

Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in the Hotel Industry

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Abstract... The thesis investigates how service qualities affects customer satisfaction in hospital-ity industry, focusing on the role of employee behaviour. The study is based on the SERVQUAL model, which identifies five key service quality dimensions: tangibles, reli-ability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The research uses a survey of 200 hotel guests to understand how these dimensions influence satisfaction and the me-diating effect of employee behaviour. The results show that all service quality dimen-sions positively impact satisfaction, with empathy and responsiveness having the strongest effects. Additionally, employee behaviour plays a significant role in shaping the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The study empha-sizes the importance of staff training to enhance service quality and improve cus-tomer interactions, boosting guest satisfaction and loyalty.		
Keywords Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Employee Behaviour, SERVQUAL		

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List of Abbreviations

- ACSI – American Customer Satisfaction Index
- CFA – Confirmatory Factor Analysis
- CR – Composite Reliability
- EDT – Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory
- EFA – Exploratory Factor Analysis
- SCSB – Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer
- SEM – Structural Equation Modelling
- SERVPERF – Service Performance (alternative to SERVQUAL)
- SERVQUAL – Service Quality (model by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry)
- SQCS – Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The hotel industry is one of the most important industries contributing to the worldwide economy. It is an integral part of tourism employment and contributes to the revenues for a large section (Deng et al. 2013). As this industry is dynamic and provides an excellent opportunity for revenue generation, hotels are competing fiercely to provide the best hospitable services for their guests (Kim et al. 2012). The increasing importance and effectiveness of service quality and customer happiness in determining the success of a hotel have resulted in this competition. Due to high service quality, guests become satisfied and satisfied guests tend to become loyal customers, they visit more often and recommend them to other people. All these factors are important for the long-term profitability of the hotel. (Prayag et al. 2019.)

Accommodation is an integral part of the tourism industry, where there is increasing competition among service providers. As competition grows, hotels must always improve their service quality to retain their existing guests and draw new guests simultaneously with the rising customer expectations (Rahimi & Kozak 2017). However, customer satisfaction in the hospitality sector has been extensively researched. The Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer (SCSB) and the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) have been developed to measure the experience of hotel guests in a structured and standardised way (Gundersen et al. 1996).

Service quality is a multifaceted concept that varies from one hotel to another as a way of measuring the quality of services to be rendered by the hotel (Brady & Cronin 2000). Since the gestures of service quality have no distinct definitions across various hotels with varying star ratings, guests interpret the service quality differently at luxury hotels than at more basic hotels (Rhee & Yang 2015). However, most of what is researched has generally been at the higher end of hotels, i.e. four- and five-star establishments. As a result, there have been scarce studies conducted that measure the service quality and customer satisfaction across different stars, such as low or mid-range hotels (Rauch et al. 2015). Given that, this study attempts to fill this gap by looking at how different dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction are impacted by hotel star ratings and other parameters. This research aims to provide information about how hotels of different categories can improve their service quality to satisfy their customers.

In the past few years, service quality and customer satisfaction (SQCS) have been the major fields of interest in tourism and hospitality research and have been greatly researched

by scholars and researchers (Shyju et al. 2021). This growing body of research demonstrates the need to discover what guests expect and how each hotel can satisfy those expectations to remain a vital part of a constantly growing market of hotels. The objective of this study is to investigate the service quality dimensions that influence customer satisfaction for hotels with different star ratings.

1.2 Research Objectives and Limitations/Delimitations

The purpose of this study is to understand the effect of the quality of service and employee behaviour in the hotel on customer satisfaction. To achieve these, the research adopted the SERVQUAL model, a widely used service expatriation tool that possesses a literature of five working standards to assess service quality, with these being the physical appearance and facilities, consistency in providing expectations-based services, the willingness of the head orientation staff to serve customers quickly, knowledge and confidence shown by hotel workers as well as capability to offer customized customer services. This model would be applied by the study to discover the influence of each of these quality aspects on the satisfaction of hotel clients and to determine which of them plays the key role in creating customer experiences.

As hotels are very much based on the personal interaction of employees with guests, the way employees act whether with pleasing behaviour, politeness, professionalism and attentiveness can either accelerate or retard the impact of the quality of the service. For instance, even if there are nice facilities and well-reviewed rooms in a hotel, bad service from its employees can cause dissatisfaction. But helpful and friendly staff can compensate for minor shortcomings in service quality. Also, investigating the role of employee behaviour as a bridge between service quality and customer satisfaction can answer whether employee behaviour affects whether the guest experience is created or ruined.

This study will provide information that hotel managers and industry professionals may find useful to enhance service delivery. By learning which service quality factors were most important to have and which employee behaviours took away from guest satisfaction, hotel businesses could determine how to best prepare their staff, what customer service policy to enact, and where additional changes in service are needed. The limitation of this study is that it only focused on the SERVQUAL model as the main framework for evaluating service. It contributes to the development of the academic literature related to Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction. The research relies on a quantitative method, and the regions were selected at random, so this research and the results may vary accordingly. Mostly mid-range and budget hotels, with leisure travellers, were more focused than luxury hotels and business guests. However, despite some shortcomings, this research seeks to fill in a

gap in prior literature on this topic by examining the mediating role of employee behaviour in influencing employee outcomes, which eventually impacts guest outcomes.

This thesis not only examines the direct link between service quality and customer satisfaction in the hotel sector but also investigates the role of employee behaviour as a mediating factor. Much research has been conducted while examining the effect of service quality on satisfaction, with little work on how employee behaviour strengthens or breaks this relationship. Furthermore, the hospitality industry is in constant change, and therefore, hotel managers should know exactly how to make the best of these dynamics to better serve their customers and, at the same time, retain them.

1.3 Research Question

The study is guided by a central question:

How does service quality influence customer satisfaction in the hotel industry?

And the sub-question is:

Does employee behaviour affect customer satisfaction?

The goal is to determine whether interactions between hotel employees and guests influence how customers perceive service quality and, consequently, their overall satisfaction with the entire experience. Besides this, the study examines which dimensions of service quality are most important in affecting customer satisfaction and whether different organisations of hotels (luxury, mid-range and budget accommodation) differ in how service quality influences guest perceptions.

The research hopes to achieve this comprehensive thinking on how the link between service quality and service satisfaction is arrived at, and if these issues are addressed. Moreover, by analysing employee behaviour driving this relationship, professionalism, friendliness, responsiveness and problem-solving abilities, it further seeks to contribute to this relationship based on what behaviours can exist to make this relationship weak or strong. It also studies the effects of non-hotel-related factors, such as expectations from customers and market trends, to present an overall study on how hotels can improve guest experience.

This study aims to provide actionable insights for hotel management while contributing to the academic discussion on service quality. By examining key service quality dimensions and the mediating role of employee behaviour in customer satisfaction, this research offers practical implications for hotel managers and industry practitioners. These customer dynamics are aimed at helping hotels produce improved service plans. Hotel managers can

teach staff members more effectively and develop policies that establish solid customer trust within the competitive hospitality realm. The established findings lead hotels to develop their customer relationship management plans and enhance their services, which enables better delivery of value-added guest experiences.

1.4 Research methods

The quantitative research approach used in this study is especially well-suited for researching large groups and extrapolating findings from the sample to larger groups (Holton 2005). The quantitative component involves collecting numerical data to objectively measure relationships among service quality, customer satisfaction, and employee behaviour. It is also combined with a descriptive research design that is used to investigate one or more variables. (Lans 2002) The design's descriptive component is to give a thorough explanation of the condition of service quality now and how it affects hotel guests' pleasure. By employing a descriptive research design, the study can outline the specific influences of various service quality dimensions and employee interactions on customer satisfaction. This method is utilised in this study to quantify how customer satisfaction is affected by service quality and to ascertain how employee behaviour functions as a mediator. Data collection was performed using a cross-sectional survey, which involves gathering data at a single point in time. This method enables the capture of a snapshot of guest experiences and perceptions regarding service quality, employee interactions, and overall satisfaction in various hotel settings. (Connelly 2016.)

