

1 copy

collection 23/6/15

Eudora Hagan

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

SERVICE QUALITY, SATISFACTION AND REPURCHASE INTENTIONS
OF HOTEL GUESTS: A STUDY OF GHANA'S WESTERN REGION

BY

EUDORA HAGAN

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HOSPITALITY AND
TOURISM MANAGEMENT OF THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEGREE IN TOURISM

OCTOBER 2014

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Name: Eudora Hagan

Signature: .....

Date: 26/6/2015.....

Supervisors' Declaration


We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Name: Professor Francis Eric Amuquandoh

Signature: .....

Date: 26/6/2015.....

Co-Supervisor's Name: Dr. K. A. Adutwum Boakye

Signature: .....

Date: 28/6/15.....

ABSTRACT

One of the critical success factors in the hotel business is service quality. The proliferation of hotels coupled with the intense competition in the hotel industry in the Western Region calls for improvement in service quality.

This study sought to assess guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region of Ghana. The study adopted a purely quantitative approach, using a self-administered SERVPERF questionnaire to collect data for the study. Percentages, means, t-test, ANOVA, factor analysis, Chi square and regression were employed to analyse data obtained from a sample of 358 hotel guests.

The study revealed that there were four dimensions underlying guests' perceptions of service quality, with the service reliability dimension emerging as the best predictor of overall service quality. Significant differences were also found to exist in the perceptions of service quality between Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests. Guests' perceptions of service quality were also found to be significantly related to the category of hotel they stayed in.

Based on the findings, it was recommended that management of hotels should take measures to improve service quality, particularly in the area of reliability of services. In addition, hotel operators in the region should implement long term strategies to recruit, train, and develop qualified employees.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have come to fruition without the support of my supervisors, employers, senior colleagues, colleague PhD students, family and friends. My first gratitude goes to my supervisors, Professor Francis Eric Amuquandoh and Dr. Kwaku Adutwum Boakye for their selfless support by placing their experience and expertise at my disposal.

I am also grateful to all senior members of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management for their encouragement, comments and suggestions. Special thanks also go to Dr. Ishmael Mensah, Mrs. Eunice Fay Amissah and Mr. Emmanuel Gamor for their immense help.

I am particularly grateful to the Takoradi Polytechnic for sponsoring me in this endeavour. The task could not have been accomplished without this financial assistance. I also owe a debt of gratitude to institutions and individuals that helped me in diverse ways in the course of this study by providing essential data and information needed: Mr. Michael Kpingbi, Acting Western Region manager of the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), all managers of hotels that participated in the study, and all guests who responded to my questionnaire. I thank you all.

To Messrs Morris Brako, Eric Paintsil, Samuel Dadzie and Miss Victoria Marble Barker, who assisted me to conduct my field work; I am most grateful. Finally, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my children, husband, parents, siblings and all my friends especially Joyce, for your encouragement, support and prayers.

DEDICATION

To Fred, Joel and Blessed Ann for all your sacrifices.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Background to the study	1
Hotels in the Western Region	9
Statement of the problem	12
Research objectives	15
Research hypotheses	15
Significance of the research	16
Organization of the thesis	18
CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS OF SERVICE QUALITY	20
Introduction	20
Service quality	20

Service quality research	24
The development of the SERVQUAL scale	26
The expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm and SERVQUAL development	27
Expectations as the standard in measuring service quality	28
Service quality dimensions	30
Measurement of service quality	34
Criticisms of the SERVQUAL model	36
The alternative SERVPERF scale	39
Service quality in the hospitality industry	41
Customer satisfaction	44
Service quality and customer satisfaction	47
Repurchase intentions	51
Service quality, customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions	52
Customer perceptions of service quality	55
Overview of service quality models	61
Gap model (Parasuraman et al., 1985)	61
Performance-only model (Cronin & Taylor, 1992)	64
Customer satisfaction mediation of repurchase intention model (Ahmed et al., 2010)	65
Grönroos's service quality model (as cited in Kang & James, 2004)	65
Internal service quality model (Frost & Kumar, 2000)	67
Perceived service quality model (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 2001)	68

Conceptual framework of the study	69
Summary	72
CHAPTER THREE: SERVICE QUALITY, SATISFACTION AND REPURCHASE INTENTIONS OF HOTEL GUESTS	73
Introduction	73
Application of the SERVQUAL scale in leisure and hospitality	73
Measurement of service quality in hospitality	78
Service quality and socio-demographic characteristics	80
The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction	84
The relationship between satisfaction and repurchase intentions	86
The relationship between service quality and repurchase intentions	86
The relative importance of service quality and satisfaction for predicting repurchase intentions	87
Summary	88
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	89
Introduction	89
The study area	89
Research perspective	93
Study design	94
Data and sources	94
Target population	95
Sample size	96

Sampling procedure	97
Research instrument (questionnaire)	101
Pre-testing	102
Fieldwork	103
Fieldwork challenges	105
Response rate	107
Methods of data analysis and presentation	108
Ethical considerations	110
Summary	112
CHAPTER FIVE: CHARACTERISTICS OF HOTEL GUESTS	113
Introduction	113
Profile of hotel guests	113
Travel characteristics of hotel guests	118
Class of hotel and guests' characteristics	120
Reasons for choice of hotel	125
Summary	126
CHAPTER SIX: GUESTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE	128
QUALITY IN HOTELS IN THE WESTERN REGION	
Introduction	128
Guests' overall perception of service quality in hotels	128
Perception of service quality by guests' background characteristics	129
Guests' perceptions of service quality dimensions and attributes	137
Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests' perceptions of service quality	144

attributes	
Service quality attributes and hotel category	149
Service failures of the hotels	155
Summary	157
CHAPTER SEVEN: DIMENSIONS AND DETERMINANTS OF SERVICE QUALITY IN HOTELS	158
Introduction	158
Structure of guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels	158
Determinants of guests' perceptions of service quality and socio-demographic and travel characteristics	165
Summary	171
CHAPTER EIGHT: SATISFACTION AND REPURCHASE INTENTIONS OF GUESTS	172
Introduction	172
Guests' satisfaction with service quality in hotels	172
Satisfaction and guests' socio-demographic characteristics	174
Repurchase intentions of hotel guests	177
Repurchase intentions and guests' socio-demographic characteristics	179
Predictors of satisfaction with hotel services	182
Overall guest satisfaction, repurchase intentions and perceived service quality	184
Importance of service quality and satisfaction in predicting guests' repurchase intentions	187

Summary	191
CHAPTER NINE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	192
Summary	192
Main findings	193
Conclusions	195
Implications for practice	198
Contribution to knowledge	200
Recommendations	202
Limitations and avenues for future research	207
BIBLIOGRAPHY	209
APPENDIX 1	259
APPENDIX 2	266

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Service quality definitions	22
2 Examples of application of the SERVQUAL scale in hotels	76
3 Sampling of hotels in the Western Region	99
4 Sampling of hotel guests	100
5 Sample and response rate	108
6 Socio-demographic characteristics of hotel guests	114
7 Travel characteristics of hotel guests	118
8 Class of hotel by guests' background characteristics (N = 358)	121
9 Reasons for choice of hotel	125
10 Overall perception of service quality and socio-demographic characteristics of guests	131
11 Perception of service quality and travel characteristics	136
12 Guests' perceptions of service quality dimensions and attributes (N=358)	139
13 Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests' perceptions of service quality attributes	146
14 Difference in perception between Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests	149
15 Mean distribution of service quality attributes by hotel category	151

16	Difference in perception between star-rated and non star-rated hotel guests	155
17	Service failures of hotels	156
18	Structure of factors accounting for guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels	159
19	Determinants of guests' perceptions of service quality by socio-demographic characteristics	166
20	Determinants of guests' perceptions of service quality by travel characteristics	170
21	Satisfaction of hotel guests (N=358)	173
22	Satisfaction by guests' socio-demographic characteristics	175
23	Repurchase intentions of hotel guests (N=358)	178
24	Repurchase intentions by socio-demographic characteristics	180
25	Binary logistic regression on overall satisfaction	183
26	Relationships between the main measures	184
27	Binary logistic regression on repurchase intentions	188

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 The hierarchical model of service quality	33
2 The gap model	63
3 The customer satisfaction mediation of repurchase intentions model	66
4 The Grönroos's service quality model	66
5 The internal service quality model	67
6 The perceived service quality model	68
7 A conceptual framework on guests' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction and repurchase intentions	70
8 A map of the study area	91
9 Guests' overall perception of service quality in hotels	129

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CP	Customer Perception
CS	Customer Satisfaction
DMO	Destination Management Organization
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTA	Ghana Tourism Authority
HSD	Honestly Significance Difference
KMO	Kaiser Meyer Olkin
PCA	Principal Component analysis
RI	Repurchase Intentions
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SQ	Service Quality
TQM	Total Quality Management
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WCDMA	West Coast Destination Management Area
WR	Western Region

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Service quality (SQ) is not a new phenomenon. It is a global issue that has been extensively researched, particularly in the services sector. Earlier studies on service quality have concluded that the quality of service delivery is an essential strategy for success and survival in a global competitive business environment (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). The demand for better customer service has considerably increased the need for managing service quality (Wu, Liao, Hung & Ho, 2012).

One of the most researched areas in services marketing has been service quality (Chen, 2008; Fisk, Brown & Bitner, 1993) though early research efforts concentrated on defining and measuring quality in the manufacturing sector (Akbaba, 2006). The service quality construct evolved out of the quality literature in manufacturing. Quality initiatives date back to the 1920s when manufacturers began to focus on controlling the physical production of goods and the internal measurements of the production process (Kandampully, 2002). The Total Quality Movement (TQM) within manufacturing slowly faded and gave way to a new paradigm which focused on the service sector and the customer/producer relationship.

As a concept, service quality has generated considerable interest and debate in the marketing research literature because of the difficulties in both defining and measuring it with no overall consensus emerging (Wisniewski, 2001). Several

studies have identified potential difficulties regarding the conceptual foundation and empirical measures of service quality (Badri, Abdullah & Al-Madani, 2005; Jabnoun & Khalifa, 2005; Landrum, Prybutok & Zhang, 2007). In fact, the quality of services cannot be measured objectively in the same way as the quality of manufactured goods (Crick & Spencer, 2011; Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990).

It is generally agreed that service quality is an attitude or global judgment about the superiority of a service although there is no agreement about the exact nature of this attitude (Robinson, 1999). Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) observed that service quality stems from a comparison of expectations with performance perceptions (disconfirmation paradigm) while others argued that it is derived from a comparison of performance with ideal standards (Teas, 1993) or from perceptions of performance alone (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

Thus, the concept of service quality has been variously defined by a number of researchers. One of the commonly used definitions of service quality borders on the extent to which a service meets customers' needs or expectations (Lewis & Mitchell, 1990; Dotchin & Oakland, 1994a; Asubonteng, McCleary & Swan, 1996; Wisniewski & Donnelly, 1996). Ueltschy, Laroche, Tamilia and Yannopoulos (2004) also define service quality as the consumer's judgment about the overall excellence or superiority of the service. Service quality is regarded as the impression customers give about the superiority or inferiority of the service provider (Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006).

The common element in these definitions is the customer's perception, how the customer perceives or feels about the service received. Thus, the customer's perception has been the primary focus of service quality studies. Likewise, this study focuses on guests' perceptions or feelings about service quality in hotels in the Western Region (WR) and how they relate to their satisfaction and repurchase intentions.

In terms of its dimensionality, service quality is not seen as a separate construct, but rather an aggregate of several dimensions or components. However, there is no general agreement either about the number, the nature and the content of the dimensions. Thus, Babakus and Boiler (1992) argued that the dimensionality of service quality is a function of the service under investigation. Several studies on service quality have, however, been based on the five generic dimensions proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988), namely, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

Closely related to service quality is the concept of perception. This is because customers form their perceptions of service quality during the service transaction. Perception is the process by which an individual translates sensory data into meaningful information that can be used and acted upon (Fridgen, 1996). Perception is influenced by learning and past experience. It has been observed that learning and experience also guide perceptions of hotels and that with more experience, guests are able to differentiate between quality and just average hotels. The fundamental elements involved in perception are the perceiver, the target and the situation (Fridgen, 1996). In the context of this research, the

perceiver is the hotel guest, the target of perception is hotels in the WR of Ghana, and the situation in which perception takes place is hotel products and services.

Guests' perceptions of service are highly diverse and fluid and therefore it is difficult to assess, because it is necessary to rely on guests' satisfaction related to their expectations in order to communicate their perceptions of the service. When measuring guests' opinions through surveys, their perceptions become a vital part of their satisfaction within a hospitality environment since it is the actual judgment of the service experiences, which can be positive or negative.

One of the identified critical success factors in the hotel business is service quality (Marković & Raspor, 2010). Gronroos (1984) observed that service quality (both technical and functional) is a key ingredient in the success of organizations. Similarly, Kandampully (2000) and Yilmaz (2009) concluded that service quality is crucial to the success of any service organization including hotels. In the quest to gain a competitive advantage and retain guests, service quality issues have become a major concern in the global hotel industry (Kandampully, Mok & Sparks, 2003).

To this effect, it has been observed that to survive and make profits in a highly competitive industry, hotels have to strive to deliver quality service to their guests (Ramsaran-Fowder, 2006; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010). For this reason, one of the most important factors affecting hotel business performance is the improvement of service quality, which is important for creating financial benefits leading to long-term competitive advantage for the hotel (Zhang, Su, Olsen, Dubey & He, 2011).

Unlike other organizations that deal with tangible products, the hotel product is primarily service-based. Service is performed for the guest by the hotel and its employees in return for payment. This means that the guest often checks out of the hotel with a memory or experience. It is therefore necessary to understand guest perceptions of service quality in order to allocate resources effectively and efficiently and develop suitable marketing strategies (Li, 2010). This makes the study of service quality in hotels unique, considering the nature of the hotel product which is basically a service product.

Services have been defined as acts, deeds, performances or efforts (Berry, 1980) or all actions and reactions that customers perceive they have purchased (Barrows & Powers, 2008). When customers buy a physical good, they acquire a title to it and there is a transfer of ownership. In contrast, a service consumer receives only the right to that service and for only a specified amount of time (Kandampully, 2000). Four unique characteristics differentiate a service from a product. These are intangibility, variability (heterogeneity), inseparability and perishability, which are briefly explained in the subsequent paragraph.

Starting with intangibility, it is the primary characteristic that differentiates a service from a product (Mackay & Crompton, 1988). Unlike physical products, services cannot be seen, tasted, felt, heard, or smelled before they are purchased (Kandampully, 2002). Secondly, service variability refers to the challenge of establishing standards in the face of varying behaviour and performance not only among service workers but also when consumers have unique demands and experience service in a unique way (Lovelock &

Gummesson, 2004). With inseparability, customers are part of the product. That is, the production, distribution and consumption of a service in a service encounter are simultaneous (Svensson, 2003). Lastly, services are perishable in the sense that they cannot be saved or stored for reuse at a later date or resold or returned in the same sense as a product (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004).

In view of the above characteristics, service quality has been noted to be one of the transitional challenges facing hospitality operators and hotel managers (Lazer & Layton, 1999). Hotels basically sell experiences (complemented with tangibles) which are produced and consumed simultaneously. It is therefore difficult to correct any defects on the service before it gets to the consumer (guest). Service defects can only be corrected based on consumers' perceptions after experiencing the service. As an emphasis to this statement, Getty and Getty (2003) argued that no matter how much effort is made to ensure service quality, it is the perception of customers that is paramount.

In the same vein, service quality from the customer's perspective is considered as the most important development in the hospitality industry (Nadiri & Hussain, 2005). Yilmaz (2009) also suggested that service quality levels of existing services in hotels should first be measured based on guests' perspective. Nadiri and Hussain (2005) again concluded that, if service quality is to be improved, it must be reliably assessed and measured.

A good way to appreciate the importance of service quality is to indicate its influence on satisfaction and repurchase intentions. Satisfaction has often been used as a proxy or an indicator of service quality. A number of studies have linked

service quality to outcomes such as customer satisfaction (Anderson, Fornell & Lehmann, 1994; Gronroos, 1984, 1990, 2001; Ko & Pastore, 2004); customer loyalty (Kandampully, 1998; Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990); value (Laroche, Ueltschy, Shuzo & Cleveland, 2004); and repurchase intentions (Fornell, 1992). To this end, many studies have also investigated the relationships existing among service quality, customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions (Chi & Qu, 2008 Dimitriadis, 2006; Faullant & Matzler, 2008; Olorunniwo, Hsu & Udo, 2006). Thus, this study assesses service quality perceptions, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions of hotel guests.

Customer satisfaction has been conceptualized as an individual's feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations (Brady & Robertson, 2001; Lovelock, Patterson & Walker, 2000; Oliver, 1981). Repurchase intentions, which usually serve as dependent variables in many service research and satisfaction models, are subjective judgments about how a person will behave in future (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin & Zeithaml, 1993; Söderlund & Öhman, 2003). Hellier, Geusen, Carr and Rickard (2003) defined repurchase intentions as "the individual's judgments about buying again a designated service from the same company, taking into account his or her current situation and likely circumstances" (p.1764). These concepts are further discussed in Chapters Two and Three of the study.

The key to sustainable advantage lies in the delivery of high service quality that results in customer satisfaction and positive repurchase intentions. In

order to be successful in the long run, service organizations like hotels need to be abreast with their guests perceptions of the quality of services they receive. Most studies that have been conducted on hotel guests' perceptions of service quality such as Juwaheer (2003), Mohsin and Lockyer (2010), Huei and Easvaralingam (2011), and Boon-itt and Rompho (2012) have focused on the developed countries. Relatively little has been done on service quality in hotels in Africa in general, and particularly in Ghana.

Africa presents a unique context because many service providers including hotels are in keen competition and are increasingly faced with the challenge of developing effective marketing strategies towards meeting customer perceived service quality, achieving customer satisfaction and positive repurchase intentions (Nimako & Mensah, 2013). Among the few studies that have been conducted on service quality in hotels in Africa are Wadawi (2010), which is a survey on hotel service quality frameworks and their application in Kenya; Ukwaiyi, Eja and Unwanede (2012), which assessed tourists' perception of service quality in the hospitality industry in Cross River State in Nigeria; Kleynhans and Zhou (2012), which investigated customer perceptions and their expectations of service quality in selected hotels in Pretoria, South Africa; and Ongori, Iravo and Munene (2013), which looked into the factors that affect performance of hotels and restaurants in Kenya.

In Ghana, since the last two decades, demand for hospitality services has been increasing at a faster rate, and as a result, many hotels have been established towards meeting the demand for accommodation from both local and foreign

customers (Sasu, 2011). The increase in competition in the hotel sector requires that hotels in the Western Region improve upon their service quality to achieve guest satisfaction in an attempt to influence repurchase intentions and in order to stay in business.

Hotels in the Western Region

In the Western Region of Ghana, the main types of visitor accommodation provided are hotels, motels and home lodges. A large range of commercial accommodation is therefore available for visitors in the Western Region (WR). However, the focus of this study is on hotels.

The hotel sub-sector forms by far the largest component of the hospitality industry in the Western Region of Ghana. The total number of registered and licensed hotels in the region as at the time of the research was 213 (GTA/WR, 2011). For statistical purposes and easy identification, the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) has grouped the hotels under three categories: star-rated hotels, guest houses and budget hotels. By GTA standards, 50 percent of the hotels in the region are classified as budget hotels while 30 percent are star-rated and 20 percent are guest houses.

With regard to the spatial distribution of hotels in the region, about 64 percent of the hotels are located in the coastal zone, mostly along the west coastline: from Shama through Sekondi-Takoradi, Busua, Akwidaa, Miamia, Axim, Beyin to Half-Assini. The rest are almost equally distributed between the middle zone

(Tarkwa, Bogoso, Wassa Akropong, Asankragua) and the northern zone (Enchi, Sefwi-Wiawso, Sefwi-Bekwai, Awaso, Bibiani).

Hotels in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis include: Takoradi Beach Hotel, Hillcrest Hotel, Raybow International Hotel, Super Star Hotel, Melody Hotel, Ahenfie Hotel, Valley Beach Hotel, Super Gardens Hotel, Trust Lodge, Akroma Plaza Hotel, Summer Lodge, among others. Other popular hotels outside the metropolis are Busua Beach Resort, Axim Beach Hotel, Frankfaus Hotel (Axim), Ankobra Beach Hotel (Axim), Hotel de Hilda (Tarkwa), B & Q Hotel (Nkroful), Bogoso Golden Hotel (Bogoso), African Rainbow Hotel (Busua), Beulah Land Hotel (Sefwi Wiawso), and others (GTA/WR, 2012). Most of the star-rated hotels are found in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis because of the economies of scale that the metropolis enjoys over the other districts.

Hotels found in the Western Region are mainly located in the urban centers, especially in the metropolitan/municipal/district capitals. Based on their location, hotels in the region may be classified into three main groups: hotels along the beaches, those along major roads and those in the central business areas. Hotels along the beaches include Busua Beach Resort, Africa Beach Hotel, Axim Beach Hotel, Vievaag Lodge, among others. Those along major routes are mostly found on the following roads: Takoradi-Cape Coast (e.g. Shammah Lodge), Takoradi-Tarkwa (e. g. Tamso Lodge), and Takoradi-Elubo (e.g. Golden Palm Lodge). Hotels located in the central business areas are mostly found within the metropolitan/municipal/district capitals such as Super Star Hotel (Sekondi-Takoradi), Morning Star Hotel (Tarkwa), and Rodick Hotel (Bibiani).

