EVALUATING SERVICE QUALITY THROUGH APPLICATION OF SERVQUAL MODEL IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

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INTRODUCTION

As quoted by Hans Christina Anderson a Danish author, "to travel is to live." Tourism is an important industry of service sector. It has gained its prominence due to increasing number of destinations worldwide. CARE Ratings reported that tourism industry contributed 7.5% to Indian GDP in the year 2017(http://www.careratings.com). One of the important features of this industry is that the growth of this industry has a positive impact on a few other industries. There exists a direct relationship between tourism and hospitality sector. Hotels today are the 'homes away from home.' The hotel industry as a whole might grow with the development of the tourism industry but the individual growth of hotels is based on their performance. (Gogus et al., 2013).

The major factor which determines their performance is customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty. Customer loyalty increases the revenue of the hotels. The profitability of a business is positively affected by customer satisfaction. (Anderson et al. (1994), Yeung et al. (2002), and Luo and Homburg (2007)). So, if the hotels have to sustain and make profits, they have to satisfy their customers. Customers satisfaction depends on the quality of service rendered (Bolton & Drew,1994).

As reported by Parasuraman et al. (1991;1996) a key driver that distinguishes a performing organization is service quality. In order to attract and retain customers' organizations have to provide good quality products and services. (Kim-Soon, 2012). Maintaining high service quality is become a challenge in the contemporary world because of the growing demands of customers.

A market research is undertaken by the hotels in order to determine who their customers are and which of their demands need special attention. (Grzinic. J, 2007). Maintaining high service quality as per the customer's expectations in hospitality organizations is essential to flourish and excel in

the competitive environment. (Renganathan R, 2011) This creates a pressure on the hoteliers to provide and maintain high standards of service quality. It becomes necessary to continuously have a check on their standards and upgrade them as per the market demand in order to run the race. Service quality has been recognized as a critical factor of success, when compared to other demands of the customers. (Grönroos, 1990; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Hence service quality is considered as the lifeblood of the hotel.

As per the reports of Indian Brand Equity Foundation the revenue generated from direct bookings of hotel is lesser than the revenue generated through online bookings and tour operators in the year 2016-2017 and the trend continuous. Fall in revenue might be associated with poor service quality. In this context it is important to evaluate the service quality of hotels. Thus, this study evaluates the service quality of hotels in the city of Bengaluru, Mysore and Mangalore which has the highest number of star hotel in Karnataka. SERVQUAL, a survey instrument is used to measure the service quality. This instrument assumes that service quality is a comparison between the customer's expectations and perceptions with respect to hotel's performance. (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

HOTEL INDUSTRY IN KARNATAKA

Karnataka the southern state of India, is one of the states which is rapidly growing in terms of commerce and technology. The state is accepted worldwide for its historical beauty. It has gained popularity in the tourism sector because of its topographic variations. The state has some wild life sanctuaries, temples depicting various architectural style and culture, museums, breathtaking hill stations. The state is a welcome home for entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs find scope to implement their ideas. This has led to increased trade and commerce. The growing tourism either in the form of recreation or corporate, creates a need to provide accommodations. In order to fulfill this need, there are many hotels which provide services to the guests.

Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka has many luxury hotels. A few of them The Leela Palace, JW Marriot, The Oberio, The Taj and so on. The other important cities such as Mysore, Mangalore, Hampi and Hassan provide fine lodging facilities to guests. The hotels in Karnataka create a scope to mix pleasure with business. Travelers who want to spend their money wisely can opt for economy hotels. These economy hotels provide satisfying services at a budgeted price. The hotels are located near important landmarks of the town which attracts many guests. The hotels in Karnataka provide a relaxed stay and true value for money paid by the guest.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Saleh & Ryan,1991) The objective of this study was to assess whether any gaps exist between the customers and management perception regarding the attributes of the hotel. The study also aimed at assessing the validity of the measure of what might be conviviality confined to service. The researchers used SERVQUAL model. The findings of this study are that the factor analysis identified five dimensions which explained seventy-eight percentage of variance. This variance is different from that of a SERVQUAL model.

(Rhee & Rah, 2009) This study intends to develop an alternative public service quality model to the existing SERVQUAL model. With the help of critical incident techniques, the researcher formulated a new classification scheme. In this study various public service quality are explored. The four main qualities of public services identified are design quality, process quality, outcome quality and relationship quality. The findings of the study suggest that the important attributes of public service quality for customer satisfaction varies with respect to customers in the public sector.

