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A Customer's Expectation and Perception of Hotel Service Quality in Cyprus

Christou Loizos
College of Tourism & Hotel Management, Nicosa, Cyprus

Hadjiphanis Lycourgos
College of Tourism & Hotel Management, Nicosa, Cyprus

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Abstract

In recent years, hotels in Cyprus have encountered difficult economic times due to increasing customer demands and strong internal industry development competition. The hospitality industry's main concern globally is to serve its customer S needs and desires, most of which are addressed through personal services. Hence, the hotel businesses that are able to provide quality services to its ever-demanding customers in a warm and efficient manner are those businesses which will be more likely to obtain a long term competitive advantage over their rivals. Ironically, the quality of services frequently cannot fully appreciated until something goes wrong, and then, the poor quality of services can have long lasting lingering effects on the customer base and, hence, often is translated into a loss of business. Nevertheless, since the issue of delivery of hospitality services always involves people, this issue must center around the management of the human resource factor, and in particular, on the way which interacts with itself and with guests, as service encounters. In the eyes of guests, hospitality businesses will be viewed successful or failure, depending on [he cumulative impact of the service encounters they have experienced on a personal level. Finally, since hotels are offering intangible and perishable personal service encounters, managing these services must be a paramount concern of any hotel business. As a preliminary exercise, visualize when you have last visited a hotel, or a restaurant, and then, ask yourself these questions: What did you feel about the quality of the experience? Was it a memorable one, which you would recommend it to others, or there were certain things, which could have made the difference? Thus, the way personalized services are provided can make the deference in attracting arid retaining long-term customers

Keywords
Hotel, lodging, Cyprus, Perception, Business, Customer Service

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By Christou Loizos, and Hadjiphanis Lycourgos

In recent years, hotels in Cyprus have encountered difficult economic times due to increasing customer demands and strong internal industry development competition. The hospitality industry's main concern globally is to serve its customer's needs and desires, most of which are addressed through personal services. Hence, the hotel businesses that are able to provide quality services to its ever-demanding customers in a warm and efficient manner are those businesses which will be more likely to obtain a long term competitive advantage over their rivals. Ironically, the quality of services frequently cannot be fully appreciated until something goes wrong, and then, the poor quality of services can have long lasting lingering effects on the customer base and, hence, often is translated into a loss of business. Nevertheless, since the issue of delivery of hospitality services always involves people, this issue must center around the management of the human resource factor, and in particular, on the way which interacts with itself and with guests, as service encounters. In the eyes of guests, hospitality businesses will be viewed successful or failure, depending on the cumulative impact of the service encounters they have experienced on a personal level. Finally, since hotels are offering intangible and perishable personal service encounters, managing these services must be a paramount concern of any hotel business. As a preliminary exercise, visualize when you have last visited a hotel, or a restaurant, and then, ask yourself these questions: What did you feel about the quality of the experience? Was it a memorable one, which you would recommend it to others, or there were certain things, which could have made the difference? Thus, the way personalized services are provided can make the difference in attracting and retaining long-term customers.

Introduction

In the marketing theory, the concept of quality service coupled with customer satisfaction has a long history. Since Cardozo's (1965) seminal study of customer effort, expectations, and satisfaction, the body of work in this field has expanded greatly, with more than 900 articles focusing on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Perkins, 1991). However, since service quality has been characterized by researchers as an important determinant in successfully attracting repeat business, consistently delivering high quality services must be considered as an essential and crucial strategy element for surviving in today's highly competitive environment.

Literature Review

Study's needs

Quality improvement has become a vital ingredient in destination competitiveness strategy, its successful operationalization requires the collection of accurate and actionable information, which is then carefully analyzed to allow managers to manipulate key components in order to create the right level of quality for a competitive tourist experience.

As a holiday destination, Cyprus faces three considerable challenges stemming from the following factors: competition from similar resorts; an economic system that has not traditionally emphasized service quality, and an unstable political environment (war, terrorism). However, there exist different perspectives in the Cyprus hospitality industry concerning how to address these issues.