The availability of accommodation in the region becomes more meaningful when it is translated into the number of rooms. The total capacity of the hotels in the Western Region was estimated to be about 1492 rooms for the star-rated hotels, 160 rooms for guest houses and 2080 rooms for the budget hotels, and range from 5-room accommodation to 62 room ones (GTA/WR, 2012). Generally, hotels found in the region are small and medium-sized.

The room rates of the hotels are not fixed. The rates change depending on the hotel season and time of the year. Usually, the rates are low during the lean season (January-March and June-August) when there is low occupancy, and increases in the peak season (April-May, September-December) when there is high occupancy. However, the room rate was estimated to range from GH¢150 to 350 for star rated hotels, GH¢60 to 120 Ghana cedis for guest houses, and GH¢30 to 50 Ghana cedis for budget hotels. According to the GTA/WR (2012), the occupancy rate for hotels in the Western Region was estimated to be about 70 per cent, increasing in the peak season and reducing in the lean season.

Often, hotel services go beyond the provision of accommodation to include meals. A number of the hotels in the region offer bed and breakfast as part of the room rate, making it look like the standard practice, while other meals (lunch and dinner) are sold separately. Some of the hotels, including guest houses, also offer beds with breakfast sold separately. The budget hotels especially offer bed only and have no restaurants so guests who patronize them may have to source food outside the hotel. Closely related to the nature of meal services is the type of meals offered by the hotels. Meals offered by hotels that have catering

facilities include Ghanaian dishes, continental dishes and ethnic specialties such as Chinese, Indian, Italian and French cuisine.

Most of the hotels operate 24 hours and 7 days a week. The day shift usually starts from 6 am and ends at 10 pm, then the night shift follows and ends the next morning at 6 am. Guests may therefore arrive at any time, and travellers with irregular movements may also find the operating hours of hotels in the region to be convenient. All the above will provide a context about guests' perceptions of service quality, their satisfaction level and their repurchase intentions for hotels in the Western Region of Ghana.

Statement of the problem

Generally, very little is known about the perceptions of guests regarding service quality in hotels in Ghana. Previous research has focused on service quality in restaurants in some parts of Ghana including the Central Region (Mensah, 2009; Owusu-Mintah, 2013), customer satisfaction in the local Ghanaian restaurant industry (Inkumsah, 2011), customer expectations of service quality in the hotel industry (Bondzie-Simpson, 2012), and service quality in Ghana's tourism industry (Appaw-Agbola & Afenyo-Dehlor, 2011). Bondzie-Simpson (2012), specifically examined customers' expectations of service quality in hotels in the Central Region in comparison with managements' perceptions of customer expectations, whereas Appaw-Agbola and Afenyo-Dehlor (2011) focused on the perceptions of service quality in hotels in the Volta Region, from the perspective of tourists and hotel managers.

It is apparent that none of these studies has focused solely on hotel guests' perceptions of service quality, except for some baseline tourism studies conducted by SNV-UCC (WCDMA, 2010). Thus, this situation shows that there is a knowledge gap in the literature on service quality in hotels in the Western Region. This situation calls for more empirical research to further the understanding of service quality in hotels in the region. In addition, apart from the fact that few empirical studies have generally been done on service quality in the hospitality industry in Ghana (Amoako, Arthur, Bandoh & Katah, 2012), very little is known with regards to hotel guests' perceptions of service quality and outcomes such as satisfaction and repurchase intentions in Ghana's hotel sector.

In recent times, economic development, technological advancement and improved standards of living have created a well informed society, with international and domestic markets becoming increasingly demanding in the services they engage in (Atilgan, Akinci & Aksoy, 2003). There is a global trend towards demand for good service quality in hotels. Hotel guests are becoming more sophisticated, discerning and demanding, making service quality one of the major challenges facing the hotel industry. Most hotels are now faced with the challenge of meeting and exceeding the needs and expectations of their guests, to ensure repurchase which is the bedrock of the hotel business (Caruana, Money & Berthon, 2000).

Service quality as a critical success factor in the hotel industry needs to be measured and monitored on regular basis to identify service defects in order to rectify them. Anecdotal evidence suggests that, in trying to improve service

quality, managements of hotels are often confronted with problems of measurement or inadequate measurement of service quality. In fact, hotel managers appear not to know what their guests consider as important when the guests are evaluating the quality of hotel services; and, very often, hotel managers do not have reliable methods for assessing the perceptions of hotel guests with regard to service quality (Blešić, Ivkov-Džigurski, Dragin, Ivanović & Pantelic, 2011).

According to Kpingbi (2011), “managers of hotels in the Western Region have no idea about how guests perceive the services they offer and are therefore not able to identify areas of concern that need attention in order to satisfy their guests, to ensure customer loyalty so as to be able to survive in the competitive hotel business environment”.

Given this state of affairs, the following questions arise: how do hotel guests perceive the service quality of hotels in the Western Region? Are hotel guests satisfied with the service they receive? Are they willing to repurchase hotel services? What are the shortfalls in hotel service delivery? Which areas need attention? Which areas need to be enhanced? It is against this background that this research assesses service quality perceptions, satisfaction and repurchase intentions of guests in hotels in the Western Region of Ghana. This research therefore seeks to find answers to the questions above and as well attempts to contribute to filling the existing gap in the service quality literature on hotels.

Research objectives

The main objective of the study is to assess service quality perceptions of hotel guests in the Western Region and how that relates to their satisfaction and repurchase intentions. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels;
2. Examine Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels;
3. Examine guests' perceptions of service quality in different categories of hotels;
4. Determine the underlying dimensions of service quality in hotels; and
5. Analyze the relationships among perceived service quality, satisfaction and repurchase intentions of hotel guests.

Research hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There are no significant relationships between guests' perceptions of service quality and their socio-demographic characteristics (nationality, gender, age, level of education and occupation).
2. There is no significant difference in the overall perception of service quality between Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests.

3. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of service quality between guests of star-rated and non star-rated hotels.
4. There is no significant relationship between guests' satisfaction and perceived service quality.
5. There is no significant relationship between guests' satisfaction and their repurchase intentions.
6. There is no significant relationship between perceived service quality and repurchase intentions.

Significance of the research

This study provides empirical basis for effective service quality management strategies and contributes to the scholarly debate in services marketing literature on service quality, satisfaction and repurchase intentions and their interrelationships, particularly in a developing country's context.

This study also provides a database that can over time help other researchers to assess the perceptions of guests towards service quality in hotels in the Western Region. Thus, future research can make reference to this study in order to ascertain whether there is an improvement or otherwise with service quality in hotels in the Western Region.

The study also has a wide application for practitioners in the hotel industry as they strive to provide the best service experience for their hotel guests. This research can add to organizational knowledge about hotel guests' perceptions of

service quality and this may prompt the need for service quality training [and retraining] in hotels in the Western Region of Ghana.

Knowledge of how guests perceive the service quality of hotels can provide an indication as to how successful hotels are at delivering services to their guests. The intangible nature of the hotel product requires marketers and suppliers of such products to strive to provide quality service to ensure guest satisfaction. The provision of welcoming and quality service by hotels is good for guests, and ultimately for the hotel business.

This research generates data on guests' satisfaction. Such data can help to develop important service quality dimensions that can be utilized by practitioners in the hotel industry to improve management and ultimately improve on service quality levels in the industry. Also the study provides information that will be useful to the hotel sector, especially managers, for the assessment of the service quality perceptions of hotel guests. With this, hotel managers can learn about shortfalls in service quality dimensions and find ways to address them.

Consistent with the effort of making Ghana a competitive destination in Africa, the issue of service quality in hotels becomes very important. Therefore, a study of guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels is very relevant. Obtaining insights into guests' needs and expectations enables hotel service providers to strive to meet expectations. This is because the success of the hotel business depends, to a large extent, on service quality.

Organization of the thesis

The thesis is organized into nine chapters. Chapter One is the introduction to the study and it looks at the background to the study, research problem, research objectives, hypotheses, significance of the research, and organization of the thesis.

Chapter Two presents the theoretical perspectives of service quality, focusing on issues such as service quality and its dimensions, service quality measurement as well as the concepts of perception, satisfaction and repurchase intention. The chapter also reviews existing service quality models and describes the conceptual framework employed for the study.

Chapter Three discusses the empirical dimensions of service quality and focuses on issues bordering service quality measurement in hotels. The chapter also presents major findings of previous research on service quality in hotels.

Chapter Four outlines the research methodology including research philosophy, research design, study population, sources of data, research instrument, sampling procedure, fieldwork, data processing and analysis, ethical issues and fieldwork challenges.

Chapter Five looks at hotels in the Western Region and their guests. The chapter presents a description of the hotels in terms of composition and distribution, accessibility, facilities, among other issues. Also, the chapter discusses the socio-demographic as well as the travel characteristics of the hotel guests.

Chapter Six discusses the findings on guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region. Issues considered include Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests' perceptions of service quality attributes, guests' perceptions by hotel category, and service quality problems observed by guests.

Chapters Seven presents and discusses the findings on the underlying dimensions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region by presenting the structure of guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels as well as the determinants of guests' perceptions by socio-demographic characteristics.

In Chapter Eight, the findings on the satisfaction and repurchase intentions of hotel guests are discussed. In addition, findings on the interrelationships among service quality, guests' satisfaction and repurchase intentions are discussed in relation to the conceptual framework of the study.

Finally, Chapter Nine provides a summary of the study, the major findings, and as well draws conclusions, identifies the implications and makes recommendations for service quality improvement in hotels in the Western Region of Ghana.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS OF SERVICE QUALITY

Introduction

The subject of service quality (SQ) has received a lot of attention regarding definitions, models and measurement issues. Several researchers have explored these subjects with varying perspectives and different methodologies. This chapter presents a review of some theoretical perspectives on service quality. It presents definitions and explanations of service quality from different points of view and explains why it is important for organizations to understand service quality and its various dimensions. Service quality measurement and other related issues, with special emphasis on the importance of service quality in the hospitality industry, are also discussed. The dynamics of the interrelationships among service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention are also presented. Literature related to customer perceptions of SQ and the factors that shape perceptions are also reviewed. Further, the chapter reviews some service quality models to put this study into perspective. Finally, the conceptual framework employed for the study is also described and explained in relation to the hypotheses formulated.

Service quality

Service quality is quite an elusive concept that is difficult to define and measure. As such, several conceptualizations have been introduced from different

perspectives. The concept of SQ is not universally agreed upon and is often used as an umbrella term to cover a range of impressions gathered by customers when dealing with vendors (Fogarty, Catts & Forlin, 2000). Service quality has therefore been defined differently by various authors. Among the earlier definitions are 'conformance to requirements' (Crosby, 1984), 'one that satisfies the customer' (Eiglier & Laugeard, 1987) or 'fitness for use' (Juran, 1988). Initial efforts in defining and measuring service quality emanated largely from the goods sector, with little reference to services. However, a solid foundation for research work in the area was laid down in the middle of the 1980s by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985). They were among the earlier researchers who pointed out emphatically that the concept of quality in the goods sector cannot be extended to the services sector.

Subsequently, attempts have been made to distinguish between 'product quality' and 'service quality'. Services are generally described in terms of four unique characteristics, namely, intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability (Bateson, 1977; Gronroos, 1990; Lovelock, 1981; Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). According to Mei, Dean and White (1999), in the hospitality industry, other attributes such as imprecise standards and fluctuating demand have been identified. It has been argued that service quality is the great differentiation among service providers (Kandampully, Mok & Sparks, 2001; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985) and has also been linked to the success of hospitality businesses (Kotler, Bowen & Markens, 2003).

Quite contrary to the goods sector where tangible cues exist to enable consumers to evaluate product quality, quality in the service context is explicated in terms of parameters that largely come under the domain of ‘experience and credence’ properties and are, as such, difficult to measure and evaluate (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2001). Nonetheless, in their research in 1985, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry provided the foundation for defining ‘service quality’. Thus, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) defined service quality as a global judgment, or attitude, relating to the superiority of the service, and explicated it as involving evaluations of the outcome and process of a service act.

In furtherance of the above, propositions put forward by Gronroos (1982), Smith and Houston (1982), and Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988) concluded and operationalized service quality as a difference between consumer expectations of ‘what they want’ and their perceptions of ‘what they get’. Since the 1980s, SQ has been investigated and variously defined by several authors, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Service quality definitions

Author	Definition of service quality
Gronroos (1984)	Customers’ perception of actual service performance and prior expectations of customers for service and consumer perception through comparison
Sinha, (1985)	Service quality exists in people’s thoughts

Table 1 (continued)

Zeithaml (1988)	Customers' evaluation on overall superiority of excellence of service
Parasuraman et al. (1988)	A form of the attitude different from an objective quality of a customer's judgment on overall superiority or excellence of a specific service
Bojanic (1991)	Customers' evaluation on superiority and excellence of products and services.
Bitner and Hubert (1994)	Consumers' overall impression on relative inferiority or superiority of the organization and its services
Cronin and Taylor (1994)	The attitude that means long-term and overall evaluation on a specific service
Asubonteng, McCleary and Swan (1996)	The difference between customers' expectations for service performance prior to the service encounter and their perceptions of the service received
Robinson (1999)	"An attitude or global judgment about the superiority of a service, although the exact nature of this attitude is not agreed" (p.23)
Bitner, Booms and Tetreault (1999, as cited in Kassim & Bojei, 2002)	The consumer's overall impression of the relative inferiority or superiority of the organization and its services: The customer formulates his perception of service quality when he interacts with the personnel of the organization. Service quality is highly dependent on the performance of employees
Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982, as cited in Kang & James, 2004)	Service quality entails physical quality, interactive quality and corporate quality. Physical quality relates to the tangible aspects of the service. Interactive quality involves the interactive nature of service and refers to the two-way flow that occurs between the customer and the service provider, or a representative, and also includes both automated and animated interactions
Palmer (2005)	The standard of service delivery expressed in terms of the extent to which customers' expectations are met

Source: Author's construct

An analysis of these definitions highlights the fact that the customer's perception of service quality has been the primary focus of service quality studies. In other words, service quality is based on the customer's perception of quality. Almost all the definitions above place the consumer in the center of affairs, focusing on the consumer's perception, evaluation, judgment and impression of the inferiority or superiority of service. A couple of the definitions as well make reference to the consumer's expectation of service. The fact still remains that the focus is on the consumer who experiences the service. Based on the above definitions, service quality can be defined as consumers' perceptions or impressions of a service experience, whether good or bad. Thus, this study considers service quality as guests' perceptions, impressions, feelings or judgments about the hotel and its services.

Service quality research

The credit for the pioneering of research on SQ goes to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988) and Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1985, 1990). The authors, based on qualitative research, formulated a measure of service quality derived from data on a number of services, instead of counting on earlier dimensions of goods quality in the manufacturing sector. The initial results yielded 10 dimensions of service quality that included tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, credibility, security, access, communication and understanding the customer.

Further empirical studies resulted in the 10 dimensions being collapsed into 5 dimensions namely: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Also a 22-item scale called 'SERVQUAL', which measures service quality based on the 5 dimensions, were formulated. The entire approach was formulated on the tenet that customers form expectations of performance on the service dimensions, observe performance and, later, form performance perceptions. In their empirical work, Cronin and Taylor (1992) suggest a different approach to the framework of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) with respect to the conceptualization and measurement of service quality. The authors form a performance-based measure of service quality called 'SERVPERF' by illustrating that service quality is a form of consumer attitude. They argue that the performance-based measure was an enhanced method of measuring service quality. Thus, the two approaches (SERVQUAL and SERVPERF) are discussed in detail in subsequent sections in this chapter.

The literature on service quality abounds with studies ranging from the exploration of its inherent dimensions to its impact on service outcomes. Service quality is a concept that has aroused considerable interest and debate in services marketing literature because of the difficulties in defining and measuring it, with ~~no overall consensus emerging~~ (Wisniewski, 2001). ~~Service quality is generally considered to be a tool that could be used to create a competitive advantage to assist service providers to deal with competition.~~ Definitions of service quality have revolved around the idea that it is the result of the comparison that customers make between their expectations about a service and their perception of the way

the service has been performed (Grönroos, 1984; Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1982; Lewis & Booms, 1983; Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985, 1988). Grönroos (1984) further observed that the quality of service (both technical and functional) is a key ingredient in the success of organizations. Technical quality answers what the consumer obtains and functional quality answers how the consumer obtains it. In other words, technical quality is the practical result of service while functional quality indicates the process of carrying out the service (Grönroos, 1990).

There is therefore the need for service quality evaluation as Edvardsen, Tomasson and Ovretveit (1994) observed that the starting point in developing quality in services is analysis and measurement. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (1996), two aspects need to be taken into consideration when evaluating service quality: content and delivery. This is because customers are in the best position to evaluate the quality of delivery while the service providers are the best judges of the content of the message. However, this research is concerned with only one aspect: how customers evaluate the quality of service delivery, in this sense, the perceptions of guests regarding the quality of services delivered in hotels in the Western Region.

The development of the SERVQUAL scale

The development of the SERVQUAL scale was grounded in services marketing theory which at that time did not provide sound conceptual foundations for investigating service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985). While service quality was defined as meeting or exceeding customers' expectations

(Grönroos, 1983; Lovelock, 1981; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985), the interpretation of this definition assumed that perceived service quality results from the comparison of the expected service with the experienced service (Grönroos, 1983; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985).

Such interpretation of the service quality definition also resulted in the direct use of the expectation construct as the standard against which perceptions of actual performance were assessed (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988), and this attracted widespread discussion within academic circles. Another weakness of the SERVQUAL scale pointed out in the literature relates to the dimensionality of the scale. This is because the application of this instrument within various service contexts yielded inconsistent results in terms of the number and the type of dimensions identified. An in-depth discussion of how SERVQUAL has been criticized is presented in a subsequent section in this chapter.

The expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm and SERVQUAL development

The theory that informs the conceptualization of service quality in the service marketing literature and, subsequently, the development of the SERVQUAL scale is the expectancy-disconfirmation theory. This theory was originally developed to explain how consumers reach satisfaction decisions (Oliver, 1980). It is, however, unclear as to why Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) draw upon this theoretical framework to explain how customers evaluate service quality. Indeed, several writers challenge Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry's (1985) approach (e.g. Babakus & Boiler, 1992; Buttle, 1996; Carman,

1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992, 1994; Ekinici & Riley, 1998; Llosa et al., 1998). According to Augustyn and Seakhoa-King (2004), such a direct application of the expectancy-disconfirmation theory within the service quality context has resulted in major theoretical and practical implications.

From the theoretical perspective, the application of the expectancy-disconfirmation theory within the context of service quality has led to a debate as to what the SERVQUAL scale is actually measuring: Is it measuring the levels of perceived service quality or is it measuring consumer satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992, 1994; Ryan, 1999)? Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) thus maintain that the SERVQUAL scale measures service quality, which is defined as an attitude, or a long run overall evaluation. In contrast, satisfaction relates to the evaluation of a specific transaction (Bolton & Drew, 1991a; Oliver, 1981). However, according to Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994), the principles and the structure of the SERVQUAL scale indicate that the instrument facilitates measuring satisfaction with specific transactions rather than the overall service quality.

Expectations as the standard in measuring service quality

The use of the expectation construct as the standard against which actual performance is assessed presents a number of problems that have direct implications for measuring service quality in general (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Teas, 1993) and quality in leisure, tourism and hospitality, in particular. Firstly, recent studies suggest that the expectation construct itself is still vague and further

research is required to provide a full understanding of this construct and its determinants (Devlin, 2002; Ekinici & Riley, 1998; Johnston & Mathews, 1997; Kozak, 2000). For example, some researchers define expectations as predictions of future performance (Oliver, 1980) while some see it as norms based on past experience (Cadotte, Woodruff & Jenkins, 1987) and others consider it as desires or goals (Spreng & Olshavsky, 1993).

Secondly, the expectation construct is dynamic as it is influenced by a number of factors including past experience, word-of-mouth communication, personal needs and a firm's external communication to customers (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Although some researchers (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin & Zeithaml, 1993; Zeithaml et al., 1993) argued that the normative "should be" expectations are more stable than the predictive "will be" expectations only when one standard is compared in relation to another.

Thirdly, expectations are subjective. Subjectivity entails that judgments of perceived service quality can differ from one individual to another and therefore can be contrasted with objective quality, which involves an emotionally detached or unbiased judgment of an aspect or a feature of a thing or event (Holbrook & Corfman, 1985). To reduce the level of subjectivity, the developers of the SERVQUAL scale define expectations in terms of a tolerance zone (Zeithaml et al., 1993).

The proposed standards comprised three levels of expectations: the desired, the adequate and the predictive. The desired level refers to what customers hope to receive, that is, what customers believe "can be" and "should

be” received (Zeithaml et al., 1993). The adequate level reflects the level of performance the consumer feels acceptable, that is, the “minimum tolerable level” (Miller, 1977). Finally, the predictive level represents what the customer believes is most likely to occur.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1994) modified their original scale to incorporate the concept of a tolerance zone, but these modifications do not substantially help in clarifying the expectation construct. Even the developers of the SERVQUAL scale themselves (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1994) contend that many issues regarding the expectation construct remain unresolved. Drawing from the above discussion, this study focuses on guests’ perceptions of service quality in hotels, without measuring expectations.

