Identification of Service Quality Determinants in the Hotel Sector: A Conceptual Review

Asem M. Othman

Abstract—The expansion of the hospitality industry is distinctive in the 21st century. Services, by nature, are intangible. Hence, service quality, in general, is a complicated process to be measured and evaluated. Hotels, as a service sector and part of the hospitality industry, are growing rapidly. This research paper was carried out to identify the quality determinants that may affect hotel guests' service quality perception. In this research paper, each quality determinant will be discussed, illustrated, and justified thoroughly via a systematic literature review. This paper sets the stage to measure the significant influence of the service quality determinants on guest satisfaction. The knowledge contribution from this study proposes to practitioners and/or hotel service providers, fundamental elements to adopt the implications into their policies.

Keywords—Hotel service, service quality, quality determinants, quality management.

I. INTRODUCTION

QUALITY is a widespread extensive terminology to all business industries. Quality associated with products or services is a distinctive characteristic that quantifies fitness for use to their end consumers [1]. Having acknowledged that, quality measures are highly significant for facilities to ensure customer satisfaction and to improve their brand image. Effectively appraising quality measures requires meticulous control of variability within their processes, products, and services. Businesses operating in service industries assess their service quality by intangible measures to quantify customers' expectations of the provided service [2]-[4] Service Quality is defined as a global judgment or attribute related to a service's superiority in exceeding customers' expectations [5]. Service quality can be measured by comparing the actual delivered service to customer expectations [6]. Customer-perceived service quality can be defined as the degree to which customers' expectations or preferences differ from their perceptions. This study emphasizes on one of the most significant sectors in service industry, which is hospitality. This study, more specifically, highlights the hotels as service providers within the hospitality industry. An increasing number of studies measured the service quality in the hotel sector [7]-[10], in willingness [9], in satisfaction [11], and in quality perception [12] of the hospitality industry. In order to sustain competitiveness, hotels must consider enhancing the overall service quality. The growth and expansion of hotel services worldwide is exponential. Through the past 11 years, between 2011 and 2021, the market size of hotel sector worldwide averages $1.12 trillion with a sustainable increase between 2015 and 2019, from $1.11 to $1.47 trillion [13]. Hence, the emergent information gap solicits the need to study and highlight hotel service quality.

II. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The standard of hotel services directly impacts the intention of guests to revisit or recommend the hotel since it contributes to the guests' satisfaction regardless purpose of travel is business, pleasure or tourism. This study proposes a conceptual framework in Fig. 1 which illustrates the constructs and dimensions of the study. Based on the service quality definition and measurement, it occurs when guests interact with hotel service providers which operates within the hospitality industry. Factors that influence service quality measurement are related to price, reputation, and guests' previous experience. In effect, the guests formulate an expected level of responsiveness, security, reliability, trust, empathy, assurance, technology, and facility development on the received service. However, the actual guest experience results in quality perception, willingness to revisit or recommend and satisfaction.

The purpose of this paper is to set the stage for future researchers to consider the application of SERVQUAL model to measure the hotel service quality, and to research the significant factors that affect guests' quality perceptions based on existing literature review. Recognizing the precise expectations of customers and the dimensions of the service quality significantly increases the overall quality of the hotel sector [14]. To achieve and exceed customer satisfaction, SERVQUAL model could be used to measure the service quality offered by hotels [15]. SERVQUAL models were introduced by Parasuraman [24] as measurement mechanisms to assess quality standards in service industries. In service quality research, the SERVQUAL model is a multi-dimensional data collection tool meant to collect customer expectations and impressions of services across five variables considered to characterize service quality. This methodology assesses customer satisfaction throughout a set of quality dimensions which include reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibility. The scope of these standards views reliability as the ability to execute the promised service dependably and in an accurate manner. Then, responsiveness is the ability to assist and provide the service promptly while the standard of assurance emanates from the level of knowledge of employees and/or workers in the sector whereas empathy alludes to employees' ability to gain trust and confidence. Finally,

Asem M. Othman is with University of Jeddah, College of Engineering, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (e-mail: amothman@uj.edu.sa).