(Karunaratne & Jayawardena, 2010) The objective of this study was to examine the level of customer satisfaction and to figure out the major factors contributing to customer satisfaction of five-star hotel in Kandy district. The SERVQUAL model was used for this purpose. The sample consisted of sixty random residential customers. A perception survey and a focused group discussion was conducted to make the findings more authentic. The findings show that the customers are not satisfied with hotel service regarding reliability and empathy. A small amount of customers felt an overall dissatisfaction with the service quality.

(Shahin & Dabestani, 2010) This research assesses the gaps of service quality based on expectations and perceptions of customers in four-star hotel of Isfahan, Iran. The researchers have used correlation analysis to fulfill their objective. The sample of the study consists of Aseman Hotel which is located in the heart of historical city of Isfahan. The results show that almost all the quality gaps are positive. The highest positive value is associated with the dimension "price".

(Agyapong, 2011) This article tries to figure out the relationship between the service quality and consumer satisfaction pertaining to utility industry. This research was geographically confined only to Ghana. This study used SERVQUAL, a survey instrument and multiple regression analysis. The results of this study indicate that all the service quality items are good predictors of customer satisfaction. The conclusion of this study states that satisfying customers' needs could improve network services because what is offered can be used to separate company's services from the competitors.

(Markovic et.al, 2013) This study was undertaken to compare customer's expectation with their perception regarding service quality pertaining to hotels in Croatia and Slovenia. The researchers used modified SERVQUAL model for the study. The study consisted of 173 Slovenian samples and 253 Croatian samples making a total of 426 samples. The results show that the guests have an overall high expectation regarding the hotel services. The guests expect safety, clean facilities as well as neat and clean employees who are willing to offer help.

(Sanjuq, 2014) It is a quantitative study with the objective to evaluate the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction. This study is geographically bound only to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The study made use of questionnaire which was based on convenience sampling. The questionnaire was sent to 412 members out of whom 67 percent responded. The collected data was analyzed through SPSS and a reliability coefficient was determined. The regression analyses found a positive relationship among the dimensions' assurance, empathy and responsiveness but this relationship had no significant customer satisfaction and effect on the same. The results show that the SERVQUAL model is an effective method to determine consumer satisfaction in retail banking industry.

(Singh & Patel, 2014) The objective of this study was to assess the quality of services in hotel industry. This study is confined only to the city of Dehradun. The researcher has used SERVQUAL model for this study. The sample size consists of 137 guests. The findings reveal that the guests are usually not satisfied with the service quality of the hotels. Dimension empathy has the lowest mean variance; their expectations are always higher than their perception. The study also reveals that there is no enough scope of service improvement in the city of Dehradun.

(Kalotra & Sharma, 2017) This study aims to analyze the gap between perceptions and expectations of 1067 respondents of Delhi, India who avail hospitality services. It is a scientific and quantitative research. The responses were recorded using SERVQUAL questionnaire. The results of this study show that the services provided by hospitality industries must be reviewed and revised as the customer's demands are ever increasing.

(Das et.al, 2017) This research aims to study the factors that affect customer satisfaction and service quality in boutique hotel industry of Kolkata, West Bengal, India. The objective of the study is to determine the factors that lead to customer satisfaction in the field of hospitality. For the purpose of the study, five boutique hotels of Kolkata were selected. Survey was conducted on the customers visiting these hotels. The results state that customer satisfaction mainly depends on two factors that is reasonable and quality food and general requirements and hospitality of the hotel.

NEED AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In contemporary world, hotels contribute a large amount of revenue to the economy. Apart from generating revenue, they provide employment opportunities to a large mass. Hence, they contribute significantly to the economic growth of a nation. There are numerous industries which fall under service sector but the hotel industry takes the most prominent position. They provide various services ranging from to basic to luxury. It is good news that hotels provide variety of services but the concern is with the quality of service. The quality of the service is utmost important which leads to customer satisfaction. It is essential to figure out if there exists a gap between the expectation and perception of the customers regarding service quality. If yes, this gap has to be filled in the mere future to enhance customer satisfaction and to generate better revenue. Hence, this study intends to evaluate the service quality of hotels in Bangalore, Mysore and Mangalore which are the top 3 districts with highest numbers of star hotels in Karnataka as per Department of Tourism report from Government of Karnataka.