Service quality dimensions

Suuroja (2003) observed that traditional service quality models considered perceptions of service quality to be based on multiple dimensions or components, and the majority of the later studies have done same. As service comprises a complex set of explicit and implicit attributes (Gronroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1988), it is logical to assume that the customer’s overall evaluation should include evaluations along these attributes. Service quality is not seen as a separate construct, but rather as an aggregate of several dimensions or components. Despite this, there is no general agreement either on the nature or the content of the dimensions.

According to Gronroos (1984), the customer's perceptions of the service process are divided into two dimensions:

1. Technical quality – the outcome dimension, or what the process leads to for the customer; and
2. Functional quality – the process dimension, or how the service process functions.

Customers perceive the quality of the service in these two dimensions – what they get and how they get it (Suuroja, 2003). Gronroos (1984; 2000) further observed that the image of a company serves as a filter that influences quality perception either favourably, neutrally or unfavourably, depending on whether the customer considers the service provider good, neutral or bad.

Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1991) additionally proposed that service quality can be viewed as three-dimensional:

1. Physical quality
2. Interactive quality
3. Corporate quality

In this sense, physical quality includes the physical environment and service equipment; interactive quality is derived from whether the service provider's interactive style fits in with the customer's participative style; and corporate quality is mainly the evaluation of corporate image.

Furthermore, Parasuraman et al. (1988; 1991; 1993) proposed a more specific list of service quality dimensions. According to them, the overall evaluation of service quality is derived from an evaluation along five dimensions:

1. Tangibles – physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel;
2. Reliability – ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately;
3. Responsiveness – willingness to help customers and provide prompt service;
4. Assurance – knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence; and
5. Empathy – caring and individualized attention that the firm provides to its customers.

Brady and Cronin (2001) also observed that service quality consists of three components. They add a third dimension – service environment – to the two dimensions – technical quality (service outcome) and functional quality (customer-employee interaction) – proposed by Gronroos (1984). They refer to this as the hierarchical model of service quality (Figure 1). They further suggest that each of the primary dimensions (interaction, environment and outcome) has three sub-dimensions, and customers aggregate their evaluations of the sub-dimensions to form their perceptions of an organization's performance on each of the three primary dimensions.

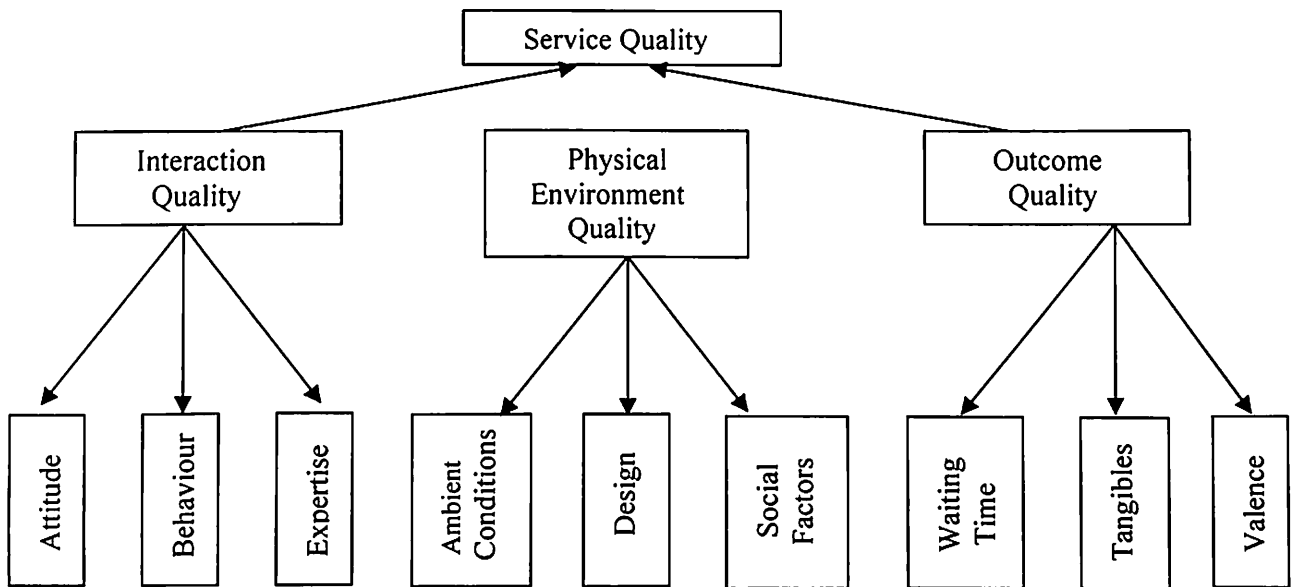


Figure 1: The hierarchical model of service quality

Source: Brady & Cronin (2001:37)

These are some of the dimensions that have been under discussion in service quality studies, although there is still no general agreement as to the content or nature of quality (Gronroos, 2001; Parasuraman et al. 1985). The dimensionality of service quality has been widely discussed and it has been concluded that the number and the definitions of the dimensions vary depending on the context. It has therefore been argued that the dimensionality of service quality is a function of the service under investigation (Robinson, 1999). All the same, this study employs Parasuraman et al. (1988) dimensions of service quality. Thus, the study assesses hotel guests' perceptions of service quality along five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

Measurement of service quality

According to the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988), service quality can be measured by identifying the gaps between customers' expectations of the service to be rendered and their perceptions of the actual performance of the service. To Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, the higher the performance-minus-expectation score is, the higher the level of perceived service quality. Babakus and Boiler (1992), Boulding, Kalra, Staelin and Zeithaml (1993), Brady, Cronin and Brand (2002) and Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994), suggested that service quality can also be measured using a performance-only (SERVPERF) approach, which explains more of the variance in an overall measure of service quality. These authors conclude that the higher the performance score, the higher the level of perceived service quality. In line with this trend, this study employs a performance-only (SERVPERF) measurement scale.

While there may be a general agreement that the evaluation of services is more subjective than that of tangible products, there has been less agreement about how to operationalize service quality as a construct (Cronin & Taylor, 1992, 1994; Dabholkar, Shepherd & Thorpe, 2000; Gabbott & Hogg, 1997). Firms throughout the world use a combination of methods to assess the perceptions of service quality. With regard to the measurement of service quality, discrepancies still remain over some issues. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1986) measured service quality by separately scoring customers' perceptions of expectations and performance and subtracting the former from the latter. Using

factor analysis, they demonstrate five empirical components, usually denoted tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, which are variously described as dimensions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985; 1986) or determinants (Johnston, 1995) of service quality. A substantial number of other researchers have sought to confirm this result, and, although some have managed to find a five-factor pattern, a substantial number have failed. Parasuraman et al. (1991) were unable to replicate their own work themselves in a later study which produced six factors (two apparently closely related) rather than the expected five.

The SERVQUAL instrument of Parasuraman et al. (1988) supports the disconfirmation approach in which the difference (or gap) between a customer's expectation and the actual performance of the service is calculated. There is no doubt that in the past decade SERVQUAL has proved to be the most popular instrument for measuring service quality. Measuring service quality through the SERVQUAL approach has been applied in: accounting and audit firms (Ismail, 2006); health spas (Markovic, Horvat & Raspor, 2004; Snoj & Mumel, 2002); higher education (Markovic, 2006; Russel, 2005); hotels (Juwaheer, 2004; Markovic, 2003, 2004; Raspor, 2009; Wang, Wang & Zhao, 2007); insurance (Tsoukatos, Marwa & Rand, 2004); public transport (Sanchez et al., 2007); restaurants (Anderleeb & Conway, 2006; Namkung & Jang, 2008); travel agencies (Martinez & Martinez, 2008); and websites (Nusair & Kandampully, 2008; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Malhorta, 2005).

The SERVQUAL approach has, however, been widely criticized by several authors for a number of weaknesses such as the usage of gap analysis

results to measure service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992, 1994) and the length of the SERVQUAL questionnaire which may result in respondent fatigue (Hoffman & Bateson, 2006). These criticisms have resulted in the development of an alternative (SERVPERF) approach, which measures only the perception aspect of service performance (Bebko, 2000; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Gronroos, 1988, 1990; Peter, Churchill & Brown, 1993). The next section presents more criticisms of the SERVQUAL approach.

Criticisms of the SERVQUAL model

Despite its popularity and wide application, SERVQUAL has been exposed to numerous criticisms, from both the conceptual and the operational points of view. From the conceptual point of view, SERVQUAL is based rather on an affirmation pattern than on the pattern of understanding; it does not manage to tie in with proved economical, statistical and psychological theories (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). There is little evidence that the consumer evaluates service quality in the sense of expectation-perception gaps (Babakus & Boiler, 1993). SERVQUAL is also directed to the process of service delivery and not to the result of service experience. Again, the five dimensions of SERVQUAL are not universal; the number of dimensions that encompass service quality is connected to the context; and there is a high degree of inter-correlation between the dimensions (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Grönroos, 1984; Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1991).

From the operational point of view, the term expectation has multiple meanings. In evaluating services, consumers use standards instead of

expectations; SERVQUAL cannot measure the absolute expectations of service quality. In terms of the content of the elements, four out of five elements cannot encompass the variability inside each dimension of service quality. Also consumer's rating of the service can vary from one to the next moment of truth; the reverse polarity of the scale elements causes wrong reactions; and dual administration of instruments causes boredom and confusion.

The most important criticism of SERVQUAL was the usage of gap analysis results (difference between expectations and perceptions of the received service) in measuring service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992, 1994). Comparing the expectation-perception gaps with the perception-only one called SERVPERF, Cronin and Taylor conclude that measurement of service quality based only on perception is enough. Hoffman and Bateson (2006) also questioned the length of the SERVQUAL questionnaire because it consists of 44 questions measuring customer expectations and perceptions, and this may result in respondent fatigue.

Baron and Harris (2003) stressed that the timing of expectation measurements is of crucial importance. In SERVQUAL, respondents must rate their expectations and perceptions of a particular service on the same scale for each of the 22 items. Moreover, respondents are often interviewed only once and are questioned to rate both their expectations and perceptions on one occasion. If respondents are using these retrospective expectations in their post-purchase evaluations, the initially measured expectations are disputable by biased experience of the respondents (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001).

The above-mentioned criticisms and others led Cronin and Taylor (1992; 1994) to conclude that it is much better to use questions about performance (perception) and ignore all questions on expectations. That is the essence of their SERVPERF model. In fact, the SERVPERF model is based on the perception items in SERVQUAL. One of the arguments is that the predictive validity of using only the perceptions component is higher than in using the difference (perception-expectation) scores.

However, SERVQUAL's developers argue that measuring expectations has diagnostic value and that making service improvement decisions based on perception data only might lead to sub-optimal or erroneous resource allocations (Parasuraman et al., 1994). Similarly, Asubonteng et al. (1996) concluded that, until a better but equally simple model emerges, SERVQUAL will predominate as a service quality measure. Alexandris, Dimitriadis and Markata (2002) also reported that SERVQUAL is a good approach for assessing practical issues of service quality in the hotel industry.

The SERVQUAL instrument has been extensively used in service quality research and has become a popular measure of service quality within the hospitality industry. Among the several studies that have used the SERVQUAL framework to measure service quality in hotels include Akama and Kieti (2003), Alexandris et al. (2002), Lau, Akbar and Fie (2005), Nadiri and Hussain (2005), Olorunniwo, Hsu and Udo (2006) and Wang, Wang and Zhao (2007).

The alternative SERVPERF scale

In parallel to the criticisms mentioned above, some researchers (Cronin & Taylor 1992, 1994; Babakus & Boiler 1992; Boulding et al. 1993) argued that measurement of expectations does not provide additional information in measuring service quality. Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) for instance emphasized that service quality was directly influenced only by perceptions of service performance. Accordingly, they developed an instrument of service performance (SERVPERF) that seems to produce better results than SERVQUAL. Similarly, Boulding et al. (1993) rejected the use of expectations as a comparison standard and recommended performance-only measurement of service quality. In their replication study of SERVFERF, Brady, Cronin and Brand (2002) suggested that service quality can be measured using a performance-only approach as opposed to the gap-based SERVQUAL scale. In this direction, many studies, such as (Luk & Layton, 2004) have proven that the SERVPERF scale is more suitable for measuring service quality in several service industries, including the hotel industry.

Cronin and Taylor (1992) conducted a study in the fast food, banking, pest control, and dry cleaning industries and concluded that SERVPERF is superior to SERVQUAL. They posited that performance-only items explain more variance in perceived service quality than do difference scores. These results have been supported by some other studies conducted in different service industries, namely dental healthcare (McAlexander, Kaldenberg & Koenig, 1994; Paul, 2003), entertainment park, aerobic school, and investment consulting firm (Lee, Lee &

Yoo, 2000), fast food restaurants (Jain & Gupta, 2004), and hotels (Luk & Layton, 2004).

Similarly, Marshall and Smith (2000) demonstrated that SERVPERF has construct validity in the context of retail shopping. Jain and Gupta (2004) compare SERVQUAL and SERVPERF scales in the fast food context, they found that the SERVPERF scale is a more convergent and discriminate valid scale than SERVQUAL in the measurement of service quality in fast food restaurants. Johns, Avci, and Karatepe (2004) measured service quality delivered by travel agents using a SERVQUAL scale. However, they indicated that performance-only scores (SERVPERF) show better reliability and validity than difference scores. Zhou (2004) used performance-only measurement of service quality (SERVPERF) in retail banking. Yoo (2005) also used SERVPERF to measure service quality of hospitals. Gaur and Agrawal (2006) pointed out that the SERVQUAL fails to serve as univocally reliable and valid measure of retail service quality. Brochado and Marques (2007) compared the performance of five alternative measures of service quality in the higher education sector, and they conclude that the SERVPERF scale has one of the best results in terms of criterion validity, convergent validity, and explained variance.

Other studies that concluded that performance-only scale (SERVPERF) provides a better method of service quality measurement in hotels are: Armstrong, Mok, Go and Chan (1997), Karatepe and Avci (2002), Luk and Layton (2004), and Nadiri and Hussain (2005). Several authors who have also used the performance-only (SERVPERF) approach to assess service quality in hotels

include Choi and Chu (2001), Jawuheer (2004), Olorunniwo et al. (2006), Poon and Lock-Teng (2005), Yilmaz (2009) and ZhiHui (2010). In line with the above discussion, the study measures guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region of Ghana using a performance-only measurement scale (SERVPERF).

Service quality in the hospitality industry

The hotel business has evolved over the years from the provision of limited overnight service to a more sophisticated product designed to meet the overall needs of its guests (Soliman & Abdullah, 2002). This change came about as a result of factors such as the desire of the industry to increase guests' satisfaction, the intense global competition in the industry, the complex nature of the hotel environment, and the fast pace of change. The industry continues to make every effort to satisfy its customers because it recognizes that they are the key to success and constitute a prerequisite for survival in today's competitive world. Service quality that leads to customer satisfaction is therefore considered to be a very important objective pursued by all hospitality establishments in recent times (Soliman & Abdullah, 2002).

Subsequently, quality of guests experience is observed to be the antecedent to both satisfaction and perceived value (Petrick, 2004b). This statement is supported by several empirical studies that find that price and quality perceptions influence value perceptions (Matzler, Renzel & Rothenberger, 2006). It is also reported that quality has both a moderated and direct effect on

behavioural intentions (Petrick, 2004b) such as repurchase intentions. Therefore, satisfaction is a direct result of quality, and this is supported by Caruana, Money and Berthon (2000), cited in Petrick (2004b). There is a clear distinction between satisfaction and quality which is worth mentioning for clarity purposes. Quality in hospitality is a measure of the hospitality provider's performance, while satisfaction is a global measure of how the provider's performance (the service experience) makes the guest feel (Petrick, 2004a).

Service quality is crucial to the success of any service organization, including hotels. Customers participate in the service delivery process as they interact closely with various aspects of the organization during service delivery. This knowledge gives them the opportunity to critically assess the services provided in organizations (Kandampully, 2000). As a result, both service managers and academic researchers have directed their attention towards understanding how customers perceive service quality. Markovic and Raspor (2010) observed that customers are likely to view services as a variety of attributes that may, in different ways, contribute to their purchase intentions and perceptions of service quality. Although researchers (Gronroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988, 1990) have focused on different aspects of service quality, they all agree that the emphasis should be on the customer.

The delivery of good service to hotel guests has thus become a central theme in the global hotel business. In this highly competitive industry, service becomes one of the most important elements for gaining a sustainable competitive advantage in the market place (Markovic & Raspor, 2010). According to Baker

and Fesenmaier (1997) and Iglesias and Guillen (2004), the global hotel industry has over the years ensured service quality at all levels as a differentiation tool to establish competitive positioning and to improve return on investment. Service quality plays a vital role in customer satisfaction, reduces costs, increases sales and encourages repeat business (Barsky & Labagh, 1992; Walker & Braunlich, 1996; Yi, 1990).

It has also been stated that it does not matter how much effort is put into producing quality service, it is the perception of customers that is paramount (Getty & Getty, 2003). Baker and Crompton (2000) and Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) also argued that there is a positive correlation between quality service and business profits. This argument is buttressed by Mack, Mueller, Crotts and Broderick (2000), who stress that it is important for businesses to talk to their customers to find out about what their expectations are and make strenuous effort to retain them in order to sustain profits. The main responsibility of hoteliers is the provision of service satisfaction (Choi & Chu 2001) and the delivery of quality service (Su, 2004) to their guests.

Furthermore, other authors also agree that guests' experience in hotels is greatly influenced by the type of service they receive at the hotel in which they stay. Therefore, hotels have to strive to deliver to their guests not only their products and services but also quality and satisfaction that may lead to long-lasting survival and profitability. As observed by Ramsaran-Fowder (2007), providing quality service improves guest satisfaction which is believed to lead to increased visitation, repeat purchases, customer loyalty and relationship

commitment. It is also believed that highly satisfied guests spread positive word-of-mouth, which in turn influences guests' expectations (Qin, 2005).

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction (CS) is defined as a special form of consumer attitude; it is a post-purchase phenomenon reflecting how much the consumer likes or dislikes the service after experiencing it (Bearden & Teel, 1983; Churchill & Surprenant, 1982; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The terms 'quality' and 'satisfaction' are often used in a seemingly interchangeable manner (Palmer, 2008), but SQ and CS are conceptually distinct constructs (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988, 1994; Sureshchandar, Rajendran & Anantharaman, 2002b), with the former leading to the latter (Cronin, Brady & Hult, 2000). Several studies seem to conclude that satisfaction is an affective construct rather than a cognitive one (Oliver, 1997; Olsen, 2002). Despite many attempts to measure and explain customer satisfaction, a consensus has still not emerged regarding its definition (Giese & Cote, 2000). Customer satisfaction is a psychological concept that involves the feeling of well being and a pleasure that results from obtaining what one hopes for and expects from an appealing product or service (Chi & Qu, 2008).

Rust and Oliver (1994) defined satisfaction as the customer's fulfilling response, which is an evaluation as well as an emotion-based response to a service. Again, satisfaction is believed to be an indication of the customer's belief in the probability of a service leading to a positive feeling (Olorunniwo et al., 2006). In addition, Cronin et al. (2000) assessed service satisfaction, using items

that include interest, enjoyment, surprise, anger, wise choice, and doing the right thing.

Hu, Kandampully and Juwaheer (2009) also defined customer satisfaction as “a cognitive or affective reaction that emerges in response to a single or prolonged set of service encounters” (p.115). Several other authors also support the view that CS is linked to profits and stress the importance of this construct to the success of organizations in the hotel, catering and tourism sectors (Barsky & Labagh, 1992; Legohere, 1998; Pizam & Ellis, 1999). In the same vein, Su (2004) argues that the biggest contemporary challenge for hotel management is to increase or maintain customer satisfaction. This argument brings to bare the importance of satisfaction in service quality measurement as observed by Juwaheer (2004) that satisfaction may be a good predictor of customers’ willingness to return to and recommend a hotel to other people.

The two most widely accepted conceptualizations of the concept of CS are the expectancy disconfirmation and the performance-only theories (Barsky, 1992; Oh & Parks, 1997; McQuitty, Finn & Wiley, 2000). The expectancy-disconfirmation theory holds that the customer first forms expectations of service performance prior to purchase or experience. The main proponent of the theory, Oliver (1980), argued that satisfaction level is a result of the difference between expected and perceived performance. Satisfaction occurs when a product or service is better than expected. The theory makes explicit two distinct stages.

In the first stage, potential customers form their expectations of the service before purchasing or experiencing it. This is particularly typical of hotel services

which are characterized as intangible and inseparable. The second stage occurs with the purchase or actual experience of the service. The customer then compares the perceived performance to prior expectations, the result being either satisfaction (positive disconfirmation), if performance exceeds expectations; or dissatisfaction (negative disconfirmation), when the reverse occurs (Oliver, 1980).

There is a recent proposal of a cognitive-affective view in which satisfaction is influenced by the individual's cognitive judgments and emotions derived from the consumption experience (Bigne', Andreu & Gnoth, 2005; Jun, Hyun, Gentry & Song, 2001; Mano & Oliver 1993; Oliver 1994; Phillips & Baumgartner, 2002). The cognitive-affective model developed by Bosque and Martin (2008) is a popular variant of the disconfirmation theory. The model examines the relationships among the psychological variables that take place in the satisfaction process, and proposes that positive and negative emotions would independently contribute to satisfaction. Finally, loyalty or commitment with respect to a brand is conceived as the main consequence of satisfaction (Brady & Robertson, 2001; Selnes, 1993; Yu & Dean, 2001).