World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Social and Business Sciences
Vol:16, No:10, 2022

tangibility which refers to the appearance and usability of the equipment and environment. This paper identifies five quality determinants in the hotel sector inspired by the SERVQUAL model. The following section describes each service quality determinant in hotels. In fact, availability of staff shows significant influence on guests' intention to visit the hotel again [17]. Hotel staff professionalism and ability to respond to customers inquiries and/or request significantly affect guests'

overall quality perceptions [18]. Hotel website's ability to respond to guests' prerequisites without the need to communicate with the hotel staff over the phone or physically during their stay has a positive influence on customer satisfaction [19], [20]. Hence, responsiveness is a fundamental quality determinant that should be considered and measured against hotel service quality.
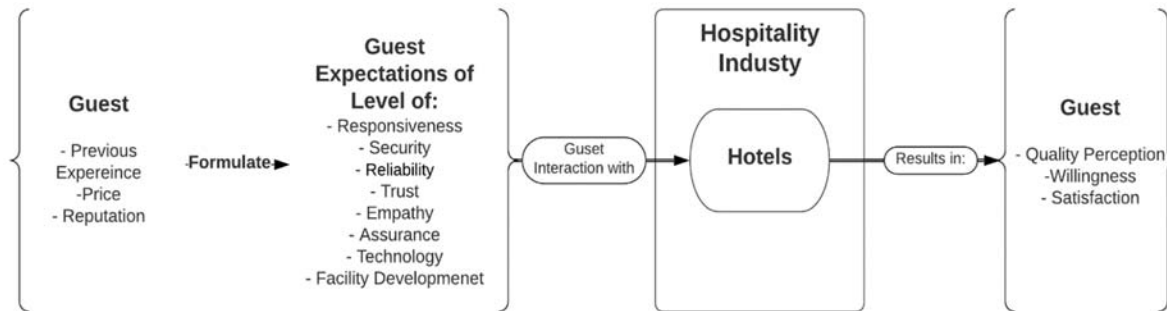

Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

B. Facility

Generally, the provision of hotel facilities has a direct impact on guests' satisfaction [21]. Hotel facility as a determinant is derived from tangibility determinant. Hotel facilities' accessibility, cleanliness, luxury, technological development, and maintainability have significant influence on customer quality perception [22].

The essential amenities' availability such as, on-site parking, free Wi-Fi, mini fridge in the room, fitness and exercise facilities in hotels and resorts has significant influence in customer satisfaction. Therefore, it is essential to pay meticulous attention to the hotel facilities provided to guests and maintaining them with constant technological updates and periodic maintenance.

C. Reliability

Reliability in the hotel sector is the effectiveness to accomplish the expected services' requests and demands from the staff members and/or the hotel website without fail. As of the hotel website, the level of reliability is affected by websites' usefulness, ease of use, as well as the ability to accomplish guest requirements accurately and dependably.

III. QUALITY DETERMINANTS

A. Responsiveness

Responsiveness in hotel industry falls in many categories which are both physical and non-physical. It is the amenability to please the guests and provide immediate services when needed. The willingness of staff and/or system to respond to guests' request and demands promptly and in a professional manner [16].

During guest's visits, dependability is demonstrated by the provision of the promised quality of service. Other factors that determine reliability include the dependability of prompt provision of on boarding services, courtesy, standard operation

procedures and the immediacy of response to the guests needs. In effect, greeting and welcoming reflect on the guest positively with confidence and satisfaction [17]. Well-trained and knowledgeable staff with good communication skills will please the guests. As well, the availability of housekeeping, room service at the time needed increases the level of reliability [17].

D. Empathy

Empathy is prioritizing hotel guests by providing hotel services exceptionally and specifically to them. It is showing guests the proper extraordinary care when needed. Also, it is the concern and attention provided for the guests by the hotel staff during their stay. Empathy entails ensuring that staff communicate and provide appropriate solutions to unique customer problems to fulfill their needs. In effect, providing the customer needs in their room such as telephone, television, meal ordering with their customized needs influences their intention to revisit or recommend the hotel [16]. Hence, staff, as service providers, applying empathy towards customers shows a positive influence towards customer's overall satisfaction [19].

E. Assurance

Assurance is providing polite and knowledgeable staff to assure trust and confidence for the guests. Staff make the guests feel safe during their stay. This ability to disseminate confidence for the customers significantly affects customer satisfaction [17], [20] as well as overall service quality expectations [23].