Research in the hospitality industry relies heavily on cross-sectional surveys because these assessments efficiently evaluate guest insights to detect customer group patterns (Ladhari 2009). This research also used a cross-sectional survey method, which allowed immediate data collection from hotel guests for studying their present-day perceptions about service quality and employee conduct and overall guest satisfaction. Using this design research, such as statistical analyses like correlation, along with regression and mediation evaluation, was performed. The links between customer satisfaction, employee behaviour, and service quality aspects were investigated using correlation analysis. A statistical technique for assessing the degree of association between two quantitative variables is correlation analysis. The strength of inter-variable relationships can be understood through high correlation measurements, and weak correlations signal minimal variable connection (Gogtay 2017). The relationship assessment between variables used Pearson's correlation coefficient, which generated results from -1 representing perfect negative correlation to +1 indicating perfect positive correlation. A positive relationship between variables confirms that growing

values in one variable cause matching increases in the other variable, while negative relationships indicate elevated values in one variable result in declining values in the other (Gogtay 2017).

To identify patterns, make predictions, and test theoretical links, researchers might assess the relationships between one or more independent variables and one dependent variable using the statistical technique of regression analysis (Gujarati 2002). Regression analysis was used in the study to demonstrate the clear connection between customer satisfaction ratings and aspects of service quality. After controlling for unrelated variables, the impact of tangibles, responsiveness, and empathy as well as empathy as dimensions of service quality on customer satisfaction was ascertained with the aid of multiple regression, an extension of basic regression. The greatest factors influencing customer satisfaction can be found by using this method, which enables the simultaneous examination of several predictors and their combined effects (Hair et al. 2019). By incorporating control variables, the regression model provides a clearer understanding of the direct influences of service quality on customer satisfaction while accounting for other potential influencing factors. This ensures more precise insights for decision-making and policy formulation, particularly in understanding which attributes of service quality influence most in improving customer experiences (Parasuraman et al. 1988).

Employee conduct acts as a mediator between customer pleasure and service quality, according to a mediation analysis. To ascertain the mediation effects, the investigation employed the methodology proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). Three steps were taken in the research: (1) verified a crucial link between customer satisfaction and service quality, (2) assessed how service quality affected employee behaviour, and (3) examined the direct correlation between employee behaviour and customer satisfaction. The reduction of the direct service quality effect on customer satisfaction when considering employee behaviour in the model supports the existence of mediation. The findings demonstrate that service quality does not fully determine satisfaction levels, as customer satisfaction outcome largely depends on employee interactions in the service delivery process.

2 Theoretical Background

This chapter offers an extensive examination of the theoretical foundations pertinent to service quality and customer satisfaction within the hotel sector. The theoretical background is provided to establish a conceptual foundation for the study by exploring key theories, models and literature that inform the research areas. The chapter delves into the dimensions of service quality alongside customer satisfaction priorities and elucidates their interconnection. The discussion explores both employee service delivery along its impact on service quality delivery operations in hotels and the related industry-wide effects. The theoretical framework creates a base to grasp fundamental concepts together with their relationships within the study. In this thesis, the framework revolves around the concepts of service quality, customer satisfaction and the mediating role of employee behaviour, all within the context of the hotel industry. To explore these relationships, the study is grounded in the SERVQUAL model for service quality and integrates theories of customer satisfaction and employee behaviour as mediators in service delivery.

2.1 Customer Satisfaction Theory

After the service is provided, the customers develop emotional responses known as satisfaction, which results from their contrast between expected experiences and the actual service performance. Guests in hotels need to understand actual performance versus expected service because this assessment determines both their instantaneous hotel experience and their future booking decisions and word-of-mouth suggestions. One of the most famous theories by Oliver (1980), the Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), serves as one of the principal models for understanding customer satisfaction. EDT defines satisfaction as the disparity between pre-visit expectations along post-visit experiences, so that superior performance creates positive disconfirmation, which produces satisfaction, but substandard performance leads to negative disconfirmation, which generates dissatisfaction (Yüksel 2008). The Management of guest expectations emerges as a vital practice according to this theory because it depends on delivering consistent performance while maintaining accurate communications. When hotels deliver a maintained clean environment alongside swift and courteous service, they create positive disconfirmation leading to satisfaction of the customer to increase (Pizam & Ellis 1999).

The Value-Perception Theory provides valuable insights for hospitality settings (Zeithaml 1988). According to this theory, satisfaction emerges from the perceived value that results from comparing customer benefits against their costs. Room quality, along with service efficiency and professional staff, make up the benefits for hotel guests, but these advantages

also include pricing structures, along with secondary expenses. Guests who recognise that their service expenses match the benefits received experience high value, thus creating stronger satisfaction. Customers will feel dissatisfied when the financial expenses exceed the advantages received. The customer perspective holds major importance in this industry due to its competitive pricing structure and need for service differentiation (Woodruff 1997 & Lai et al. 2009).

An alternative approach to measuring service quality and its impact on customer satisfaction is provided by the SERVPERF model, developed by Cronin and Taylor in 1992. Unlike models that compare expectations and perceptions, SERVPERF focuses solely on the actual performance of the service. (Karmacharya 2022.) This model argues that in the hotel industry, tangible evidence of service performance, such as the cleanliness of the facilities, the efficiency of the check-in process, and the responsiveness of staff, is the primary determinant of customer satisfaction. Even when initial expectations are high, it is the service performance now of consumption that ultimately influences the guest's satisfaction (Cronin et al. 2000 & Ladhari 2009). This approach aligns with the emphasis on service quality dimensions outlined in the SERVQUAL model, where factors such as reliability, responsiveness, and empathy directly affect guest experiences.

In summary, theories such as Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory, Value-Perception Theory and the SERVPERF model offer frameworks for understanding customer satisfaction in the hotel industry. These theories collectively emphasise that high-quality service reflected in consistent, reliable, and value-driven performance is essential for exceeding guest expectations and developing long-term loyalty. By focusing on these perspectives, hotels can design their service strategies to enhance customer satisfaction, improve brand reputation and achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

2.2 SERVQUAL Model of Service Quality

Services are intangible products of human labour that might meet certain needs and, as a result, fetch a price in return (Alam 2022). Service quality stands as an essential element in defining customer satisfaction, specifically within hotel institutions that operate under considerable guest service standards. The widely used framework for measuring service quality was created by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, three American marketing experts, in 1988, known as SERVQUAL (Shi et al. 2020). The model determines service quality through assessing customer-perceived services against their service expectations. Research has extensively applied SERVQUAL for assessing service quality in the hospitality field across multiple years (Wang et al. 2015).

Service quality perceptions of customers develop through five core dimensions, which form the foundation of the SERVQUAL model. The characteristics falling under tangibles focus on both facilities and physical items, as well as equipment and staff presentation, and communication materials. In the hotel industry, these aspects encompass the cleanliness and maintenance of rooms, the modernity of amenities, the professionalism of hotel staff and the overall aesthetic appeal of the hotel (Ali & Amin 2014). The initial encounter sets up guest expectations since tangible elements provide essential influences on customer expectations. Service quality depends heavily on reliability because hotels must provide promised services with dependable accuracy for customers. According to (Ladhari 2009), hotel guests count on facilities to supply booked accommodation while promising quick entrance and exit procedures, together with the essential amenities they advertise. The combination of reliable service enhances trust with customers, who therefore stay with the hotel a second time.

In response to Figure 1. It can be seen that all five parameters of SERVQUAL respond to service quality and then to customer satisfaction. It is also observed that a hotel demonstrates responsiveness through staff members who demonstrate readiness to help guests while delivering speedy service. This service quality aspect proves vital for guest satisfaction because it demonstrates the promptness of personnel who serve customers, manage complaints and respond to queries (Chowdhary & Prakash 2007). A hotel which places priority on responding to guests delivers positive guest experiences along with stronger client loyalty. Customer confidence improves through staff members delivering respectful communication and demonstrating competence when meeting guest needs. Luxury hotels demand extremely professional service combined with individual attention from staff, which stands as an essential requirement (Markovic & Raspor 2010).