However, the performance-only theory questions the relevance of measuring expectations and juxtaposing them against performance. The key argument here is that prior expectations do not play any meaningful role in satisfaction (Crompton & Love, 1995; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Kozak, 2001; Tse & Wilton, 1988; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001). There is a huge controversy over which of the two approaches is a better measure of satisfaction. Each method has its strengths and weaknesses. While the cognitive-affective measures are challenged

regarding the validity and authenticity of prior expectations, the performance-only models are also limited because they do not provide a comprehensive basis for comparison and analysis.

In addition, other studies show that CS may have direct and indirect impact on business results. Anderson, Fornell and Lehmann (1994); Luo and Homburg (2007) Yeung, Ging and Ennew (2002) concluded that customer satisfaction positively affects business profitability. A number of studies have investigated the relationship between satisfaction and customer behaviour patterns (Chi & Qu, 2008; Dimitriades, 2006; Faullant, Matzler & Füller, 2008; Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000; Olorunniwo et al., 2006; Soderlund, 1998).

Service quality and customer satisfaction

While Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988, & 1994) argued that SQ and CS are related constructs, critics maintain that such a conclusion is premature since the debate regarding the relationship between CS and SQ has not been resolved despite a number of propositions made to explain this relationship (Berry, 1994; Bitner & Hubbert, 1994; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Lee, Lee & Yoo, 2000; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Taylor & Baker, 1994).

Emerging results from some empirical studies (Sureshchandar, Rajendran & Anantharaman, 2002b) indicated that while CS and SQ share a unique relationship, they are also distinct. Rust and Oliver (1994), based on Oliver (1993), identified two bases for differentiating these two constructs. Firstly, they argue that service quality is a more specific construct than overall satisfaction

since it is based on the product and service features while dissatisfaction judgments can result from any dimension, quality related or not. The authors further argue that a company has to have a certain degree of control over the attributes of service quality whereas customer satisfaction may be affected by aspects that are completely beyond the company's control.

Similarly, Oliver (1993) noted that service quality perceptions do not necessarily require experience with the service whereas satisfaction evaluation does require the service to have been experienced. Within the leisure sector, Crompton and MacKay (1989) also noted that satisfaction, which is a psychological outcome, is different from service quality, which is an attribute of service. In practice, therefore, the confusion over the service quality and customer satisfaction constructs has led to the application of the SERVQUAL scale to measure both CS (Wisniewski, 2001) and, more frequently, SQ (Akan, 1995; Ekinci, Riley & Fife-Schaw, 1998; Fick & Ritchie, 1991; Gabbie & O'Neill, 1997; Juwaheer & Ross, 2003).

In the service marketing literature, service quality and customer satisfaction have been considered as two sides of the same coin. Oliver (1980) proposes that satisfaction is a function of the disconfirmation of performance from expectation. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) also conceptualized service quality based on the disconfirmation paradigm and conclude that quality is the difference between perceived and expected service. According to Kotler (1991), satisfaction is the post-purchase evaluation of products or services given

the expectations before purchase. To this end, satisfaction depends on the ability of the supplier or service provider to meet the customer's expectations.

While customer satisfaction could be related to values and prices, service quality generally does not depend on prices. Judgments about service quality are quite specific to the service delivered whereas satisfaction can be determined by a broader set of factors including those outside the service delivery experience such as the mood of the customer. Perceptions on service quality do not depend on experiences with the service environment or service providers, but judgments for satisfaction depend on past experiences (Oliver, 1993).

However, there is no consensus among researchers in their views on service quality and satisfaction. Some (Bitner & Hubbert, 1994; Sureshchandar et al., 2002) made an attempt to operationalize satisfaction along the same lines as service quality because they are both forms of attitude. They argued that although items used to measure service quality indicate the level of service offered, they can also act as measures of overall service satisfaction. Other researchers including Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Shemwell, Yavas and Bilgen (1998) argued that service quality and satisfaction are different elements. To these researchers, service quality perceptions reflect a customer's evaluative perceptions of a service encounter at a specific point in time, whereas customer satisfaction is experiential in nature, involving both a process and an end stage and comprising both cognitive and emotional elements.

Gabbie and O'Neill (1996), however, observed that, in today's hospitality industry, the true measure of success lies in the ability to satisfy customers

continually. This is because satisfied customers tend to be loyal to the service provider and are more likely to return. Service quality features are directly and positively related to satisfaction with the service provided (Pantouvakis, 2010). The general thought is that satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived service quality and the performance of the service provider (Babakus, Cornell, Mitchell & Schlegelmilch, 2004; Fornell, 1992; Gotlieb, Grewal & Brown, 1994). However, some studies also suggest that satisfaction is an antecedent to service quality (Bolten & Drew, 1991b; Bitner, 1990).

The dimensions of quality thus approximate to product features, and the customer consumes either outcomes (in products) or processes (in services) (Grönroos, 1998). Moreover, the two contentious constructs of quality and satisfaction tend to merge, especially in long-term relationships, into an overall concept of “relationship satisfaction” (Leverin & Liljander, 2006). This is directly influenced by perceptions of technical quality (physical or tangible quality) and functional quality [interactive or process quality] (Caceres & Paparoidamis, 2007; Yap & Sweeney, 2007). In this regard, Grönroos (2001) makes the following interesting observation:

“... Service quality dimensions ... could and should be measured with customer satisfaction with the service. Quality as such should not be measured ... I should probably have used the terms technical and functional features of services instead of technical and functional quality...” (p.151)

Repurchase intentions

Repurchase intentions (RI) refer to the individual's judgment about buying again a designated service from the same company, taking into account his or her current situation and likely circumstances ((Lacey, Suh & Morgan, 2007). The trend in marketing toward building relationships with customers continues to grow and marketers have become increasingly interested in retaining customers over the long run (Lemon et al., 2001). Many researchers suggest that customer satisfaction is a key determinant of customer retention (Bolten, 1998; Zeithaml et al., 1996)). According to Reichheld (1996), satisfaction measures have accounted for up to 40% of the variance in models of customer retention.

Increasing customer satisfaction and customer retention leads to improved profits, positive word-of mouth, and lower marketing expenditures (Reichheld, 1996). Additionally, previous studies suggest that customer satisfaction positively influences purchasing intentions. For instance, Rust and Zahorik (1993) noted that customer satisfaction significantly influences customer retention, market share, and profitability. Service quality and customer satisfaction have been widely recognized as key influences in the formation of consumers' purchase intentions in service environments (Taylor & Baker, 1994).

The term 'repurchase intentions' has also been described as a behavioural component that shows willingness (enthusiasm) to purchase a product or service (Mittal, Ross, & Baldasare, 1998). The increasing interest in understanding the concept of repurchase intention has evolved because repeat purchasing is critical to a continued stream of profitability (Oliver, 1997). The primary underlying

assumption regarding the RI of customers has been linked to the belief that CS and/or SQ perceptions positively affect behavioral intention of customers.

In this regard, consumers who are less satisfied complain more and are less likely to repurchase the product (Cho, Lee & Chon, 2004; Tian-Coal, Crompton, & Willson, 2002; Cronin & Michael, 1989; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). In fact, a satisfied customer tends to be highly committed to a service and may eventually become a loyal customer (Tan & Kek, 2004).

Service quality, customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions

There is an extensive body of literature across a number of research settings that supports the view that satisfaction has a positive influence on repurchase intentions (Bernhardt, Donthu, & Kennett, 2000; Cronin & Taylor, 1994; Söderlund, 2006). In general, it is considered that levels of satisfaction determine the likelihood that consumers will pay for a service again (Szymanski & Henard, 2001). Moreover, La Barbera and Mazursky (1983) proposed that customer satisfaction will be factored into stronger repurchase intentions and customer loyalty (Butcher et al., 2001).

There seems to be no clear consensus in the literature on the causal ordering of service quality and satisfaction, and on which one of them is a better predictor of the customer's intention to return or to repurchase (Bolten & Drew, 1991b; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). One group of researchers upholds the view that satisfaction is antecedent to service quality (Bitner, 1990; Bolten & Drew, 1991b). Another group of researchers also believe that service quality is antecedent to

satisfaction and argue that since service quality is a cognitive evaluation, a positive service quality perception can lead to satisfaction, which may in turn lead to favourable customer intentions (Brady & Robertson, 2001).

A third perspective maintains that there is a non-recursive relationship between service quality and satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1994). In this sense, neither of the constructs is antecedent to the other. Whatever the case may be, many authors conclude that both service quality and satisfaction have a direct link to the customer's repurchase intention. Service quality is also closely related with customer satisfaction (Wei & Ramalu, 2011; Zineldin, 2006).

A wide variety of studies have been done to support the link between customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions (Fornell, 1992; Patterson & Spreng, 1997; Rust & Zahorik, 1993; Taylor & Baker, 1994). Bearden and Teel (1983) argued that "customer satisfaction is important to the marketer because it is generally assumed to be a significant determinant of repeat sales, positive word of mouth, and customer loyalty" (p.21). Similarly, Anderson and Sullivan (1993) also argued that the more satisfied the customers are the greater their retention is. This view is also supported by Ranaweera and Prabhu (2003) who observed that the effects of customer satisfaction on customer retention are found to be significant and positive. Specifically, the levels of customer satisfaction will influence the level of repurchase intentions.

However, there are mixed opinions on whether service quality has a direct relationship with the customer's repurchase intention in all service contexts. Nevertheless, Cronin and Taylor (1992) concluded in their research that a direct

link between service quality and customers' repurchase intentions is significant. Based on Cronin and Taylor's (1992) research, tourists' post-trip behavioural intentions can be divided into three types: re-visit intention, recommendation intention and alternative intention. A number of studies also investigate the relationship between tourist experience and post trip intention. Beeho and Prentice (1997) observed that if tourists are satisfied with their recreational experiences, they will recommend their destinations to friends and relatives. Similarly, Schmitt and Allscheid (1995) noted that consumers who are satisfied with their overall experiences are more likely to have positive post-experience behavioural responses. In a similar vein, Petrick (2004a) proposed that tourists' intention to revisit is influenced by three factors: past travel experience, recreational experience and satisfaction.

Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2001), however, point out in their book on consumer behaviour that consumers who have negative experiences do not only reduce the frequency of their consumption but also have a negative effect on the will and purchasing behaviour of people around them. Similarly, Ibrahim and Ng (2002), in their study of shopping centers in Singapore, observed that consumers' perceptions of shopping in stores directly affect their enjoyment of the experience, which further affect their revisit behaviour. Likewise, Lee and Overby (2004), in their study of consumers' online shopping behaviour, concluded that consumers' ultimate experience is positively correlated with satisfaction and is also significantly associated with customer loyalty.

A review of the existing research in this area identifies a number of variables as having impact on intention to repurchase. For example, Murray and Howat (2002) found a positive relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions among customers of an Australian sport and leisure center. Also, Jiang and Rosenbloom (2005) established that satisfaction and price perception influence intention to return among e-retailing customers.

Although there is also a small body of research that suggests that the relationship between the two variables is not as direct as the discussion above may suggest (Hellier, Geursen, Carr & Rickard, 2003; Oliver, 1999; Zins, 2001), the discussion presented above provides strong evidence of the positive impact that customer satisfaction has on repurchase intention.

Customer perceptions of service quality

Strydom, Jooste and Cant (2000) define customer perceptions (CP) as

“the process of receiving, organizing and assigning meaning to information or stimuli detected by the customer’s five senses and opined that it gives meaning to the world that surrounds the customer. Perceptions are also described as the end result of a number of observations by the customer. Customers perceive services in terms of the quality of services provided and the satisfaction level attained” (p. 84).

Bamossy, Askegaard and Hogg (2006) also define perceptions as;

“the process in which a person selects, arranges and interprets stimuli, these stimuli are filtered and adjusted to become one’s own view of the world. Even though exposed to the same thing in the same environment, two persons will never experience the same. We live in a world where we are daily exposed to millions of different stimuli; different smells, sounds, tastes and textures. Our brain takes in and processes only a small number of these stimuli” (p. 36).

It is only when the customer’s perception of the business, the products and the services are known that one can truly know whether the business is doing well. All that customers see, hear and experience are linked and form the customers’ overall perception of the business. This is why it is essential for hotels in the Western Region of Ghana, and all businesses, to know their customers’ perceptions of their performance with regards to service quality.

According to Zeithaml and Bitner (1996), four main factors that influence customers’ service perceptions are image, price, service encounters (moment of truth) and the evidence of service. These factors are explained below:

Image

Customer perceptions can be affected by the image or reputation of the organization. Keller (1993) defines organizational image as “perceptions of an organization reflected in the associations held in customer memory”. The

associations can be reflected through contact with employees and even the service experience itself. Organizational image can assist an organization to build positive CP of service. This positive image serves as a buffer against incidents of poor service (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996).

Price

The price of a service can also influence CP. This is because service is intangible and customers rely on price as an indicator to judge whether the service can meet their expectations or not. If the price is higher than average price, customers are likely to expect higher quality than others; if the price is too low, customers may doubt the ability of the organization to deliver the service appropriately. In both situations, the higher or lower expectations will greatly influence customer perceptions of service.

Service encounters (moments of truth)

Service encounter refers to the interaction between the customer and the service provider during a period of time. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (1996), when customers have service transactions with a service organization, they can judge the quality of service provided by this organization through evaluating the concrete service encounters. Customers can receive a snapshot of the organization's service quality through interactions. Thus, adequate service encounters will improve the positive relationships between the service provider and the customer. Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) identified three types of service

encounters that can be managed by a service organization to have interactions with customers. They are remote encounters, phone encounters and face-to-face encounters.

Remote encounters take place when there is no direct human contact between the customer and the service provider. Examples are potential guests searching for pictures and information on services offered on a website of a hotel. Although there is no direct human contact in these remote encounters, each represents an opportunity for hosts to influence the guest's perceptions of service performance.

Phone encounters are extended to an electronic encounter responding to rapid information-technology (Bennett & Strydom, 2005). Electronic encounter refers to the interaction between customers and service providers that occur through the Internet and other multi-media. Almost all service providers, especially in the hospitality industry, rely on electronic encounters to perform customer service especially in the hospitality industry such as making reservations and answering inquiries. However, the variability of an electronic encounter is greater than that of a remote encounter, taking into account the access to the website, the navigation of the website interface, the tone of voice, employee knowledge, and effectiveness in handling customer issues (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). It is important to deliver effective and functional services to (potential) customers via friendly navigation on website interface and effective employees who are capable of sending specific and factual information to customers.

Face-to-face encounters take place between a customer and a service provider in direct contact, meeting in person. The service provider's perceived knowledge, appearance, attitude and other forms of behaviour or attributes are important determinants of the success of the encounter. Most service encounters in the hospitality industry occur on the provider's premises. A typical example is guests checking in at the reception counter of a hotel. This encounter is generally difficult to supervise and, even when supervised, attitudes and body language of employees cannot be controlled or rectified in the presence of guests (Bennett & Strydom, 2005). Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) emphasized that customers also play a role in creating quality service for themselves through their own behaviour during the face-to-face encounters.

Evidence of service

The last factor influencing customer perceptions of service is referred to as the evidence of service. Because services are intangible, customers do not only rely on price to evaluate service quality but also seek evidence of service in every interaction they have with an organization to build an impression of service perceptions. Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) identified three elements of evidence experienced by the customer: people, process and physical evidence.

People refers to the persons in service transactions including the personnel in service transactions, customers themselves and other customers within the interaction setting (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). For example, the action and the attitude of the personnel at a reception desk in a hotel will be judged on the

impression of perception in terms of the employee's politeness and effectiveness. Moreover, customers share the service environment with other customers as they consume the service. Fellow customers can either enhance or diminish a customer's perception of quality (Wu, 2007). The actions and attitude of other guests he/she meets in a lounge room will also influence the perception of service received.

Process refers to a series of activities or steps in the service delivery process, the level of flexible function and technology of the service performances, which influence the service perceptions of customers (Lovelock, 2001). For instance, the guests may build up service perceptions from observing a guest waiting in the line to check-in and by the way the employees take a lunch order, manually or by means of a computer.

Physical evidence assists customers in service evaluation because the intangibility of the service often makes it difficult for customers to evaluate service perceptions. Physical evidence consists of facility exterior, facility interior and tangibles. Facility exterior includes the exterior design, parking, landscaping and the surrounding environment; facility interior ranges from the interior design, equipment used to serve customers and air quality; and tangibles are tangible cues such as business cards, stationery, receipts and brochures (Hoffman & Bateson, 2006).

Overview of service quality models

A conceptual model attempts to show the relationships between salient variables (Ghobadian, Speller & Jones, 1994). It is a simplified description of the actual situations. There are a number of models available for the study of service quality issues: Gap Model (Parasuraman et al., 1985), Performance-only Model (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), Customer Satisfaction Mediation of Repurchase Intentions Model (Ahmed, Nawaz, Usman, Shaukat, Ahmed & Wasim-ul-Rehman, 2010), Grönroos' Service Quality Model (Kang & James, 2004), Internal Service Quality Model (Frost & Kumar, 2000), Perceived Service Quality Model (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 2001) among many others. The above mentioned models are presented below:

GAP Model (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

Much of the recent research on service quality has been carried out within the framework of the service quality gap model developed from the extensive research of Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988, and 1991). The service quality gap model was derived from the magnitude and direction of five 'gaps' (Figure 2) which are:

Gap 1: customers' expectations and management's perceptions (also known as knowledge gap). This gap may result from a lack of understanding of what customers expect from a particular service due to the absence of a proper marketing research orientation.

Gap 2: management's perception and service quality specifications (service standards gap). This gap shows the disparity between management's knowledge of client's expectations and the process of service producing, resulting from an inadequate commitment to service quality.

Gap 3: service quality specifications and service delivery (performance gap). This gap is the consequence of role ambiguity and conflict, lack of teamwork and poor technology. Even when guidelines or specifications exist for performing excellent service, its delivery may not be up to standard due to poor employee performance.

Gap 4: service delivery and external communications (communications gap). Customer expectations are established by promises made by a service provider's promotional messages. This gap results from inconsistencies between the quality image portrayed in promotional activities and the actual quality of services delivered.

Gap 5: consumers' expectation and perceived service. This gap depends on size and direction of the four gaps associated with the delivery of service quality on the marketer's side.

The first four gaps (Gap 1, Gap 2, Gap 3 and Gap 4) affect the way in which service is delivered and the existence of these four gaps leads to the extent of Gap 5. In other words, the extent of Gap 5 depends on the size and direction of the first four gaps. It is Gap 5 that actually drives the perception of service quality. According to this model, service quality is a function of perceptions and expectations and can be modeled as:

$$SQ = \sum_{j=1}^k (P_{ij} - E_{ij})$$

Where:

SQ = overall service quality; k = number of attributes

P_{ij} = performance perception of stimulus i with respect to attribute j

E_{ij} = service quality expectation for attribute j that is the relevant norm for stimulus i

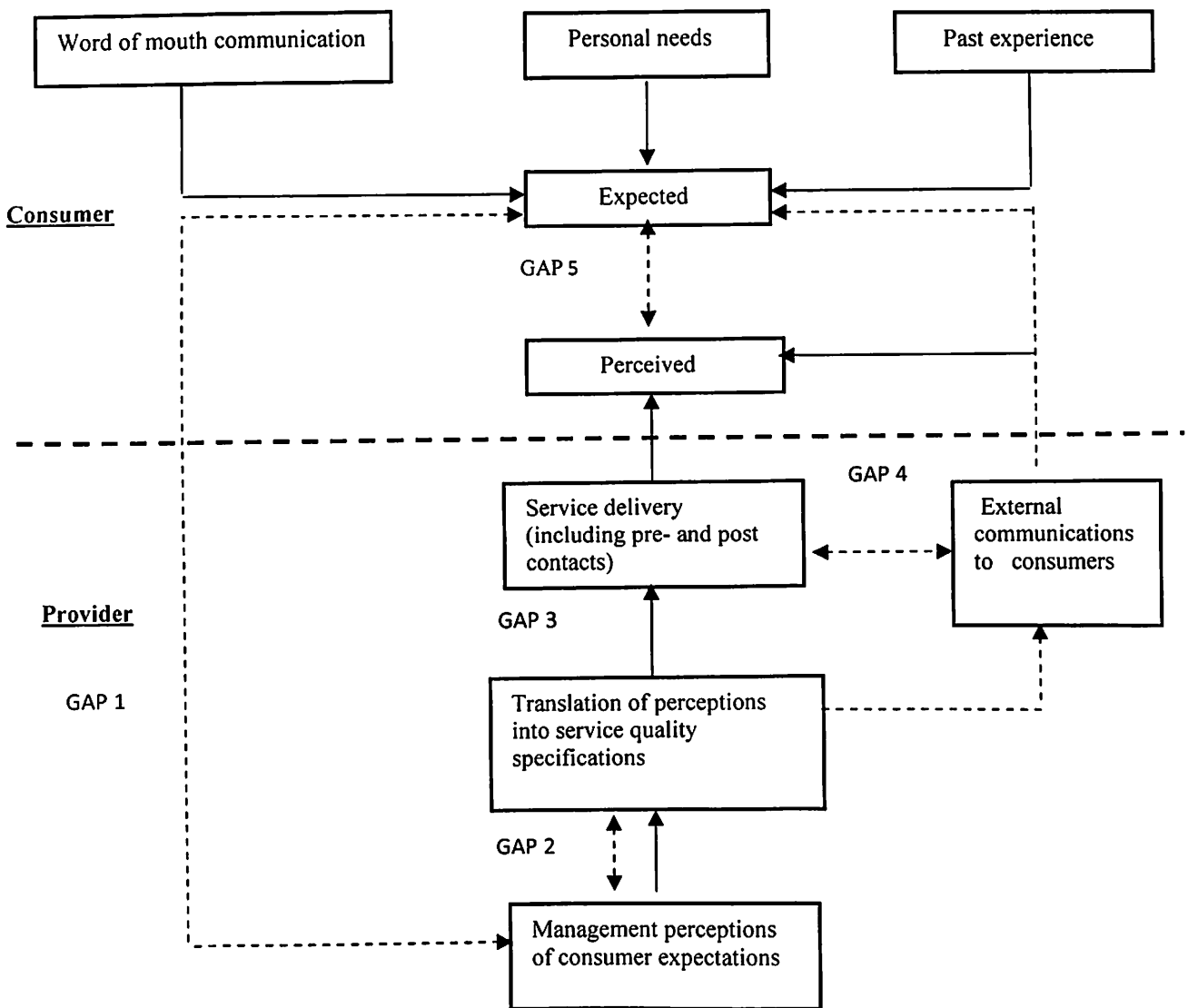


Figure 2: The gap model

Source: (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

In terms of strengths, the Gap Model presents customer perception as a benchmark established by customers, performance levels as perceived by customers, customer comments and suggestions, and impressions from employees with respect to customer expectations and satisfaction. However, the following weaknesses can be identified in the Gap model: the uniform applicability of the method for all service sectors; the use of different scores in calculating SERVQUAL, contributing to problems with the reliability, discriminant validity, convergent validity, and predictive validity of the measurement (“measurement of service quality”, 2012).

