers' experience about the service they perceived to receive through the service counter. Kumra (2008) also stated that service quality is involved not only in final products/services but also in the production and supplying process; therefore, employee involvement and commitment are important in all stages of offering final products or services. (Slack and Singh 2020.)

Martinelli and Balboni (2012) stated that consensus exists among academics and researchers that service quality is vital to providing a differentiating advantage to businesses and achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty. Also, Shipton et al. (2017) suggest that service quality plays an important role in customer loyalty and satisfaction and are desirable goals of retailers. Also, Awan and Rehman (2014) believe that many organizations adopt marketing strategies and programs focused on delivering customer satisfaction believing that customer satisfaction gives rise to customer loyalty and increased profitability. Service quality holds a significant position in customer satisfaction and hence firm may increase its market share by improving its service quality. (Slack and Singh 2020, 3.)

There is a favorable bilateral relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality, hence, Taylor and Baker (1994) accepted that satisfaction and service quality act jointly on intentions and suggested that the higher perceived service quality and customer satisfaction levels are, the higher purchase intentions will become. (Özkan 2020.)

Service quality means the ability of a service provider to satisfy customers in an efficient manner through which he can better the performance of the business. In the service sector too ''quality" is an important element for the success of business. It is because of the realization of its positive link with profits, increased market share, and customer satisfaction. (Ramya et al. 2019.)

Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong defined the term 'service quality' as a service firm can hang on to its customers. That is, in their opinion customer retention is the best measure of service quality. (Ramya et al. 2019, 38.)

Indeed (2021) states that the importance of service quality cannot be overemphasized in an organization. The team further stated that service quality can boost sales and in turn increase revenue in an organization. hence, customers who perceive a company's services as being high quality are more likely to do business with that company. Also, customers who buy from companies with high service quality are more likely to continue buying from those companies regularly. Thus, saving marketing money has been identified as one of the merits of service quality, hence, retaining existing customers by offering them high-quality services is typically less expensive than attracting new ones. (Indeed 2021.)

Furthermore, service quality attracts quality employees, hence, highly performing professionals generally prefer to work for companies with high service quality., also, it strengthens the company's brand, thus, the reputation of a company with above-average service quality can boost sales by attracting new customers or retaining existing ones, and finally, it eliminates certain barriers to buying, therefore, high service quality can convince a hesitant customer to make a purchase, as they know that if the service is not right for them, they can rely on strong customer service to remedy the situation. (Indeed 2021.)

Furthermore, all dimensions are important to customers, but some more than others. Service providers need to know which are to avoid majoring in minors. At the same time, they cannot focus on only one dimension and let the others suffer. The research conducted by service quality asked participants to assign points across the five dimensions. The results show that reliability scores high, which means that customers are more satisfied when a service provider can perform the promised service dependably, and accurately., while tangibles score the lowest which might suggest that customers do not care much about the appearance of physical facilities, equipment personnel, and communication materials, there focus is the quality of service been rendered. (Arlen 2008.)

Fitzsimmons and Sullivan (1982) stated that service quality is generally viewed as the output of the service delivery system, especially in the case of pure service systems. Anderson et al. (1994) postulated that service quality is linked to consumer satisfaction. Although there is no consensus in the research community about the direction of causality relating to quality and satisfaction, the common assumption is that service quality leads to satisfied customers. For example, customers leaving a restaurant or hotel are asked if they were satisfied with the service they received. If they answer "no," we tend to assume service was poor. Direct service providers, such as waitresses, also note that at times the best service efforts are criticized because the customer's perceptions of the service are clouded by being in a bad mood or having a disagreement with someone just before arriving or arriving at the restaurant. These service providers recognize that in practice the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction is affected by other factors, one of which is the customers themselves. (Duffy et al.

1998) Also, Demirel (2022) The more customers perceive that the service quality exceeds the cost of receiving the service, the higher it will be. This results in more satisfaction.

Amin et al. (2013) opined that Scholars view service quality as an antecedent of customer satisfaction. Furthermore, Saha and Theingi (2009) found out in the airline industry, that there is a significant relationship between airline service quality and passenger satisfaction, meaning that the higher the perceived service quality, the higher the passenger satisfaction. On the contrary, Lau et al. (2011) states that when a customer is not satisfied, he or she is more likely to switch to another airline and not recommend the airline to friends or family members. (Ali et al. 2015.)

Cronin et al. (2000). Service quality is found to be a strong predictor of customer satisfaction. Ndubisi and Wah (2005) state that Various studies have been conducted in similar areas, where banking service quality dimensions have been tested as predictors of customer satisfaction. (Ganguli and Roy 2011.)

2.2.1 Measurement of service quality

In the case of tangible goods, quality can be assessed by examining the goods. Quality control can be used to check specifications and reject defective goods. However, service quality cannot be assessed in the same way as a tangible product due to features of service such as intangibility, separability, etc. As in the case of goods, the service provider cannot undertake a quality check before the service is finally delivered to the customer. To assess the service quality, the customer judges the expected service quality against the perceived quality when they receive it. There are mainly two methods for measuring service quality and they are Gap analysis Service and service performance measures. (Ramya et al. 2019, 39.)

2.2.2 Gap model of service quality

The gap analysis model of service quality was developed by Parasuraman, et al. in the year 1985. The model indicated that customer perception of quality was influenced by a series of five distinct gaps. They are mentioned and shown in Figure 3 below. (Ramya et al. 2019, 39.)

Gap - I - Gap between customer expectation and Management perception. The reasons for this gap are a lack of adequate market research and a lack of upward communication. This gap can be narrowed by adopting adequate research programs to know customer needs and to improve the communication system. It can be measured by using the service quality scale and comparing the scores obtained from the management and customers. (Ramya et al. 2019, 39.)

Gap - 2 - Gap between management perception and service quality specification. This gap exists in service firms because of the lack of wholehearted commitment of management to service quality, inadequate service leadership, etc. It can be closed by standardizing the service delivery process and setting proper organizational goals. (Ramya et al. 2019, 39.)

Gap - 3 - Gap between service quality specification and service delivery. The third gap originates from the discrepancies in the actual service delivery, that is, the service providers or employees do not perform at the level expected by the management. It is because of ineffective recruitment, lack of proper incentives and motivations, etc. This gap can be eliminated by providing the employees with adequate support. (Ramya et al. 2019, 39.)

Gap - 4 - Gap between service delivery and external communication. The gap between service delivery and external communication occurs due to exaggerated promises or ineffective communication to the customer, which raises customer expectations. This can be narrowed by the efficient and effective communication system. (Ramya et al. 2019, 39.)

Gap - 5 - Gap between expected quality and perceived quality. This gap exists because of the inequality in the service expectation of the customer and his service perception. This can be overcome by identifying, quantifying, and monitoring customer expectations and perceptions through the effective use of marketing and marketing research tools. (Ramya et al. 2019, 39.)
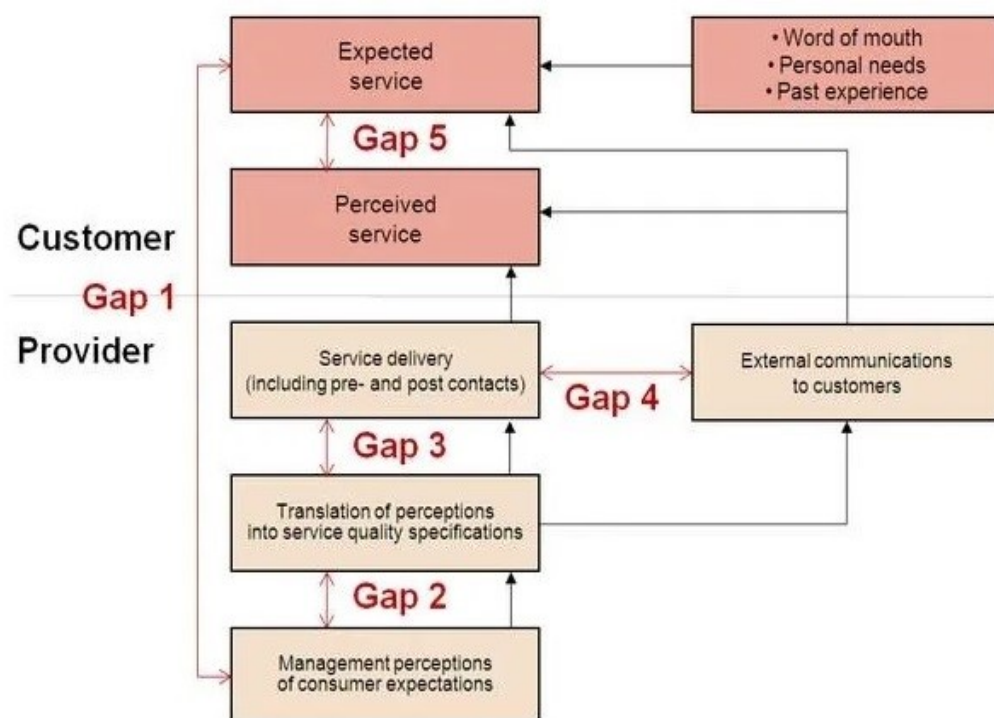

Figure 3. Gap Model of Service Quality (Theintactone 2019)

An alternative to using gap theory methodology for measuring service quality is the service performance measures. The two types of performance measures can be used under this method. (Ramya et al. 2019, 39.)

2.2.3   Service performance measures (Soft measures of service quality)

The soft measure of service quality is a type of service performance measure, which is an alternative method of measuring service quality. Soft measures of service quality are those that cannot easily be observed and must be collected by talking to customers, employees, or others. A typical example of this measure is customer satisfaction surveys. Under this method, individual customers or corporate customers may be asked to rate their specific and overall impression of service delivery. For this, a questionnaire or interview schedule can be used. Besides this, focus group interviews and other market research techniques can be utilized for this purpose. (Ramya et al. 2019, 39.)

Another example of a soft measure of service quality is internal performance analysis. In this method, employee surveys are conducted to determine the perception of the quality of service delivered to customers on specific dimensions. Also, feedback from quality circles, performance evaluation reports, customer retention levels, etc., provide information to monitor the quality of services. (Ramya et al. 2019, 39.)

2.3   Dimension of service quality

Parasuraman et al (1988) postulated that service quality is comprised of five dimensions which are Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. The author further stated that all the dimensions are important to customers, but some dimensions are more important than others. (Arlen 2008.)

The dimensions of service quality were discussed in detail and shown clearly in Figure 4 below.

Reliability is defined as the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. In a broad sense reliability means, service firms' promises about delivery, service provisions, problem resolutions, and pricing. Customers like to do business with those firms, who keep their promises. So, it is an important element in the service quality perception by the customer and his loyalty. Hence service firms need to be aware of customer expectations of reliability. (Ramya et al. 2019, 40.)

Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service. This dimension focuses on the attitude and promptness in dealing with customer requests, questions, complaints, and problems. It also focuses on punctuality, presence, professional commitment, etc., of the employees or staff. It can be calculated on the length of time customers wait for

assistance, answers to questions, etc. The conditions of responsiveness can be improved by continuously viewing the process of service delivery and employees' attitudes toward the requests of customers. (Ramya et al. 2019, 40.)

The assurance dimension can be defined as an employee's knowledge, courtesy, and the ability of the firm and its employees to inspire trust and confidence in their customers. This dimension is important in banking, and insurance services because customers feel uncertain about their ability to evaluate outcomes. (Ramya et al. 2019, 40.)

 The empathy dimension is the caring individualized attention provided to the customers by their banks or service firms. This dimension tries to convey the meaning through personalized or individualized services that customers are unique and special to the firm. The focus of this dimension is on a variety of services that satisfy different needs of customers, individualized or personalized services, etc. In this case, the service providers need to know customers' personal needs or wants and preferences. (Ramya et al. 2019, 40.)

The fifth dimension of service quality is Tangibility which is defined as the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, communication materials, and technology. All these provide enough hints to customers about the quality of service of the firm. Also, this dimension enhances the image of the firm. Hence tangibility dimension is very important to firms, and they need to invest heavily in arranging physical facilities. (Ramya et al. 2019, 40.)
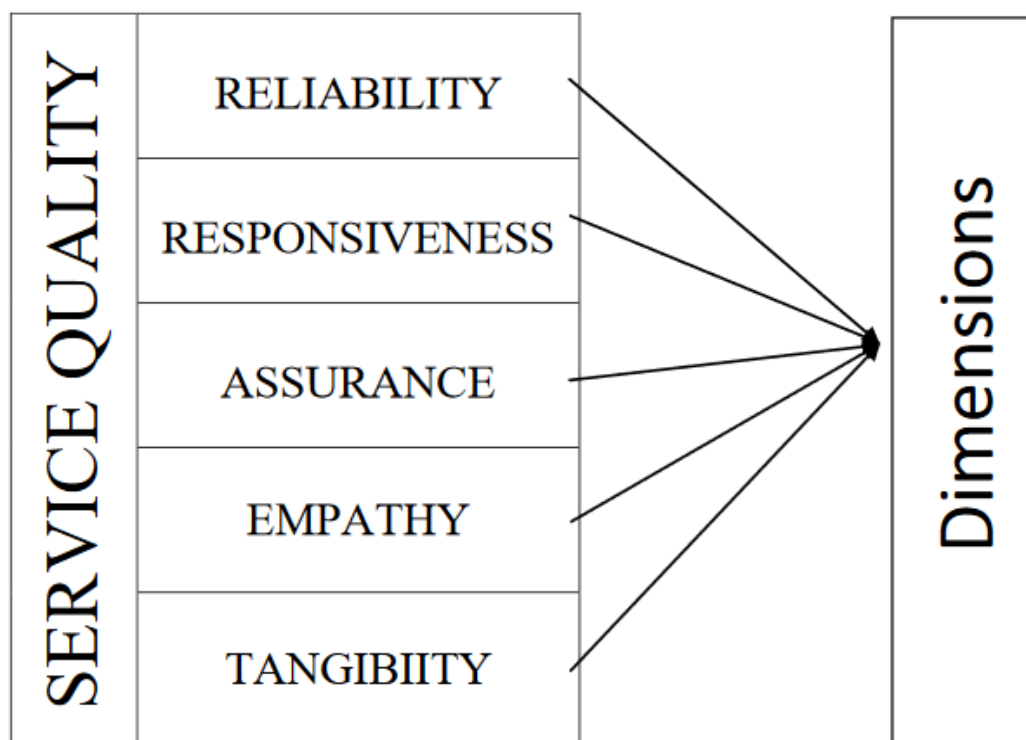

Figure 4. Five dimensions of service quality

In the increasingly competitive market, especially the services market, the focus on service quality is essential to service firms for their survival and success. The management of service quality helps the management to maintain consistency in service delivery and to meet changing customer expectations more efficiently and effectively. (Ramya et al. 2019, 40.)