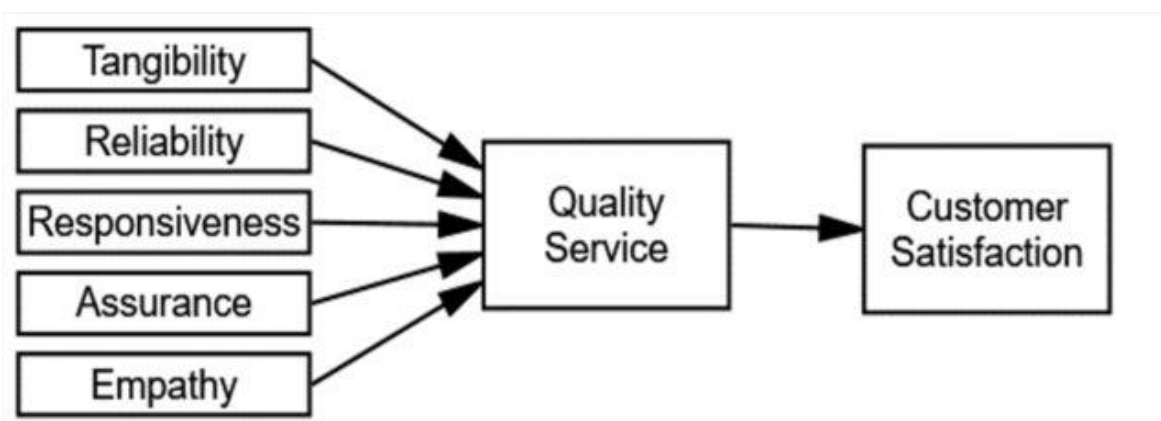


Figure 1. The SERVQUAL Model Source (Nautwima et al. 2022).

The final component of the SERVQUAL model represents empathy, which signifies hotel personnel's capability to deliver personalised and caring services to customers. Guest satisfaction depends on management's ability to recognise personal needs and deliver unique services to customers while treating them with respect (Kandampully & Suhartanto 2000). When hotels remember frequent guest visits and handle unique dietary demands, along with suggesting location-specific attractions, they illustrate high empathetic abilities. Hotels which focus on these individual customer needs will provide guests with experiences that become more significant and long-lasting (Mann et al. 2024).

2.2.1 Gaps in SERVQUAL Model

The SERVQUAL model includes potential gaps that appear between customer expectations versus actual service delivery to assist hotels with identifying service improvement areas. Hotels encounter the knowledge gap because management fails to comprehend customer expectations from inadequate market study results combined with insufficient guest input and poor communication flow between executive staff members and service personnel (Zeithaml et al. 1996). Hotels develop service standards which fail to match what their customers are expecting, and policies that do not represent guest demands can negatively affect service quality (Ladhari 2009). The delivery gap forms when service providers deliver a quality of service that diverges from designated service standards because of insufficient training, minimal motivation, and restricted resources (Khan 2003). Communication issues occur from hotels' use of deceptive marketing practices for their advertisements, which create false customer expectations. Guest satisfaction reduces as they discover their received service fails to match advertised promises (Grönroos 2007). Customers experience a satisfaction gap when their actual experiences differ from the expectations most important to them. The larger this gap, the lower the level of customer satisfaction (Ali & Amin 2014).

Researchers widely implement the SERVQUAL model across hotels for service quality assessment, along with service enhancement. The hotel industry employs this model to perform surveys, which enable it to acquire customer feedback to locate its service improvement priorities. Luxury hotels base their service model on assurance and empathy to deliver customised interactions, whereas budget hotels maintain reliability and responsiveness for delivering effective operational support (Markovic & Raspor 2010). Below in Figure 2 is a visual representation of the 5 major gaps of service quality.

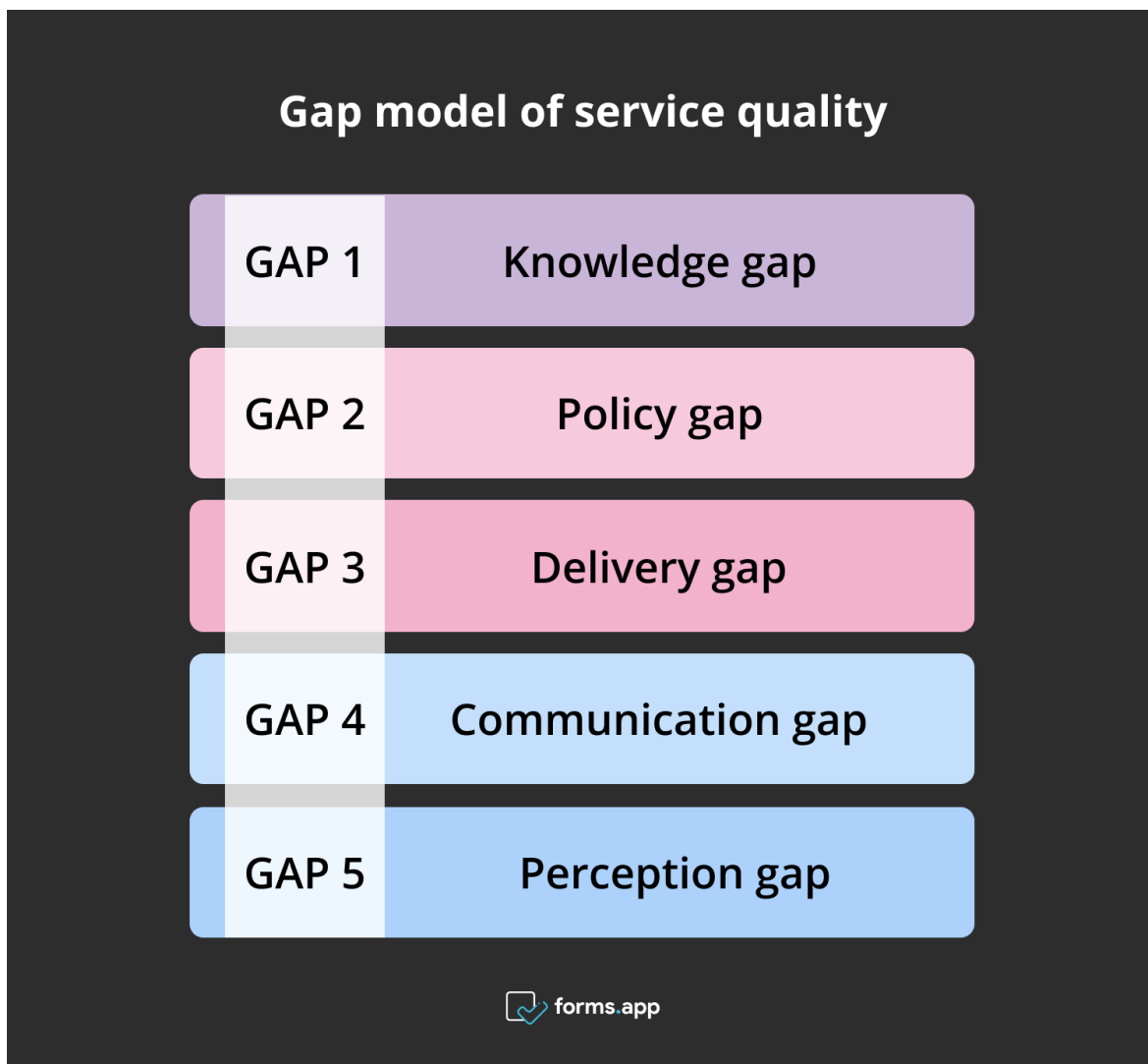


Figure 2. Gap model of service model (Çıtak 2024).

2.2.2 Advantages and Limitations of the SERVQUAL Model

The training and development process in organisations benefits significantly from SERVQUAL because it detects the staff areas that require enhancement. Through the identification of main areas, hotels can enhance customer service encounters and achieve superior quality measures (Kandampully & Suhartanto 2000). The SERVQUAL model serves multiple advantages that make it an excellent assessment method for service quality evaluation. The model sets a defined process for service gap detection, which enables hotel operators to create improved services that better satisfy customers (Ali & Amin 2014). The model maintains a customer-oriented approach by concentrating on guest expectations during their experience rather than staff-established service criteria (Ladhari 2009).

Evaluating competitive levels becomes possible through this model because hotels can measure their quality performance against their competitors' standards (Khan 2003). While

the model offers many advantages, there are several disadvantages which limit its effectiveness. The main drawback of SERVQUAL stems from its subjective nature, which permits customer perceptions and expectations to differ according to their characteristics as well as cultural background and past experiences (Grönroos 2007). The model envisions that all five service quality dimensions have equal importance toward all customers (Zeithaml et al. 1996), but empirical proof suggests otherwise. Some experts point out that SERVQUAL fails to explain the changing dynamics of service delivery and customer expectation patterns clearly (Markovic & Raspor 2010).