The Cyprus Hotel Association has announced satisfactory occupancy rates and has anticipated recovery rates better than the ones predicted. They said: "the hotel industry is in a much stronger position to absorb any downturn than during the last recession". On the contrary, some hoteliers claimed: "occupancy rates are not expected to increase despite a high

number of customers, due to the increased hotel capacity." Under such conditions, both the Cypriot authorities and hoteliers should seek effective means of monitoring and evaluating whether or not Cyprus is delivering the quality and range of services, activities and experiences necessary to satisfy the customers. In addition to these, industry rumors indicated that the hotels in Cyprus are planning extensive redevelopment.

The problem remains for the hoteliers to specify service quality, failure to do so can lead to a quality gap or gaps. Furthermore, it is important to understand customers' attitudes towards the quality of the service provided by hotels before implementing any service-improvement training programs. Any research should aim to explore the importance of customer care in the hospitality industry generally, covering the following points in particular: the customers' expectation and perceptions of the service quality; the gap between the expectations and perceptions; and the impact of training factors determining service quality on overall customer satisfaction. The study involves the collection of consumer opinion data that might be helpful to the whole hospitality for improving the quality of service, which delivers or achieves customer's satisfaction.

Literature on Quality

In assessing consumer opinion to assist in the hospitality industry, the assessment should involve gathering information on service quality and customer satisfaction. In order to do this, a consumer opinion survey must be created, data collection must proceed, and effective methods of assessing and presenting data must be considered. To accomplish this. The researchers should draw on information from a number of publications and journals.

Service quality

In the service literature, there is a number of studies looking at the operational and theoretical framework using various methodologies to measure service quality in different hospitality sectors (see Ryan & Cliff, 1997; Getty & Thompson, 1994; Saleh &Ryan, 1991; Pizam & Milman, 1993). In the service industry, definitions of service quality focus on meeting customers' needs and expectations, and on how well the service actually meets these customers' expectations (Lewis & Booms, 1983). Gronoos (1984) had stated that perceived quality of service was dependent on the comparison of expected service with perceived service, and thus, the outcome of a comparative evaluation process. Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) had developed the GAP model, and the subsequent SERVQUAL model within the GAP framework. Parasuraman *et al.* had defined "service quality" as the degree and direction of discrepancy between customers' perceptions and expectations, and defined "perceived service quality" as the gap between customers' perceptions and expectations -- a measurement of service quality. The smaller the gap, the better the service quality provided, and the greater the customer satisfaction.
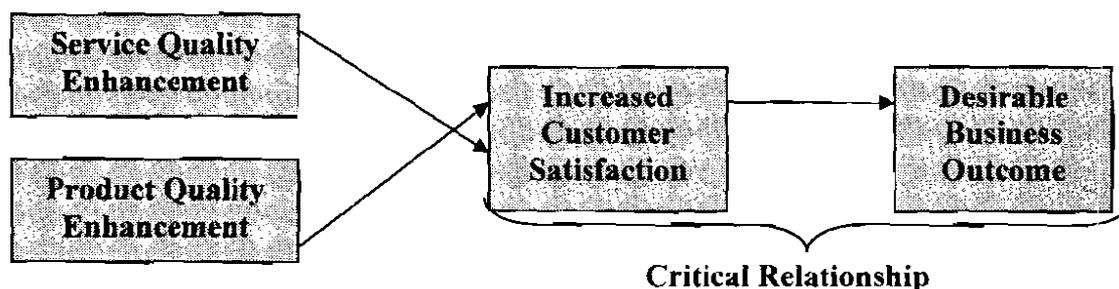
Customer Satisfaction

The concept of "customer satisfaction" is different from "perceived service quality", although some studies have found a significant correlation between the two paradigms, and included similar errors of interpretation (Oh and Park, 1997). Perceived service quality differs from satisfaction in that service quality is the customers' attitude or global judgment of service superiority over time, while satisfaction is connected with a specific transaction (Bitner, 1990; Bolton & Drew, 1991; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988).