An organization that understands customer expectations and can fulfill them to the best of its ability succeeds in the competitive world of marketing. fulfilling customers' expectations leads to satisfaction and exceeding expectations in terms of service delivery results in customer loyalty. (Indeed 2021.)

Thus, this research work would adopt the five dimensions of service quality in measuring the current level of customer satisfaction in Newton Park Hotel and Resort Ltd.

3   Research Implementation

3.1   Describing the research

As a thesis rooted in research practice, it is structured into four basic parts aimed at fulfilling its core objective, as portrayed in the following procedure below. (Figure 5)
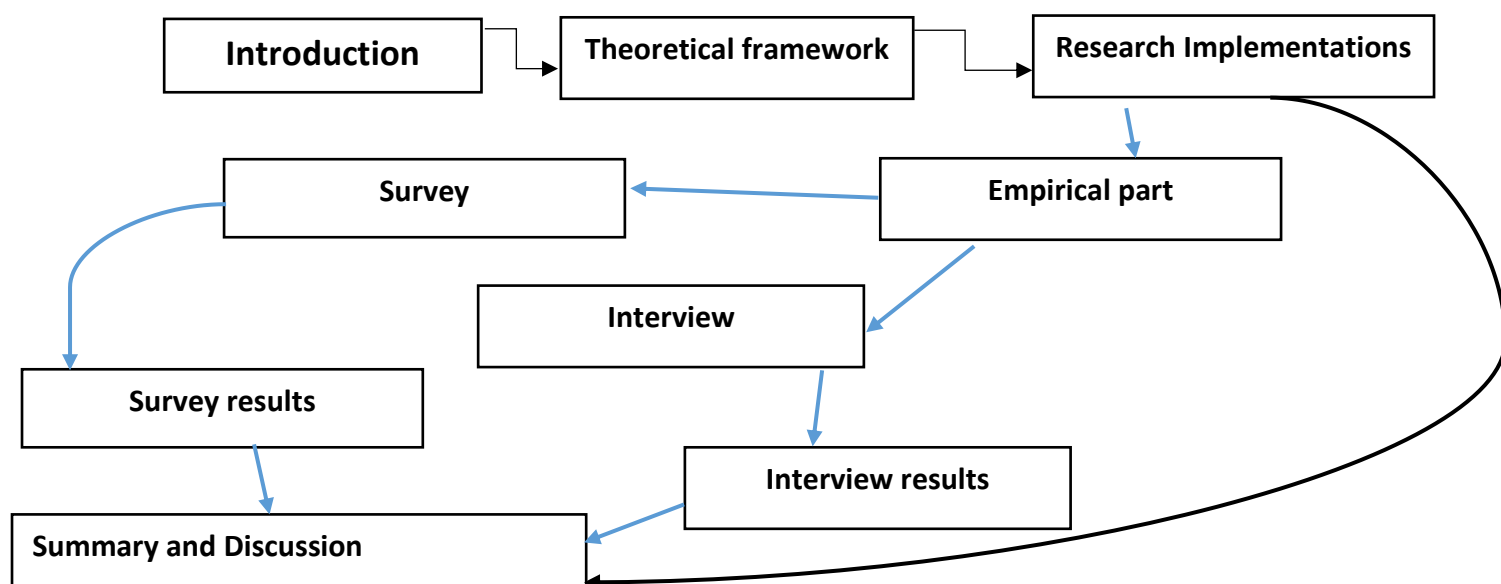

Figure 5. Thesis structure

The first chapter of this thesis work explored the concept (customer satisfaction) of the study and the background of the study. previous research works were discussed to build a solid foundation for this study. case company was discussed. The fundamental part of the thesis was also discussed which includes, objectives, and delimitations, research questions, research methods, data collection, and data analysis.

The second chapter establishes a theoretical framework aimed at comprehensively under-standing the concept of customer satisfaction, which has been examined across various dimensions in research and organizational contexts over time. Additionally, customer loyalty is introduced to enhance comprehension of the outcomes associated with satisfied customers. Moreover, the chapter introduces the five dimensions of service quality as the primary instrument for assessing the current level of customer satisfaction at Newton Park Hotel.

The third chapter discussed the structure of the thesis, analyzing the materials used in the thesis, survey, and interview results, and research findings/ discussion of results.

Furthermore, the fourth chapter which happens to be the last chapter in the research-based thesis talks about the recapping the objectives and the results, in which the thesis' main re-search question and sub-questions were answered. Also, discussions, and suggestions for further research were deliberated.

3.2   Survey and interview data collection

To assess the current level of customer satisfaction at Newton Park Hotel Ltd, a survey was conducted between January 31 and February 14, 2024.

Following a 15-day data collection period, a total number of one hundred and four (104) lodging customers of Newton Park Hotel participated in the survey, indicating a robust response rate that enhances the reliability of the research findings.

This survey utilized a questionnaire designed specifically for this purpose. The questionnaire was structured into three distinct sections. The first section encompassed demographic questions aimed at gathering background information about the respondents. The second section was segmented into five dimensions of service quality, each comprising questions necessitating responses from respondents. A Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 was employed for rating the responses of the customers, with 1 indicating "very unsatisfied" and 5 indicating "very satisfied."

The third section featured an open-ended question, permitting respondents to freely express their opinions and provide feedback concerning their experiences while lodging in Newton Park Hotel.

The questionnaire as shown in appendix 1 was developed and analyzed by using an online application called Google Forms. The link to the questionnaire was embedded in a QR code, the code was generated and translated into a printable format. Convenience sampling was adopted in distributing the paper that has the QR code. The hotel porter was instrumental in this distribution; the paper was visibly placed in all the unoccupied hotel rooms with an introductory message, while the porter introduced the content of the (QR Code) paper to the guests in the occupied rooms. Also, the hotels' guest relation officer shared the questionnaire link to the hotels' promotion WhatsApp group and directly to some customers.

Furthermore, to address the sub-questions within this study, an interview was conducted with Mrs. Chidinma Imo, the front office manager of Newton Park Hotels. With a tenure spanning nine years, Mrs. Imo holds the title of the hotel's most longstanding manager. Her extensive experience encompasses various managerial roles within the establishment, including significant involvement in staff training and recruitment. Consequently, she was deemed the most suitable candidate for the interview.

The interview took place on the 10 of February 2024, facilitated through zoom cloud meetings. Comprising seven questions centered around the Model of service quality. The interview form as shown in appendix 2 aimed to deepen understanding of phenomena bordering staff training, level of supervision, and another important aspect the interviewee may want to say as regards

the subject matter. To ensure accuracy and completeness, Otter.ai transcription services were utilized.

3.3   Survey results

The survey results showed that 104 respondents participated in the survey. Five dimensions of service quality were used to ascertain the current level of customer satisfaction at Newton Park Hotel. Findings showed that some dimensions of service quality are more important to customers than others, However, despite variations, the satisfaction scores across all five dimensions were notably high (Arlen 2008.)

Below are how the respondents reacted to various questions regarding their satisfaction level based on lodging services being rendered by Newton Park Hotel Ltd:
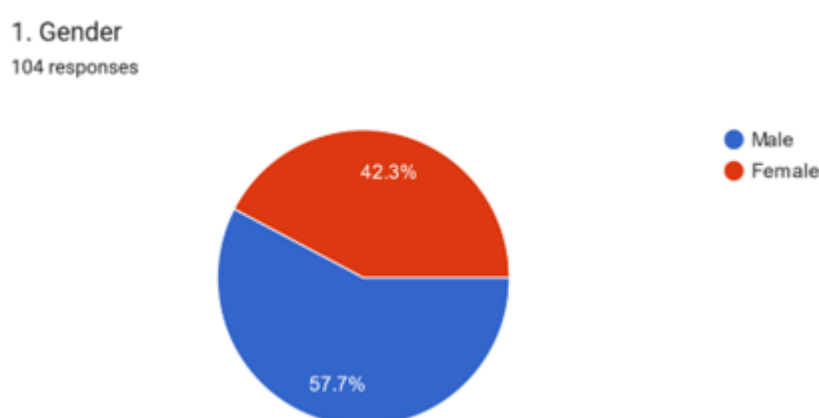
Figure 6. The gender of the respondents

In the pie chart depicted in Figure 6, the gender distribution among the respondents was illustrated. Among the total population of respondents, sixty (60) respondents identified as male, constituting 57.7% of the total population. Additionally, forty-four (44) respondents identified as female, representing 42.3% of the total population of respondents. The nearly equal representation of genders indicates a well-balanced and diverse patronage within the hotel. This gender parity highlights the hotel's ability to accommodate a broad spectrum of lodgers, effectively attracting both male and female customers.

Figure 7 below depicts the age distribution of the survey respondents, categorized into five distinct age groups spanning from eighteen (18) to over fifty-six (56) years old. The analysis revealed that the majority of Newton Park lodging customers fell within the age range of 26-35, comprising 54.8% of the total respondents. This suggests a notable predominance of young lodging customers. Following this group, respondents aged 36-45 constituted 21.2% of the total age distribution, while those aged 46-55 accounted for 17.3%. Customers aged 18-25

constituted 5.8% of the total age group, with the lowest representation observed in the fifty-six (56) years and above category, making up just 1% of the overall age distribution.
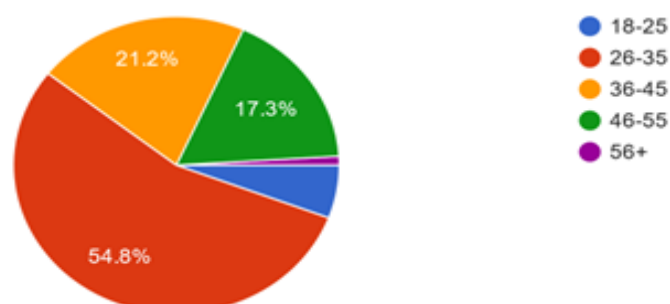
2. Age
104 responses

Figure 7. The age distribution of the respondents.

Figure 8 below illustrates the frequency of lodging among the survey participants at Newton Park Hotel. Out of the respondents, thirty-five (35) individuals, accounting for 33.7% of the total population, reported lodging at the hotel 2-3 times. Following this, the group indicating lodging 4-5 times comprised 26.9% of the respondents, i.e., twenty-eight (28) respondents; suggesting an elevated level of satisfaction with the hotel's services and supporting the notion that satisfied customers tend to repeat business (Tao 2014). Additionally, twenty-one (21) respondents (20.2%) stated that they had lodged at Newton Park Hotel more than 4-5 times, further indicating a significant rate of repeat patronage. Finally, twenty (20) respondents, constituting 19.2% of the total population, reported being first-time lodgers.

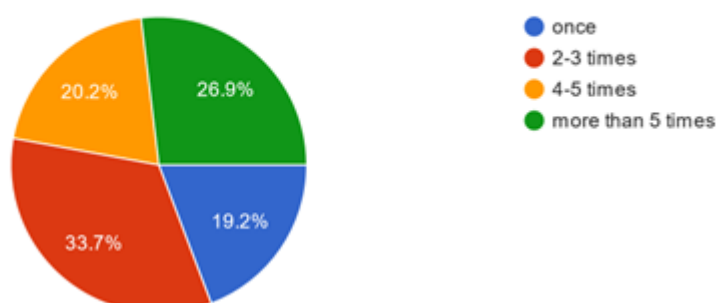3. How frequently do you stay in lodging services per year?
104 responses

Figure 8. The number of stay-in lodging services by the respondents

The author previously indicated the utilization of five dimensions of service quality to assess the current level of customer satisfaction in Newton Park Hotel. This decision was made be-

cause aligning perceived service with service quality typically results in elevated levels of customer satisfaction. When customers' perceptions of service closely correspond with the actual quality of service rendered, it enhances their overall experience and augments the likelihood of their satisfaction with the service provided.