Bangalore

Bengaluru formerly called Bangalore is a megacity which is the capital of Karnataka. It has population of over ten million which makes it a megacity. It is sometimes referred as the 'Silicon Valley of India' or 'IT capital of India' because it plays a major role in IT export. It is accredited as the 'garden city' because of its arsenic natural beauty such as greenery, broad streets and presence of many parks. It is also called as the "Pub capital" and "Rock/Metal Capital of India." It is called so because it is one of the premier places to hold international rock concerts. In civic administration, the high court of the state and the legislative house of the state Vidhana Soudha is situated here.

The city is a major economic and cultural hub of India. It is a city with many esteemed institutions like HAL, Indian Institute of Science. Indian Institute of Management, state library etc. The city has two beauty lush green gardens named Lalbagh and Cubbon park. There is a famous Shiva temple Kemp fort. The Shiva statue in this temple is the second largest in India. There is a Krishna temple, on the Hare Krishna hill, which attracts many foreign tourists. It is a startup hub too. Many potential entrepreneurs try pitching their ideas in this city. It is the second largest growing metropolises in India. In 2016, Bangalore stood in fourth position in the world for the fastest growing city.

Because of the above factors, the tourism and hotel sector in Bangalore is in a booming phase. Lonely Planet ranks Bangalore in third position among the world's top 10 cities to visit by. There are many hotels in town which caters to the needs of tourist from across the country and globe. According to Karnataka Department of Tourism there are 430 hotels in Bangalore (18 five-star,

45 four-star, 108 three-star and 259 budget hotels). A few of the famous hotels in Bangalore are Royal Orchid, Leela Place, Ritz Carlton, Meridian, JW Marriot, The Park etc.

Mysore

Mysore, the cultural capital of Karnataka is the third most populous city in the state. It is referred as the heritage city because of its heritage structures and palaces. These structures attract many numbers of tourists to the city.

A few of the famous places in Mysore are zoo, KSR dam, Shivannasammudram, Chennakesva temple, Lalitha Mahal, St. Philomena's church, Chamundeshwari temple etc. During Dasara, the city receives a greater number of tourists than the usual days. This festival is world famous and people from all over the globe visits the city. The city is also remembered as the prominent yoga center which attracts tourist every year. Along with traditional industries, tourism is a major industry of Mysore. It is a destination for all seasons.

The number of tourists visiting this city is increasing every year. Even in 2007-2008 the year of recession, the number of tourists increased. According to Karnataka Department of Tourismthere are 103 hotels in Mysore (1 five-star, 7 four-star, 21 three-star and 74 budget hotels). As per the hoteliers the occupancy rate during peak seasons it is 70% and during Dasara it goes up to 90%-100%. One of the interesting facts about Mysore hotels are a few of the palaces are converted into a hotel. This gives an opportunity for a common man to enjoy the grandeur of palace. With an increase in the tourism sector of Mysore, the hotel industry is also developing.

Mangalore

Mangalore the largest urban center of Karnataka is situated in the district of Dakshin Kannada. It is the fourth largest city in the state. It is the chief port of Karnataka. Almost 75% of Indian cashew and coffee exports are handled in this port. It is one of the multi cultured but non-metro cities of India. The major constituent if its economy is the port related activities and agriculture. Many folk art is practiced in the city one of them is Yakshagana. The famous festivals celebrated here are Dasara, Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali, Ester and 'Eid.

The famous IT companies such as Infosys and Wipro have made their presence here. A few famous industries in this city are boat building, leaf spring industry, fishing and cotton industry. The only museum in Mangalore is the Shreemanti Bai Memorial Government Museum. A few important tourist centers are the St. Paul's Church, Panambur beach, Netrvati bridge, Gokarnatheshwara temple, Pilikul botanical garden, Tannirbavi beach. The city is also famous for premiere educational institutions like the National Institute of Technology, Suratkal, Kasturba

Medical College, NIITE education trust.

There are many hotels in Mangalore to accommodate tourists. There are 93-star hotels in Mangalore (1 five-star, 2 four-star, 10 three-star and 80 budget hotels) as stated by the Karnataka Department of Tourism. These hotels aim to provide top class facilities to their customers. There are attractive packages provided to attract customers. Hospitality sector has a potential for growth in this city.