Most of the studies into customer satisfaction in the hospitality literature have focused on identifying service attributes, which are treated as customers' needs and wants. From a marketing perspective, customer satisfaction is achieved, when their needs and wants are fulfilled. There is a general widespread agreement in the literature that the provision of service quality is concerned with generating customer satisfaction. Gronoos, Parasuraman *et al.* and Johnston have defined service quality in terms of customer satisfaction, that is, the degree of fit between customers' expectations and perceptions of service.

Service Quality & the Satisfaction

Quality improvement has become a vital ingredient in the strategy for making destinations more competitive. Customer satisfaction has its roots in the global quality revolution. The relationship between service and product quality and overall customer satisfaction has been repeatedly demonstrated.

Figure 1: The relationship between quality and satisfaction

Critical Relationship

The first research involving the measurement of customer satisfaction occurred in the early 1980s. Works by Oliver (1980), Churchill and Surprenant (1982), and Bearden and Teel (1983) tended to focus on the operationalization of customer satisfaction and its antecedents. By the mid-1980s, the focus of both applied and academic research had shifted to construct refinement and the implementation of strategies designed to optimize customer satisfaction, according to Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996). Their discussion of customer satisfaction, service quality, and customer expectations represents one of the first attempts to operationalize satisfaction in a theoretical context. They proposed that, the ratio of perceived performance to customer expectations was key to maintaining satisfied customers. Several years later, Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml (1988) published a second, related discussion that focused more specifically on the psychometric aspects of service quality. Their multi-item SERVQUAL scale is considered as one of the first attempts to operationalize the customer satisfaction construct. The SERVQUAL scale focused on the performance component of the service quality model in which quality was defined as the disparity between expectations and performance. The battery of items used in the SERVQUAL multi-item scale is still used today as a foundation for instrument development. The primary areas considered in the scale involved tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. For many years these dimensions were regarded as the basis for service quality measurement.

The SERVQUAL and HOLSAT Instruments

The SERVQUAL instrument was developed by Parasuramen *et al.* in 1985 to measure service quality. The instrument consists of 22 statements across five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Fick and Ritchie (1991) had demonstrated the usefulness of the SERVQUAL instrument in measuring service quality in hospitality-related service industries, although a number of concerns and shortcomings of the instrument were identified. Saleh and Ryan had (1991) developed a modified SERVQUAL questionnaire to survey guests and the management staff of a hotel. A number of criticisms have been made regarding the underlying conceptualization and operationlisation of the SERVQUAL model and scale (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Brown et al., 1992). Carman (1990) had stated that the 22 SERVQUAL items could not be used exactly as designed unless modifications to items and wordings were made to accommodate the new settings. Despite the criticism of the applicability of SERVQUAL, many researchers have found that the instrument is useful for measuring service quality

HOLSAT is the name given to the research instrument designed for particular investigation. The design of the HOLSAT survey builds on previous work to develop

indicators of service quality from the consumer perspective. In particular, the method seeks to clarify some confusion that exists in the literature between the terms expectation, perception and satisfaction.

Based on the service quality instrument developed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1998), and holiday satisfaction instrument, this study aims to assess any service quality gaps between customers' expectations and perceptions of Cyprus mainly important hotels, and to explore the factors in predicting customers' satisfaction with Cyprus hospitality industry.

Key variables in the literature

In sum, a number of researchers have investigated the customers' expectations and perceptions of the service quality, and the customer satisfaction. As the key variables, service quality and customer satisfaction have been examine extensively in the literature. Undoubtedly, survey instrument design is a highly technical process. Study in instrument design and testing is critical to the development of a valid and reliable survey instrument.

Research Hypothesis

Given the research aim, we developed the following hypothesis; A customer's expectation and perception of service quality, when surveyed, will provide significant information that can be used by hospitality leaders to develop service-improvement training programs.