Section 2

Dimension 1: Reliability

question 1:

1. How satisfied are you by the rate of accuracy and reliability of the information provided during the booking process?

104 responses
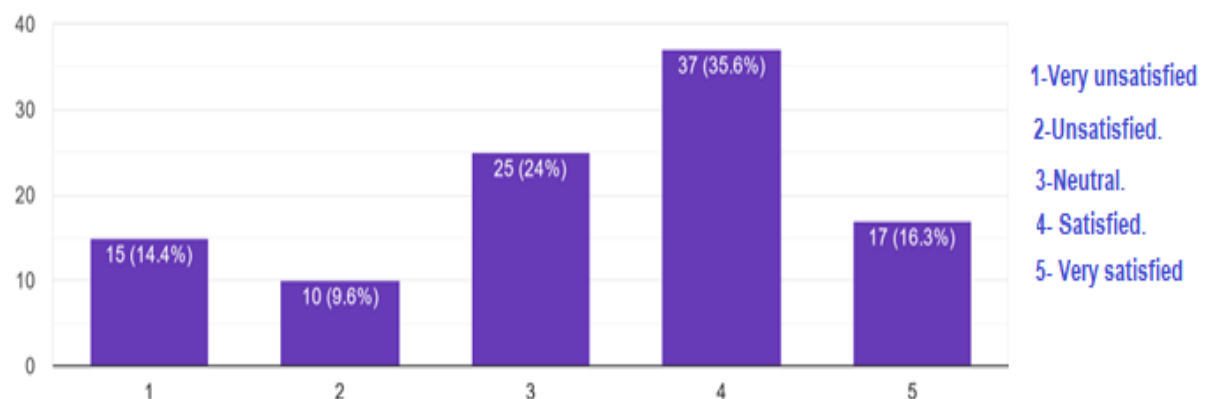
Figure 9. Level of customer satisfaction as regards the reliability of the information provided during the booking processes

The question seeks to explore the level of customer satisfaction concerning the accuracy and reliability of information dispensed during the booking process, as depicted in Figure 9. The findings reveal that 16.3% of the total respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction, and 35.6% expressed satisfaction, suggesting a high satisfaction quotient concerning the accuracy and reliability of the information provided by the hotel during the booking process. A further 24% reported a neutral stance, indicating neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction with the reliability of the provided information. Conversely, 9.6% expressed dissatisfaction, while 14.4% reported being very unsatisfied, representing a small yet noteworthy segment of customers dissatisfied with the accuracy and reliability of the information provided by the hotel during the booking process.

Question 2:

2. To what extent are you satisfied in terms of room cleanliness and readiness upon check-in?
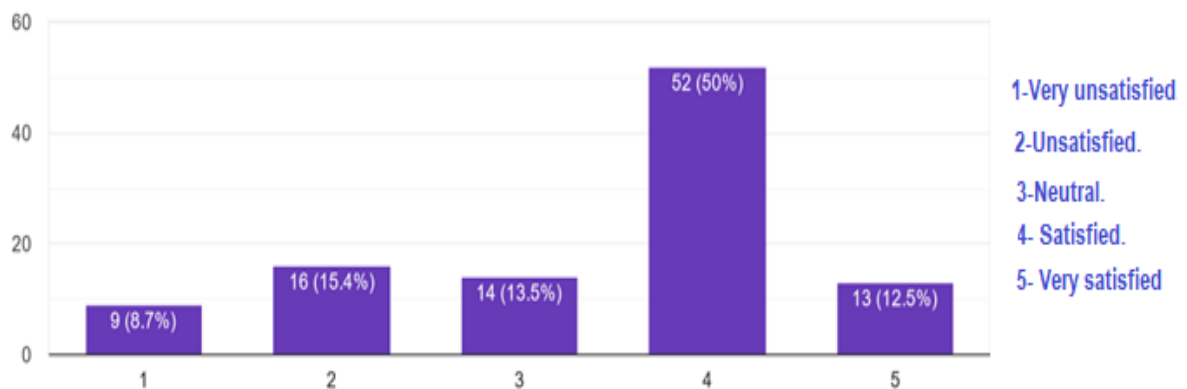
104 responses

Figure 10. Level of customer satisfaction as regards room cleaning and ready upon arrival

The second question in the reliability dimension delved into assessing the level of customer satisfaction as regards room cleanliness and readiness upon check-in as shown in Figure 10 above. The response provides an insight into how clean, and readiness of the hotels' rooms aligned with the customer's initial expectations. Among the respondents, 12.5% expressed being very satisfied, while 50% reported being satisfied, indicating that a significant proportion of the respondents were happy about the room's cleanliness and readiness upon check-in. Additionally, 13.5% of respondents were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, indicating a neutral stance about the cleanliness of the room. Conversely, 15.4% expressed dissatisfaction, with 8.7% reporting being very unsatisfied, representing a small yet noteworthy portion of customers dissatisfied with the cleanliness and readiness of the room upon arrival, indicating a disparity with their expectations.

Question 3:

3. How satisfied are you with the consistency of service provided by the hotel staff during your stay?
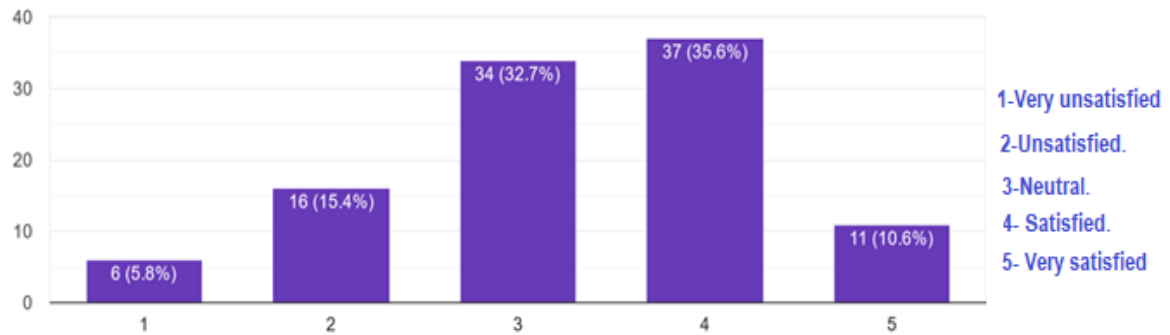
104 responses

Figure 11. Consistency of service provided by the hotel

Figure 11 above vividly illustrates the consistency of service provided by the hotel. The findings reveal that 10.6% of the customers expressed being highly satisfied with the hotel's consistency in delivering services. 35.6% indicated that they were satisfied with the provided services. This high number of satisfied customers indicated that Newton Park Hotel is very consistent with the services they are providing to the customers. similarly, 32.7% of the respondents were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, indicating a neutral stance on the subject matter. On the contrary, 15.4% of respondents indicated that they were unsatisfied with the services, while 5.8% were very unsatisfied. Although the percentage of respondents that indicated unsatisfied was low, however, Newton Park Hotel should as a matter of urgency improve their lodging services.

Question 4:

4. Did the hotel deliver the services promised in its advertisements and promotions?
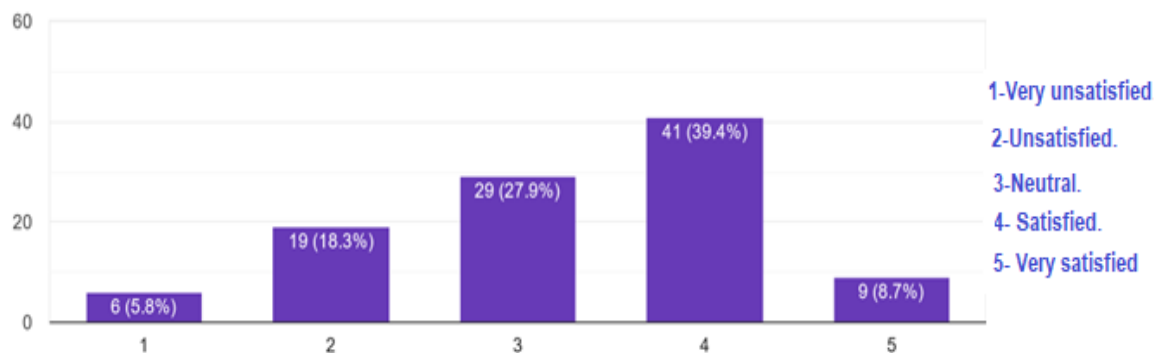104 responses

Figure 12. Level of customer satisfaction based on expected service and perceived service

The fourth question in the reliability dimension of service quality aimed to assess the level of customer satisfaction as regards the services Newton Park Hotel promised its customers during its business promotions and advertisements. As shown in Figure 12 above, a low portion of 8.7% indicated that they were very satisfied with perceived services. Notably, 39.4% of the total respondents agreed that the expected service matched the perceived service, highlighting a significant portion of satisfied customers. Another 27.9% of respondents were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, indicating a neutral stance. On the other hand, 18.3% of respondents were not satisfied, suggesting a low level of dissatisfaction with the perceived service. lastly, 5.8% were very unsatisfied, representing a small proportion of respondents who indicated that the hotel was not able to provide the services they promised in their advertisement and promotions.

Question 5:

5. How reliable was the hotel's response to your requests or concerns during your stay?
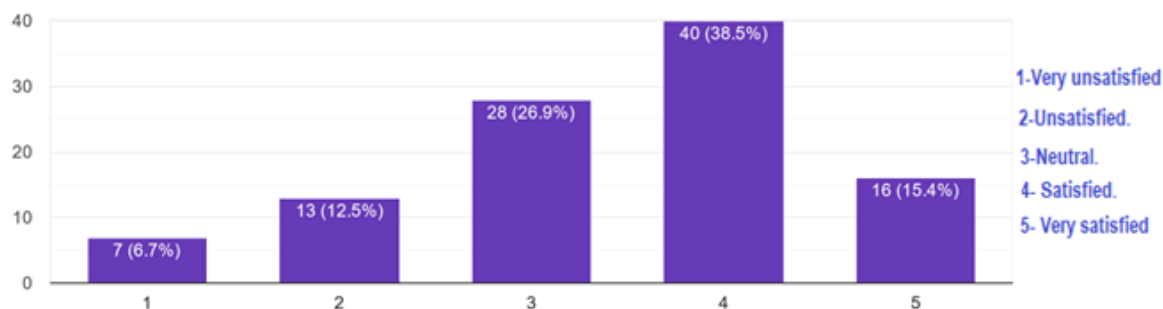104 responses

Figure 13. Level of customer satisfaction based on the hotels' latent response to customer requests

The fifth question within the customer satisfaction survey examined Newton Park Hotel's responsiveness to guest requests during their accommodations. As shown in Figure 13 above, the analysis revealed that 15.4% of participants expressed high satisfaction with the hotel's responsiveness. A significant portion (38.5%) reported satisfaction, while 26.9% remained neutral. Conversely, 12.9% expressed dissatisfaction, with 6.7% indicating strong dissatisfaction. Despite a notable proportion reporting satisfaction, enhancing customer service is vital for Newton Park Hotel to meet the majority, if not all, of its customers' needs.

Dimension 2: Responsiveness

Question 1:

1. How quickly did the hotel respond to your inquiries or requests before your arrival?
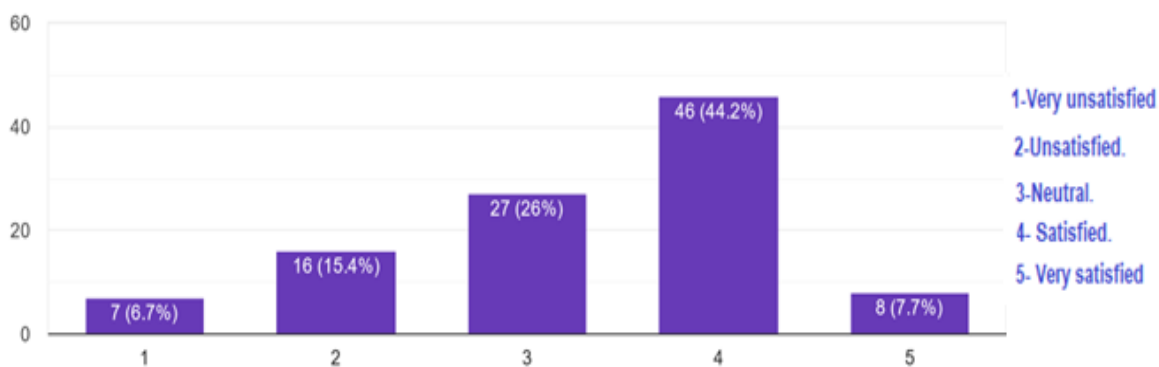104 responses

Figure 14. Level of customer satisfaction based on how quickly the hotel responds to their customer by their arrival

The first question in the responsiveness dimension of service quality seeks to understand the timeliness of Newton Park Hotel in addressing inquiries or requests from its customers, as shown clearly in Figure 14 above. Results indicate that 7.7% of respondents expressed high satisfaction with the hotel's responsiveness before their arrival. A notable 44.2% reported satisfaction with the promptness of the hotel's responses. Additionally, 26% of respondents adopted a neutral stance, neither satisfied nor unsatisfied. Conversely, 15.4% expressed dissatisfaction, with 6.7% strongly dissatisfied with the hotel's actions.