As Figure 3 illustrates below, the SERVQUAL model is used for assessing service quality. The hospitality industry relies heavily on the SERVQUAL model because it remains one of the most accepted approaches for service quality assessment. Hotels achieve improvements in terms of guest satisfaction by measuring customer expectation gaps against what they perceive as the service delivered. This model provides structured guidance through its design, together with customer feedback analysis, to enable high-quality service maintenance for hospitality organisations. Hotels that utilise the SERVQUAL model enhance client satisfaction, which results in increased customer loyalty and long-term business achievement in the cutthroat hospitality sector. (Ho et al. 2013.)

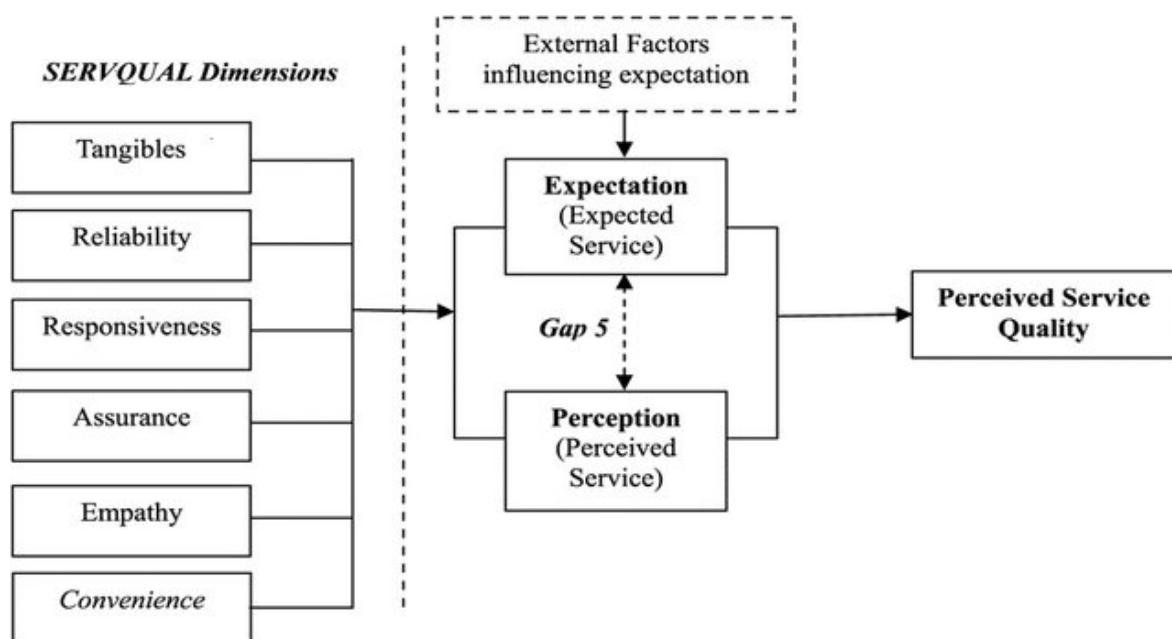


Figure 3. Evaluating service quality using the SERVQUAL model (Namupala 2019).

2.3 Service Quality in the Hotel Industry and Its Dimensions

According to the SERVQUAL model created by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), service quality is the discrepancy between what customers expect and what they believe

was provided. According to this concept, customers' opinions of service quality are influenced by five important factors: tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and reliability. These factors affect many facets of service delivery in the hotel setting. Tangibles pertain to the physical surroundings, such as the hotel's look, furnishings, cleanliness, and employee demeanour. The ability of the hotel to continuously deliver precise and trustworthy services, such as keeping rooms tidy and guaranteeing a seamless check-in and check-out procedure, is the major focus of reliability. Responsiveness refers to how quickly and effectively hotel staff address customer requests, complaints, and concerns, demonstrating attentiveness and care in their service approach. Assurance involves the knowledge, skills, and professionalism of hotel employees in making customers feel confident and secure in their service experience. Empathy reflects the staff's ability to understand and cater to individual customer needs, offering personalised service and genuine care for guest satisfaction.

Hotels are increasingly recognising the importance of these dimensions, as service quality directly affects guest satisfaction and provides a competitive advantage. A hotel with high-quality facilities and well-maintained rooms may still struggle to retain customers if the staff is unresponsive or unprofessional. This highlights the multi-dimensional nature of service quality, where both tangible and intangible factors play a role in shaping guest experiences. Measuring these dimensions allows hotels to assess their strengths and weaknesses, helping them refine their service delivery and address areas that need improvement. The effective management of service quality across all these aspects determines not only customer satisfaction but also guest loyalty and the long-term success of the hotel industry (Kandampully 2003).

2.4 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

The connection between customer satisfaction and service quality in the hotel sector is one of the main topics of this thesis. These two constructs have been shown to have a high positive association in numerous studies. High service quality leads to increased customer satisfaction, while low service quality results in dissatisfaction. The SERVQUAL model plays a key role in understanding this relationship, as it measures service quality along multiple dimensions, each of which has an impact on overall satisfaction (Ali & Amin 2014).

By matching or surpassing customer expectations in every SERVQUAL dimension, service quality can be seen as having a direct impact on customer satisfaction. For example, if the hotel provides clean and well-maintained rooms (Tangibles), responds promptly to cus-

customer requests (Responsiveness), and ensures a high level of professionalism and confidence (Assurance), customers are more likely to feel satisfied with their stay. (Zun et al. 2018.)

From a practical perspective, customer satisfaction can be regarded as the outcome of positive service quality. When customers perceive the hotel as providing high-quality service, their level of satisfaction increases. Conversely, when they perceive poor service quality, their satisfaction decreases. Service quality can also affect customer satisfaction indirectly through employee behaviour. Employees' behaviour plays a key role in delivering the facility, and their behaviour significantly influences how customers perceive service quality. For instance, if employees are friendly and empathetic, customers are more likely to perceive higher service quality, leading to greater satisfaction. (Slåtten 2009.)

The correlation between service quality and customer satisfaction is not always straightforward, as customer expectations, cultural differences, and individual preferences can influence the way customers evaluate service quality. However, a strong service quality-customer satisfaction link is a critical factor in ensuring the success of hotels. (Sureshchandar 2002.)

2.5 Role of Employee Behaviour in Service Delivery

In the hotel industry, employee behaviour has a significant impact on client satisfaction and service quality. Employees are the primary point of interaction between customers and the hotel, making their professionalism, demeanour, and service efficiency essential in fulfilling customer needs and expectations. Frontline employees such as receptionists, housekeepers, and restaurant staff hold a pivotal role in directly influencing customer perceptions of service quality. Their ability to demonstrate professionalism, courtesy, attentiveness, and empathy contributes to a positive service environment, fostering higher levels of customer satisfaction. Guests often base their overall hotel experience on their interactions with these employees, making their behaviour a fundamental component of service delivery. (Omoruyi 2016.)

Employee training and development serve as vital strategies for ensuring service excellence. Hotel managers implement training programs focused on customer service skills, effective communication, conflict resolution, and cultural sensitivity. Well-trained employees are better equipped to address customer concerns, resolve issues efficiently, and provide personalised service, all of which enhance service quality and satisfaction levels. The ability of employees to handle customer inquiries with confidence and professionalism directly impacts guest experiences (Prasanth 2015). Employee engagement is another crucial factor

influencing service delivery. Engaged employees exhibit a higher level of emotional commitment toward their work and organisation, making them more proactive in meeting customer needs and going beyond standard service expectations. Research highlights a solid connection between employee engagement, service quality, and customer satisfaction, reinforcing its importance as a key management priority. (Lahap 2016.)

The concept of emotional labour holds particular significance in the hospitality sector, where employees are required to manage their emotions and display positive behaviours such as friendliness, enthusiasm, and patience during guest interactions. Customers tend to respond more positively to employees who exhibit genuine warmth and attentiveness, leading to higher satisfaction levels. The ability of hotel staff to consistently maintain a welcoming demeanour, even in high-pressure situations, strengthens customer perceptions of service reliability and professionalism. (Kim et al. 2015.)