OBJECTIVES

This study is conducted with an aim to find if there exists any gap between the expectations and perceptions of the customers regarding the service quality rendered by the hotels. Thus, the focus of this study is on:

- To evaluate the service quality scores of Gap 5 i.e. the difference between customers' expectations and perceptions on the services offered by star hotels in Bangalore, Mysore and Mangalore using SERVQUAL model.
- To assess service quality using Customer Satisfaction Index for the same sample.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

SERVQUAL is a tool used for assessing the service quality which was developed by Parasuraman et al (1988). It is a popular tool used for measuring the service quality (Mauri et al., 2013). The model records expected performance and perceived performance of service quality. The difference between these two factors is evaluated and conclusions are drawn. The gap model is the foundation of SERVQUAL scale (Sharma, 2014). It consists of 22 statements which are meant to assess the customer expected and perceived performance of the hotel. These 22 statements of the scale belong to five dimensions respectively Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. (Yuan et al., 2010).)

- Tangibles: The appearance of physical facilities available in the hotel is evaluated under this dimension. E.g. Furniture and fixtures.
- Reliability: This dimension speaks whether the customers can depend on the hotel for the service promised by them.
- Responsiveness: This dimension assesses whether the hotel is prompt in providing their services. It also indicates whether the hoteliers are willing to help the customers.
- Assurance: This dimension speaks whether the hoteliers are able to gain the trust and confidence of the customers.
- Empathy: This indicates whether the hotel understands and cares for its customers. This

dimension also speaks whether the hotel tries to give individual attention to customer.

These five categories act as a framework for the questionnaire. The customers are given 22 set of questions before they take up the service. This records the expectations of customers. Once the customers have taken up the service, the same 22 set of questions are given to them again. This accounts to the perceptions of the customer. The difference between the expectations and perceptions is evaluated. This model has been most widely adapted and tested conceptualization of service quality during the years. (Ladhari, 2008;2009).

In this study seven-point Likert scale is used where (1) being strongly disagree to (7) being strongly agree. The questionnaire was distributed to the customers of three-star, four-star and five-star hotels in Bangalore, Mysore and Mangalore. Questionnaire was distributed online to 500 customers of 25 star hotels from all the three districts. Among the 500 questionnaires distributed, 395 questionnaires have been returned. Out of 395 returned questionnaires, only 384 were fit for the study. The ideal sample size for an infinite population with 95% confidence level is 384 (Kotrlik et al.,2001). The collected data is analyzed using Weighted average method and Paired Sample T TEST.

LIMITATION

The sample size of this study is restricted only to areas of Bangalore, Mysore and Mangalore representing the state of Karnataka. The results of this study are specific to the sample selected. But, this study will aid in further research.

RELIABILITY TEST

Cronbach's alpha was developed in 1951 by Lee Cronbach. It is the common and convenient measure of reliability or internal consistency. It is most widely used measure of reliability although it has certain limitations. (Peterson, 1994). The Cronbach alpha of this study is 0.785. Cronbach alpha value of 0.7 and above is considered to be satisfactory.

Cronbach's alpha	No of items
0.785	45

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The first objective is fulfilled by finding the difference between the expectations and perceptions of the customers. This gap is calculated using Weighted Average.

a) The responses have been recorded on seven-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA). The responses are recorded for all the 22 statements of expectations and perceptions.
b) Weighted average has been calculated for all the 22 statements of expectations and perceptions.
c) The difference between the average of expectations and perceptions has been calculated to determine the gap score.

Table 01: Weighted Average Score of the Expectations of the Hotel Customers

EXPECTED	SD	D	PD	N	PA	A	SA	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
TANGIBLES								
ST1	0	0	0	46	106	136	96	**5.73**
ST2	0	0	0	36	98	138	112	**5.85**
ST3	0	0	0	48	96	144	96	**5.75**
ST4	0	0	2	54	103	143	82	**5.65**
RELIABILITY								
ST5	0	0	3	48	89	148	96	**5.74**
ST6	0	0	2	46	95	132	109	**5.78**
ST7	0	0	0	34	91	142	117	**5.89**
ST8	0	0	0	61	93	111	119	**5.75**
ST9	0	0	0	41	98	160	85	**5.75**
RESPONSIVENESS								
ST10	0	0	0	45	104	131	104	**5.77**
ST11	0	0	5	38	79	159	103	**5.83**
ST12	0	0	0	48	120	127	89	**5.67**