Question 2:

2. Were you satisfied with the promptness of check-in and check-out processes at the hotel?
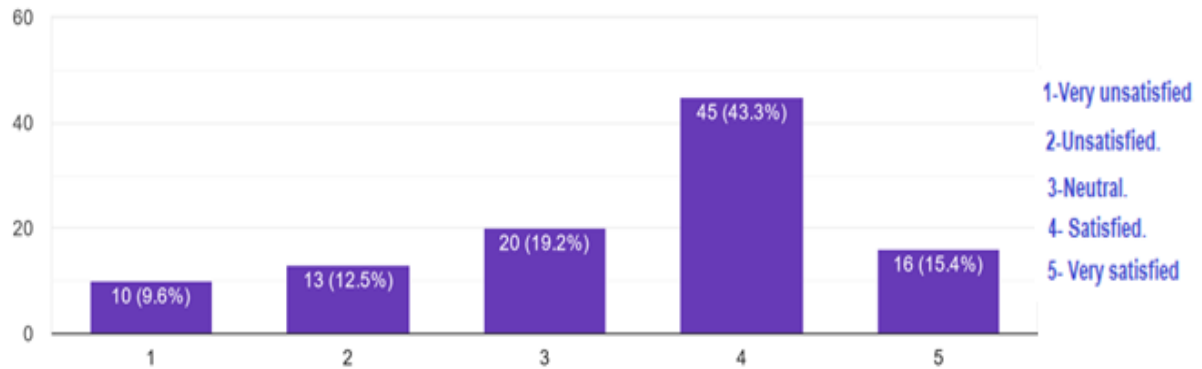104 responses

Figure 15. Level of customer satisfaction based on promptness of check-in and check-out processes

Figure 15 above scrutinized the efficiency of the check-in and check-out procedures. Results reveal that 15.4% of respondents expressed high satisfaction with the hotel's execution of these processes. A substantial 45.3% of respondents indicated satisfaction with the check-in and check-out procedures. Furthermore, 19.2% of respondents adopted a neutral stance. Conversely, 12.5% expressed dissatisfaction, with 9.6% indicating strong dissatisfaction with the promptness of the check-in and check-out processes.

Question 3:

3. How responsive was the hotel to any issues or complaints you raised during your stay?
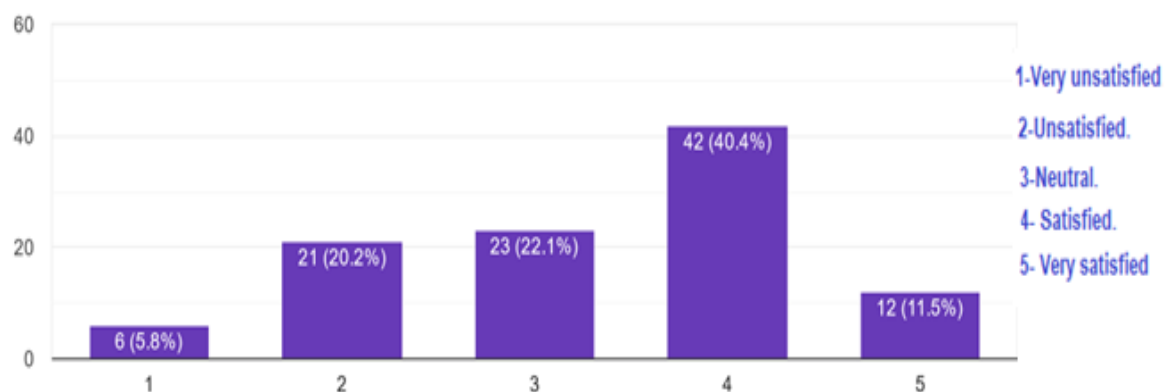104 responses

Figure 16. Level of customer satisfaction on responsiveness to complaints

The third question within the responsiveness dimension of service quality, aimed at gauging customer satisfaction levels at Newton Park Hotel, is depicted in Figure 16 above. The findings revealed that 11.5% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the hotel's response to issues raised during their stay. Additionally, 40.4% of respondents reported satisfaction with the hotel's handling of their complaints. Furthermore, 22.1% of respondents adopted a neutral stance, indicating neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. Conversely, 20.2% expressed dissatisfaction with the hotel's complaint handling, with 5.8% indicating strong dissatisfaction. Despite a notable proportion expressing satisfaction, Newton Park Hotel should explore new approaches to address customer complaints effectively, aiming to maximize satisfaction across the board.

Question 4:

4. To what extent did the hotel meet your expectations in terms of addressing your specific needs and preferences?
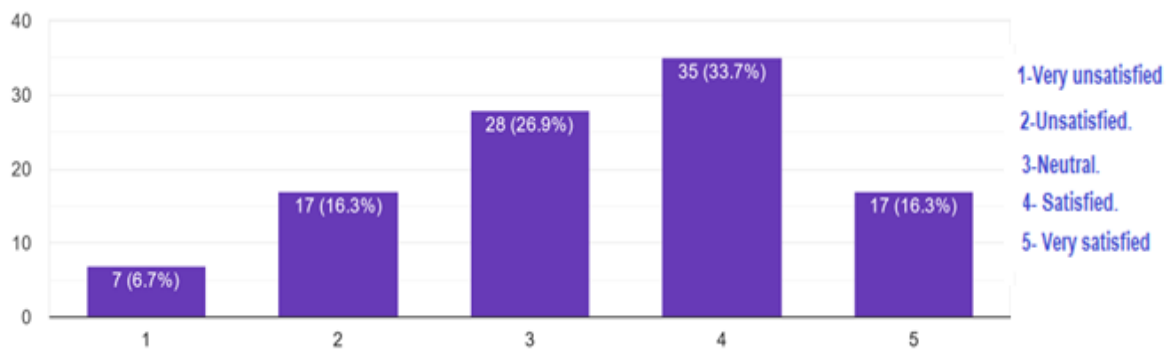
104 responses

Figure 17. Level of customer satisfaction based on addressing specific needs and preferences

The analysis in Figure 17 above evaluated the degree to which Newton Park Hotel fulfills its customers' expectations regarding their individual needs and preferences. The findings revealed that 16.3% of respondents were highly satisfied, indicating that their expectations were met to a significant extent. Additionally, 33.7% of respondents expressed satisfaction, suggesting that the hotel successfully addressed the specific needs and preferences of a considerable portion of the total respondents. However, 16.3% of respondents reported dissatisfaction, with 6.7% expressing strong dissatisfaction, indicating that the hotel failed to meet their expectations.

Dimension 3: Assurance

Question 1:

1. How knowledgeable and competent did you find the hotel staff in addressing your questions or concerns?
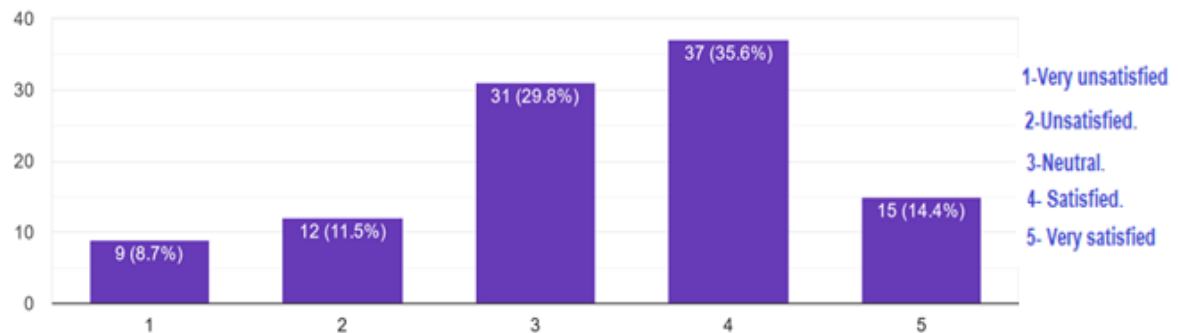
104 responses

Figure 18. Knowledge and competence of the hotel's staff in addressing questions and concerns of its customers

The first question within the assurance dimension of service quality, as depicted in Figure 18 above, was aimed at evaluating customer satisfaction regarding the competence and knowledgeability of Newton Park Hotel's staff in addressing inquiries or concerns. The findings revealed that 14.4% of respondents expressed high satisfaction with the staff's competence. Furthermore, 25.6% of respondents reported satisfaction with the level of competence demonstrated by the hotel's staff in addressing their questions. Conversely, 29.8% of respondents remained neutral, indicating neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. However, 11.5% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, with 8.7% indicating strong dissatisfaction with the staff's competence.

Question 2:

2. To what extent did the hotel provide a sense of security and safety during your stay?
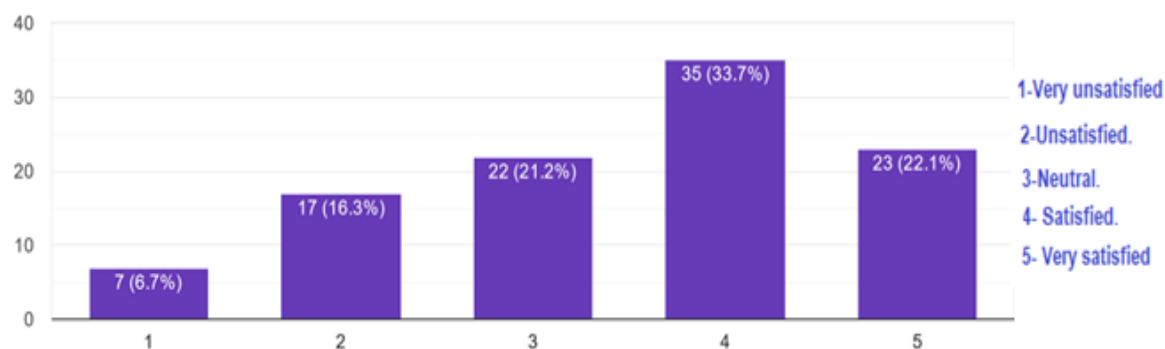104 responses

Figure 19. Level of customer satisfaction based on the extent Newton Park Hotel assured its customers of their security and safety

The evaluation depicted in Figure 19 above assessed the level of customer satisfaction regarding the extent to which Newton Park Hotel provided a sense of security and safety to its guests. The results indicate that 22.1% of respondents were highly satisfied with the perceived sense of security and safety while staying at the hotel. Additionally, 33.7% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the safety and security provisions made by the hotel. Moreover, 21.2% of respondents adopted a neutral stance, neither satisfied nor unsatisfied. Conversely, 16.3% of respondents reported dissatisfaction, with 8.7% expressing strong dissatisfaction. Despite a notable proportion indicating satisfaction, Newton Park Hotel should take proactive measures to enhance its efforts in assuring customers of their safety and protection.

Question 3:

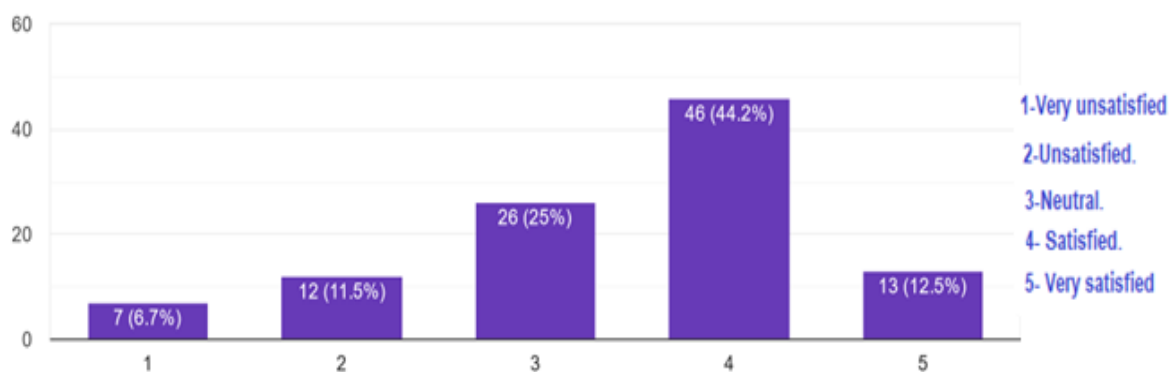3. Were you satisfied with the professionalism and courtesy of the hotel staff?
104 responses

Figure 20. Level of customer satisfaction assessing professionalism and courtesy of the hotel staff

The third question in the assurance dimension of the service quality model, which measured the level of customer satisfaction with the professionalism and courtesy of the hotel staff was evaluated in Figure 20 above. Results showed that 12.5% of the respondents were very satisfied with the level of professionalism and courtesy the Newton Park Hotels' staff demonstrated. A significant number of 44.2% were satisfied with the professionalism and courteous display of the hotel's staff. A notable number of 25% were neutral, hence they were not satisfied or unsatisfied. On the other hand, 11.5% were visibly unsatisfied, while a little but significant number of 6.7% were very unsatisfied.

Question 4:
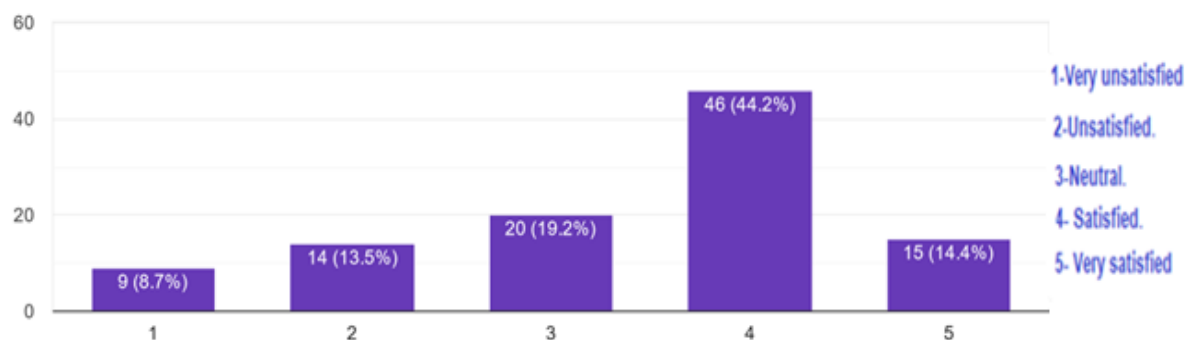
Figure 21. Level of customer satisfaction assessing room service activities

The survey assessed the level of customer satisfaction concerning room service activities as depicted in Figure 21 above. Among the total respondents, 14.4% expressed a high level of satisfaction with the room services activities. A significant proportion, representing 44.2% of the respondents, reported satisfaction with the room services activities. Moreover, 19.2% of respondents remained in a neutral state, indicating neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. Conversely, 13.5% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, while 8.7% reported a high degree of dissatisfaction with all room service activities.