Performance-only Model (Cronin & Taylor, 1992)

The originators of this model investigate the conceptualization and measurement of service quality and its relationship with customer satisfaction and purchase intentions. They compare computed difference scores with perception to conclude that perceptions-only is a better predictor of service quality. They argue on the framework of Parasuraman et al. (1985), with respect to conceptualization and measurement of service quality, and develop a performance-only measurement of service quality called SERVPERF. With this they illustrate that service quality is a form of consumer attitude and the performance-only measure of service quality is an enhanced method of measuring service quality. They argue that SERVQUAL confounds satisfaction and attitude and state that service quality can be conceptualized as similar to an attitude, and can be operationalized by the adequacy-importance model. They particularly maintain that performance instead of performance-expectation determines service quality. Thus, Cronin and Taylor

(1992) conclude that service quality is evaluated by perceptions-only without expectations and without importance weights according to the formula:

$$SQ = \sum_{j=1}^k P_{ij}$$

where:

SQ = overall service quality;

k = the number of attributes;

P_{ij} = performance perception of stimulus i with respect to attribute j .

Customer Satisfaction Mediation of Repurchase Intentions Model (Ahmed et al., 2010)

This model is based on the five SERVQUAL dimensions and depicts a significantly positive relationship among the quality of service offered, customer satisfaction, and with future purchase intentions of customers (Figure 3). The model shows a direct relationship between service quality and customers' repurchase intentions, and also posits that customer satisfaction mediates a relationship between service quality and customers repurchase intentions.

Grönroos's Service Quality Model (as cited in Kang & James, 2004)

The model proposes that service quality consists of technical and functional dimensions and that a service organization's image functions as a filter in the perception of service quality. The model also proposes that there are direct relationships between service quality perception and the technical and functional quality dimensions in addition to the indirect effects of technical and functional

quality on service quality perception. Finally, the model suggests that service quality leads to customer satisfaction (Figure 4).

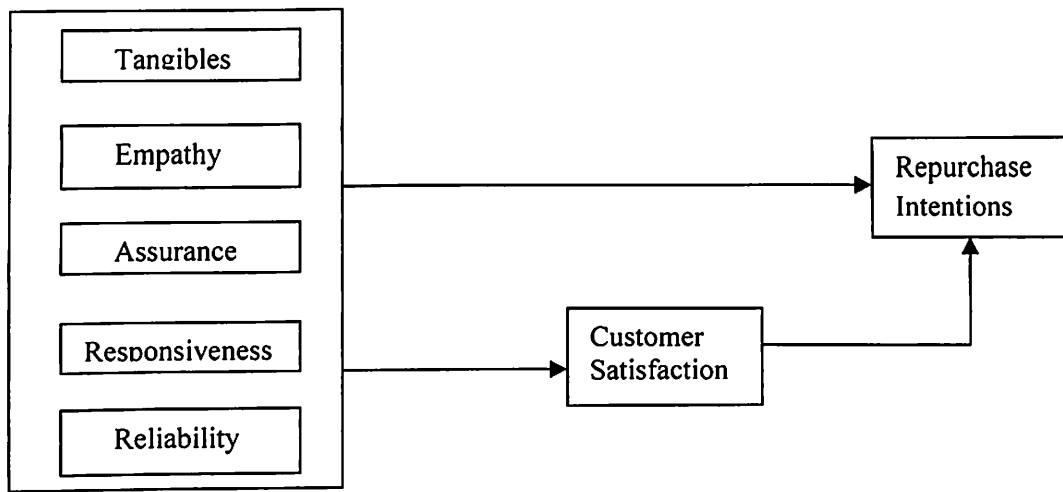


Figure 3: The customer satisfaction mediation of repurchase intentions model

Source: Ahmed et al., (2010)

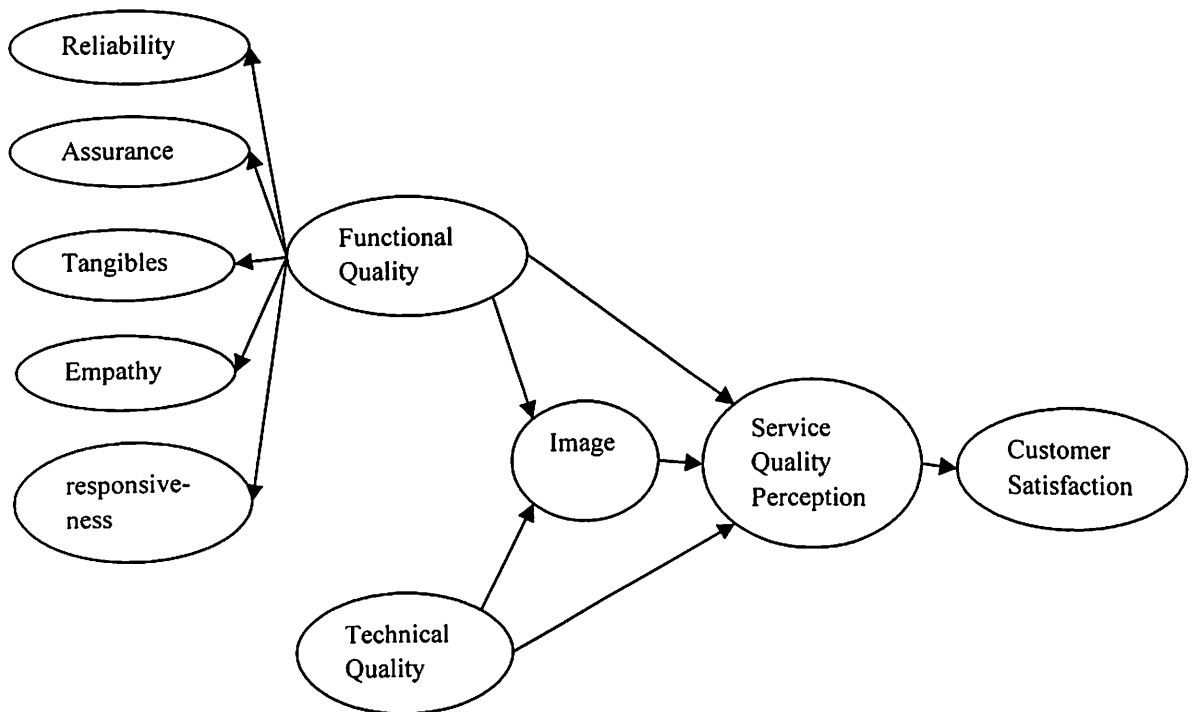


Figure 4: The Grönroos's service quality model

Source: Kang and James (2004)

Internal Service Quality Model (Frost & Kumar, 2000)

The authors have developed an internal service quality model based on the Gap Model (Parasuraman et al., 1985). The model (Figure 5) evaluates the dimensions and their relationships that determine service quality among internal customers (front-line staff) and internal suppliers (support staff) within a large service organization.

The internal Gap 1 shows the difference in support staff's perception (internal supplier) of front-line staff's expectation (internal customers). Internal Gap 2 is the significant difference between service quality specifications and the service actually delivered resulting in an internal service performance gap. Internal Gap 3 is the gap which focuses on the front-line staff (internal customers). The gap is based on the difference between front-line staff's expectations and perceptions of support staff's (internal supplier) service quality.

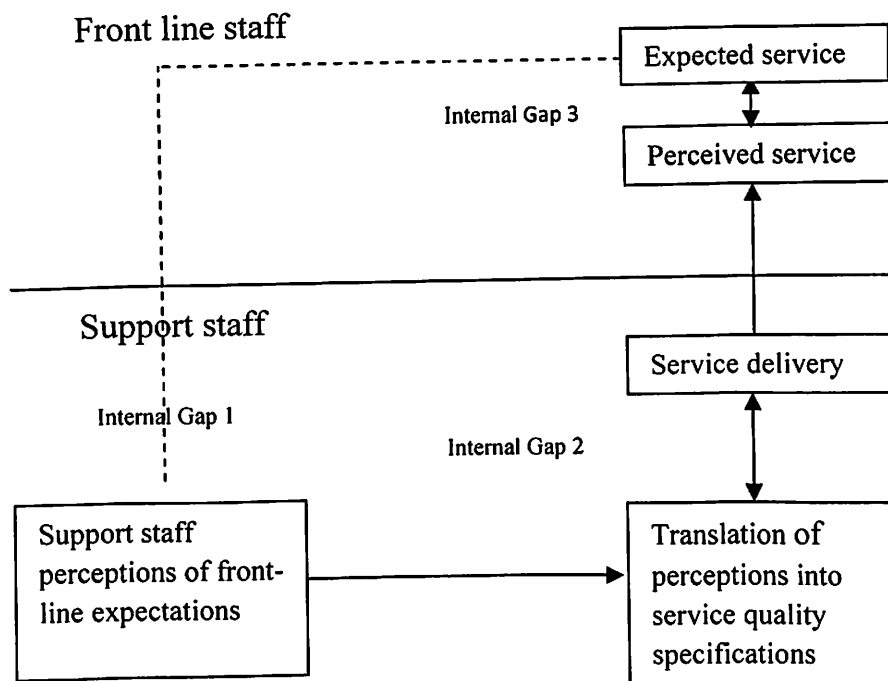


Figure 5: The internal service quality model
Source: Frost and Kumar (2000)

Perceived Service Quality Model (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 2001)

Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2001) explain that the creation of customer satisfaction for a service can be identified through a comparison between service perceptions and service expectation (Figure 6). According to Zeithaml and Bitner (1996), the quality of service is the excellence or superior service delivery process to consumers with expectations. There are two main factors affecting the quality of services, namely, expected service and perceived service. If the services received are as expected, then the serviced quality is good or satisfactory. If the services received exceed the expectations, then perceived service quality is very good or ideal. On the other hand, if the service received is less than expected, then service quality is perceived as poor or low. Quality of service therefore depends on the ability of the service provider to consistently meet the needs and desires of consumers.

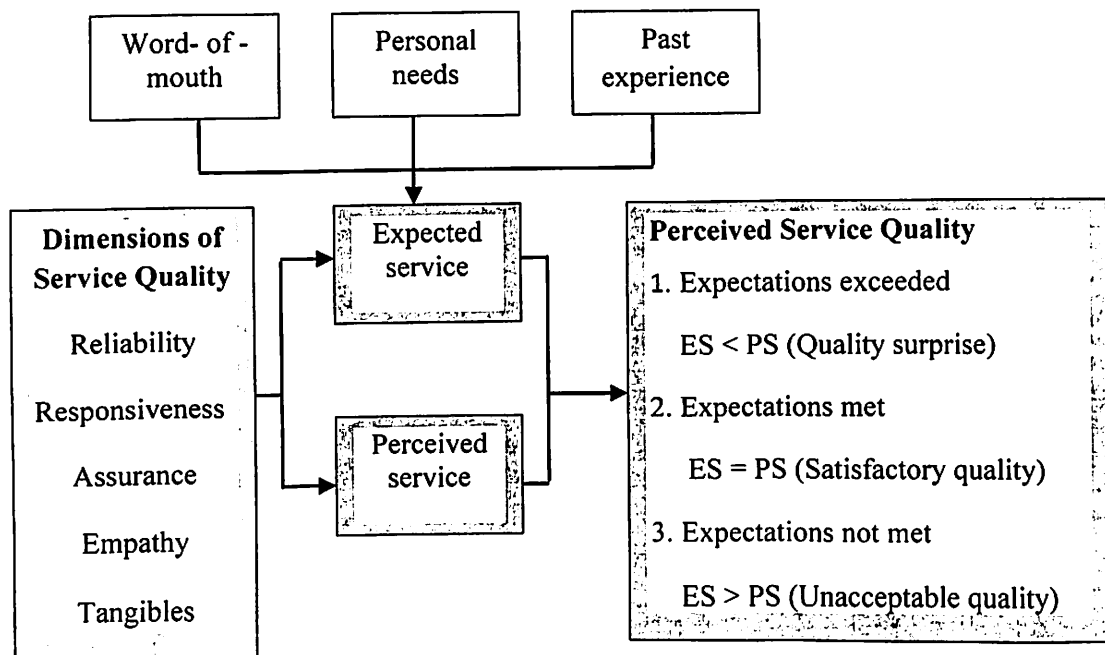


Figure 6: The perceived service quality model

Source: Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2001)

Conceptual framework of the study

A conceptual framework attempts to show the relationships that exist between salient variables (Ghobadian, Speller & Jones, 1994) as it is a simplified description of the actual situation (Seth, Deshmukh, & Vrat, 2005). As Miles and Huberman (1998) pointed out, conceptual framework is a written or visual presentation that explains either graphically, or in narrative form, the main things to be studied including the key factors like concepts and variables; and the presumed relationships among them.

After a thorough review of literature including existing conceptual frameworks, the study adapts three service quality models: the Customer Satisfaction Mediation of Repurchase Intentions Model (Ahmed, et al., 2010), the Performance-only Model (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), and the Gronroos's Service Quality Model (Kang & James, 2004). These models were reviewed, with relevant aspects adopted and merged to develop the conceptual framework (that is, Guests' Perceptions of Service Quality, Satisfaction and Repurchase Intentions) for the study. Subsequently, a comprehensive framework incorporating all the relevant variables as constructs pertaining to the study was developed for the study. A conceptual framework for hotel service quality based on the literature review and discussions is presented in Figure 7.

The Customer Satisfaction Mediation of Repurchase Intentions Model was selected because it has variables such as service quality, customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions that are relevant to the current study. The Performance-only Model was also selected because it looks at service quality based on customers' judgment of actual service performance without considering expectations. The

Therefore, in developing the conceptual framework for the study, the relevant aspects of the three service quality models, as indicated above, were adopted and merged. Further modifications were done with the inclusion of some socio-demographic variables (nationality, gender, age, level of education, occupation). These variables were chosen because of the assumption that there could be some differences in guests' perceptions of service quality by these variables. The framework conceptualizes service quality perceptions of hotel guests to be informed by the five dimensions of service quality, and also influenced by guests' socio-demographic characteristics. The conceptual framework also hypothesizes relationships among hotel guests' perceptions of service quality and their repurchase intentions; perceptions of service quality and guests' satisfaction; and guests' satisfaction and repurchase intentions.

The conceptual framework thus aims to examine the predictive ability as well as the nature and strength of relationship among service quality, guest satisfaction and repurchase intentions. All constructs were conceptualized to fit better into the current study setting. Based on the original view of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), service quality was conceptualized as a function for the perception of service quality along the five service quality dimensions. Next, customer satisfaction has been conceptualized in this study as the guest's cumulative post-purchase affective evaluation based on the services consumption experience at the hotel. Lastly, the repurchase intentions construct has been conceptualized as a guest's likelihood of revisiting the hotel in the future.

Summary

This chapter has reviewed the theories, concepts and models that inform service quality in hotels, thereby leading to a composite model that formed the conceptual framework for the study. The various theoretical perspectives on service quality including the disconfirmation paradigm and the performance-only approach to service quality measurement have also been discussed. Related literature on service quality, customer satisfaction, repurchase intentions and customer perceptions have also been presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE
SERVICE QUALITY, SATISFACTION AND REPURCHASE
INTENTIONS OF HOTEL GUESTS

Introduction

This chapter presents issues concerning service quality, satisfaction and repurchase intentions. The chapter looks at how service quality in hotels has been measured. It presents some empirical findings of studies that have been conducted on hotels regarding service quality, satisfaction and repurchase intentions.

Application of the SERVQUAL scale in leisure and hospitality

The SERVQUAL scale has been widely used for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality in leisure, tourism and hospitality. While some researchers used the original scale developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), others modified it with a view to capturing some of the unique features of the leisure, tourism and hospitality industries and/or addressing some of the inherent weaknesses of the original instrument (Table 2). The rationale for using the original SERVQUAL scale or for introducing modifications differed across various studies but three general tendencies can be observed.

Firstly, researchers who applied the original scale for measuring quality in leisure, tourism and hospitality (Crompton & More, 1991; Gabbie & O'Neill, 1997; Ryan & Cliff, 1997) argued that the service dimensions identified by Parasuraman et al. (1988) sufficiently represented the most significant aspects of services, the perceived quality of which they intended to measure. In particular,

Ryan and Cliff (1997) argued that the original SERVQUAL scale was a suitable instrument for measuring quality in travel agencies because the dimensions of the SERVQUAL scale highly corresponded with the factors that Albrecht (1992) and LeBlanc (1992) identified as those that customers used to evaluate service quality in travel agencies. Although both authors identify other factors that might seem different from the five dimensions proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), Ryan and Cliff (1997) argued that the SERVQUAL scale measured the most significant ones and incorporated the other factors determined by LeBlanc (1992) (that is, price confidence, agent continuity and recovery) and Albrecht (1992) (that is, corporate image and competitiveness).

Secondly, researchers who modified the SERVQUAL scale by introducing additional items claim that the original scale does not sufficiently represent the unique features of services that constituted the object of their investigations (Akan, 1995; Ekinci et al., 1998; Frochot & Hughes, 2000; Juwaheer & Ross, 2003; Knutson, Stevens, Wullart, Patton & Yokoyama, 1991; Saleh & Ryan, 1991; Stevens et al., 1995). For example, Saleh and Ryan (1991) explained that not all of the SERVQUAL scale items were immediately applicable to a hotel. Consequently, they modified this scale using some of Martin's (1986) cited in Saleh and Ryan (1991) 40-item scale questions developed for the assessment of restaurant services. This resulted in the development of a 33-item scale for measuring service quality in hotels.

The additional items that the researchers include in their scales are derived mainly from the literature although, more recently, several researchers

undertake some primary studies with a view to identifying supplementary attributes of services under investigation (Frochot & Hughes, 2000; Juwaheer & Ross, 2003). While these modifications led to the development of new and sometimes renamed scales (Table 2), in conceptual terms, the majority of these instruments followed the same principles and the structure of the SERVQUAL scale.

Heung, Wong and Qu (2000), for example, stressed the relative simplicity and the relatively low cost of using the SERVQUAL scale as well as its potential for producing valuable information on service quality. Similarly, Atilgan, Akinci, and Aksoy (2003) used the SERVQUAL scale as the skeleton for the development of a modified instrument for measuring service quality because “it is mostly used, valid and generally accepted measurement tool” (Atilgan et al., 2003, p.413).

Thirdly, several researchers modified the original SERVQUAL scale, more substantially, by addressing some of its inherent weaknesses (e.g. Ekinci et al., 1998; Frochot & Hughes, 2000; Johns & Tyas, 1996; O’Neill & Palmer, 2001; O’Neill, Williams, MacCarthy & Grovers, 2000). In doing so, they followed another approach to measuring service quality proposed by Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994), who were most critical of the SERVQUAL scale within the service marketing field. Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) argued that if service quality is best conceptualized as an attitude, then the adequacy-importance model of attitude measurement is the most appropriate measure of service quality.

Table 2: Examples of application of the SERVQUAL scale in hotels

Researchers and year of study	Object of evaluation	Comments
Knutson et al. (1991)	Hotels and motels	Modified SERVQUAL scale called LODGSERV (26 items)
Saleh and Ryan (1991)	Hotels	Modified SERVQUAL scale (33 items)
Getty and Thompson (1994)	Lodging industry	Modified SERVQUAL scale called LODGQUAL
Patton et al. (1994)	Hotels	Application of LODGSERV
Akan (1995)	Hotels	Modified SERVQUAL scale (30 items)
Gabbie and O'Neill (1996, 1997)	Hotels	Modified SERVQUAL scale-perceptions only
Suh et al. (1997)	Hotels	Modified SERVQUAL
Ekinci et al. (1998)	Resort hotel	LODGSERV scale (18 items)
Qu and Tsang (1998)	Hotels	Modified SERVQUAL scale (35 items)
Tribe and Snaith (1998)	Resorts	Modified SERVQUAL scale called HOLSAT
Ingram and Daskalakis (1999)	Hotels	Modified SERVQUAL (21 items)
Wong et al. (1999)	Hotels	Modified SERVQUAL (27 items)
Juwaheer and Ross (2003)	Hotels	Modified SERVQUAL (39 items)

Source: Adapted from Augustyn & Seakhoa-King (2004)

Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) subsequently developed a SERVPERF scale, which assessed service quality in terms of the perception of performance only. Such an approach avoids many of the problems inherent in the SERVQUAL scale, including the existence of multiple comparison standards and the weaknesses of the expectation construct. However, the SERVPERF scale measures service quality along the same five dimensions of service quality proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) and such an approach does not address the problem of the dimensionality of the SERVQUAL scale.