ST13	0	0	0	34	104	137	109	**5.84**
ASSURANCE								
ST14	0	0	0	54	114	122	94	**5.67**
ST15	0	0	0	57	106	119	102	**5.69**
ST16	0	0	0	104	100	139	41	**5.30**
ST17	0	0	0	33	129	138	84	**5.71**
EMPATHY								
ST18	0	0	0	56	95	134	99	**5.72**
ST19	0	0	0	51	117	129	87	**5.66**
ST20	0	0	0	51	92	166	75	**5.69**
ST21	0	0	0	48	110	131	95	**5.71**
ST22	0	0	0	30	102	170	82	**5.79**

Table 01 shows weighted average of customers' expectations regarding the 22 attributes. The customers expect more from the reliability dimension. Under Tangibles, visually appealing facilities is the most important factor (5.85), providing service right the first time (5.89) has more weightage under reliability. The most influencing factor under responsiveness is the readiness to respond to customer queries (5.84). Employees who have knowledge to answer customer questions (5.71) and understanding the specific needs of the customers (5.79) are the dominant factors under the dimension assurance and empathy respectively. Thus, from the above table it can be interpreted that hotel industry have to concentrate more on these attributes as they hold more weightage out of the 22 attributes. To sum it up, customers expect a clean and visually appealing place to stay with legitimate and well-timed services.

Another important point to be noted is that most of the responses are positioned in the range of 5 to 7 that is between partial agree and strongly agree. This implies that poor performance by the hotel is not acceptable as customer's expectations are high.

Table 02: Weighted Average Score of the Perceptions of the Hotel Customers

PERCEPTION	SD	D	PD	N	PA	A	SA	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
TANGIBLES								
ST1	13	43	72	91	87	54	24	**4.15**
ST2	17	40	68	96	91	51	21	**4.10**
ST3	11	38	49	125	68	64	29	**4.28**
ST4	8	57	60	98	76	53	32	**4.01**
RELIABILITY								
ST5	16	49	58	111	73	48	29	**4.04**
ST6	19	60	51	112	72	54	16	**4.01**
ST7	10	63	59	91	68	60	33	**3.96**
ST8	22	39	42	151	71	48	11	**4.18**
ST9	9	48	61	93	81	63	29	**4.28**
RESPONSIVENESS								
ST10	19	61	56	88	74	46	40	**3.85**
ST11	6	55	52	113	82	50	26	**4.08**
ST12	29	47	71	87	82	48	20	**4.05**
ST13	13	54	60	83	81	60	33	**3.93**
ASSURANCE								
ST14	4	68	42	99	71	61	39	**3.90**
ST15	24	71	58	72	72	69	18	**4.03**
ST16	21	58	60	111	71	42	21	**4.09**
ST17	17	44	66	96	79	55	27	**4.11**
EMPATHY								
ST18	13	81	57	90	77	43	23	**3.79**
ST19	9	55	70	102	92	26	30	**3.90**

ST20	13	61	63	78	90	49	30	**4.05**
ST21	18	48	65	98	79	47	29	**4.05**
ST22	26	41	49	126	71	52	19	**3.99**

Table 02 shows the weighted average of customers' perceptions regarding the 22 attributes. In the above table most of the responses are placed between partially disagree to partially agree. In comparison with table 01, it is evident that the performance of the hotels is below the expectations of the customers. The least performance of the hotels is in the areas of visually appealing materials associated with service (4.01), providing services right the first time (3.96), keeping customers informed when services will be provided (3.85), employee who instill confidence in customers (3.90) and giving customers individual attention (3.79). These are the black areas which the hotels have to work upon. They have to plan strategies accordingly to turn the black areas into white and to sustain in the market.

Table 03: Difference between the Weighted Average Score of the Expectations and Perceptions of the Hotel Customers

	WEIGHTED AVERAGE EXPECTATIONS	WEIGHTED AVERAGE PERCEPTION	DIFFERECE
TANGIBLES			
ST1	5.73	4.15	**-1.59**
ST2	5.85	4.10	**-1.74**
ST3	5.75	4.28	**-1.47**
ST4	5.65	4.01	**-1.64**
RELIABILITY			
ST5	5.74	4.04	**-1.71**
ST6	5.78	4.01	**-1.78**
ST7	5.89	3.96	**-1.93**
ST8	5.75	4.18	**-1.57**
ST9	5.75	4.28	**-1.47**