Question 5:

5. How well did the hotel communicate its commitment to providing high-quality services?
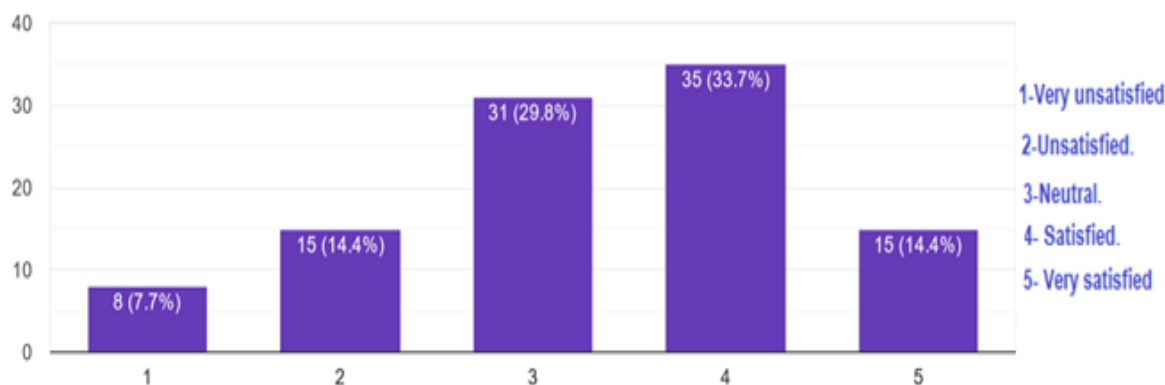104 responses

Figure 22. level of customer satisfaction based on the hotels' commitment to providing high-quality services

Figure 22 above demonstrates how the respondents reacted to the hotels' commitment to providing high-quality services question. Results showed that 14.4% of the total respondents indicated that they were very satisfied with the hotel's commitment to providing high-quality services. Additionally, 33.7% were satisfied indicating a sizable portion of the respondents that are noticeably confident in the hotels' commitment to providing high-quality services. Notably, 29.8% of respondents were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, indicating a neutral stance on the subject matter. In contrast, 14.4% were unsatisfied, while 7.7% of the total respondents were very unsatisfied with the hotel's commitment to providing high-quality services. Although the number of satisfied respondents in this dimension is much, Newton Park Hotel should as a matter of urgency improve its commitment to providing high-quality services to satisfy all its customers.

Question 6:

6. Did you feel confident in the hotel's ability to meet your expectations?
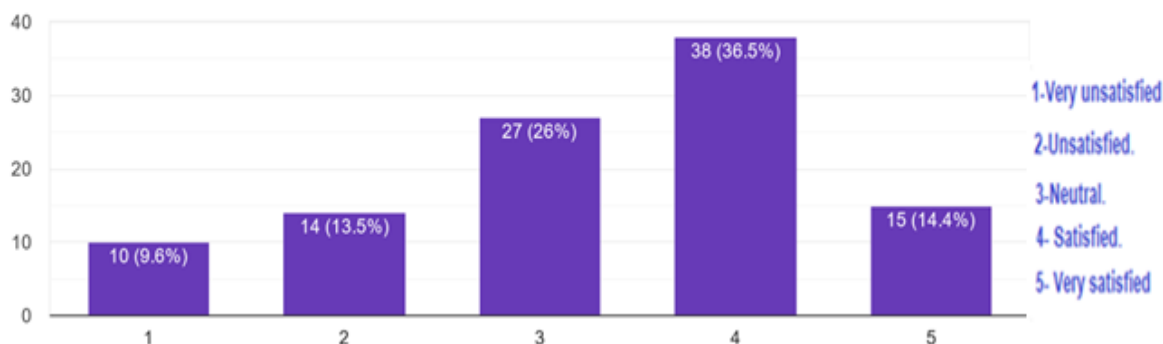104 responses

Figure 23. Level of customer satisfaction assessing customer expectations

The assessment of the hotels' capacity to fulfill customer expectations is depicted in Figure 23 above. Among the total respondents, 14.4% expressed a high level of confidence in Newton Park Hotels' ability to meet their expectations. Additionally, 38.5% of respondents conveyed satisfaction and conviction regarding the hotels' capability to meet their expectations. Furthermore, 26% of respondents remained neutral, indicating ambivalence toward the subject matter. Conversely, 13.5% of respondents lacked confidence in the hotels' ability to meet their expectations, while 9.6% expressed a high degree of dissatisfaction. Despite many respondents expressing confidence in the hotels' ability, there is room for improvement. Newton Park hotels should strive to enhance customer satisfaction by prioritizing quick, efficient, and effective service delivery.

Dimension 4: Empathy

Question 1:
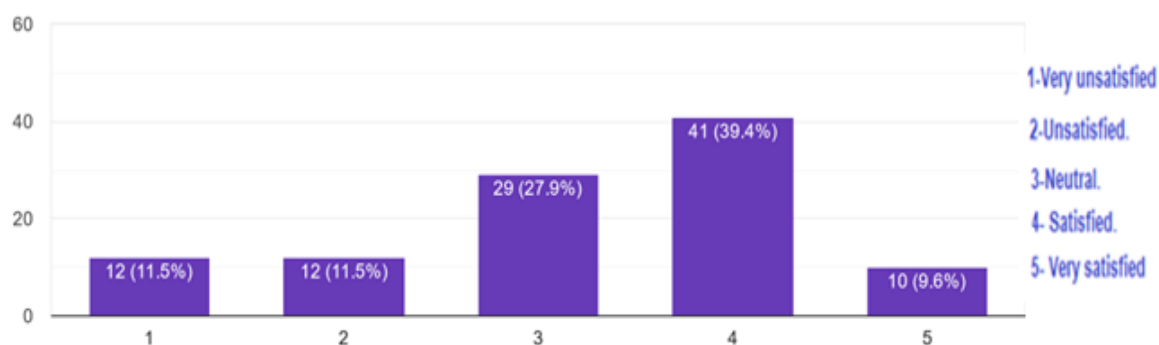
Figure 24. Level of customer satisfaction assessing responses to specific needs

The first question within the empathy dimension of the service quality model, utilized in this survey to assess customer satisfaction at Newton Park Hotel, is depicted in Figure 24. Among respondents, 9.6% expressed being highly satisfied with the way the hotel staff comprehended and addressed their specific needs. Additionally, 39.4% of respondents indicated satisfaction with the hotel's handling of their requirements. A further 27.9% of respondents maintained a neutral stance in their evaluation. Conversely, 11.5% of respondents voiced dissatisfaction with the hotel's response to their specific needs, while an equal percentage expressed strong dissatisfaction, suggesting a shortfall in the hotel staff's ability to understand and cater to their requirements.

Question 2:

2.To what extent did the hotel tailor its services to meet your individual preferences?
104 responses

Figure 25. Level of customer satisfaction measuring personalized services

The provided data from Figure 25 presents the responses of participants to questions regarding how the hotel customized its services to align with customer preferences. Among the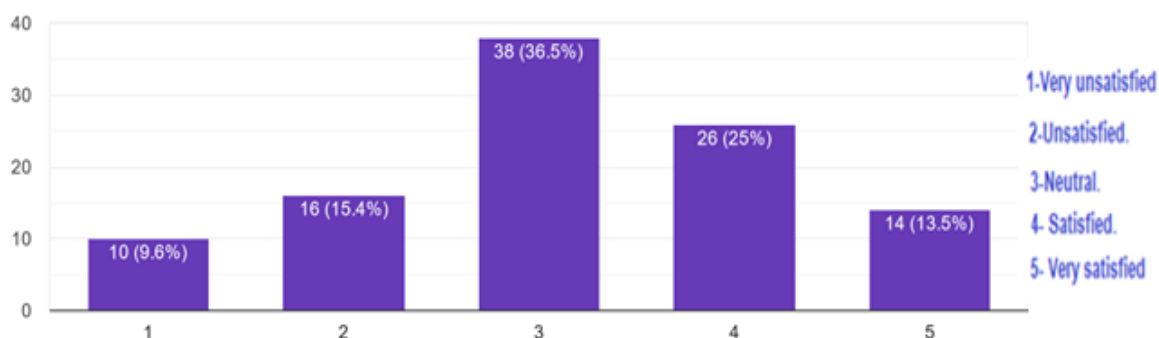 total respondents, 13.5% expressed being highly satisfied with the degree to which the hotel adapted its services to match their preferences. Additionally, 25% of respondents reported satisfaction with this aspect. Furthermore, 36.5% of respondents maintained a neutral stance, indicating a mix of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Conversely, 15.4% of respondents voiced dissatisfaction with the hotel's efforts to tailor its services to meet their preferences, while 9.6% expressed strong dissatisfaction, suggesting that the hotel fell short in customizing its services to align with their preferences.

Question 3:

3. How satisfied were you with the level of care and attention provided by the hotel?
104 responses
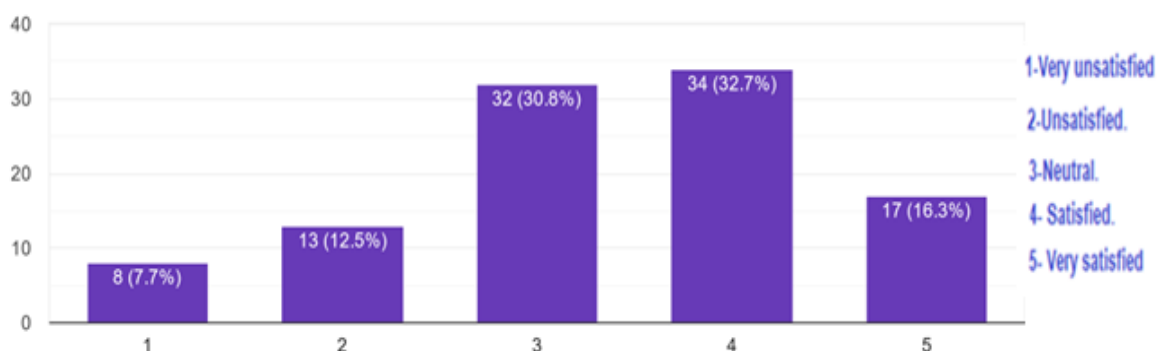
Figure 26. Level of customer satisfaction based on care and attention provided by the hotel

The level of care and attention provided by the Newton Park Hotel was measured by the customer satisfaction survey as seen in Figure 26 above. The results showed that 16.3% of the respondents were very satisfied with the level of care and attention the hotel provided. 32.7% of respondents were just satisfied by the level of care and attention gotten from Newton Park

Hotel. In addition, 30.8% of respondents were neutral, hence they were either satisfied or un-satisfied. 12.5% of respondents were not satisfied, while 7.7% reported being very unsatisfied with the level of care and attention provided by Newton Park Hotel.

Question 4:

4. Did the hotel try to understand and address any challenges you faced during your stay?
104 responses
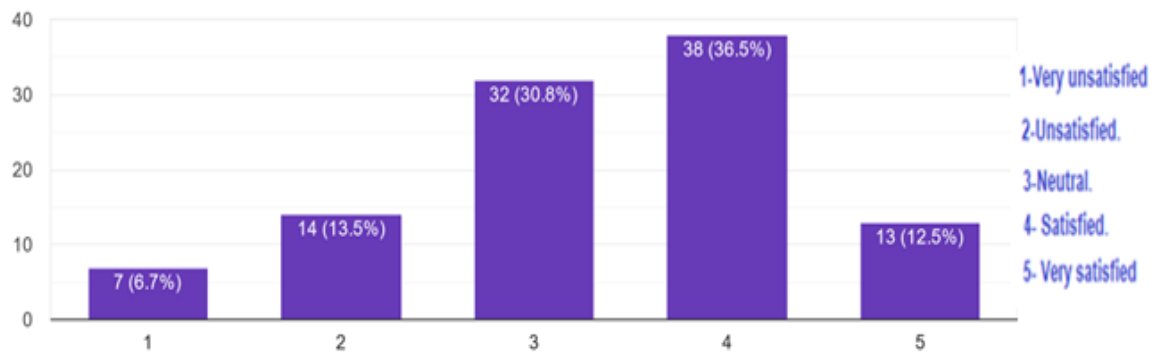
Figure 27. Level of customer satisfaction in addressing challenges faced while lodging

The fourth question within the empathy dimension of the service quality model, as depicted in Figure 27, aimed to gauge the satisfaction of Newton Park customers regarding the hotel's ability to comprehend and resolve any challenges encountered during lodging. The results obtained revealed that 12.5% of total respondents expressed being highly satisfied with the hotel's responsiveness to the challenges faced. Additionally, 36.5% of respondents affirmed their satisfaction, indicating the hotel's understanding and effective addressing of encountered difficulties. Moreover, 30.8% of respondents maintained a neutral stance, indicating neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. Conversely, 13.5% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, while 6.7% conveyed strong dissatisfaction, suggesting that the hotel did not adequately understand and address the challenges faced by customers.