According to Augustyn & Seakhoa-King (2004), the five generic dimensions of service quality represented in the SERVQUAL scale have indeed rarely been repeated in studies within leisure, tourism and hospitality. While the results of these studies may indicate that quality dimensions are contextual, it should be noted that research methodology literature recognizes four major sources of measurement differences: the respondent, the measurer, situational factors and the instrument (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). Indeed, a more in-depth analysis of approaches to data collection adopted by researchers who attempted to measure perceived service quality in leisure, tourism and hospitality indicates that these four sources of measurement differences may have significantly contributed to the studies yielding inconsistent results.

Although Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) suggested that the SERVQUAL scale could be adapted or supplemented to fit the characteristics or specific research needs of a particular organization from the methodological point of view, it cannot be expected that modified scales would produce the same

results. In fact, every attempt to modify the SERVQUAL scale to reflect the needs of the leisure, tourism and hospitality industries produced a new instrument and only studies that use exactly the same instrument for measuring a particular construct may produce similar results. This, however, has not happened in the leisure, tourism and hospitality industry, with the exception of LODGSERV and DINESERV that have been used on more than one occasion.

Consequently, it should not be surprising that studies measuring service quality in hotels for example identified as few as two and as many as nine dimensions of service quality. For example, Ekinici et al. (1998) identified two dimensions while Juwaheer and Ross (2003) identify nine dimensions of service quality for hotels. In a similar vein, Narangajavana and Hu (2008) identified four aspects of service performance for improving service quality: service delivery, hotel employees, guest amenities and surroundings, and prestige. Other studies conducted in the hotel sector also identify different outcomes with regard to the number and interpretation of dimensions guests use to assess perceived hotel service quality (Akan, 1995; Akbaba, 2006; Choi & Chu, 2001; Markovic, 2003; Wong et al., 1999).

Measurement of service quality in hospitality

The area of service quality has been well researched, with some researchers applying either the SERVQUAL scale or the SERVPERF scale, and others developing their own scale of measurement. In addition, measuring service quality and obtaining customer feedback enable service providers to benchmark

themselves with their competitors thereby adding value to their own processes. Hence, it is necessary to explore the various dimensions of service quality as perceived by customers and other stakeholders and also based on models other than SERVQUAL so as to satisfy the individual objectives of the study (Padma, Rajendran & Sai, 2009).

In furtherance, Ko and Pastore (2005) developed a reliable and valid measure of service quality in recreational sports industry. They operationalized service quality in terms of four constructs, namely, programme quality, interaction quality, outcome quality and environment quality. On the contrary, Poon and Low (2005) use exploratory factor analysis to obtain different factors - hospitality, accommodation, food and beverages, recreation and entertainment, supplementary services, transportation, location, security and safety, innovation and value added services, appearance, pricing and payment. Similarly, Olorunniwo, Hsu and Udo (2006) conducted a second order factor analysis and find different dimensions (tangibles, recovery, responsiveness and knowledge) of service quality in the lodging industry. Narayan, Rajendran and Prakash Sai (2009) found core tourism experience, information, hospitality, fairness of price, hygiene, amenities, value for money, logistics, food and security to be the dimensions of service quality in the Indian tourism industry.

The literature again presents various empirical works linked to service quality in the hotel industry. Atilgan, Akinci and Askoy (2003), in their study on service quality in hotels in Turkey, suggested a new approach for the research of evaluation dimensions of service quality in hotels. The research analyzes two

groups of tourists from different countries. The results suggested that the operators must consider in the elaboration of their itineraries and tourist packages, the cultural characteristics that affect the perception of service quality.

Juwaheer and Ross (2003) analyzed the perceptions of hotel guests in Mauritius and conclude that the quality of service fell short of guests' expectations, citing empathy as the greatest gap. Nadiri and Hussain (2005) also analyzed service quality in Cyprus hotels using SERVPERF, applying the instrument to European customers. The results found only two dimensions instead of the traditional five SERVQUAL dimensions, and European customers were found to be very demanding regarding improvement in the quality of service.

Service quality and socio-demographic characteristics

Indeed, in the consumer behaviour literature, personal characteristics are among the major factors determining consumer decision-making and subsequent behaviours. Therefore, it is logically assumed that customers with different individual characteristics have different reasons for behaving the way they do. For example, demographic variables such as age and education have been found to exert an important influence on the overall perception of service quality (Kim & Lough, 2007). Also, customers with higher income have selected ambience and comfort level as their determinant selection variables (Kivela, 1997).

Hotel guests' satisfaction and their socio-demographic profile is also an important factor in the hotel industry. Abdullah and Hamdan (2012) proved that age, marital status, gender, ethnicity, occupation and monthly income influenced

how Malaysians and other foreign guests in Malaysia select their hotel accommodation. In addition, Raza et. al. (2012) proved that in Romania gender has no significant difference in terms of frequency of visit and overall satisfaction, while satisfaction varies with different income groups. Socio-economic status may also affect customer satisfaction and that of loyalty. In Iyiade's (2009) study, high socio-economic hotel guests in Nigeria were found to spend more during their stay in the hotel, but they are not easily satisfied and thus have low loyalty level.

Mattila, Grandey and Fisk (2003) and Snipes, Tompson and Oswald (2006) argued that there can be gender differences in customer perceptions about service quality. To confirm this, Tabassum, Rahman and Jahan (2012) found significant differences between the ranking of male and female guests with the tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy dimensions of service quality in a tourist hotel. Similarly, Sanchez-Hernandez et al. (2010) found differences between men and women in the association of service quality with customer evaluation. Women and men are also found to perceptions differ in the association of functional and relational dimensions of service quality with their satisfaction and loyalty (Juwaheer, 2011).

Still on gender, Spathis et al. (2004) studied the effect of gender on the perception of service quality and on the importance attached to its various dimensions. The outcome of this study shows that male customers perceived service quality higher than female customers. Contrary to the work of Spathis et al. (2004), Butler, Sharon and Turner (1996) showed that females perceived a

higher level of hospital service quality than males. The literature also explains the differences in consumption behaviour related to gender through differences either biological, attitudinal or personality traits of masculinity and femininity distinguishing male from female (Fisher & Arnold, 1994).

Age is considered a critical factor as it helps the marketer to determine how desires and needs change and evolve when the individual grows (Stafford, 1996). Studies based on the analysis of the effect of age reveal significant differences between various age groups whether it is at the perception level or at the degree of importance given to service quality. Thus, Stafford (1996) showed that, as far as banking quality is concerned, two young groups (18-25 years and 26-35 years) were less concerned with the honesty and reliability dimensions than older groups (36-45, 46-55 and more than 65 years).

Similarly, within the framework of hospital service, Butler et al. (1996) showed the existence of a positive relation between age and service quality perception: Precisely, the aged patients perceived a higher level of quality of the tangibles dimension than younger patients. To explain the differences in service quality perceptions among customers of different age groups, Homburg and Giering (2001) conclude that older people have restricted information processing capabilities and that information process decreases with age. In the same way, John and Cole (1986) suggested that the elderly can be expected to exhibit problems with information loads because they process at slower speeds. Thus, the elderly are less consistent in their judgments.

Throwing more emphasis on age, Knutson and Patton (1993) found that older customers are more concerned about their health and the quality of food was identified as important. In a another study, Soriano (2002) found food quality not to stand out as the most important reason for young customers; however, customers over 60 years of age indicated food quality as the most important attribute determining their satisfaction. In a similar vein, Siu and Mou (2005) and Lee and Chen (2009) observed that tourists' perceptions of service quality do not vary with age differences. On the contrary, Tabassum et al. (2012) detected a significant difference among guests of different age groups regarding the reliability dimension.

In the literature, very few studies have been undertaken on service quality perceptions and occupation. However, observations made by researchers such as Tsang and Qu (2002) in China; Nadiri and Hussain (2005) in Cyprus, and Yilmaz (2009) indicated that hotel guests are mostly professionals. For example, Yilmaz (2009), in a study on service quality in the hotel industry in Cappadocia, found that most of the hotel clients are professionals.

Studying the influence of socio-demographic factors on the expression of satisfaction with general practitioners' service, Venn and Fone (2005) observed that a higher reported satisfaction is significantly associated with being at home, disabled and retired whereas a lower level is associated with those seeking work or students. In addition, within the framework of the study of influence of occupation on consumers' expectations in relation to police service quality by Webb (1998), the results revealed the existence of significant differences between

the various categories. On the other hand, while agreeing on the status of a sample of retired senior travellers, significant differences were detected in the importance of three attributes relating to the selection of hotel (Callan & Bowman, 2000). Lee and Chen (2009) also found that tourists' perceptions of service quality in hotels do not vary with occupation.

In terms of education, Butler et al. (1996) did not note any significant relationship between the level of education of patients and their perception of hospital service quality. In the same way, no significant differences are recorded on the level of the scores of importance allotted to factors of service quality, provided by the local authority, between people of various levels of education (Scott & Schieff, 1993). However, the study by Webb (1988) on expectations of consumers with respect to service quality showed that respondents that have a lower level of education wished a higher level of performance regarding assurance/reliability and tangibles dimensions, contrary to those that have higher level of education who do not give much importance to these dimensions. In the same vein, Tabassum et al. (2012) found a significant difference between level of education and the reliability dimension, as well as the responsiveness and empathy dimensions of service quality.

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction

According to Sureshchandar et al., (2002), customer satisfaction should be seen as a multi dimensional construct just as service quality, meaning it can occur at multi levels in an organization and that it should be operationalized along the

same factors on which service quality is operationalized. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) suggested that when perceived service quality is high, it will lead to increase in customer satisfaction. They support the view that service quality leads to customer satisfaction and this is in line with Lee et al. (2000) and Saravana and Rao (2007) who acknowledged that customer satisfaction is based on the level of service quality provided by the service provider.

Su et al. (2002) carried out a study to find the link between service quality and customer satisfaction. From their study, they came up with the conclusion that there exists a great dependency between both constructs and that an increase in one is likely to lead to an increase in the other. Also, they point out that service quality is more abstract than customer satisfaction because customer satisfaction reflects the customer's feelings about many encounters and experiences with a service firm while service quality may be affected by perceptions of value (benefit relative to cost) or by the experiences of others that may not be as good. Additionally, Spreng and Singh (1993) stated that high levels of service quality should result in highly satisfied consumers.

These observations made here are in line with other research findings that confirm the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Such studies include Anderson and Mittal (2000), Chang and Wang (2011), Cronin et al. (2000), Edward and Sahadev (2011), Hellier et al. (2003), Hume and Mort (2010), Lai et al. (2009) Lam et al. (2004), Roig et al. (2009) and Yang and Peterson (2004).

The relationship between satisfaction and repurchase intentions

Bitner, Booms, and Tétréault (1990) and Jones and Suh (2000) identified overall satisfaction with an organization to have a direct impact on how likely customers are to reuse a service. In a banking environment, Ganesh et al. (2000) see a direct link between dissatisfaction and switching behaviour and emphasized that satisfaction was a strong antecedent to intention to repurchase. Howat, Murray, and Crilley (1999) considered the satisfaction of customers of sport centers to be positively related to their willingness to recommend a service, repurchase from the provider and increase frequency of visits. There is also a small body of research that suggests that the relationship between the two variables is not as direct as the findings above may suggest (Hellier et al., 2003; Oliver, 1999; Zins, 2001).

In addition, previous research indicates that satisfaction has a positive influence on repurchase intentions regardless of the service offered by the provider (Taylor & Baker, 1994). Many studies (Bolton, 1998; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Fornell, 1992; Oliver, 1980) reported a direct positive relationship between satisfaction and repurchase intention. These studies establish that overall customer satisfaction with a service is associated with repurchase intention.

The relationship between service quality and repurchase intentions

There are many studies such as Cronin and Taylor (1992) on service quality as antecedent to repurchase intentions. Also Boulding et al. (1993) found positive relationships between service quality and repurchase intentions. Indeed,

Jones and Sasser (1995) suggested that the application of satisfaction in service industries is driven by the assumption that a satisfied customer will return for a repurchase. Furthermore, Cronin and Taylor (1992) identified a correlation between service quality and customer preference loyalty, focused solely on the relationship between perceived service quality and repurchase intentions. Similarly, customer orientation is been found to be related to customer service perceptions and outcome behaviours such as repurchase intentions (Brady & Cronin, 2001). On the contrary, Ahmed et al. (2010) saw no direct relationship between the two constructs but observe that customer satisfaction mediates a relationship between service quality and customers' repurchase intentions.

The relative importance of service quality and satisfaction for predicting repurchase intentions

Both service quality and satisfaction have been widely recognized as antecedents of repurchase intentions. However, studies reveal that satisfaction is a better predictor of intentions to repurchase than service quality (Ravald & Gronroos, 1996). Evidence is also provided by Cronin and Taylor (1992) who found a much stronger relationship between satisfaction and repurchase intentions than the relationship between service quality and repurchase intentions. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1994) also revealed in their analyses that customer satisfaction is likely to achieve a greater level of statistical significance when both service quality and customer satisfaction have a significant effect on repurchase intentions.

A number of studies also concluded that the level of customer satisfaction is positively associated with repurchase intentions (e.g. Alegre & Cladera, 2009; Alegre & Garau, 2010; Choi & Chu, 2001; Ladhari, 2009; Ryu, Han & Kim, 2008). The findings of these studies confirm that both service quality and customer satisfaction have a direct and positive impact on customers' intention of repurchasing the same service setting.

Similarly, other studies such as Cho et al. (2004), Novatorov and Crompton (2002), Tian-Cole et al. (2002), and Yoo, Cho, Chon (2003) also supported the notion that satisfaction is a reliable predictor of repurchase intentions. For instance, Tian-Cole et al. (2002) who conducted a study on satisfaction and behavioural intentions in the leisure and recreation field, found that visitors' future behavioural intentions were expected to be influenced positively by both overall service quality and overall satisfaction.

Summary

This chapter has presented some empirical evidence on service quality. An overview of the hotel product and services as well as the hotel guest cycle was first presented. This was followed by a review of how service quality has been measured in the hospitality sector and some of the major findings in various studies. Issues of the dynamics of service quality and socio-demographic characteristics of hotel guests were also presented. Lastly, some empirical evidence on the interactions and interdependence among service quality, satisfaction and repurchase intentions were presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and the methodological procedures for conducting this study. Issues covered are the study area, research perspective, research design, data and sources, target population, sample size and sampling procedure. Others are the research instrument developed and used for the pursuit of the research objectives, pre-testing, ethical considerations, fieldwork, challenges encountered, response rate and data analysis procedure.

The study area

The study area is the Western Region of Ghana, which is situated in the south-western part of Ghana between latitudes 5° N and 30° N and longitudes 3° W and 32° W (Figure 8). The region shares borders with Cote d'Ivoire to the west, the Central Region to the east, parts of the Ashanti and the Brong Ahafo Regions to the north, and at the south is the Gulf of Guinea. The Western Region covers an area of 23,921 sq km, with a coastline of 192 km. It is one of the ten administrative regions of Ghana. It was carved out of the Western province in the early 1960s. Section 140 of the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) established the Regional Coordinating Council, with the main functions of coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the activities of sector departments within its jurisdiction with the view of improving the livelihood of the people through the provision of better social and economic infrastructure and services.

The population of the region, according to the 2010 population and housing census is 2,376,021 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

The Western Region (WR) has substantial natural endowments. It is one of the most endowed in the country and therefore has a lot of investment opportunities. The Western Region is an area that reveals many of the diverse attractions of Ghana (parks/reserves, forts, pristine beaches, mineral resources/mines, cultural and historical heritage).

The region attracts a number of visitors due to its numerous attractions, and the recent discovery of oil at Cape Three Points. There are a number of hotels, spread across the region and located in and around Bibiani, Awaso, Sefwi Bekwai, Sefwi Wiawso, Enchi, Asankragwa, Wassa Akropong, Bogoso, Prestea, Tarkwa, Elubo, Half Assini, Esiama, Axim, Agona Nkwanta, and Shama; with a concentration in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis. In this regard, the Destination Management Organization (DMO), on July 16, 2010, launched a web site (www.ghanawestcoast.com) to promote tourism in the region. One of the aims of this project is to promote quality service and attractions focused on quality beaches, nature and heritage that would attract both local and international tourists.

The Acting Deputy Executive Director in charge of finance and administration of the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), in a presentation at the launch of the website, observed that Western Region is expected to become the preferred tourism destination by the year 2020.

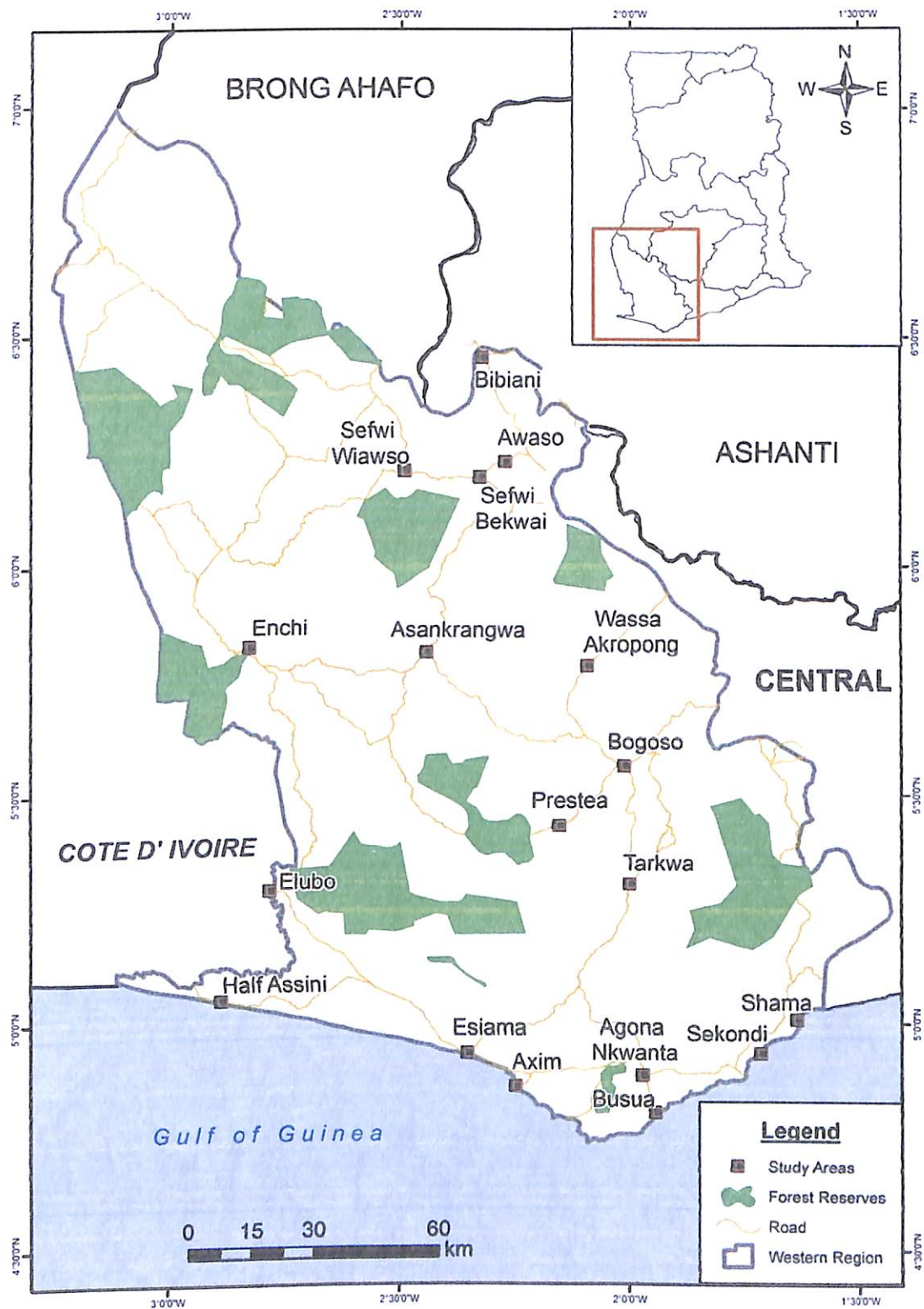


Figure 8: A map of the study area

Source: GIS Unit, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, UCC, 2013

The changing profile of the region as well as that of visitors to the region has resulted in an expansion of the hotel industry evidenced by the increase in the number of hotels. According to the regional office of the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), the number of hotels in the Western Region increased from 195 in 2010 to 213 in 2011. Most of the star rated (1-3 star) hotels are located in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis. Some of the major hotels in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis include: Takoradi Beach Hotel, Raybow Hotel, Planters Lodge, Hillcrest Hotel, Animens Hotel, Super Star Hotel, Melody Hotel, Ahenfie Hotel, Valley Beach Hotel, Super Gardens Hotel, Trust Lodge, Akroma Plaza Hotel, Summer Lodge, among others. Other major hotels outside the metropolis are: Axim Beach Hotel, Frankfaus Hotel, Ankobra Beach Hotel, B&Q Hotel, Hotel De Hilda, Bogoso Golden Hotel, Busua Beach Resort, African Rainbow Resort and Beulah Land Hotel.