It is critical to understand customer attitudes in order to provide high-quality service and build a more integrated system. It is critical for hotel services to have a mechanism to gauge customer satisfaction. The SERVQUAL model's five dimensions are summarized in Table I.

World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Social and Business Sciences
Vol:16, No:10, 2022

TABLE I
IDENTIFIED QUALITY DETERMINANTS FOR HOTEL SERVICE PROVIDERS

Quality Determinant	Description
Responsiveness	The ability to provide adequate and prompt service to guests' requests and inquiries.
Facility	The pleasant aesthetics in hotels as well as being equipped with amenities that facilitates and improves guests' stay.
Reliability	The ability to respond to guests' request and needs accurately, dependably, and as promised.
Empathy	The ability to execute proper and extraordinary personalized care when needed.
Assurance	The ability to ensure guests safety and disseminate confidence to the customers.

IV. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Considering the abovementioned identified service quality determinants, this research paper will allow researchers to study the significant influence of those determinants on guests' satisfaction and/or willingness to revisit the hotel. The measured level of satisfaction will aid hotel service providers to ensure higher level of service quality by categorizing which quality determinants have significant influence on service quality, as well as by distinguishing which determinant has the largest effect on customers, by ranking them. The expected results from measuring the effect of the quality determinants on customer satisfaction will prompt practitioners and/or hotel service providers to apply their implications into their policies. To do so, empirical analysis is required to be carried out. The measurement of the effect of the predetermined service quality determinants can be accomplished by the collection of data from guests' perspective. Data can be collected by a development of a survey instrument, focus groups, and/or interviews. The researcher must focus on formulating questions/items that reflect each quality determinant. Afterwards, several statistical approaches can be utilized to analyze the data and come up with conclusions. For example, regression, multiple regression analysis, structural equation modeling, and weighted averages are adequate statistical tools to produce the required results. Future studies could narrow down their objective of the study, depending on the nature, and purpose of the study. Several elements need to be considered when conducting the data collection method, such as, the level of luxury (number of stars of the hotel), the targeted population; age groups, gender, level of education, the socioeconomic status, the frequency to travelling and being a guest in a hotel, and many other elements. Since targeted respondents may differ based on the nature and purpose of the study, those elements will be reflected on the data collection tool which is the development of the survey instrument, and/or the interviews questions. Once data are collected and analyzed, researchers will be able to produce the conclusions that have been proposed in this study.

V. CONCLUSION

Since services are intangible, service quality is a complicated process to be measured as opposed to product quality. This paper identified five service quality determinants for hotel service providers. The identified service quality determinants were responsiveness, facility, reliability, empathy, and assurance. Each quality determinant was identified and described. This paper is used to set the stage for future researchers to use those determinants for service quality measurements in the hotel sector. According to the findings of this research, which employed a modified SERVQUAL model in the hotel industry, it is recommended that the model is customized for the environment in which it is applied. Because the common characteristics used to assess service quality are not applicable to all sectors, it is imperative to place them critically and alter them as necessary. To obtain an appropriate model, customization through the reduction or expansion of the number of questions and factors with additional variables could be added in the future to improve hotel customer satisfaction measurement.

As a result of this study, the hotel sector has been challenged to investigate the link between service quality and guest satisfaction. A significant finding of this review is that the effect of the identified quality dimensions is comparable to that of guests' satisfaction, and thus decision makers should give the same amount of attention to elements affecting quality. The primary limitation of this study lies in its methodology as a conceptual review study. Because service processes evolve over time, long-term data collection and analysis can aid in acquiring a more comprehensive grasp of the service's quality and features.