In summary, employee behaviour plays a defining role in shaping service quality and customer satisfaction within the hotel industry. By prioritising employee training, engagement, and emotional intelligence, hotels can create a service-oriented culture that fosters guest satisfaction, enhances brand name, and establishes a competitive gain in the hospitality market.

2.6 Employee Behaviour as a Mediating Factor

Customer perceptions of service quality and, consequently, customer happiness are greatly influenced by employee behaviour. Employee behaviour refers to the attitudes, actions, and interactions that employees exhibit when providing services. This can include interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, the ability to resolve conflicts, and the overall demeanour of staff when interacting with customers. (Dinc et al. 2014.)

The mediating role of employee behaviour in service delivery suggests that even if a hotel's physical environment (e.g., rooms and amenities) and service systems are of high quality, poor employee behaviour (e.g., rudeness, unresponsiveness, lack of empathy) can significantly detract from the guest experience and reduce customer satisfaction. On the other hand, positive employee behaviour (e.g., friendly, helpful, proactive) can enhance customers' perceptions of the hotel's service quality, even if some physical aspects are less than perfect. (Slåtten 2009.)

A significant aspect of service delivery in hotels is employee behaviour. Hotel staff are the face of the business, and their interactions with guests directly influence perceptions of service quality. Employees who are responsive, courteous, and proactive contribute positively

to guest experiences, while negative employee behaviour (e.g., rudeness or inattentiveness) can detract from an otherwise well-executed service. The mediating role of employee behaviour has gained attention in service quality research, as it serves as a bridge between the tangible aspects of service and the emotional satisfaction of guests (Sürücü et al. 2019). For example, a guest may perceive a hotel's physical facilities (tangibles) as high-quality, but if they encounter rude or unhelpful staff, the satisfaction of guest may be severely impacted. On the other hand, even if the physical environment is less than perfect, exceptional service from staff can elevate the guest's overall satisfaction. Thus, employee behaviour can amplify or mitigate the impacts of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction (Lam et al. 2005).

This framework can help us understand the theory in organisational behaviour, which focuses on how employees' roles or service providers and behaviours (e.g., customer orientation, professionalism) influence customer experiences. The relationship between the hotel's service offerings and the satisfaction of its guests is mediated by the efficient performance of staff's duties in meeting the expectations of the customers.

2.1 Integrated Framework for the Thesis

This thesis aims to provide knowledge of the relationships between service quality, staff behaviour, and customer happiness by integrating a framework for setting out a systematic understanding of these relationships. This framework's basic assumption is that customer pleasure is influenced by service quality, and that the relationship between the two is not always linear. Employee behaviour plays the role of a mediating factor by which service quality is subsequently affected and by which customer satisfaction is affected.

Service Quality (X) → Employee Behaviour (Mediator) → Customer Satisfaction (Y).

This equation refers to various dimensions that make up the guest experience in a hotel, which we call service quality represented as X. Specifically, it is composed of the physical appearance of the hotel environment, consistency and reliability of service delivery, responsiveness of hotel staff to guest needs, sense of confidence and trust hotel employees create toward the customers, as well as the capacity of hotel staff to deliver attentional service. Under these aspects, the quality of services is provided after each aspect, and every customer will rate the entire hotel in terms of how all is put together.

This relationship is mediated by employee behaviour, which causes employee behaviour, and employee behaviour then affects service quality and ultimately, service quality translates to customer satisfaction. When employees are professionally dressed, attentive and

receptive, service quality perception is affected for the better, and guests have a good experience. If, however, employee interactions are characterised as indifferent, unresponsive, or disengaged, even if a high level of operational standards is achieved, the perception of service quality by consumers can fall.

This framework is based on the outcome variable Y, Y is customer satisfaction, which represents the guest's emotional and cognitive-emotional response to their hotel experience. When you have high satisfaction, it means that the guest's expectations have been or were met or exceeded, and the guest generally gives a positive review, the guest comes back again, and you will have brand loyalty. But if the fulfilment of service quality expectations is not attained or if the employee behaves negatively, resulting in a negative influence on the guest perception, satisfaction levels will decline.

This research attempts to understand more deeply what it is that pushes customer satisfaction in the hotel industry through the analysis of the presence of these interactions. The key contribution of the findings will be to provide insight into the service quality that can be increased within the hotel service management strategies, the effective employees' training, as well as to enhance the creation of a service culture focused on guest satisfaction.

3 Research Implementation

This chapter describes the entire study approach taken to investigate the connections among customer satisfaction, service quality, and the mediating function of staff behaviour in the hotel sector. An overview of the population and sampling methodologies is given, followed by a description of the research design, a discussion of sample size issues, and an explanation of the research methodology and data collection process.

3.1 Population and Sampling

The population for this study consists of hotel guests who have recently stayed in hotels across different categories, including luxury, mid-range, and budget hotels, and across various geographical locations. This broad population is chosen to ensure that the findings are generalizable to the larger hotel industry. To obtain a representative sample from this diverse population, a stratified random sampling technique was used. In this approach, the overall population is divided into distinct subgroups, such as hotel category or geographical location, and applicants are randomly chosen from each smaller group (Aoyama 1954). This method ensures that the sample reflects a wide range of guest experiences and perspectives, which is essential for increasing the reliability and validity of the study's results.

This study based its sample size determination on statistical power analysis to establish the necessary number of respondents for detecting meaningful relations between study variables. 200 hotel guest participants formed the minimum data collection sample to guarantee strong results with sufficient statistical power. The decision behind this number depended on practical execution factors such as respondent accessibility and data collection duration. The research survey was implemented at different hotels throughout Nepal and India with both domestic and international hotel guests. The survey was administered exclusively in digital format to maximise reach and convenience for participants. It was distributed via social media and email invitation, and QR codes were displayed in hotel lobbies, guest rooms, and common areas. They could answer the survey within two weeks of their stay. The survey reached 350 people whom later resulted in 200 were proper participants. January and March 2025 were the periods in which respondents submitted their surveys. The selected 200 respondents ensure adequate data acquisition for statistical testing and maintain process feasibility.

Following data collection, the analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to summarize the basic features of the data, reliability analysis to ensure the survey instrument consistently measured the intended variables, correlation analysis to inspect the relations

between service quality, employee behaviour and customer satisfaction. Regression analysis, including mediation analysis was done to test the hypothesized relationships. This comprehensive approach to data analysis allows the study to uncover significant patterns and provide empirical evidence on the effect of service quality and employee behaviour on customer satisfaction in the hospitality business.

3.2 Questionnaire Survey

A structured questionnaire was used in this study to establish empirical relationships between service quality, employee behaviour and customer satisfaction throughout hotel operations. The survey tool used SERVQUAL framework elements (Parasuraman et al. 1988) to develop its design, which delivered theoretical construct relevance for hospitality service contexts.

The initial section of the survey captured essential demographic data consisting of participant age range, along with their gender identity, as well as their hotel visit purpose between business and leisure purposes and their selected hotel rating category. The gathered information helps segmentation analysis uncover dissimilarities in guest satisfaction between different types of guests. The main part of the questionnaire measured SERVQUAL service quality indicators through five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The researchers used a five-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree to measure operational differences between expected versus actual service perceptions.

Employee behaviour underwent a separate assessment to evaluate staff friendliness, together with professional conduct and their level of attentiveness. The metrics serve to measure their effect on the overall satisfaction levels, and researchers will use them in combination with satisfaction data to confirm primary behavioural triggers. The survey included a customer satisfaction evaluation that reviewed all aspects of rooms and service, and lodging experience from beginning to end. Analyses were done on the collected data from responses to determine the impact that service quality and employee conduct have on dependent variables.

This quantitative research approach combines descriptive statistics for demographic reports and satisfaction surveys and employs correlation and regression tests with SERVQUAL dimension comparisons between business and leisure groups. The full questionnaire is provided in Appendix A for reference.

3.3 Measurement of Variables

Research has developed three important measurement factors, which include service quality together with employee behaviour and customer satisfaction. The variables receive analysis through structured questionnaires, followed by quantitative statistical approaches, which use factor analysis and reliability testing and regression analysis to demonstrate their relationships.