The proliferation of hotels coupled with the intense competition in the hotel environment in the region calls for service quality, to ensure guests' satisfaction and repurchase. This has become necessary since the survival of hotels and the sustainability of the industry in the region in the current competitive environment may in part depend on service quality. A bad experience during a hotel service encounter could mar the entire experience for guests, and this can negatively affect repeat business (Mensah, 2009) or repurchase intentions.

Furthermore, in tandem with attempts by the Destination Management Organization (DMO) and the GTA to promote the Western Region as the most

preferred tourist destination in Ghana, the hotel sector is also contributing its quota by embracing the idea of “quality management”. Quality management is an organizational approach to understanding precisely what customers need and consistently delivering accurate solutions (“quality management in business”, 2012). Some hotels have been awarded for quality management by the GTA and others are striving to achieve this goal. Despite these initiatives, the hotel industry in the region is rarely researched in terms of service quality, and there seems to be a paucity of data on service quality in hotels in the region. The above forms the justification for selecting Western Region as the study area.

Research perspective

The philosophical underpinning of this research is the positivist perspective, which asserts that real events can be observed empirically and explained with logical analysis. This study combines a deductive orientation with precise measurement of quantitative data to enable the discovery and confirmation of causal laws to predict human behaviour (Newman, 2000). Therefore, the study uses objective methods to collect quantitative data using the questionnaire and a large sample size.

In view of the positivist perspective, the study adopts purely quantitative methods of data collection and analysis. The study also follows the hypothetico-deductive model which presents social research as interaction between empirical observation and reason or induction and deduction (Sarantakos, 2005).

Study design

This study employed the cross-sectional survey research design, which provides a general picture of the subject under study and allows for generalization to a population (Salkind, 2000). Cross-sectional surveys are used to gather information on a population at a single point in time; and so they are “designed to study some phenomenon by taking a cross-section of it at one time” (Babbie, 2007, p.89). The study is directed towards determining the nature of the service quality situation in hotels in the Western Region of Ghana, as existed at the time of the study. Data was collected from a sample of hotel guests at one time by means of questionnaires. Miller (2004) cites the following advantages for survey research: The ability to collect a wide scope of information from a large population, it deals with a real situation in the sense that the researcher collects data in the actual situation, and it provides a first step in developing hypotheses or identifying more specific problems for research.

The cross-sectional design was preferred over others such as the experimental research design, because the study looks for relationships among variables but does not manipulate them.

Data and sources

In view of the quantitative approach employed for the study, data were collected mainly through the survey method, with the use of a questionnaire. Primary data on service quality perceptions, overall satisfaction, repurchase intentions, overall perception of service quality in hotels in the Western Region;

as well as data on socio-demographic characteristics were obtained from guests of the sampled hotels.

Secondary data, which include data on the hotel industry in Ghana, regional distribution of hotels, the number of rooms and beds in hotels, were obtained from published and unpublished documents and reports such as Statistical Factsheets of the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA). Data on hotels in the Western Region were also obtained from the GTA office of the WR. Moreover, relevant websites such as www.touringhana.com and www.ghanawestcoast.com were also sourced for information.

Target population

A target population “consists of the complete group of elements (people or objects) that are identified for investigation based on the objectives of the research project” (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tathan, 2006, p.310). The target population of the study comprised all guests, aged 18 years and above, male or female who stayed in selected registered and licensed hotels in the Western Region for at least one night from August 2011 to February 2012. For the purpose of this study, a guest is defined as any individual who is a temporary visitor of either Ghanaian or international origin, stays for at least one night in the hotel and spends money for services rendered.

Sample size

Sample size can be determined either by using statistical techniques or through some ad hoc approaches. Ad hoc approaches are applied when a person knows from experience what sample size to adopt (Aaker et al., 2007). According to Peng et al. (2006), a minimum sample size of 100 respondents is needed for any type of quantitative research to reach a significant result. The sample for this study was pegged at 374 respondents.

The choice of sample size for hotel guests was informed by factors such as representativeness, the size of the population and the confidence level needed. The estimation of the sample size was therefore based on Fisher's (1950) formula for determining sample size for population greater than 10000 as follows:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where: n = required sample size

z = the standard normal deviation usually set at 1.96

p = the proportion of the target population estimated to have
particular characteristics

q = 1.0p

d = the degree of accuracy desired, usually set at 0.05

In order to obtain the value of the population used to derive the sample size for hotel guests, the total number of hotel beds was used. This was done because it was impossible to obtain a sampling frame for hotel guests. According to figures compiled by the Western Regional office of the Ghana Tourism Authority for only the licensed and registered hotels as at the time of the study,

there were a total of 2935 hotel beds. From the foregoing, the sample size of hotel guests based on a population of 2935 hotel beds was set at 374. The sample size was derived as follows:

$$n = \frac{(3.841) (0.50) (0.50)}{(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 384.1$$

for population less than 10000:

$$n = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{n}{N}}$$

Where: N = the population size

$$n = \frac{384}{1 + \frac{384}{2935}}$$

$$n = \frac{384}{1.130}$$

$$n = 339.8 \text{ approx. } 340$$

$$n = \underline{340}$$

However, the sample size was pegged at 374 hotel guests (by adding 10% of n) to ensure that the study yields adequate number of responses needed for quantitative analysis, in view of anticipated non-responses.

Sampling procedure

This study employed a multi-stage sampling technique by using a combination of cluster, stratified and simple random sampling techniques to select a sample of hotels (53 hotels) for the study. The total number of licensed and

registered hotels in the Western Region, according to the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA, 2011) was 213, comprising sixty three (63) 1-3 star hotels, 42 guest houses and 108 budget hotels. The sample size for hotels was 53 (25% of the total). The choice of the sample size for hotels was informed by what the researcher thought would be representative, what would be credible and what could be done with the available time and resources (Patton, 1990).

The first stage of the sampling was the division of the hotels in the region into three clusters: hotels in the coastal zone, hotels in the middle zone and hotels in the northern zone. The coastal zone covered areas around Sekondi-Takoradi, Shama, Agona, Axim, Busua, Half-Assini, Esiam and Elubo. The middle zone covered areas around Tarkwa, Bogoso, Prestea and Wassa Akropong. And the northern zone covered areas around Enchi, Asankragua, Sefwi Wiawso, Sefwi Bekwai, Bibiani and Awaso (See Figure 9). The next stage was to stratify the hotels in each cluster (zone) into three strata namely: one to three star, guest houses and budget hotels. The basis for the stratification was the class or rating of the hotels. The final stage was to use the simple random sampling technique to select a proportion (25%) of hotels from each stratum within a cluster to form the total sample of 53 hotels from which the respondents (hotel guests) were selected (See Table 3).

The sample of hotels was obtained by extracting the sampling frame for each stratum from the GTA list of hotels (The GTA list of hotels for 2011 served as the sampling frame). The sample size for each stratum was thus allocated 25 percent to ensure that each class of hotel and guest house was adequately

represented. A sample was randomly selected from the sampling frame for each stratum by the use of random numbers generated from a random numbers table. Finally, the individual samples from each stratum were put together to form the sample (53) of hotels used for the study.

Table 3: Sampling of hotels in the Western Region

Zone	1-3 star	25%	Guest house	25%	Budget	25%	Total	25%
Coastal zone	45	11	29	7	63	16	137	34
Middle zone	9	2	6	2	24	6	39	10
Northern zone	9	2	7	2	21	5	37	9
Total	63	15	42	11	108	27	213	53

Source: Author's construct

Convenience sampling was employed to draw the required sample of hotel guests for this study. This was necessary because of the anticipated difficulty in accessing a list of guests and their contact details, which made it impossible to draw up and apply a sampling frame. As a result of this limitation, a decision was made to use the convenience sampling approach to select the respondents (hotel guests). Thus, guests who were in-house, checking-in and checking-out at the time of visit to the hotels during the period of the fieldwork were sampled. Questionnaires were therefore administered to guests who fell within this category in the selected hotels.

On the average, 7 guests were selected from each of the fifty three (53) hotels, irrespective of class, size or occupancy to form a sample size of 374 respondents for the study (Table 4). This decision was taken to allow for generalization of findings to all categories of hotels, and to avoid the situation where findings would be skewed towards one hotel category. though the convenient sampling approach is a non probability technique and thus, not representative of the population, it is still considered to be the most practical and appropriate technique to use where there is no sampling frame (de Vaus, 2002).

Table 4: Sampling of hotel guests

Hotel category	Number of hotels	Number of guests
1 -3 star	15	106
Guest house	11	78
Budget hotels	27	190
Total	53	374

Source: Author's construct

One major weakness of the convenience sampling method is that it is less representative. Therefore, to ensure representativeness, and to capture both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests, care was taken not to select respondents from only one group. This was achieved by first allowing guests who were checking in to fill the hotel's registration form, and this made it possible for their nationalities to be detected.

Research instrument (Questionnaire)

In view of the quantitative approach used, data were mainly collected by means of questionnaires. A self-administered questionnaire, a modified SERVPERF scale (performance-only items), based on the five SERVQUAL dimensions and named HOSQUAL was employed in this study.

The questionnaire consisted of three main sections. The first section was designed to measure service quality perceptions of hotel guests using 48 hotel-specific items based on five domains: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The next section covered items that measured the overall service quality of the hotels from guests' perspective, the overall satisfaction level of hotel guests, and the intention to repurchase. The third section of the questionnaire had questions relating to demographic data (age, nationality, gender, level of education, marital status, religion, and occupation) of the respondents. Some researchers (Babakus & Mangold 1992; Karatepe & Avci, 2002) point out that a five-point Likert scale works better and increases response rate and response quality. Therefore, a five-point scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was preferred for data collection, and not the seven-point scale on the original SERVPERF.

Some items on the original SERVQUAL instrument refined by Parasuraman et al. (1991) were adapted and used in a SERVPERF instrument (Cronin & Taylor, 1992, 1994) that was modified to suit the hotel setting and named HOSQUAL. This resulted in changes in some of the original items. The

HOSQUAL instrument contained a list of items designed with reference to the five SERVQUAL dimensions, which resulted in a 48 item scale (See Appendix).

Pre-testing

Pre-tests are small tests of single elements of a research instrument that are predominantly used to check the 'mechanical' structure of the instrument (Sarantakos, 2005). A pre-test was undertaken in July, 2011 in order to identify ambiguities, misunderstandings or other inadequacies (Ary et al., 2002), to make the instrument more relevant and appropriate and to ensure the content validity of the instrument for the actual data collection. Thus, in the pretest, questionnaires were administered to twenty (20) hotel guests in Cape Coast. Participants in the field test were asked to complete the questionnaire and to comment on the total time it took to complete.

The major issues identified with the questionnaires during the pre-test were inadequate response sets, questions not properly structured or worded and the irrelevance of some of the questions in the Ghanaian context. The instrument was subsequently revised through the addition, re-wording and deletion of some of the items on the scale. The pre-test helped to improve the questionnaire.

Appropriate reliability and validity tests were conducted to validate the results empirically. Reliability refers to the instrument's ability to provide consistent results in repeated uses whereas validity refers to the degree to which the instrument measures the concept the researcher wants to measure (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). This provides confidence that the empirical findings accurately

reflect the proposed constructs. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to check the unidimensionality of the measure (Anderson & Gerbing, 1991; Stevens, 1996) in order to ascertain that each item in the model represents the same measure (Ahire, Golhar & Waller, 1996). Because the service constructs were determined from the literature, their selection can be defended on face value, and face validity is thus ensured (Kaplan & Sakuzo, 1993). Since the measuring instrument was adapted from the SERVQUAL and SERVPERF measures, which have been widely used among researchers and have achieved consensus for the variables under consideration, content validity can be confidently asserted (Bohrnstedt, 1983).

The pre-testing of the instrument enabled the establishment of the internal consistency and reliability of the instrument. A reliability co-efficient of 0.977 was achieved. The instrument was therefore deemed reliable since, according to Wallen and Fraenkel (2001), reliability coefficient should be at least 0.70 or higher to be considered reliable for effective instruments.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork was undertaken from 18th August, 2011 to 28th February, 2012 in the Western Region of Ghana. The target population for this study was all guests who experienced the services of hotels in the Western Region and had stayed for at least one night. The accessible population for this study therefore comprised guests who met the above criteria and were willing to complete the questionnaire. Prior to the administration of the questionnaires, contacts were

made either in person or via telephone with the management of the selected hotels, to discuss the study and to establish a rapport. The discussion mainly centered on explaining the purpose of the research and requesting for their assistance with the data collection, by accepting and granting permission for their guests to partake in the study.

Four field assistants were trained to assist in the collection of the data. They were Bachelor of Technology graduates of Tourism Management and Hospitality Management from the Takoradi Polytechnic. Two of the field assistants were senior instructors at the Hospitality department of the Takoradi Polytechnic while the other two were National Service personnel attached to the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) office in Takoradi. The training was geared towards equipping the assistants with relevant skills in interviewing, translation of the questions and research ethics. They were introduced to the purpose and objectives of the research and were also given the necessary directives as to the conduct of the fieldwork.

For the purpose of this study, questionnaires were self-administered directly to the target population (guests) at the front desk, the lobby, the restaurant and recreational areas of the selected hotels. This method was preferred because it saved time and also allowed respondents to complete the questionnaires without any direct assistance from the researchers. The questionnaires were also cheaper and allowed for more truthful responses because they provided anonymity (Salkind, 2000). Though most of the questionnaires were self-administered, on a few occasions, questionnaires had to be administered through interviewing. Some

of the guests, especially those who were about to check out, completed the questionnaires immediately. Questionnaires were also handed over at the front desk to guests who were checking in and were asked to complete it and return it to the front desk when checking out or to leave it in their rooms to be picked up.

Since the nationality of guests could not be readily anticipated, it was not possible to assign specific quotas. However, to ensure that the study captured both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests, guests checking in were allowed to fill the hotel's registration form before the questionnaire was administered to them. This made it possible to detect if they were Ghanaians or not. In situations where only Ghanaians or non-Ghanaians were found to be available in some hotels, some questionnaires were administered; then after a day or two, when the other category was found to be available, the rest of the questionnaires were administered. This approach was possible because research assistants either stayed in budget hotels or with friends and relations around the vicinity of the selected hotels. This technique also ensured that the study captured both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests.

Fieldwork challenges

Like all other large scale studies, a number of challenges were encountered on the field: Nonetheless, these did not compromise the validity of the data collected since steps were taken to systematically address the drawbacks.

First, there was the uncooperative attitude of some of the respondents who had little time to spare because they were either busy or tired and needed to rest.

Others complained that they were continually inundated with questionnaires of various forms either from students or research institutions, and they felt it was a bother to them. To deal with this challenge, respondents were once again made to understand the purpose of the research and the importance of their contributions as hotel guests. Also, their privacy was not invaded and they were not coerced to participate in the study. Some of them consented to participate eventually. For those who remained adamant, the substitution sampling method was adopted.

Fieldwork was rather tedious due to the geographical spread of the hotels in the study area. The hotels were not concentrated in a particular area but rather widespread. This was especially so in the middle and northern zones of the study area. In addition, there was no proper signage or directional signs to some of the hotels. The poor nature of the roads in some parts of the region further aggravated the situation. To reduce the difficulty and discomfort of travelling over long distances, a private vehicle was used instead of public transport. This made it possible to stop intermittently along the way to inquire from residents, in situations where there were no directional signs.

Despite the assurance that responses provided by respondents would remain confidential with the guarantee of anonymity, some of the hotel managers were still reluctant to allow their guests to participate in the study. They were suspicious of the true essence of the research and thought that responses obtained from their guests would be used against them. However, after a thorough explanation of the purpose of the study and further assurance of confidentiality and anonymity, they accepted and allowed their guests to participate in the study.

Those who remained adamant were excluded from the study and substituted with other hotels of the same category.

Administering questionnaires in the 1-3 star hotels was slow and lengthy due to the fact that it took days just to see the managers of the hotels for their permissions to be sought in order to administer the questionnaires. In some cases the questionnaire had to be approved by management before permission was given. In order to reduce the bureaucratic channels one had to go through, personal phone calls were made to the managers to book meeting appointments or seek permission to administer the questionnaires.

In some cases questionnaires were retrieved after several visits and phone calls. Because of this some questionnaires were either missing or taken away by guests. This challenge was dealt with by the administration of new questionnaires. Fieldwork was therefore prolonged due to the length of time it took to retrieve the questionnaires.

Response rate

A total of 366 guest questionnaires were returned from the field but 358 were considered useful for the analysis. The response rate of every survey is considered to be very critical with regard to the quality of the data. In this survey, though 374 questionnaires were administered, 358 were considered appropriate, representing a response rate of 95.7% as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Sample and response rate

Hotel category	Sample		Response rate	
	number	%	number	%
1-3 star	106	28.3	103	97.2
Guest house	78	20.9	75	96.2
Budget hotel	190	50.8	180	94.7
Total	374	100.0	358	95.7

Source: Field survey, 2012

Non-response occurred due to respondents either simply refusing to take part in the study or partially completing the questionnaire. The response rate of 95.7% was thus deemed appropriate for analysis and interpretation of the data. To deal with anticipated non-responses, the following measures were put in place. First, a larger sample than what was needed was drawn. Secondly, respondents were personally approached and explanations given to them where possible, rather than relying solely on the managers and the front desk personnel. Lastly, the substitution sampling method was used in situations where respondents refused to take part in the study. These measures ensured that there was a high response rate.

Methods of data analysis and presentation

This study employed quantitative methods of analysis, using SPSS (Statistical Product for Service Solution) for windows version 17.0. Data collected from the field was prepared by checking, editing and coding in order to ensure

clarity and consistency to allow for easy data entry. The reliability of the scale was tested using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient to establish internal consistency. The analysis was done based on the objectives set and the hypotheses formulated for the study.

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and simple percentages were calculated for all the variables and used in describing and summarizing the data and other characteristics of the subject matter. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the socio-demographic and travel characteristics of guests. Percentages and means were also used to identify which service quality attributes were highly or lowly perceived by guests. Percentage in agreement was then used to explore the perceptions of Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests with regard to the specific service quality attributes.

An inferential statistic method like the Chi-square test of independence was used to explore the relationship between hotel patronage and guests' background characteristics and to examine the relationship between guests' overall perception of service quality and their background characteristics.

The independent sample t-test and the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were also used to explore the extent to which guests' perceptions of service quality dimensions vary with their socio-demographic and travel characteristics. Furthermore, the ANOVA was employed to assess guests' perceptions of service quality among the different categories of hotels through the comparison of the means generated. The independent samples t-test was again

used to examine the extent to which guests' perceptions of service quality vary between star-rated and non star-rated hotels.

The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was also used to identify the structure of the underlying dimensions of hotel service quality perceptions. The items on the scale for measuring service quality were grouped together in a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) using varimax rotation.

The binary logistic regression analysis was employed to determine the best predictors of guests' satisfaction; and to assess the effect of overall satisfaction on perceived service quality and guests' repurchase intentions. Finally, the Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to examine the relationships that exist among perceived service quality, satisfaction and repurchase intentions.

Results obtained were presented in the form of tables, which were interpreted alongside discussions based on the objectives set for this study and the hypotheses formulated. References to existing literature were made where appropriate.

Ethical considerations

Certain ethical considerations concerned with such matters as plagiarism and honesty in reporting of results arise in all fields of research, but additional issues arise when the research involves human subjects (Veal, 2006). The study was preceded by a thorough review of literature to establish its originality. All sources of data and information or ideas used were duly acknowledged, and results obtained were accurately reported.

The purpose of the research was verbally explained to the respondents, clearly establishing the nature of the research as an academic exercise and not giving them false impressions about the research. There was a clear indication of the purpose of the research in the cover letter on the questionnaire as well. Clear information as to the type of questions and the degree of question sensitivity or stress was also given. This was done in order to obtain respondents' consent to participate. According to Veal (2006), in some cases, obtaining respondents' written 'informed consent' is neither practicable nor necessary. Written informed consent was therefore not sought for this study due to its nature as a non-experimental survey, which poses no risk of physical or psychological harm to the respondents.

Sarantakos (2005) asserts that "ethical standards prescribe that respondents should never be coerced to take part in a study; participation should be free, voluntary and fully informed" (p.20). Participation was completely voluntary, and only those who were willing to participate were included in the study. The protection of respondents' identity was accomplished as the respondents were made to exercise their rights to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. Moreover, it was ensured that no one else had access to the data, and confidentiality was preserved by assigning numbers to each questionnaire such that no questionnaire could be identified with a particular respondent.

Summary

This chapter focused on the methodology of the study, including a description of the study area. The study followed a cross-sectional survey research design. Both primary and secondary data were collected from hotel guests and relevant institutions. Questionnaires were used to elicit data from hotel guests. Probability sampling procedures were followed to arrive at a sample of 53 hotels which were included in the study. Due to the lack of a sampling frame, the convenience sampling approach was employed to select a sample of 374 hotel guests. The chapter further described how data was collected for the study and also outlined field work challenges and how they were dealt with. Finally, the chapter identified data analysis methods used and how the results were presented.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHARACTERISTICS OF HOTEL GUESTS

Introduction

This chapter first provides a description of the socio-demographic and travel characteristics of guests who patronized hotels in the Western Region. The chapter then examines the relationship between hotel patronage and guests' characteristics and explores guests' reasons for choice of hotel.