Research Methodology

This research used sampling and assessing techniques to gather data on consumer opinion regarding service quality and expectations in order to assist hospitality officials in their effort to develop service-improvement programs. The study used a descriptive research design, in part, because the study involved the use of secondary research in the form of existing information in order to design a consumer opinion survey. The survey also used descriptive statistics for the assessment and presentation of data. A self-administered survey questionnaire was constructed and used to collect data from the target samples. The questionnaire consists of three sections: general information about the respondent and the customer's holiday purposes, ratings on expectations by the respondent, and ratings on their overall holiday satisfaction. The respondents were asked to assess the performance of those facilities and services identified by the questionnaire on a 7-point Likert performance scale. The study adopted the use of a single overall measure of tourist satisfaction.

There were several procedures used in designing this study. First, a review of the literature was conducted. Second, participating hotels in the major tourist region were contacted and interviewed. Third, the instrument underwent preliminary testing. Fourth, the survey was implemented, instruments were delivered to the community sample. Surveys of visitors were conducted in hotels. Fifth, and finally, survey results will were tabulated for presentation.

Secondary Data

The data collection was carried out in two stages. The first stage adopted an inductive, qualitative approach in order to identify the SERVQUAL issues of importance to hospitality industry participants. Secondary data in the form of the magazines (Hotels, Hospitality Industry, etc.), newspaper articles, hotel brochures, and other related information from Internet were collected. As a result of the data collection, a number of quality issues were included in a simple consumer opinion survey. The survey is self-administered and so it was designed so as to collect data regarding the relative importance of factors dealing with lodging, food service, and service attitude.

Primary Data

The second stage was data collection. Primary data collection methods included the distribution of the self-administered survey questionnaire.

Questionnaires

There are two main research instruments designed for analyzing the concepts of quality service and consumer satisfaction. They are: SERVQUAL, and HOLSAT. In the SERVQUAL instrument, five elements of service quality are tested: reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, empathy and assurance. Gap scores are calculated based on the difference between expectation and perception of service delivery.

The other instrument is HOLSAT. It was used by the researchers to measure holiday and hotel satisfaction. A pilot study was used in order to construct the final instrument. An integral part of the development of HOLSAT was the testing of its efficacy in the main destinations on Cyprus, Nicosia, Pafos, Limassol, and Ayia Napa. The instrument is divided into distinct sections. Respondents are asked to rate their opinions according to a seven-part Likert-type scale, 1-7. The data entry was performed using the Questionnaire Processing System program that result in a database of quantitative information from which a cross-tabular report will be produced.

The structured questionnaire contains four parts. Part 1 was designed to assess customers' expectations of service quality on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" (7) to " strongly disagree" (1). Part 2 assesses customers' perceptions of service quality on the same 7-point Likert scale. Part (3) was used to evaluate customers' overall satisfaction with service quality, again on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from " very satisfied" (7) to "very dissatisfied" (1). Part 4 was the collected socio-demographic data about the respondents. The surveys were conducted from May 2005 to July 2005. The questionnaire used in this survey has been extracted by the revised publication of the SERVQUAL tool.

Interviews

Interview are an important measurement tool for the research information. Through the interview, we can directly contact members of the firm and gather the most current information. The contact method chosen, personal interviews, is where the interviewer was face-to-face with respondents. A series of in-depth interviews were conducted with hotels guests to understand the expectation and perception of the hotels that they considered important when selecting hotels.