Dimension 5: Tangibles

Question 1:

1. How would you rate the overall physical appearance and cleanliness of the room and its facilities?
104 responses
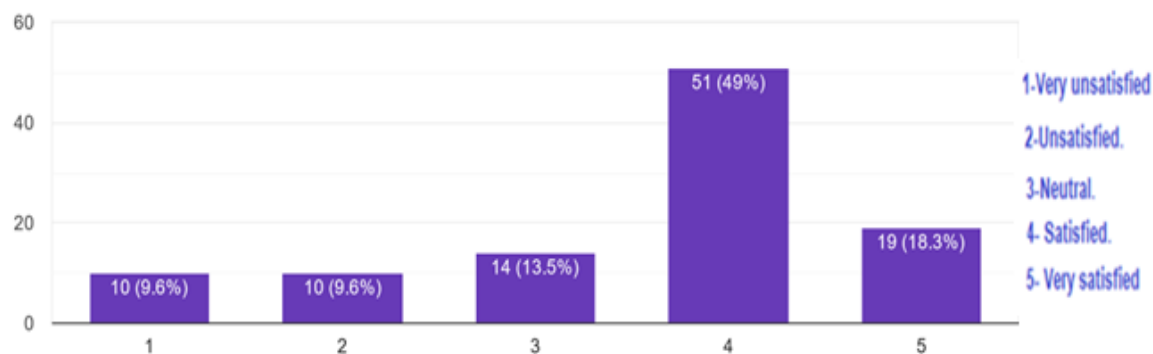
Figure 28. Level of customer satisfaction based on Newton Park hotels' physical appearance

The first question in the tangibles dimension of the service quality survey assessed respondents' perceptions of the overall physical appearance and cleanliness of the hotel's rooms and facilities. As shown in Figure 28 above, the results revealed that 18.3% of respondents were highly satisfied with the cleanliness and appearance of the hotel rooms. Additionally, a significant proportion, accounting for 49% of respondents, expressed satisfaction with the overall physical appearance and cleanliness of the hotel rooms and facilities. Furthermore, 13.5% of respondents remained neutral in their assessment. In contrast, 9.6% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, while another 9.6% reported feeling very unsatisfied with the overall physical appearance and cleanliness of the hotel rooms.

Question 2:

2. How satisfied are you with the room internet connection?
104 responses
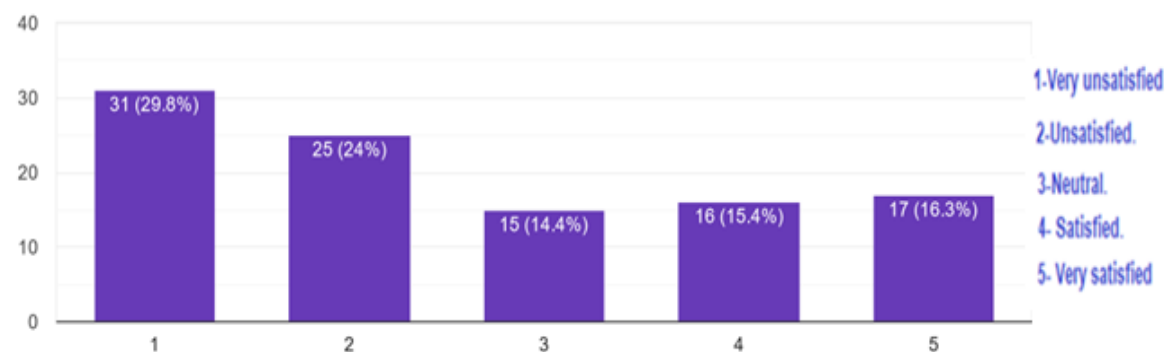
Figure 29. Level of customer satisfaction as regards internet connectivity

The level of customer satisfaction regarding the internet connectivity at Newton Park Hotel was assessed in Figure 29, as depicted above. The findings indicate a notable dissatisfaction among respondents, with 29.8% expressing being very unsatisfied with the internet connectivity. Additionally, 24% of respondents voiced their displeasure with the internet connections. Furthermore, 15.4% remained neutral, indicating a state of uncertainty between satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In contrast, 15.5% of respondents reported being satisfied, while 16.3% expressed being very satisfied with the internet connection. The percentage of respondents expressing dissatisfaction with the internet connectivity is particularly high, suggesting that the hotel should consider increasing its bandwidth to broaden coverage and provide stronger internet connectivity for its customers.

Question 3:

3. How satisfied were you with the aesthetics and comfort of your accommodation?
104 responses
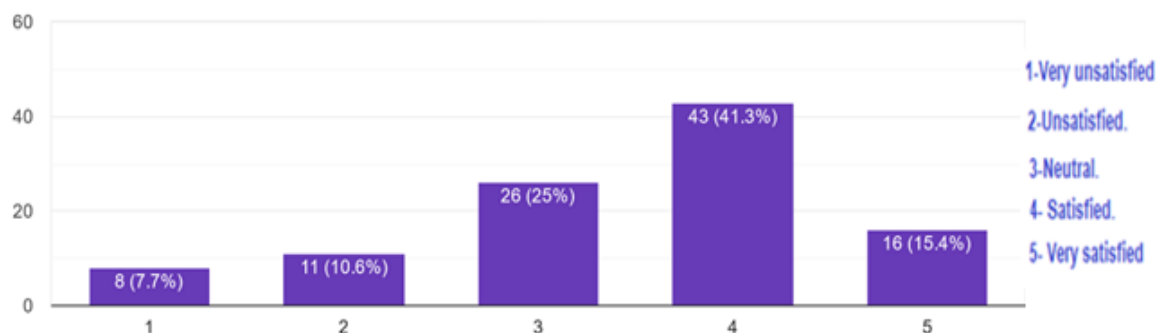
Figure 30. Level of customer satisfaction based on the aesthetics of the hotel

The respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction regarding the aesthetics and comfort of the hotel's accommodations. The results depicted in Figure 30 show that 15.4% of the respondents expressed being very satisfied with the aesthetics and accommodations of the hotel. Additionally, 41.3% of respondents were visibly satisfied with their experience, while 25% indicated neutrality. In contrast, 10.6% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, while 7.7% reported feeling very unsatisfied, indicating discomfort with the aesthetics and accommodations provided by Newton Park Hotel.

Question 4:

4. To what extent did the hotel meet your expectations in terms of dining and recreational facilities?
104 responses
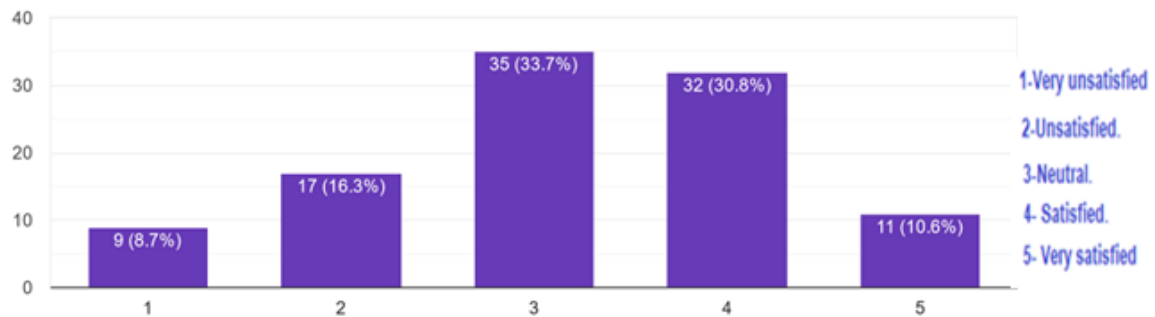
Figure 31. Level of customer satisfaction accessing dining and reactional facilities

The fourth question in the tangible dimension of service quality aimed to assess the extent to which the expectations of the respondents were met by the hotels in the areas of dining and reactional facilities. As shown in Figure 31 above, a low number of 10.6% indicated that they were very satisfied with perceived services. Notably, 30.8% of the total respondents agreed that the expected service matched the perceived service, highlighting a significant portion of satisfied customers. Another 33.7% of respondents were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, indicating a neutral stance. On the other hand, 16.3% of respondents were not satisfied, suggesting a low level of dissatisfaction with the perceived service. lastly, 8.7% were very unsatisfied, representing a small proportion of respondents who indicated that the hotel was not able to meet their expectations in terms of dining and reactional facilities.

Question 5:

5. How would you rate the quality and condition of the overall physical environment of the hotel?
104 responses
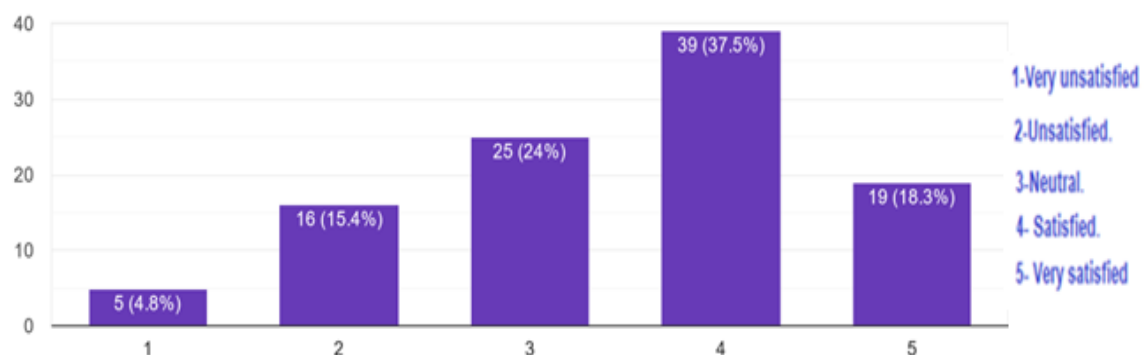
Figure 32. Level of customer satisfaction as regards to quality and condition of the hotels' environment

The respondent was asked to rate how satisfied they were with the quality and condition of the overall physical environment of the hotel. As clearly shown in Figure 32 above, 18.3% indicated that they were very satisfied with the quality and condition of the overall physical environment of the hotel. 37.5% indicated that they were satisfied, hence they were pleased with the quality of the hotels' physical environment. 24% of the respondents were neutral, indicating that they were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied with the hotel's physical environment. In contrast, 15.4% of respondents were not satisfied, while 4.8% were very unsatisfied, suggesting that the quality and condition of the hotel's physical environment were not able to meet their standards.

Question 6:

6. Did the hotel provide amenities and services that met your expectations?
104 responses
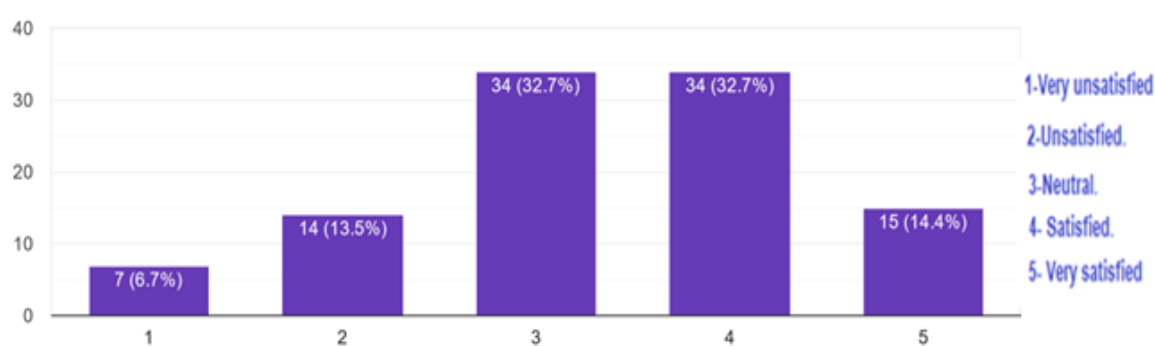
Figure 33. Level of customer satisfaction assessing services and amenities

The last question in this customer satisfaction survey was aimed at assessing the level of customer satisfaction as regards to services and amenities provided by Newton Park Hotels to its customers. As shown in Figure 33 above, 14.4% of the respondents were very satisfied with the services and amenities provided by the hotel. 32.7% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied, while another 32.7% registered their neutrality on the subject matter. In contrast, 13.5% of respondents were not satisfied, and 6.7% of the respondents were very unsatisfied with the services and amenities provided by the hotel.

Section 3

Open-ended questions and responses.

Theme 1: How long did you need to wait before the staff responded to your request, and how did you see the willingness of the staff to assist?

In this question, many respondents gave a monosyllabic response, like not too long, five minutes, ten minutes, and so on, while few gave a complete sentence like ''the staff respond promptly to my requests and gives alternatives on how to access services they do not offer

outside''. ''At most 30 minutes, which most times I feel is not the fault of the staff but management.'' I did not stay long, immediately after the payment I got a pleasant response from the staff.''

Theme 2: Would you like to visit Newton Park Hotel again, and would you recommend it to your friends and families?

Also, many respondents gave a monosyllabic response like, yes, of course, no, maybe, unlikely, etc. while some gave a full sentence like,' Yes and I have already recommended it to my friends''. 'Yes, and I would highly recommend it to family and friends.'' 'Yes of course, Newton Park Hotel is a pleasant and amazing hotel, that offers the ultimate service to its customers, I will recommend the hotel to my family and associates.'' 'Yes, I will always love to visit Newton Park Hotel, and yes will love to recommend it to my friends.'' etc.