Service quality assessment relies on the SERVQUAL model with dimensions that comprise tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The research scales responses of study participants using a rating scale that begins at 1 (Strongly Disagree) and ends at 5 (Strongly Agree) to measure the dimensions' perceptions. The application of both exploratory factor analysis followed by confirmatory factor analysis identifies content validity of the SERVQUAL measure and its reliability.

Customers evaluate employee performance through their feelings about cordiality along with helpfulness, professional appearance, and attentive actions. The variable serves as a mediating factor that explains how service quality creates satisfaction among customers. The analysis utilises SEM to examine both mediation effects while investigating how staff behaviour affects the way customers perceive service quality.

The evaluation of customer satisfaction depends on survey participants' assessments of hotel satisfaction as well as their referral potential and their plans for returning to the hotel. A series of regression analyses and correlation tests support the evaluation of relationships between customer satisfaction, service quality and employee conduct in the hotel industry. The research investigates whether some service quality dimensions produce more significant influences on customer satisfaction levels than others.

The research utilises analysis of quantitative data to reveal customer perception patterns, together with measurement of service quality and employee behavioural impact on satisfaction then explores positive hotel experience factors.

3.4 Data Analysis

Statistical analysis techniques were applied to examine the relationships between service quality, employee behaviour, and customer satisfaction. The analysis followed a systematic approach to ensure robust findings. Descriptive statistics were first used to summarise the demographic characteristics of respondents and their basic response patterns. This included calculating means and standard deviations for continuous variables and frequency distributions for categorical variables. These initial analyses provided a comprehensive

overview of the sample composition. Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between all pairs of continuous variables. This included the five SERVQUAL dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy), employee behaviour measures, and customer satisfaction scores. The correlation coefficients, ranging from -1 to +1, revealed both the direction and strength of these relationships. Multiple regression analysis was performed to assess how service quality dimensions predict customer satisfaction. The analysis used a hierarchical approach with demographic variables entered first as controls, followed by the five SERVQUAL dimensions. This approach allowed examination of each dimension's unique contribution to customer satisfaction while accounting for other factors. Mediation analysis was conducted to test whether employee behaviour mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The analysis followed established procedures to examine both direct and indirect effects. This helped determine whether service quality's impact on satisfaction operates through its influence on employee behaviour.

All analyses were performed using appropriate statistical software to ensure accuracy and reliability. The results of these analyses are presented in the following sections, providing empirical evidence about the relationships between service quality, employee behaviour, and customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

4 Survey results

This section presents the findings from the survey, beginning with the demographic profile of respondents, followed by correlation and regression analyses examining the relationships between service quality, employee behaviour and customer satisfaction.

4.1 Demographic Information

The demographic section of the survey obtained information about the respondents' characteristics, since these data help identify the pattern of the sample population while making the results applicable to the general population. The research includes demographic variables that cover age ranges alongside gender distribution, together with hotel class (luxury, mid-range, budget) and duration of visits and the reasons for visiting (business or leisure). Service quality and satisfaction perceptions among guests are susceptible to changes based on these factors. According to Table 1, Most respondents (35%) fall within the 25-34 age group, representing a younger demographic with higher expectations for service quality and digital convenience.

Age Group	Percentage (%)
18-24 years	25%
25-34 years	35%
35-44 years	20%
45-54 years	10%
55+ years	10%

Table 1. Age distribution of the demographic

Table 2 shows a higher proportion of female respondents (60%) suggests that gender-based preferences may play a role in hotel selection and satisfaction.

Gender	Percentage (%)
Male	40%

Gender	Percentage (%)
Female	60%

Table 2. Gender distribution of demographics.

As presented in Table 3, there is a balanced distribution across different hotel categories, ensuring that diverse guest experiences are captured, providing a comprehensive perspective on service quality.

Hotel Type	Percentage (%)
Luxury	10%
Mid-range	30%
Budget	60%

Table 3. Hotel Category.

According to Table 4, the purpose of travel for most demographics was leisure rather than business.

Purpose	Percentage (%)
Business	30%
Leisure	70%

Table 4. Purpose of Stay.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The links between customer satisfaction, employee behaviour, and service quality aspects were investigated using correlation analysis. This analysis helps identify whether service quality and employee behaviour significantly impact customer satisfaction. Understanding

these relationships allows businesses to prioritise service improvements based on the most influential factors.

Pearson Correlation Coefficients:

Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Table 5 shows the correlation between customer satisfaction and aspects of service quality. The findings imply that the aspects of service quality that have the most effect on guest satisfaction are assurance and dependability, which have the largest positive connections with customer satisfaction.

Service Quality Dimension	Correlation with Customer Satisfaction	Strength of Correlation
Tangibles	0.72	Strong Positive
Reliability	0.78	Strong Positive
Responsiveness	0.75	Strong Positive
Assurance	0.80	Very Strong Positive
Empathy	0.77	Strong Positive

Table 5. Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction.

Service Quality and Employee Behaviour

The relationship between service quality dimensions and employee behaviour is detailed below in Table 6. These results show that assurance has the strongest positive correlation with employee behaviour, highlighting its importance in shaping how employees interact with guests.

Service Quality Dimension	Correlation with Employee Behaviour	Strength of Correlation
Tangibles	0.65	Moderate Positive

Service Quality Dimension	Correlation with Employee Behaviour	Strength of Correlation
Reliability	0.62	Moderate Positive
Responsiveness	0.68	Moderate Positive
Assurance	0.74	Strong Positive
Empathy	0.70	Moderate Positive

Table 6. Service Quality and Employee Behaviour

Employee behaviour displays a very strong positive link with customer satisfaction, based on a measurement of 0.83, as Figure 8 indicates. Employee behaviour which combines helpfulness with professionalism and attentiveness strongly determines the level of overall customer satisfaction. Data indicates that hotel employees behave according to how staff members experience the physical hotel structure and how they receive and deliver service. The physical environment maintenance combined with swift service delivery creates conditions which guide employee attitudes and their guest relationships.

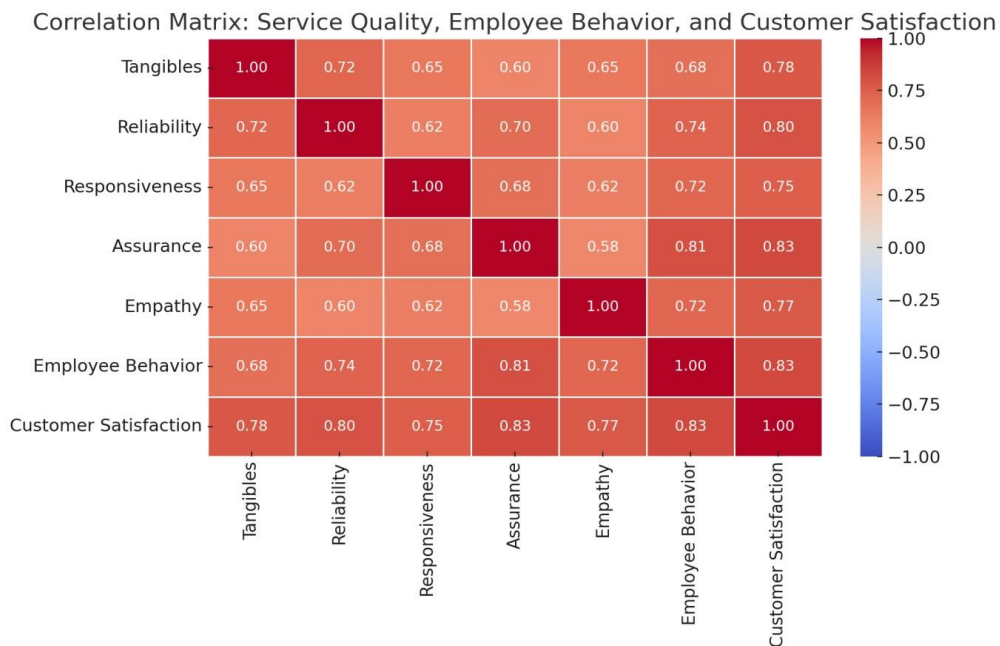


Figure 4. Correlation matrix: Service Quality, Employee Behaviour and Customer Satisfaction

4.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used in the study to demonstrate the clear connection between customer satisfaction ratings and aspects of service quality.