RESPONSIVENESS			
ST10	5.77	3.85	**-1.92**
ST11	5.83	4.08	**-1.74**
ST12	5.67	4.05	**-1.62**
ST13	5.84	3.93	**-1.90**
ASSURANCE			
ST14	5.67	3.90	**-1.77**
ST15	5.69	4.03	**-1.67**
ST16	5.30	4.09	**-1.21**
ST17	5.71	4.11	**-1.60**
EMPATHY			
ST18	5.72	3.79	**-1.93**
ST19	5.66	3.90	**-1.76**
ST20	5.69	4.05	**-1.64**
ST21	5.71	4.05	**-1.66**
ST22	5.79	3.99	**-1.80**

Table 03 shows the difference between the weighted average of expectations and perceptions. In all the 22 attributes there exist Gap 5 which has to have to be worked upon by the hoteliers. The highest difference exists in prompt services to customers (1.93) and providing service right the first time (1.93) which falls under the dimension reliability and empathy respectively. Attributes subsequent to the above are employees who instill confidence in customers and employees who have the knowledge to answer customer questions from the dimension responsiveness with a gap of (1.92) and (1.90) respectively. The least gap exists in the attribute employees are continuously courteous. The gap score is (1.21).

The hoteliers have to increase the quality of the service they provide by training their employees to render prompt service and to attend customer queries with complete knowledge and confidence. They should have sufficient number of employees to provide service on time.

Table 04: Average of Service Gap Score of Hotel Customers for RATER Dimensions

Tangibles WMS		Reliability WMS		Responsiveness WMS		Assurance WMS		Empathy WMS	
ST1	1.59	ST5	1.71	ST10	1.92	ST14	1.77	ST18	1.93
ST2	1.74	ST6	1.78	ST11	1.74	ST15	1.67	ST19	1.76
ST3	1.47	ST7	1.93	ST12	1.62	ST16	1.21	ST20	1.64
ST4	1.64	ST8	1.57	ST13	1.90	ST17	1.60	ST21	1.66
		ST9	1.47					ST22	1.80
Average	1.61		1.69		1.79		1.56		1.76

Table 04 shows the average of the gaps under each dimension. There is a gap score in all the dimensions. Hoteliers have to work in the overall improvement of their service quality. The highest average gap score occurs in the dimension of Responsiveness followed by Empathy. Hoteliers should work towards the improvement of the efficiency of the employees, promptness, willingness to help the customers and the employees should possess sufficient knowledge to deal with the queries of the customers. Hoteliers fail to understand and give individual attention to the needs of the customers. These dimensions should be worked up on in order to gain better customer satisfaction.

With the help of the five dimension (RATER) of SERVQUAL instrument, the gap scores of customers' expectations and perceptions regarding the services offered by the hotel industry is evaluated. The next step is to apply Paired T Test to determine the significant influence of the relative gap score of the above 5 dimensions on customer satisfaction.

The Paired Sample Test has compared the following:

- Expectation and Perception on Tangibles (E.TAN and P.TAN)
- Expectation and Perception on Reliability (E.REL and P.REL)
- Expectation and Perception on Responsiveness (E.RES and P.RES)
- Expectation and Perception on Assurance (E.ASS and P.ASS)
- Expectation and Perception on Empathy (E.EMP and P.EMP)

Following hypothesis has been framed to fulfill the objectives of this study:

H01: There is no significant gap between the customer expectations and perception of tangibles dimension of hotels under survey.

H02: There is no significant gap between the customer expectations and perception on reliability dimension of hotels under survey.

H03: There is no significant gap between the customer expectations and perception of responsiveness dimension of hotels under survey.

H04: There is no significant gap between the customer expectations and customer perception of assurance dimension of hotels under survey.

H05: There is no significant gap between the customer expectations and perception on empathy dimension of hotels under survey.

Table 05: Paired Sample T-TEST

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	E.TAN – P.TAN	1.61000	.11690	.05845	1.42398	1.79602	27.544	3	.000
Pair 2	E.REL – P.REL	1.68800	.17810	.07965	1.46686	1.90914	21.193	4	.000
Pair 3	E.RES – P.RES	1.80000	.14306	.07153	1.57236	2.02764	25.164	3	.000
Pair 4	E.ASS – P.ASS	1.56000	.24372	.12186	1.17219	1.94781	12.802	3	.001
Pair 5	E.EMP – P.EMP	1.75800	.11713	.05238	1.61256	1.90344	33.560	4	.000

From table 05, it is evident that there exists significant gap between the customers' expectations and perceptions regarding service quality of hotel industry. The T test results shows that significant values of all the dimensions are below the level of significance (0.05). As a result, null hypothesis cannot be accepted. The dimensions such as Pair 1(.000), Pair 2 (.000), Pair 3 (.000), Pair 4 (.001) and Pair 5 (.000) have significant values in the present research study.