Theme 3: why did you choose to lodge in Newton Park Hotel?

Many respondents gave very short answers to the above question. For example, 'good service'. 'relaxation'. 'Location.' 'Comfort. 'Classy, nice, proximity, security, close to the city center, Aesthetics.' etc. While few gave a full sentence in their responses like, it is because of its comfort and conducive environment.'' ''It is because it is a nice place and conducive to stay''. ''Provision of adequate attention and the environment is very clean and super''. ''I was introduced to Newton Park by a friend and the hotel has been living up to her billing''. ''It is situated in a central and upscale location with easy access to many amenities.'' etc.

Theme 4: Is there anything you would like to tell us about the hotel?

This question aims to give the respondent the ability to make recommendations on how Newton Park should improve on their services or any other thing they might wish to say as regards Newton Park hotel services. Many respondents gave a short answer, like 'nothing'. 'Keep up the good work'. etc., while some gave a response in this manner, ''improve on your internet''. '' Work more on the management''. '' rates of accommodation are very high, applied discount to customers for motivation, updating advertising regularly is very good because it creates more awareness to people across the globe.'' 'The lift is not encouraging, changing it will be a good idea''. 'Improvement in all aspects most especially internet connection''. 'I will be looking forward to a much-improved service delivery''. ''The hotel is well structured in all its levels of operations. The social amenities are top-notch, and their staff is well mannered and very easy to talk to and comprehend''. 'Security and their services are best''. etc.

3.3.1 Interview results

As previously posited, employee satisfaction potentially exerts a direct influence on customer satisfaction (Lovelock & Wright, 2007). In an endeavor to procure comprehensive insights into the involvement of the staff at (Service provider) Newton Park Hotel in service quality, a gap analysis model of service quality was employed as the framework for the interview. This approach facilitated an exploration of the employees' contribution to service quality within the context of the organization. (Kumra 2008). Hence, this chapter serves to illuminate the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee, shedding light on the insights gathered within the context of the study.

Theme 1: How do you keep up with industry trends and evolving customer demands, and how do you make sure that your staff is knowledgeable about the preferences and expectations of your customers?

''The interviewee responded that they do that using social media by monitoring comments made by their customers, checking TripAdvisor to get customers' feedback, observing their competitors have a cue in current trends, also getting feedback from their customers by providing feedback boxes, and they communicate effectively with their customer seeking their opinion on how to serve them better. Furthermore, in making sure that their staff are knowledgeable about the preferences and expectations of their customers, the interviewee stated that they achieved this through continuous training, outsourcing the services of consultants to carry out external training on their staff, they also doing on-the-job training and monthly training, and by so doing improves the services they are rendering to their customers.''

Theme 2: How does your hotel approach training programs to equip staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet service quality standards?

''Here the interviewee states that the majority of the answers to these questions have been expressed in the first question, however, continuous training and digital training have been instrumental in keeping checks and balances, hence staff members are always aware when they are deviating from the hotels' service standard, and in turns, retrace their steps accordingly.''

Theme 3: What level of supervision is provided to ensure that staff members adhere to service quality standards in their daily tasks?

''The interviewee stated that they provide formal supervision, conducting regular meetings and training between supervisor and supervisee in ensuring that the organizational goals and objectives are achieved.''

Theme 4: How do you ensure that staff members are adequately trained to deliver services by established standards?

The interviewee asserts that how they ensure that staff members are adequately trained to deliver services by the established standard is through creating training plans which they host regularly, also they do cross-exposure, which means changing departments for their staff so their staff can be versatile in all the department in the hospitality sector.''

Theme 5: Do you think that staff motivation can enhance customer satisfaction? if yes, how do you implement it?

''The interviewee believes that staff motivation can enhance customer satisfaction. This is because when a staff is motivated, the said staff performs optimally which translates into effective and efficient service delivery and in turn, enhances customer satisfaction. Also, they employ reward systems to recompense the deserving staff, they are empathic to their staff and very transparent in their dealings with their staff members. The interviewee also states that the organization recognized exceptional services being rendered by their staff by offering incentives, and finally, they believe and trust in their staff, and by so doing incorporating a sense of belonging in their staff members.''

In line with the above question, the interviewer asked the interviewee if there is anything that can be a hindrance to customer satisfaction, like any observable staff attitude. The interviewee responded by saying that lack of effective communication can induce customer dissatisfaction, furthermore, when staff is being dishonest (for example, if the room air conditioner is out-of-service and the room was sold to a customer without the customer's prior notice of the faulty air conditioner) to the customers, and inability to introduce the hotel facilities properly, all this can lead to customer dissatisfaction.''

Theme 6: How do you let customers know about the facilities, services, and any possible limitations while they are lodging?

The interviewee states that they let their customers know about their facilities by introducing the facilities and how to use them. This is done by the hotels' porter, and in a situation whereby there are limitations, they apologize to their customers and look for the quickest means to remedy the situation.''

Theme 7: Anything else you might want to tell me?

The interviewee states here that it is paramount for an organization to know its customers as regards to services needed by the customer. In a situation where an organization knows its customers, it will be instrumental in delivering quality services.

Additionally, the interviewer inquired about the prevalence of negative feedback concerning the hotel on platforms such as Google Ratings and TripAdvisor. In response, the interviewee emphasized the inherent diversity of human needs, acknowledging the impossibility of satisfying every customer. However, the interviewee highlighted recent changes in management at Newton Park Hotel, indicating proactive measures taken to address previous complaints. These measures include extensive renovations and upgrades of outdated facilities within both guest rooms and public areas. Furthermore, enhancements in cuisine quality and ongoing staff training initiatives were emphasized as contributing factors aimed at minimizing or eliminating future negative feedback.

3.4   Research findings/ discussion of the results

The analysis of results across the five dimensions of service quality will be conducted separately to provide a comprehensive overview. Specifically, the findings from the reliability dimension are as follows:

Reliability

In the reliability dimension, the majority of customers (63.2%) reported being very satisfied with the reliability of services provided by Newton Park Hotel. This indicates a strong positive perception of the hotel's reliability among this segment of customers. The total percentage of satisfied (199.1) customers exceeded 100%, suggesting that a significant portion of respondents across the satisfaction spectrum reported satisfaction with reliability. This is generally a positive indication, although it's worth noting that satisfaction levels could be further analyzed to understand variations among respondents. A substantial proportion of customers (124%) indicated a neutral stance regarding the reliability of services. This suggests that a notable segment of customers are neither satisfied nor unsatisfied with the hotel's reliability, indicating a potential improvement in terms of clarity or consistency in service delivery.

While not as high as the satisfied categories, a significant portion of customers (71.2%) expressed dissatisfaction with the reliability of services provided by the hotel. This signals a need for attention and improvement in addressing issues related to reliability to enhance overall customer satisfaction. Although the percentage is lower compared to other categories, the presence of very unsatisfied customers (41.4%) highlights critical concerns regarding the reliability dimension. Addressing the issues raised by this segment is crucial to prevent further dissatisfaction and potential negative word-of-mouth.

Overall, while there are areas of strength in the reliability dimension, there are also clear opportunities for improvement. Newton Park Hotel needs to analyze feedback in more detail and take appropriate actions to address concerns and enhance overall customer satisfaction in this dimension.

Responsiveness

In the responsiveness dimension, approximately half of the respondents (50.9%) reported being very satisfied with the responsiveness of services provided by Newton Park Hotel. This indicates a significant portion of customers perceive the hotel's responsiveness positively. Also, 161.6% of the total respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the responsiveness dimension. This is generally a positive indication, highlighting strong performance in this dimension. A notable portion of customers (94.2%) indicated a neutral stance regarding the responsiveness of services. While this indicates a lack of strong opinions, it also suggests room for improvement in terms of delivering more proactive and attentive service to customers.

Although lower than the satisfied categories, a significant proportion of customers (64.4%) expressed dissatisfaction with the responsiveness of services provided by the hotel. This signals a need for attention and improvement in addressing issues related to responsiveness to enhance overall customer satisfaction. While the percentage is lower compared to other categories, the presence of very unsatisfied customers (28.8%) highlights critical concerns regarding responsiveness. Addressing the issues raised by this segment is crucial to prevent further dissatisfaction and potential negative word-of-mouth.

Overall, the responsiveness dimension shows mixed results, with areas of strength and areas for improvement. Newton Park Hotel needs to analyze feedback in more detail and take appropriate actions to address concerns and enhance overall customer satisfaction in this dimension.

Assurance

The majority of customers (92.2%) reported being very satisfied in the assurance dimension. This indicates a strong positive perception of the hotel's ability to instill confidence and trust in its services among this segment of customers. The total percentage of satisfied (228.9%) customers is significantly high, exceeding 100%. This suggests that a substantial portion of respondents across the satisfaction scale have trust in Newton Park staff's ability to carry out expected services. A notable proportion of customers (150%) indicated a neutral stance regarding the assurance provided by the hotel. While this indicates a lack of strong positive or negative responses, it may also suggest room for improvement in effectively communicating and demonstrating the hotel's commitment to quality and reliability.

Furthermore, a significant percentage of customers (80.7%) expressed dissatisfaction with the assurance dimension. This underscores the importance of addressing any perceived shortcomings in terms of reliability, credibility, or trustworthiness to enhance overall customer satisfaction. While the percentage is lower compared to other categories, the presence of very unsatisfied customers (48.1%) highlights critical concerns regarding the assurance dimension.

Addressing the issues raised by this segment is crucial to prevent further dissatisfaction and uphold the hotel's reputation for quality and reliability.

Overall, while there are areas of strength in the assurance dimension, there are also clear opportunities for improvement. Newton Park Hotel needs to analyze feedback in more detail and take appropriate actions to address concerns and enhance overall customer satisfaction in this dimension.

Empathy

A significant portion of customers (51.9%) reported being very satisfied with the empathy dimension demonstrated by Newton Park Hotel's staff. This suggests that the hotel staff effectively understood and responded to customers' needs and concerns, fostering a positive emotional connection with guests. 133.6% of the total percentage for satisfied customers exceeds 100%, indicating a strong overall satisfaction level with the empathy dimension. This suggests that the majority of respondents across the satisfaction spectrum felt adequately understood and supported by the hotel staff, contributing to positive experiences during their stay. A considerable proportion of customers (125%) indicated a neutral stance regarding the empathy demonstrated by the hotel staff. While this may suggest a lack of strong positive or negative sentiment, it also highlights an opportunity for the hotel to enhance further its efforts in understanding and addressing customers' needs and emotions.

However, lower than the satisfied categories, a significant percentage of customers (53%) expressed dissatisfaction with the empathy dimension. This indicates that there are areas where the hotel staff may need to improve their ability to empathize with and support guests, potentially leading to enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty. While the percentage is lower compared to other categories, the presence of very unsatisfied customers (35.5%) underscores critical concerns regarding the empathy dimension. Addressing the issues raised by this segment is crucial to prevent further dissatisfaction and ensure positive guest experiences.

Overall, while there are areas of strength in the empathy dimension, there are also spaces for improvement. Newton Park Hotel should continue to prioritize training and development initiatives to enhance staff empathy and responsiveness, ultimately leading to improved customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Tangibles

A large number of customers (93.3%) reported being very satisfied with the tangibles (physical facilities, equipment, and appearance) provided by Newton Park Hotel. This indicates a strong positive perception of the hotel's physical attributes among this segment of customers. Also, the total percentage of satisfied customers (206.7%) exceeds 100%, indicating that a significant portion of respondents across the satisfaction scale reported satisfaction with the tangible

aspects of the hotel. This is a positive indication of the hotel's efforts to maintain and enhance the physical environment for its guests.

Furthermore, a notable proportion of customers (143.3%) indicated a neutral stance regarding the tangibles provided by the hotel. While this indicates a lack of strong positive or negative sentiment, it also suggests room for improvement in terms of maintaining or upgrading physical facilities to meet customer expectations. However, a significant percentage of customers (89.4%) expressed dissatisfaction with the tangible dimension. This indicates that there are areas where the hotel's physical attributes may need improvement or renovation to meet customer needs and preferences better. While the percentage is lower compared to other categories, the presence of very unsatisfied customers (67.3%) highlights critical concerns regarding the tangibles dimension. Addressing the issues raised by this segment is crucial to prevent further dissatisfaction and ensure a positive overall guest experience.

Overall, while the tangibles dimension shows relatively high satisfaction levels, there are still areas for improvement, particularly in addressing the needs and preferences of customers who expressed dissatisfaction or neutrality. This might involve renovations, upgrades, or improvements to physical facilities to enhance overall customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The results obtained across the five dimensions are a strong indication that Newton Park lodging customers are satisfied with the actual services received from the hotel. having exhibited a high satisfaction score across the five dimensions, it is worth noting that the current level of customer satisfaction in Newton Park Hotel is very high. These results supported the study of Khadka et al. (2017), Zeithaml (2000), Tao, (2014), Fitzsimmons and Sullivan (1982), and Demirel (2022). which all agreed that service quality has a direct effect on customer satisfaction, hence when the customer's expected service is matched with the perceived service, it will result in customer satisfaction.

4   Summary and discussion

4.1   Recapping objectives and results

The study Objective is to determine the current level of customer satisfaction at Newton Park Hotel. In other to achieve precision, the study was limited to the lodging customers only. Also, to reach the study objectives, a qualitative research method was employed in the form of a survey and interview. The survey consists of a questionnaire designed around five dimensions of service quality, and the Likert scale, ranging from 1 (indicating very unsatisfied) to 5 (indicating very satisfied), was utilized to gauge customer satisfaction level. Moreover, an interview was conducted with the Newton Park Hotels' front office manager. the interview aimed at assessing the roles of employees in service quality.