Model Summary: Service Quality (X) and Customer Satisfaction (Y)

The impact of the five service quality variables on customer satisfaction levels was assessed using multiple regression analysis. The five dimensions explained 72% of customer satisfaction variance as shown by the statistically significant model ($p < 0.001$). According to Table 7 and Figure 5, assurance and reliability produce the highest influence on customer satisfaction, while responsiveness, empathy, and tangibles also have an impact.

Service Quality Dimension	Regression Coefficient (β)	Significance Level (p-value)
Tangibles	0.15	$p < 0.04$
Reliability	0.20	$p < 0.01$
Responsiveness	0.18	$p < 0.05$
Assurance	0.23	$p < 0.01$
Empathy	0.17	$p < 0.05$

Table 7. Regression Coefficients

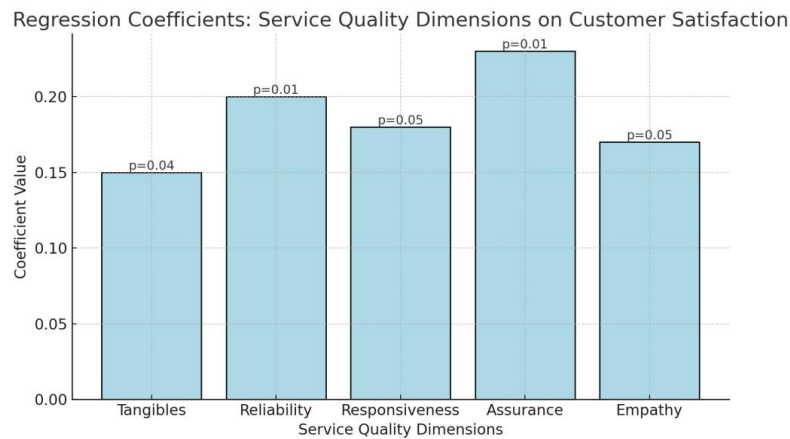


Figure 5. Regression Coefficients: Service Quality Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction

4.4 Mediation Analysis

Employee conduct acts as a mediator between customer pleasure and service quality, according to a mediation analysis. Table 8 provides evidence that shows that employee conduct serves as a fundamental influence in service-oriented industries such as hospitality because it directly affects customer satisfaction levels. Meanwhile, mediation analysis provides a detailed understanding of the service quality-customer satisfaction relationship because it proves the essential role of employee engagement in delivering superior service. Research outcomes show employee behaviour serves as a complete mediation channel between service quality and customer satisfaction because interactions between staff members strongly determine customer quality perception. Service quality provides the initial foundation for satisfaction, but employee positive attributes lead to superior customer fulfilment because they deeply influence the customer experience.

Path	Significance Level (p-value)
Direct Effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction	$p < 0.001$
Effect of Service Quality on Employee Behaviour	$p < 0.01$
Effect of Employee Behaviour on Customer Satisfaction	$p < 0.001$
Indirect Effect (Mediation)	$p < 0.01$

Table 8. Mediation Analysis Results

4.5 Synthesis of Key Findings

The study provides valuable information that explains service quality interactions with employee behaviour alongside effects on customer satisfaction in the hotel sector. The evaluation of survey responses exposed significant trends among the collected data that require special attention.

Through demographic analysis, it was discovered that most hotel guests belong to the age group of 25-34, since they represented 35% of the total participants. The young demographic profile indicates hotels should focus their service strategies on digital requirements and smooth customer experiences since these listeners expect modern conveniences. Female participants made up 60% of the total sample population, which points towards potential gender-related disparities in service-related preferences. Budget hotel guests and leisure travellers made up the majority (60% and 70%) of respondents, which allowed the research to analyse these particular market groups specifically.

All dimensions from the SERVQUAL analysis exhibited significant positive relationships with customer satisfaction ratings. The survey showed that assurance served as the primary influential dimension with a 0.80 correlation strength and reliability, followed by a 0.78 coefficient. The study results establish competent staff together with consistent service delivery as essential factors that create guest satisfaction. Through regression analysis, the five service quality dimensions established 72% reliability for explaining customer satisfaction scores. Research revealed that employee behaviours strongly influenced customer satisfaction through their very strong correlation value of $r = 0.83$. Employee behaviour demonstrates complete mediation between service quality and customer satisfaction according to the results of the mediation analysis. Excellent customer experiences are built upon high-quality standards, but positive staff engagements deliver those exceptional guest encounters.

The results indicate that hotels should concentrate on service consistency since reliability stood as the key driver of guest satisfaction. The study results show promising service customisation prospects for younger leisure tourists who represented most of the respondents. The research yields important findings, yet stakeholders should recognise specific limitations of the study. The research results become less applicable to wider market segments because most respondents came from budget hotels among young guests. The research provides crucial insights about how service quality interacts with employee conduct to produce customer satisfaction outcomes in hotel services.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary and discussion

This study investigated the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the hotel industry, with a specific focus on the role of employee behaviour. The research was guided by Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (Oliver 1980) and the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al. 1988), confirming that service quality is a fundamental driver of customer satisfaction, while employee behaviour serves as a critical mediator in this relationship.

The central research question, **how service quality influences customer satisfaction in the hotel industry**, was answered through empirical findings showing that service quality accounts for 72% of the variance in satisfaction scores. Key SERVQUAL dimensions, particularly assurance ($r = 0.80$) and reliability ($r = 0.78$), emerged as the strongest predictors, supporting prior research on the importance of skilled personnel and dependable service delivery (Min & Min 2011). Additionally, tangible service elements, such as physical surroundings, were found to enhance perceived service quality (Brady & Cronin 2000).

The sub-question, **whether employee behaviour affects customer satisfaction**, was also clearly addressed. The study confirmed that employee behaviour significantly mediates ($r = 0.83$) the link between service quality and satisfaction. Behaviours such as attentiveness, courtesy, and problem-solving were particularly influential in shaping guest perceptions (Karatepe 2011). Hotels where employees demonstrated professionalism and responsiveness consistently reported higher satisfaction levels, reinforcing the idea that staff conduct directly impacts service evaluations.

Along with the main discoveries, the study performed investigations to understand the differences between hotel segments, including luxury, mid-range, and budget. The importance of assurance and reliability as fundamental elements mattered to all hotel guests, yet luxury hotels emphasised personal care more strongly than budget hotels emphasised efficiency and noticeable service elements. Different hotels need specific service plans because their category and their guests' expectations differ. The practical examination in this research provides hotel management with implementable service recommendations. Hospitality service delivery will improve by focusing workforce training on friendliness, together with responsiveness and problem-solving capabilities. The effective management of service consistency and proper demographic-based service methods represents equally vital components for achieving guest satisfaction. The research shows youth leisure visitors prioritise individualised care (Ladhari 2009), so hotels need to train staff with service methods tailored

to their core audience. This research contributes both academic and practical knowledge about hospitality service quality, which hotel managers can apply to boost guest entertainment. Hotels gain a dual advantage in industry competition when they merge service quality enhancements with suitable employee engagement approaches to develop better customer relationships.

5.2 Validity and Reliability

In any research study, establishing the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments is crucial to ensuring that the findings are credible and useful. In this study, extensive efforts were made to ensure both internal consistency and the overall soundness of the research design. The research used established measurement instruments based on SERVQUAL and previous academic work to create instruments for measuring service quality, employee behaviour, and customer satisfaction. The questionnaire adopted widely recognised theoretical models as its foundation and took expert advice from subject matter experts during the instrument design period.

To guarantee adequate representation of the hotel guest population, the sample selection employed stratified random sampling methodology. This method expanded the study's applicability while decreasing possible prejudiced results. The study maintains its trustworthy conclusions because research has its process transparent from data collection to analysis.

5.2.1 Reliability Test

Reliability testing is a fundamental step in quantitative research to ensure that the measurement scales used in the study produce consistent and stable results. It assesses the internal consistency of the survey items, determining whether they reliably measure the intended constructs (Elsayed 2012). Understanding the reliability of a tool reduces investigation errors to produce more valid study results.