From all the test conducted for the study, it has been found that gap exists between the expectations and perceptions of the customers regarding the service quality of the hotels in the states of Bangalore, Mysore and Mangalore.

The service providers should focus on the service quality measures as they are not able to meet the expectations of the customers. The hotel must provide clean and well-furnished rooms. The employees should be buoyant and confident. They should be prompt and punctual in their service. They should possess sufficient knowledge about the development of the hotel, the facilities provided, various branches of the hotel, pricing etc. in order to answer the questions of the customers. The hoteliers should understand the needs and expectations of their customers and act accordingly.

Customer Satisfaction Index

Customer Satisfaction Index is a universal analytical tool that measures satisfaction level of the customers pertaining to the services provided. It helps in understanding the behavior, needs and desires of the customers. The profitability and the market value of a business can be predicted with the results of Customer Satisfaction Index (Anderson et al. 1994, Eklof et al. 1999, Chiu et al. 2011).

Table 06: Weighted Score of Customer Satisfaction Index

Attributes	Importance Score	Importance Weight	Satisfaction Score	Weighted Score
1	5.745	0.201	4.135	0.830
2	5.784	0.202	4.094	0.828
3	5.774	0.202	3.980	0.803
4	5.594	0.196	4.033	0.788
5	5.714	0.200	3.958	0.790
Total	**28.61**	**1.000**		**4.040**

$$=4.04/7*100 = \textbf{57.71 \%}$$

From the above table the value of Customer Satisfaction Index is 4.040 out of 7. By converting this score into a percentage, the satisfaction index shows that the service is about 58 percent successful in satisfying its customers.

CONCLUSION

From the results and interpretation of the above analysis it is evident that there exists a gap between customers' expectations and perceptions in all the dimensions of hotel service quality provided by the hotels in the states of Bangalore, Mysore and Mangalore. These gaps have to be filled at the earliest as they are significant. If the gaps are not filled, it will have a large impact on revenue generated from this industry. The hoteliers should understand the expectations and the needs of the customers and strategize accordingly. They should pay individual attention to the customers.

The basic expectation of the customers is clean and visually appealing place of stay. Hoteliers should not compromise on the appearance of the hotel. One of the most important reasons for the gaps mentioned in this study is lack of efficient and skilled employees. The management has to take steps to train their employees in terms of promptness and punctuality in providing service. The employees should be confident, so that they can instill confidence in the customers. They should have complete knowledge about the hotel to clarify the doubts of the customers.

The Customer Satisfaction Index shows that the customers satisfaction level is only 58%. This is because there exists gap in the expectations and perceptions of the customers regarding the services provided. If the gap is filled, the satisfaction level of the customers will increase which in turn will lead to loyal customers.

At last, it can be concluded that the hotels surveyed in the states of Bangalore, Mysore and Mangalore lack service quality. They fail to meet the expectations of the customers. There are various gaps in the expectation and perceptions of the customers. These gaps can be filled by bringing necessary changes in strategies and their management style.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:

As it is influential for the hoteliers to fill the gap between the expectations and the perceptions of the customers the following recommendations might be of help in filling the gaps**:**

1. In order to fill gaps that has been created because of improper service provided by the employees, it is advised to employ best personnel who are efficient and skillful. Training the employees to provide right service to the right customer at the right time will increase

the service quality.

2. It is recommended to implement a structured system of updating the employees about the development of the hotel. This can be done by conducting timely meetings or technology can be brought into picture for the same.

3. The hoteliers are suggested to pay individual attention to the needs of the customers and provide customized and personalized services as the needs and desires of each customer is different.

4. The management is advised to have an efficient quality management system of collecting feedbacks from the customers. The feedbacks so collected should be made best use by analyzing the weak points of the hotels. Improvisation should be made on these weak points.

5. As per the study there exists a gap in visually appealing facilities, to fill this gap the hoteliers are recommended to do a study on the taste and preferences of their customers and necessary modifications can be made in the visual appearance of the hotel.

Hence, this research paper has evaluated the service quality and customer satisfaction index of star hotels in Bangalore, Mysore and Mangalore with the use of 7 point Likert scale SERVQUAL model.

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