As a result, the following research questions were addressed: **"What is the current level of customer satisfaction at Newton Park Hotel?"**

The current level of customer satisfaction in Newton Park Hotel was researched in this study. The techniques used are the five dimensions of service quality. The results obtained from the five dimensions indicated that the current level of customer satisfaction is very high. This is supported by various studies conducted by different authors like Khadka et al. (2017), and Yuan et al. (2005) which indicate that service quality is the precursor of customer satisfaction, hence, when the expected service quality is matched with perceived service quality, then there will be customer satisfaction. The study also found that customer satisfaction and service quality have a major role in customer loyalty, hence, when the service quality is optimal and consistent, then there will be customer satisfaction, which would in turn lead to customer loyalty. (Hossein et al. 2018; Sim et al. 2006; and Tideswell et al. 2004). The study also found new variable employee satisfaction which affects overall customer satisfaction especially in service sectors, because when the employee is motivated, it goes a long way in enhancing the (services) output being rendered to their customers.

The results obtained from the reliability dimension showed that Newton Park Hotel is keeping to their words, hence their customers have confidence in them in providing promised services. Although the number of customers indicating satisfaction is high, the hotel should improvise more ways to ensure that their customers have absolute trust in them. This can be done by matching their exact words with exact actions, they should not promise what they cannot do, and in a situation, where they fail to meet up with the promised services due to contingencies beyond their control, the appropriate measure should be employ in disseminating the issues to its customers, rather than keeping mute.

Furthermore, Newton Park Hotel has been associated with quick and efficient check-in and check-out procedures, hence the scores obtained from the Responsiveness dimension are

very high. However, the hotel should try and adopt more modern ways in check-out and check-out of their customers, one of these ways might be a self-service application, which can enable the customers to perform this function at their convenience, rather than waiting in the reception. This self-service application can also be used as a medium by which the customers can channel their complaints while lodging at the hotel.

This will go a long way in effecting quick and effective response time to customer complaints, and on-time resolutions. Also, in the assurance dimension, it is proven that Newton Park staff have done well in proving that they are competent, knowledgeable, and courteous and have shown the ability to infuse trust and confidence in their customers, hence the high satisfaction score derived from the (Assurance) dimension. Although the customer has shown satisfaction in that dimension, the Hotel should try as much as possible to deepen the trust their customer bestowed on them by creating a more transparent billing system, showing more professionalism in their dealings with customers, and doing more in handling customer complaints.

Furthermore, Newton Park Hotel has proven to be empathic to its customers. This is proven by the results obtained from the empathy dimension which showed that 133.6% of respondents indicated satisfaction in that dimension. This is also proven by the responses obtained in the open-ended section, in which some respondents commented that Newton Park staff, are very compassionate, friendly, and very attentive to their needs and preferences. Newton Park Hotel should do more incorporating unique and personalized services to its customers, this will go a long way in deepening the empathic dimension of the services being provided to their customers. In conclusion, the results obtained from the tangible dimension showed that the customers were satisfied (206.7%), however, the percentage of unsatisfied (89.4%) and very unsatisfied customers (67.3%) are significant. This is because of poor internet connectivity and faulty elevators. Newton Park Hotel should as a matter of urgency upgrade its internet bandwidth for wider coverage and fast connection within the hotel premises and should replace the old internet access point, and switches, this will go a long way in proving their internet connectivity. Also, the hotel should outsource its maintenance department to a professional engineering company, instead of employing directly. This approach would be more efficient and effective in handling technical challenges the hotel may encounter while providing services to its customers. Also, they should be more present on social media in reviewing what customers are saying about them and should be serious in checking the feedback boxes at the hotel's reception desk. They should not glory about the current business booms and take with levity the feelings and preferences of their customers; hence, it may result in a business switch if a serious competitor emerges.

Sub-question 1: What is the employees' role in customers' service quality?

To gain insight into the employee role in customer service quality, an interview was conducted with the hotel front office manager. The manager went on and explain that the employee plays a major role in service quality as supported by the study conducted by Joudeh et al. (2018), Kumra (2008), Spencer et al. (2004), and Yuan et al. (2005). Employee plays a major role in service quality. To achieve efficient and effective service delivery, training programs, on-the-job training, active supervision, customer feedback systems, and motivations are means by which the employee plays a major role in service quality.

Furthermore, Newton Park Hotel has well-defined standard operational procedures which are written down and handed over to all the hotel staff as a guidebook, hence, the constant adherence to customer service quality cannot be jeopardized.

Sub-question 2: What are the key factors that contribute to or hinder customer satisfaction, focusing on room quality, staff attitude, and room amenities?

To gain insight into factors that might contribute to or hinder customer satisfaction, the author found that delayed service, lack of product knowledge, old and low-maintained facilities, lack of effective communications, etc., can hinder customer satisfaction in Newton Park Hotel. Also, staff motivation, friendly employees, courteous employees, knowledgeable employees, hotel location, etc., are factors that contribute to customer satisfaction in Newton Park Hotel. This finding is supported by the study of Yilmaz et al. (2005), Kim (2008), and Hokanson (1995). Newton Park Hotel conducts periodic changing of room facilities, whereby the old ones are actioned to the employee in lower prices, this has made the hotel maintain its aesthetic for a very long time. Also, Newton Park staff maintains a positive appearance all the time, which goes a long way in exhibiting a positive attitude, also, temperament, positivity, and personality are their key attributes in employing their front office staff, hence, the hotel employs accurate supervision in checking the staff attitude and employs (cross-exposure) change of department if a particular staff is not aligning with the so called "Always wear a happy look policy".

4.2   Discussion

The study aimed to examine the current level of customer satisfaction at Newton Park Hotel & Resort Ltd, focusing specifically on lodging services. Through a qualitative case study approach, the research delved into the experiences and perceptions of customers, seeking to understand the intricacies of service quality within the hospitality industry. Surveys and interviews were employed to gather primary data. The survey was conducted through the use of an online questionnaire, which was distributed through QR codes, and by the assistance of Newton Park hotels' staff. The interview was conducted through Zoom cloud meetings, with the

hotel's front office manager, which gave the study insight about the roles of employees in service quality. The findings revealed varying levels of customer satisfaction within Newton Park Hotel. While some customers expressed overall satisfaction with the lodging services, others highlighted areas for improvement. Factors influencing satisfaction included room quality, staff attitude, and room amenities. These aspects emerged as crucial determinants of the overall customer experience.

However, this study may be said to have weak reliability and validity because the questionnaire used for the study was self-developed by the author, hence there was no pilot study to ascertain the strength of its validity and reliability, although it centered around the five dimensions of service quality. Hence more studies are encouraged to use the same questionnaire which will go a long way in ascertaining the reliability and validity of the questionnaires. Also, generalizability, a hallmark of robust research, is compromised due to the specificity (Newton Park hotels' customers) of the respondents. Moreover, the exclusion of factors such as customers' nationality further restricts the applicability of findings to a broader context.

Furthermore, replications of this study in diverse hotel settings are paramount to validate the robustness of the findings and enhance their generalizability. Adopting similar research methods across a range of hotels would facilitate comparisons and identify common patterns or divergent trends in customer satisfaction dynamics.

4.3   Suggestions for further studies

The scope of this study may present a constraint on the applicability of its findings due to its exclusive focus on the lodging customers of Newton Park Hotel. Consequently, the current level of customer satisfaction in Newton Park Hotel is suggested for further study in the area of restaurants, outdoor services, recreational services, spa facilities, and shuttles services, either collectively, or independently as a single variable. As a result, this will give a more holistic view in ascertaining the current level of customer satisfaction in Newton Park Hotel.

In conclusion, it was stated earlier that the modern business environment is marked by the significant impact of several tactics used by entrepreneurs to draw in customers and obtain a competitive advantage. Therefore, Newton Park Hotel has leverage on several tactics which was discovered by this study using the five dimension of service quality as a technique. it will be imperative that the Hotel continues in its quest for satisfying customers and adopt the report of this study as stated in appendix 1 that this report will help Newton Park Hotel to understand the current level of its (lodging) customer satisfaction and initiate amendments if necessary.

Hence, this study has shown that when the customer's expected service quality is matched with the perceived service quality there will be customer satisfaction- which are a fundamental

aspect of any business endeavor. A thorough comprehension of these concepts could empower Newton Park Hotel to cultivate a reputable presence in the market and stimulate heightened customer demand.

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Appendix 1. Customer satisfaction survey conducted from January 31 to February 14, 2024.

Available at

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeqedEr7wWs-bco8zxnzxxlwaGef88u3vhvEl7AXDXoo7IlARQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

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Section 1 of 7

Customer satisfaction Survey

B *I* <u>U</u> ⊝ X̶

Dear Respondent,
I am a student of Tourism and Hospitality management from the LAB University of Applied Sciences. Currently, I am conducting a survey on the level of customer satisfaction in Newton Park Hotel, the survey is purely for an academic purposes; however, the data will be used by the hotel to gauge the level of customer satisfaction of their guest and initiate necessary amendments. it will take approximately ten minutes to complete. your responses are highly confidential, and it will be nice if you can answer the whole questions to the best of your knowledge.

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1. Gender *

○ Male

○ Female

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2. Age *

○ 18-25

○ 26-35

○ 36-45

○ 46-55

○ 56+

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3. How frequently do you stay in lodging services per year? *

○ once

○ 2-3 times

○ 4-5 times

○ more than 5 times

After section 1   Continue to next section

Section 2 of 7

RELIABILITY

We would like to know your thought on the level of satisfaction based on lodging services provided by the hotel

(1-Very unsatisfied/ 2-Unsatisfied/ 3-Neutral/ 4- Satisfied/ 5- Very satisfied)

1. How satisfied are you by the rate of accuracy and reliability of the information provided during the booking process? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

2. To what extent are you satisfied in terms of room cleanliness and readiness upon check-in? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

3. How satisfied are you with the consistency of service provided by the hotel staff during your stay? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

4. Did the hotel deliver the services promised in its advertisements and promotions? *

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

5. How reliable was the hotel's response to your requests or concerns during your stay? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very Satisfied

After section 2   Continue to next section

RESPONSIVENESS

(1-very unsatisfied/ 2-unsatisfied/ 3-neutral/ 4- satisfied/ 5- very satisfied)

1. How quickly did the hotel respond to your inquiries or requests before your arrival? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

2. Were you satisfied with the promptness of check-in and check-out processes at the hotel? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

3. How responsive was the hotel to any issues or complaints you raised during your stay? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

4. To what extent did the hotel meet your expectations in terms of addressing your specific needs and preferences? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

After section 3   Continue to next section ▼

Section 4 of 7

ASSURANCE

(1-very unsatisfied/ 2-unsatisfied/ 3-neutral/ 4- satisfied/ 5- very satisfied)

1. How knowledgeable and competent did you find the hotel staff in addressing your questions or concerns? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

2. To what extent did the hotel provide a sense of security and safety during your stay?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very satisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very unsatified

3. Were you satisfied with the professionalism and courtesy of the hotel staff? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

4. how satisfied were you with the room services activities? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

5. How well did the hotel communicate its commitment to providing high-quality services? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

6. Did you feel confident in the hotel's ability to meet your expectations? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

EMPATHY

(1-very unsatisfied/ 2-unsatisfied/ 3-neutral/ 4- satisfied/ 5- very satisfied)

1. How well did the hotel staff understand and respond to your specific needs? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

2.To what extent did the hotel tailor its services to meet your individual preferences? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

3. How satisfied were you with the level of care and attention provided by the hotel? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

4. Did the hotel try to understand and address any challenges you faced during your stay? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

After section 5   Continue to next section

TANGIBLES

(1-very unsatisfied/ 2-unsatisfied/ 3-neutral/ 4- satisfied/ 5- very satisfied

1. How would you rate the overall physical appearance and cleanliness of the room and its facilities? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

2. How satisfied are you with the room internet connection? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

3. How satisfied were you with the aesthetics and comfort of your accommodation? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

4. To what extent did the hotel meet your expectations in terms of dining and recreational facilities? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very satisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very unsatisfied

5. How would you rate the quality and condition of the overall physical environment of the hotel? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

Section 7 of 7

General questions/Feedback

Description (optional)

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1. How long did you needed to wait before the staff response to your request, and how did you see the willingness of the staff to assist?

Long answer text

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2. Would you like to visit Newton park hotel again, and would you recommend it for your friends and families?

Long answer text

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3. why did you choose to lodge in Newton park hotel?

Long answer text

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4. Is there anything you would like to tell us about the hotel?

Long answer text

Appendix 2. Question of the interview conducted on the 10 of February 2024.

Customer satisfaction survey interview questions

Theme 1: How do you keep up with industry trends and evolving customer demands, and how do you make sure that your staff is knowledgeable about the preferences and expectations of your customers?

Theme 2: How does your hotel approach training programs to equip staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet service quality standards?

Theme 3: What level of supervision is provided to ensure that staff members adhere to service quality standards in their daily tasks?

Theme 4: How do you ensure that staff members are adequately trained to deliver services by established standards?

Theme 5: Do you think that staff motivation can enhance customer satisfaction? if yes, how do you implement it?

Theme 6: How do you let customers know about the facilities, services, and any possible limitations while they are lodging?

Theme 7: Anything else you might want to tell me?