REFERENCES

[1] B. K. Kahn, D. M. Strong, and R. Y. Wang, "Information Quality Benchmarks: Product and Service Performance," *Commun. ACM*, 2002, doi: 10.1145/505248.506007.
[2] C. Gronroos, "Service quality: The six criteria of good perceived service quality.," *Rev. Bus.*, 1988.
[3] P. Joshi and S. K. Chadha, "Measuring service quality perception of students in business schools," *Int. J. Serv. Oper. Manag.*, 2016, doi: 10.1504/IJSOM.2016.10000355.
[4] S. Kiumarsi, S. M. Isa, and K. Jayaraman, "Determinants of service quality on service loyalty: The mediating role of customers' satisfaction and brand equity," *Problems and Perspectives in Management*. 2015.
[5] A. Parasuraman, V. A. Zeithaml, and L. L. Berry, "SERQUAL: A Multiple-Item scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality," *Journal of Retailing*. 1988, doi: 10.1016/S0148-2963(99)00084-3.
[6] B. R. Lewis and V. W. Mitchell, "Defining and Measuring the Quality of Customer Service," *Mark. Intell. Plan.*, 1990, doi: 10.1108/EUM0000000001086.
[7] S. Marković and S. R. Janković, "Exploring the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in Croatian hotel industry," *Tour. Hosp. Manag.*, 2013, doi: 10.20867/thm.19.2.1.
[8] P. S. Rao, "Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in Hotel Industry," *IOSR J. Humanit. Soc. Sci.*, 2013, doi: 10.9790/0837-1853944.
[9] M. Raza, A. Siddiquei, H. Awan, and K. Bukhari, "Relationship Between Service Quality, Perceived Value, Satisfaction And Revisit Intention In Hotel Industry," *Interdiscip. J. Contemp. Res. Bus.*, 2012.
[10] N. M. Stefano, N. Casarotto Filho, R. Barichello, and A. P. Sohn, "A fuzzy SERVQUAL based method for evaluated of service quality in the hotel industry," 2015, doi: 10.1016/j.procir.2015.02.140.
[11] M. Vujić, S. Đorđević, and M. Lakićević, "Service quality and customer satisfaction in the hotel industry in Serbia," *Menadzment u Hotel. i Tur.*, 2019, doi: 10.5937/menhottur1901061v.
[12] H. C. Wu and Y. J. Ko, "Assessment of Service Quality in the Hotel Industry," *J. Qual. Assur. Hosp. Tour.*, 2013, doi: 10.1080/1528008X.2013.802557.
[13] Statista, "Market size of the hotel and resort industry worldwide from 2011 to 2019, with a forecast for 2020 and 2021," *Travel. Tour. Hosp.*, vol. 2021, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1186201/hotel-and-resort-

industry-market-size-global/.

[14] S. Sharma and S. Srivastava, "Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Hotel Industry," *TRJ Tour. Res. J.*, 2018, doi: 10.30647/trj.v2i1.20.

[15] P. Asubonteng, K. J. Mccleary, and J. E. Swan, "SERVQUAL revisited: A critical review of service quality," *Journal of Services Marketing*. 1996, doi: 10.1108/08876049610148602.

[16] K. Poku, M. Zakari, and A. Soali, "Impact of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty in the Hotel Industry: An Empirical Study from Ghana," *Irmbrjournal.Com*, 2013.

[17] Y. Shafiq, I. Shafiq, M. Din, and K. Cheema, "Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction: A Study of Hotel Industry of Faisalabad, Pakistan," *Int. J. Manag. Organ. Stud.*, 2012.

[18] I. Yilmaz, "Measurement of service quality in the hotel industry," *Anatolia*, 2009, doi: 10.1080/13032917.2009.10518915.

[19] M. J. Hossain, F. S. Chowdhury, and R. Ahmed, "Status of tourism research in Bangladesh: a review of literature," *Bangladesh Res. Found. J.*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 197–206, 2012.

[20] N. H. Minh, N. Thu Ha, P. Chi Anh, and Y. Matsui, "Service quality and customer satisfaction: A case study of hotel industry in Vietnam," *Asian Soc. Sci.*, 2015, doi: 10.5539/ass.v11n10p73.

[21] T. Devi Juwaheer, "Exploring international tourists' perceptions of hotel operations by using a modified SERVQUAL approach – a case study of Mauritius," *Manag. Serv. Qual. An Int. J.*, 2004, doi: 10.1108/09604520410557967.

[22] D. Das, U. Chawla, and S. Ray, "Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality in the Boutique Hotel Industry of Kolkata, West Bengal," *Int. J. Manag. (IJM*, 2017.

[23] S. Marković, S. Raspor, G. Ivankovič, and T. Planinc, "A study of expected and perceived service quality in Croatian and Slovenian hotel industry," *Eur. J. Tour. Res.*, 2013.

[24] Parasuraman, V. a Zeithaml, and L. L. Berry, "SERQUAL: A Multiple-Item scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality," *Journal of Retailing*. 1988.