Cronbach's Alpha is analysed to determine the consistency of multi-variable scales since it has become the standard reliability coefficient for social science research. The methodology rates the group cohesion between multiple items and produces values that span from zero to one. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or higher proves adequate acceptance because it demonstrates that scale items properly relate together and reflect the same underlying construct. When internal consistency reaches 0.80 or above, the reliability quality is deemed good, but values that surpass 0.90 suggest excellent consistency (Kılıç 2016).

This study utilises Cronbach's Alpha in its reliability test to confirm the internal consistency and dependability of the service quality and employee behaviour, and customer satisfaction scales to elevate the validity of reported findings.

5.2.2 Reliability Analysis

The reliability tests evaluate consistency within items that measure core variables to ensure valid measurement instruments for service quality and employee behaviour, and customer satisfaction. An acceptable Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or higher determines reliability measurement according to statistical analysis.

The results, as shown in Table 9, indicate strong internal consistency across all constructs, confirming that the survey items effectively measure their intended concepts. Research results indicate that the measurement instrument demonstrated strong reliability, which makes it suitable for future use in analysis. The researcher analysed the construct reliability through tests which measured a combination of overall satisfaction together with likelihood to recommend, along intention to return. A Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.92 in Table 9 indicated that the customer satisfaction measuring scale was internally consistent.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Level
Service Quality	0.88	Acceptable
Employee Behavior	0.85	Acceptable
Customer Satisfaction	0.92	Highly Acceptable

Table 9. Cronbach's Alpha Values for the Constructs.

5.3 Ethical Considerations

The research maintained established ethical standards throughout the process to guarantee both research credibility and process integrity. Every step of the research process included ethical priority because it aimed to safeguard participant rights while keeping research activities transparent.

The participants received thorough details regarding the study's research aims before disclosing their optional participation status. All respondents received informed consent that allowed them to withdraw from the study at any time with no adverse effect. All participants received complete data protection through identity anonymisation and data security measures that prevented unauthorised access to the collected information. The analysis approach protected the anonymity of every responding person.

The research followed a transparent approach by reporting the complete set of methodologies alongside correct interpretations of data results and their outcomes. All data appeared in its original state without any modifications because we presented the results drawn from actual participant responses. This study's ethical protocol protected participant rights as well as improving the validity and reliability of discovered research findings.

The chapter performs a deep analysis of gathered information that examines interdependencies among hotel industry service quality measures, employee performance, and customer satisfaction levels. The study explores data through demographic analysis, together with reliability measures, and it tests correlations and executes regression modelling to confirm how employee behaviour bridges the connection between service quality and customer satisfaction.

5.4 Future Research and Recommendations

The study delivers substantial findings about service quality and employee behaviour, but simultaneously establishes various investigation directions for future research. The first recommendation for upcoming research involves extending the research horizons by testing additional mediating variables, which include technology adoption in service delivery as well as cultural influences that shape customer perception. Understanding additional variables in this process will help explain the complex pathway that service quality follows to produce customer satisfaction. Research in the future should use longitudinal methods that monitor how satisfaction among customers develops concerning hotel strategy adjustments, which stem from study findings across multiple periods.

The results from this research directly guide that to achieve better customer service, hotel managers should conduct extensive employee training sessions that develop assurance-related competencies. The development of trust-building behaviour, simultaneously improving responsiveness, and displaying empathy will create better guest experiences. Every phase of service delivery must incorporate both reliability and responsiveness through revised service design processes that managers should establish. The establishment of employee engagement initiatives based on motivational approaches, together with positive work culture interactions, brings major improvements to service quality evaluations. Hotels create loyal, recurring clients by matching employee and organisational service direction, which results in consistent, superior customer satisfaction.

This study enhances both practical applications and theoretical development through its inclusion of employee conduct as a medium that connects service quality to consumer sat-

isfaction. The integration of employee behaviour creates both theoretical value by enhancing fundamental models and a research foundation for testing different situations across industries. This research shows how both physical elements and emotional factors in service delivery led to complete satisfaction with systems for customers. Future academic studies should replicate this research model through different geographic areas and service sector contexts to validate the identified relationships.

The research demonstrates that service quality, together with employee conduct, plays an essential part in hotel sector customer satisfaction. Higher customer satisfaction accompanies better brand image, together with a sustainable competitive advantage when service providers enhance both tangible and intangible service assets. The research findings regarding hotel service management present essential guidance for implementing future organisational development. The collaboration of researchers and practitioners will enable them to create more successful strategies which benefit single hotels and the overall hospitality industry.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Questionnaire Structure

This questionnaire was designed to collect data on service quality, employee behaviour, and customer satisfaction in the hotel industry. It consists of four sections: demographic information, service quality, employee behaviour, and overall customer satisfaction. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Section 1: Demographic Information

This section gathers basic details to classify respondent profiles, including:

- Age
- Gender
- Purpose of hotel stay (Business or Leisure)
- Type of hotel (Luxury, Mid-range, Budget)

Section 2: Service Quality

This section assesses respondents' perceptions of service quality using the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model:

- **Tangibles:** Cleanliness, appearance of facilities, staff uniforms.
- **Reliability:** Consistency of service, accuracy of billing, and problem resolution.
- **Responsiveness:** Speed of service, willingness to assist guests.
- **Assurance:** Competence, professionalism, and trustworthiness of staff.
- **Empathy:** Personalised attention and understanding of customer needs.

Sample Items:

- "The hotel's facilities are visually appealing."
- "The hotel consistently delivers services as promised."
- "Hotel staff promptly address guest requests."
- "The staff is knowledgeable and instils confidence in customers."
- "The hotel provides personalised attention to guests."

Section 3: Employee Behaviour

This section evaluates the role of employee behaviour in shaping guest experiences, focusing on:

- Friendliness
- Professionalism
- Attentiveness
- Overall customer service experience

Sample Item:

- "The hotel staff was friendly and attentive throughout my stay."

Section 4: Customer Satisfaction

This section measures overall guest satisfaction with their hotel stay, covering:

- Room quality
- Service experience
- Staff behaviour
- General satisfaction with the hotel stays

Sample Item:

- "Overall, I am satisfied with my experience at this hotel."

Appendix 2: Descriptive Statistics Table

The table below provides a summary of the demographic and other relevant characteristics of survey respondents.

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	120	60%
	Female	80	40%
Guests	Domestic Guests	100	50%
	International Guests	100	50%
Age Group	18–25	50	25%
	26–40	100	50%
	41+	50	25%

Appendix 3: Reliability Analysis Results

The table below presents the Cronbach's alpha values for each dimension of service quality and customer satisfaction, indicating the reliability of the survey constructs.

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha
Tangibles	0.91
Reliability	0.89
Responsiveness	0.92
Assurance	0.88
Empathy	0.90
Customer Satisfaction	0.87

These values confirm that all survey dimensions demonstrate high internal consistency and reliability.

Appendix 4: Correlation Matrix

The table below presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between SERVQUAL dimensions and customer satisfaction.

Dimension	Tangi- bles	Reliabil- ity	Responsive- ness	Assur- ance	Empa- thy	Satisfac- tion
Tangibles	1.00	0.65	0.72	0.78	0.68	0.81
Reliability	0.65	1.00	0.60	0.70	0.69	0.75
Responsive- ness	0.72	0.60	1.00	0.74	0.68	0.79
Assurance	0.78	0.70	0.74	1.00	0.76	0.82
Empathy	0.68	0.69	0.68	0.76	1.00	0.78
Satisfaction	0.81	0.75	0.79	0.82	0.78	1.00

Appendix 5: Regression Analysis Output

The table below presents the regression coefficients and significance levels for the service quality dimensions.

Dimension	Coefficient (β)	Significance (p-value)
Tangibles	0.21	<0.01
Reliability	0.25	<0.01
Responsiveness	0.30	<0.001
Assurance	0.18	<0.05
Empathy	0.35	<0.001

Appendix 6: Mediation Analysis Results

The mediation analysis evaluates the role of employee behaviour in the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

Path	Effect (β)	Significance (p-value)
Service Quality → Employee Behaviour	0.45	<0.001
Employee Behaviour → Satisfaction	0.40	<0.001
Direct Effect (Service Quality → Satisfaction)	0.35	<0.001