Sample

The guest sample was select in six hotels within Cyprus. There are: the Holiday Inn hotel and Cyprus Hilton Hotel in Nicosia, the Amathus Beach Hotel in Limassol, the Venus Beach Hotel and the Pioneer Beach Hotel in Pafos, and the Adamas Beach Hotel in Ayia Napa. The reason for choosing a wide range of hotels in different destinations was to achieve a reliable and valid research sample of guests who responses represent an overall picture of quality in Cyprus. The sample consisted of hotels guests, both male and female, above age of 18. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed to guests lodging in the hotels. The sample size was limited to a quota of 50 respondents per hotel. Through a simple random sample selection technique, each hotel guest had an equal chance of being selected for an interview. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the sampling unit, and was collected immediately after completion.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Findings

The first set of analysis, involved objective statistics associated with the major personal and socio-demographic variables. Of the 300 questionnaires received, 210 were completed and usable, representing a response rate of 70%. Table 1 shows that 55.1% of the respondents were female. Most respondents were in the age categories 35-44 (21.1%) or 55-64(17.7%). The majority of respondents were staffs (35%), retired (24%). Russia, Britain, and Germany were the top three countries regarding to the tourists arrival volume. It appeared that respondents with a "leisure"

purpose for their trip (69.4%) dominated the sample, while "business" and "visiting friends/relatives" accounted for only 19.6% and 11.0% respectively. Obviously, 7 days and 14 days are the most popular options for the length of stay. Table 1 contains details from this analysis.

TABLE 1: Profile of tourists in Cyprus

Variables		Results
Gender	Male	44.9%
	Female	55.1%
Age	18-24	15.4%
	25-34	15.7%
	35-44	21.1%
	45-54	15.3%
	55-64	17.7%
	65 or above	14.8%
Occupation	Student	10.0%
	Retired	24.0%
	Housewife	14.0%
	Staffs	35.0%
	Manager	14.0%
	Others	3.0%
Nationality	British	30%
	Russian	32%
	Germany	14%
	Finish	8%
	French	3%
	Arabic	4%
	Norway	2%
	Others	7%
Purpose of traveling	Business	19.6%
	Leisure	69.4%
	Visiting friends & relatives	11.0%
Length of stay	Less than 7days	15%
	7days	31%
	14days	35%
	21days	10%
	Over 21days	9%

Expectations Vs Perceptions

It is important to remember that this is a pilot study and that the significance of results may be reduced by the inherent limitations of the methodology. The results, however, serve to illustrate the potential utility of SERVQUAL and HOLSAT in the measurement of holiday satisfaction. Table 2 shows the respective exceptive expectation means, perception means, gaps mean regarding the service quality received by tourists in Cyprus. The results show that tourists had relatively high expectations (means=6.52) of hotels, in regard to, "employees would never be too busy to respond." However, they reported relatively low expectation scores (means=5.06) for items referring to convenient operating hours.

It should be further noted that all the perception scores in relation to the service attributes in this study were lower than the expectation scores, implying that each service attribute suffered a service quality shortfall. The largest gap scores were found for "Employees are never too busy to respond to customers' requests" (gap score=-2.21). This might indicate that employees were not motivated to take the initiative in solving customer's problems.

Table 2: Distribution of service quality values between consumer's expectations and perceptions of Cyprus hospitality industry (n =300)

Statement	Expectation	Perceptions	Gap means
1. The holiday would be good value for money.	5.48	4.96	-0.52
2. The destination would be safe and secure	5.57	4.13	-1.44
3. The destination would have a variety of nightlife.	5.53	4.77	-0.76
4. The would have convenient operating hours	5.06	4.42	-0.64
5. The destination would have a variety of restaurants and/or bars	6.64	4.45	-2.19
6. Employees would never be too busy to respond	6.52	4.31	-2.21
7. The restaurants and bars would be cheap.	6.32	4.10	-2.22
8. I would be able to sample local food and drink.	6.54	4.52	-2.02
9. The shops would be cheap.	6.27	4.33	-1.94
10. The nightlife would be cheap.	5.87	3.70	-2.17
11. The hotel staff would be friendly.	5.79	4.19	-1.60
12. The room would have quality furnishings.	6.00	4.16	-1.84
13. Facilities in the rooms would be function properly.	5.76	4.49	-1.27
14. Hotel meals would be of a high quality.	6.03	4.00	-2.03
15. Laundry service would be good.	6.18	4.22	-1.96
16. I would be able to mix and talk with Cypriot people.	6.13	4.40	-1.73
17. I expected the good weather conditions in the area	6.13	4.35	-1.78
18. I would be able to learn more about Cyprus history.	5.57	3.98	-1.59
19. I would be able to visit museums and archaeological sights.	5.21	4.33	-.0.88
20. I would be able to use local transports.	5.44	3.97	-1.47
21. The beach and ocean would be clean.	5.79	4.20	-1.59
22.Efficiency of check-in and check-out at the accommodation	5.69	4.92	-0.77
23.Employees would be neat employees	5.65	5.25	-0.40

Note: Gap-mean score is defined as: Gap-mean= Perception mean - Expectation mean.

The results of factor analysis as shown in table 3 suggested that five factors, or dimensions with 23 variables from the original 26 variables, were abstracted for interpretation of the scale. The five dimensions were named: "responsiveness and assurance", "reliability", "empathy", "resources and corporate image", and "tangibility".

Based on the results of factor analysis, table 2 presents the results of expectation, perception, and gap mean scores for the five factors. The results show that customers had the largest gap score (-1.99), for this factor, suggesting that they had felt relatively disappointed with hotels in relation to this aspect. The shortfall, may also suggest that employees were not able to deliver quality service as promised. The smallest gap score was tangibility (-0.91), indicating perhaps that most hotels were able to provide a computerized check-in and checkout facility, and to ensure that employees were neat and tidy, thus, generally meeting their customer's expectations.

Table 3:Results of factor analysis on 23 attributes and its five dimensions (n = 300)

Attribute	Factor
1. The holiday would be good value for money. 2. The destination would be safe and secure 3. The destination would have a variety of nightlife. 4. The would have convenient operating hours 5. The destination would have a variety of restaurants and/or bars 6. Employees would never be too busy to respond	Factor 1 Responsiveness and assurance
7. The restaurants and bars would be cheap. 8. .I would be able to sample local food and drink. 9. The shops would be cheap. 10. The nightlife would be cheap. 11. The hotel staff would be friendly.	Factor 2 Reliability (-1.99)
12. The room would have quality furnishings. 13.Facilities in the rooms would be function properly. 14. Hotel meals would be of a high quality. 15. Laundry service would be good.	Factor 3 Empathy
16. I would be able to mix and talk with Cypriot people. 17. I expected the good weather conditions in the area 18.I would be able to learn more about Cyprus history. 19.I would be able to visit museums and archaeological sights. 20. I would be able to use local transports.	Factor 4 Resources and corporate image
21. The beach and ocean would be clean. 22.Efficiency of check-in and check-out at the accommodation 23.Employees would be neat employees	Factor 5 Tangibility (-0.91)

Limitations

As for the limitations of this study, measurement of perceived service quality in terms of perceptions and expectations was made at the same time, in that respondents attempted to compare their perceptions of service quality with their expectations. It may be argued that guest may not remember what the expected prior to arrival. Respondent bias can also be due to demographic differences from the whole population of travelers to Cyprus. Due to the fact that a convenient sampling method was used to collect the data, guests staying at other times of the year may be different from those surveyed.

It could be argued, then, that the study results might have been different had the survey been conducted in different months of the season or in different seasons.

Also, there is a limitation which relates to differences in perceptions of tourists, as the majority of the sample in this study was British tourists. Thus, this study could be replicated with other nationalities, as the relative importance of destination components may be nationality-specific.

Conclusions

The study accepts the hypothesis question as the research findings reveals that there was a gap between customer expectations and perceptions, in terms of the quality of the service provided by hotels, meaning that customer's expectations of service quality were not met. Factor analysis showed that " reliability", " responsiveness and assurance" were the most influential factors in this study in predicting customer satisfaction. These two factors had the largest gap scores, suggesting that customer's perception fell seriously short of their

expectations. To be competitive, it seems that hotels should have to focus on more efforts on improving these two critical areas in terms of employees and professional service attitude.

To achieve this may mean that hotels will have to implement long-term human resource strategies to recruit, train and develop qualified employees. In turn, this may require additional investment in terms of time and training costs. The findings of this study have shown that such an investment is critical to fulfilling customer's expectations, and ensuring customer satisfaction.

In conclusion, delivering quality service will be one of the major challenges facing hospitality managers in the opening years of the next millennium. It will be an essential condition for success in the emerging, keenly competitive, global hospitality markets. While the future importance of delivering quality hospitality service is easy to discern and to agree on, doing so presents some difficult and intriguing management issues.

Managerial Implications

The challenge of providing high quality tourist experiences becomes less difficult when managers know what tourists' needs are, and can correctly assess the importance that tourists attach to individual service elements which make up the total tourist experience. Given the criticality of satisfaction data in developing management strategies and scarcity of research on this concept in Cyprus, the study results have important implications for the Cyprus Tourism Office, which has the opportunity to make recommendations to the various tourism sectors that operates. Considering the multi-dimensional nature of factors affecting tourist satisfaction, authorities should ensure that these factors work together in a systematic and synergistic fashion to secure the delivery of quality experiences to the tourist. The current level of overall satisfaction with the holiday in tourist destinations in Cyprus appears to be largely determined by the level of tourist impressions of hospitality, service quality, accommodation, catering, and other tourist facilities and activities in which the tourist participated. Therefore, there is substantial responsibility on the part of those who run these facilities. They need to ensure that current levels of satisfaction with their businesses are maintained or improved. This responsibility is particularly critical given that these components impact significantly on the likelihood of recommending, an important factor in generating favorable word-of-mouth. In today's highly competitive market, the destination's survival depends greatly on its ability to provide superior tourist experience, which generates tourist satisfaction.

How can hospitality businesses manage them more effectively? We suggest a two-step process in the evaluation of a service chain.

First, hospitality managers should identify each encounter in the service chain that they wish to take apart, and then single out those that are of operational or strategic significance – in effect, focusing in on the few encounters that really make a difference to guest experience and thus to the bottom line.

Second, apply what we have called the 6 S's to improving these critical encounters through effective redesign. These are:
1.   Specification
2.   Staff
3.   Space
4.   System
5.   Support
6.   Style

"Specification" means clearly detailing information about the "what, when, where, and how" of service encounters. It requires giving careful thought to the linkages between particular service encounters and others in the service chain.

Questions such as which staff members are involved in providing the service? What skills do they need? What training has been provided? How committed are they to service goals? Is team cooperation or individual empowerment required? What attitudes are appropriate—friendly, open, helpful, warm service, or efficient? What staff members deal with guests? Are staff presentations and appearances appropriate?

Is there adequate space to handle each of the activities such as waiting, handling luggage? Are the necessary systems to support the service in place? Is the appropriate technology being fully used? Are the services provided given the facilities and financial and human support needed to do the job? Is the management style, and marketing orientation, appropriate for the tasks? All need to be answered in order for service quality scores to improve.

When hospitality managers have carried out this two-step process of analysis and corrective action implementation, they will be in an excellent position to make decisions that will both improve the quality of hospitality services provided and the guest perceptions of them.

In short, it is clear that hospitality and tourism managers need to undertake periodic tourist satisfaction assessment, as satisfaction cannot be improved without measuring it. However, they also need to incorporate relative performance measurement into their investigations, as any information without relative performance is incomplete. Service encounters are the building blocks of quality in hospitality service. Zeroing in on hospitality service quality in this manner will help hospitality businesses meet the service challenges of the millennium, enhance their market positions. So far, our hypothesis has been proved. "A customer's expectation and perception of service quality survey will provide significant information that can be used by hospitality leaders to develop the service-improvement programs".

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About the authors: Christou Loizos and Hadjiphanis Lycourgos teach at the College of Tourism and Hotel Management, Nicosa, Cyprus.