Profile of hotel guests

Demographic variables are the most popular bases for classifying/segmenting customers. Consumer wants, preferences and usage rates are often associated with demographic variables since they are easy to measure (Kotler, 2003). Information on socio-demographic characteristics is essential for the interpretation and understanding of perceptions of service quality though there has been very little attempt to link the socio-demographic characteristics of customers to their perception of service quality (Mensah, 2009). The question of how socio-demographic variables influence consumer behaviour is an important issue that has to be studied (Kim & Chung, 2011).

Table 6 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents which include nationality, age, gender, marital status, level of education, religious affiliation, occupation, and monthly income. Generally, the respondents covered in this study were mostly males between the ages 18 and 39 years, Christians,

married, and with university/college education. They were mostly professionals who earned more than GH¢2000 per month.

Table 6: Socio-demographic characteristics of hotel guests

Socio-demographic characteristics	Frequency (N= 358)	Percentage (%)
Nationality		
Ghanaian	249	69.6
Non-Ghanaian	109	30.4
Age (in years)		
18-39	200	57.3
40-59	135	38.6
60 and above	14	4.1
Gender		
Male	289	80.7
Female	69	19.3
Marital status		
Never married	102	28.5
Married	242	67.5
Previously married	14	4.0
Level of education		
Primary/Basic school	11	3.1
Secondary/High school	73	20.4
Tertiary/University	187	52.2
Postgraduate	87	24.3
Religious affiliation		
Christian	294	82.1
Muslim	24	6.8

Table 6 (continued)

Judaist	15	4.2
Atheist	17	4.7
Other	8	2.2
Occupation		
Self-employed	80	22.3
Professionals	245	68.4
Retired	12	3.4
Student	21	5.9
Monthly income (GH¢)		
Less than 500	43	13.0
500-999	87	26.1
1000-1499	56	16.8
1500-1999	47	14.1
2000 and above	100	30.0

Source: Field survey, 2012

As shown in Table 6, about two thirds (70%) of the respondents were Ghanaians whilst the remaining (30%) were non-Ghanaians from countries such as United Kingdom (6.4%), Norway (3.7%), United States of America (6.4%), China (9.2%), Korea (9.2%), Germany (8.3%), Togo (5.5%), Nigeria (11.9%), India (6.4%), South Africa (10.1%), the Netherlands (5.5%), Australia (9.2%), Spain (3.6%) and Canada (4.6%). This finding seems to suggest that hotels in the Western Region are patronized more by Ghanaians.

Over half of the respondents (57.3%) were within the 18-39 age bracket and were followed by those aged between 40 and 59 years (39%). This is in

contradiction with Karatepe and Avci's (2002) findings where more than half of the respondents fell in the age categories of 28-37 years and 38-47 years, with 18.5 percent belonging to the age category of 18-27 years. This finding is, however, close to Yilmaz's (2009) study which found more than half of guests to be between the ages of 18-44 years.

Table 6 indicates that the sample for the study comprised more males (81%) than females (19%). This also contradicts the observation made by Juwaheer (2004) in Mauritius that about an equal proportion of females (50.4%) and males (49.6%) make use of the existing hotel facilities. On the contrary, it reinforced the finding of Tsang and Qu (2000) in China that more males (65%) utilized hotels than their female counterparts (35%). Traditionally, males are known to travel more than females, and this could be a contributory factor to the low patronage by female guests. Traditionally, the Ghanaian culture also frowns on women patronizing hotel facilities, and therefore, the few female guests could be made up of more non-Ghanaians than Ghanaians.

Close to 68 per cent of the respondents were married while 28 per cent were never married. The rest (4%) were either divorced, separated, or widowed. This finding is inconsistent with the popular notion that people who are single (never married and previously married) travel more because they may not have any family responsibilities and obligations.

As evident from Table 7, a little over half (52%) of the respondents were tertiary/university graduates. They are followed by those who had postgraduate education (24%). This finding conforms with those of Tsang and Qu (2000),

Karatepe and Avci (2002) and Juwaheer (2004), who observed that more than half of guests who patronize hotels had a university, college or graduate education.

With regards to religious affiliation, the majority of the respondents (82%) were Christians, followed by Muslims (7%). The rest (11%) were Judaists, Atheists and those who practiced other religions. This finding was expected because it is a fact that there are more Christians than Muslims in Ghana. The 2010 population census reported 71.2 per cent Christians and 17.6 per cent Muslims (Ghana Demographics Profiles, 2013).

From Table 6, guests were mostly professionals - doctors, nurses, pharmacists, lawyers, accountants, auditors, bankers, teachers, engineers, miners, drivers and managers (68.4%), followed by the self-employed - businessmen/women and entrepreneurs (22.3%). This finding is in line with observations made by researchers such as Tsang and Qu (2002) in China, Nadiri and Hussain (2005) in Cyprus and Yilmaz (2009). For example, Yilmaz (2009) in a study on service quality in the hotel industry in Cappadocia, found out that most of the hotel clients were professionals.

With regard to monthly income, respondents who earned GH¢2000 and above were relatively more (30%) while 13 per cent earned less than GH¢500. All the other income groupings were fairly represented. This implies that staying in a hotel does not really require a certain threshold of income. This is because there are different categories and classes of hotels (star rated and non-star rated) that offer different room rates. Usually, the star-rated hotels have higher room rates than the non star-rated ones.

Travel characteristics of hotel guests

Apart from socio-demographic elements, travel characteristics were also considered in the study because it is known to inform the overall perception of the hotel guest (Kim & Chung, 2011). Table 7 presents the travel characteristics of the respondents. The elements covered were purpose of visit, length of stay, travel party and visit to the hotel. Generally, guests travelled for business purposes and stayed for 1-5 days. They mostly travelled alone and were either travelling for the first time or had some travel experience.

Travelling for business purposes (57.5%) was the leading reason guests offered for staying in hotels in the Western Region. This was followed by those who were on vacation (14.2%). This finding also contradicts Juwaheer's (2004) study which found the majority (85%) of guests staying in hotels for leisure purposes followed by business.

Table 7: Travel characteristics of hotel guests

Travel characteristics	Frequency (N= 358)	Percentage (%)
Purpose of visit		
Business	206	57.5
Conference	20	5.6
Visiting friends & relations	34	9.5
Vacation	51	14.2
Education/Research	22	6.1
Other	25	7.1

Table 7 (continued)

Length of stay		
1-5 days	238	66.4
6-10 days	58	16.2
More than 10 days	62	17.4
Travel party		
Alone	218	61.0
In a group	63	17.6
With spouse	46	12.8
With family	23	6.4
Other	8	2.2
Status of guest		
First time guest	184	51.4
Repeat guest	174	48.6

Source: Field survey, 2012

About 7 percent associated their stay in the hotels in the Western Region with other purposes such as official duties, funerals, and outreach programmes. This finding is in conformity with the general trend in Ghana. Visitors' main purpose of travelling to Ghana has been reported to be business reasons followed by vacation ("visitors to Ghana", 2012).

More than half (66%) of the guests reported staying between 1 and 5 days. However, the average length of stay for visitors to Ghana has been reported to be 10.7 days (UNCTAD, 2010). Therefore the relatively high proportion of guests

staying for 1-5 days could be attributed to the fact that they were mostly Ghanaians. The rest who reported staying for over 6 days constituted 33.6 per cent. This observation could be explained by the fact that most of the guests who stayed in the hotels for over 6 days may have been foreigners who had travelled to the Western Region for business and other purposes and might have taken temporary accommodation in the hotels.

The majority of the respondents (61%) travelled alone and this is followed by those who travelled in a group (45%), and those who travelled with their spouses (32.9%). For about 51 per cent of the respondents, it was the first time they had travelled to stay in the hotel whilst 49 per cent had ever travelled to stay in the hotel before. This shows a split in number of guests either visiting the hotel for the first time or being on repeat visit, and this was good for the hotel business. What this implies is that, apart from attracting new guests, hotels in the Western Region were also enjoying repurchase by guests. Repeat visitors are thought to be an appealing segment because they are believed to be more destination loyal (Oppermann, 1999, 2000). It also costs less to attract repeat visitors than first timers and, importantly, they can provide a reliable revenue stream to pay for the costs of pursuing new visitors (Petrick, 2004).

Class of hotel and guests' characteristics

The Chi square statistic (X^2) was used to explore relationships between the class of hotels and guests' background characteristics. Class of was the dependent

variable while guests' background characteristics formed the independent variables. The results are presented in Table 8.

As shown in Table 8, significant relationships existed between class of hotel and some of the background characteristics (nationality, monthly income, level of education, occupation and purpose of visit). A significant relationship was established at $p = 0.000$ between class of hotel and nationality of guests. The majority (89.9 %) of the non-Ghanaian guests stayed in the star-rated hotels whilst guests who utilized the non-star rated hotels comprised more of Ghanaian guests (41.4%).

Table 8: Class of hotel by guests' background characteristics (N=358)

Background characteristics	Number	Hotel category		χ^2 (p-value)
		Star rated (%)	Non-star rated (%)	
Nationality				
Ghanaian	249	58.6	41.4	34.369 (0.000*)
Non-Ghanaian	109	89.9	10.1	
Age				
18-39	200	67.5	32.5	0.527 (0.760)
49-59	135	68.9	31.1	
60 and above	14	76.9	23.1	
Gender				
Male	289	65.7	34.3	5.321 (0.070)
Female	69	78.3	21.7	
Marital status				
Never married	120	60.8	39.2	

Table 8 (continued)

Married	242	70.2	29.8	14.105
Previously married	14	61.1	38.9	(0.079)
Level of education				
Primary/basic	11	36.4	63.6	
Secondary/high school	73	68.5	31.5	
Tertiary/University	187	64.2	35.8	19.388
Postgraduate	87	80.5	19.5	(0.004*)
Religious affiliation				
Christian	294	66.0	34.0	
Muslim	24	58.3	41.7	
Judaism	15	86.7	13.3	
Atheist	17	94.1	5.9	44.847
Other	8	91.7	8.3	(0.000*)
Occupation				
Self-employed	80	68.8	31.2	
Professional	245	65.3	34.7	
Retired	12	66.7	33.3	51.922
Student	21	71.4	28.6	(0.000*)
Monthly income (GH¢)				
Less than 500	43	37.2	62.8	
500-999	87	56.4	43.6	
1000-1499	56	75.0	25.0	
1500-1999	47	68.1	31.9	51.922
2000 and above	100	86.0	14.0	(0.000*)
Purpose of visit				
Business	206	69.9	30.1	
Conference	20	75.0	25.0	
VFR	34	47.1	52.9	
Vacation	51	74.5	25.5	

Table 8 (continued)

Education/research	22	63.6	36.6	19.401
Other	25	68.0	68.0	(0.035*)
Length of stay				
1-5 days	238	63.4	36.6	
6-10 days	58	72.4	27.6	13.397
More than 10 days	62	83.9	16.0	(0.495)
Travel party				
Alone	218	67.9	32.1	
In a group	63	61.9	38.1	
With spouse	46	78.3	21.7	
With family	23	65.2	34.8	5.045
Other	8	62.5	37.5	(0.538)
Status of visit				
First visit	184	63.6	36.4	3.643
Repeat visit	174	73.0	27.0	(0.162)

*Significance level $p \leq 0.05$; VFR (Visiting friends & relations)

Source: Field survey, 2012

Similarly, a significant relationship ($p = 0.004$) was established between class of hotel and guests' level of education. Guests with postgraduate education were noted to stay in the star rated hotels (80.5%) more than their other counterparts while those who stayed in the non-star rated hotels were mostly primary and basic school leavers (63.6%). Interestingly, this latter group was also the group with the least representation (36.4%) of guests who stayed in the star rated hotels.

Like educational attainment, a significant relationship ($p = 0.000$) was also found between class of hotel and occupation. Surprisingly, more (71.4%) students were found to stay in the star-rated hotels while about a third (34.7%) of professionals stayed in the non-star rated hotels. Students may not be earning regular incomes to enable them patronize the star-rated hotels which obviously charge higher room rates. However, the reason behind this finding could be that these students might have travelled for educational or research purposes that may have been sponsored by institutions or organizations. It could also mean that these students may not have been staying alone in the hotel, but at the expense of other guests belonging to the other occupational groups.

As expected, a significant relationship was established between hotel patronage and income ($p = 0.000$). The result showed that guests who earned the highest monthly income (more than GH¢2000) patronized the star-rated hotels while individuals who earned less than GH¢500 were observed to patronize the non-star rated hotels. In contrast, no significant relationships were detected between hotel patronage and age ($p = 0.760$), gender ($p = 0.070$), marital status ($p = 0.079$) and religious affiliation ($p = 0.358$).

With respect to trip characteristics, a significant relationship ($p = 0.035$) was established between patronage of hotel and purpose of visit. More than half (75%) of guests travelling for conference stayed in star-rated hotels while a little over half (53%) of those visiting friends and relations (VFR) preferred non star-rated hotels. No significant relationships were found to exist between hotel choice

and length of stay ($p = 0.495$), travel party ($p = 0.538$) and status of visit ($p = 0.162$).

Reasons for choice of hotel

Having explored the relationship between class of hotel and guests' characteristics, it was deemed prudent to probe further to identify guests' reasons for choosing the hotel they stayed in. Eleven reasons were identified, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Reasons for choice of hotel

Reasons	Frequency (N=358)	Percentage (%)
Location of the hotel	202	56.4
Affordable room rate	177	49.4
Recommended by a friend	175	48.9
Good quality service	150	41.9
Clean environment	149	41.6
Security and safety	145	40.5
The hotel has a good image	134	37.4
Good quality food and beverage	93	26.0
The class/rating of the hotel	81	22.6
Efficient reservation system	80	22.3
Attractive architectural design	73	20.4

Source: Field survey, 2012

Location (56.4%) was found to be the major reason informing the choice of hotels guests stayed in. This implies that location plays a major role in guests' decision on their choice of hotel. This finding is consistent with Ekinici, Prokopaki and Cobanoglu (2003) who observed that location is the primary reason for choice of hotel and that this is followed by facilities provided and quality of services. Lockyer (2005b) also identified factors such as location, price, facilities and cleanliness as having a strong influence on travellers' hotel choice. Similarly, Stringam, Gerdes and Vanleeuwen (2010) found location, size of guest room, staff facilities and breakfast to be the major reasons for choosing a hotel. Other dominant reasons given include affordable room rates (49.4%), recommendations by friends (48.9%), good quality service (41.9%), clean environment (41.6%), and security and safety (40.5%).

Summary

This chapter has provided a description of hotels in the WR of Ghana, as well as the socio-demographic and travel characteristics of the hotels' guests. The relationship between hotel patronage and guests' characteristics has been examined. Guests' reasons for choice of hotel have also been explored. Issues that emerged were that the sampled hotels' guests were mostly Ghanaians, males, young, married and highly-educated. Most of the guests were Christians, professionals and earned monthly incomes of more than GH¢2000. They mostly travelled alone and for business purposes for less than one week. For a little over half of the sampled guests, it was their first stay in the hotel. There were

statistically significant relationships among guests' nationality, occupation, level of education, monthly income as well as the purpose of visit on the one hand and hotel patronage on the other hand. This sets the contextual background for subsequent discussions with regard to guests' perceptions of service quality, their satisfaction and repurchase intentions for hotels in the Western Region of Ghana.

CHAPTER SIX

GUESTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY IN HOTELS IN THE WESTERN REGION

Introduction

In the highly competitive hotel industry, service becomes one of the most important elements for gaining a sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace. Consequently, many service managers and scholars have directed their attention towards understanding how customers perceive the quality of service (Marković & Raspor, 2010). Hence, as the background characteristics of guests in hotels in the Western Region have been explored in the previous chapter, this chapter now looks at the perceptions of these guests with regard to service quality in the hotels. Issues pertaining to the overall perception of service quality and how it relates with the background characteristics of guests are explored. Service quality dimensions are also explored in relation to guests' background characteristics. Also the perceptions of specific hotel service quality attributes are examined with descriptive statistics. Finally, this chapter examines guests' perceptions of service quality among the different hotel categories as well as service quality problems observed by guests.

Guests' overall perception of service quality in hotels

Due to the increasing importance placed on service quality, many studies have sought to examine how guests perceive the quality of services and the impact that improved service quality has on the hotel industry (Ladhari, 2009;

Kadampully & Hu, 2007). Results from Figure 9 show that nearly three-quarters (72%) of the hotel guests rated service quality in the hotels as high while 10 percent thought that service quality was low with 18 percent of them rating it as moderate. This number is still very significant as far as service quality in hotels is concerned. This is because service quality is all about excellent service, which implies service without defects. Studies have shown that hotel customers are likely to become more demanding in terms of the level of hotel services they consider to be satisfactory (Nadiri & Hussain, 2005), and also expect improved services from the hotels (Yilmaz, 2009).

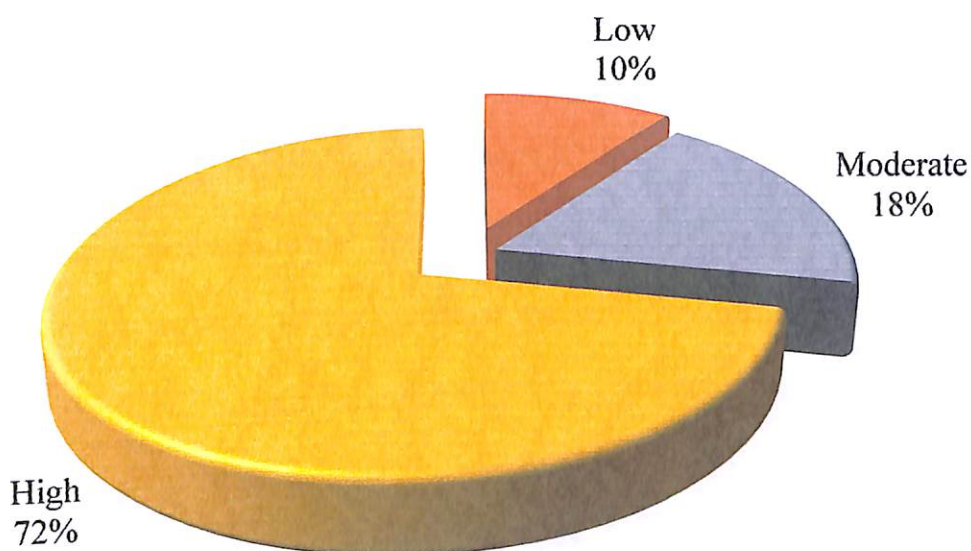


Figure 9: Guests' overall perception of service quality in hotels

Source: Field survey, 2012

Perceptions of service quality by guests' background characteristics

To further examine how guests' characteristics relate to their overall perception of service quality, a Chi-square test of independence (X^2) was used.

Tables 10 and 11 present the results of the test of relationship between overall perception and guests' background characteristics. Overall perception was the dependent variable while guests' characteristics formed the independent variables. Table 10 shows significant relationships between overall perception of service quality and some socio-demographic variables of guests: gender, level of education, religious affiliation, occupation and monthly income.

A significant relationship was established at $p = 0.054$ between overall perception of service quality and the gender of guests. Based on this result, the hypothesis that, there is no significant relationship between guests' overall perception of service quality and their gender was rejected. The majority of female guests (81.4%) rated service quality as high, while those who rated service quality to be moderate comprised more males (21%). This observation suggests that guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region can be influenced by their gender. In a similar study in hospitals, Butler, Sharon and Turner (1996) showed that women perceived a higher level of hospital service quality than men.

On the contrary, Spathis et al. (2004) who studied the effect of gender on the perception of service quality found that male customers perceived a higher level of quality than females. Highlighting the influence of gender on behaviour, Fisher and Arnold (1994) argued that consumption behaviour related to gender could be either biological, attitudinal or the personality traits of masculinity and femininity distinguishing man from woman.

Table 10: Overall perception of service quality and socio-demographic characteristics of guests

Socio-demographics	F	Overall perception			X ² (P-value)
		Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	
Gender					
Male	289	9.7	20.9	69.4	9.279*
Female	69	11.4	7.2	81.4	(0.054)
Age (in years)					
18-39	200	11.0	14.0	74.0	
40-59	135	8.2	24.4	67.4	9.769
60 and above	14	0.0	15.4	84.6	(0.282)
Marital status					
Unmarried	116	11.7	16.2	72.1	1.320
Married	242	9.3	19.0	71.7	(0.858)
Level of education					
Primary/Basic school	11	10.0	10.0	80.0	
Secondary/High Sch.	73	14.2	7.9	77.9	
Tertiary/University	187	11.6	19.3	69.1	26.293*
Postgraduate	87	4.6	24.1	71.3	(0.050)
Religious affiliation					
Christian	294	11.7	18.2	70.1	
Muslim	24	10.5	11.0	78.9	
Judaist	15	0.0	25.5	74.5	
Atheist	17	0.0	37.5	62.5	24.369*

Table 10 (continued)

Other	8	2.6	12.8	84.6	<i>(0.018)</i>
Occupation					
Self-employed	80	19.1	11.8	69.1	
Professional	245	8.8	23.7	67.5	
Retired	12	0.0	4.3	95.7	<i>36.406**</i>
Students	21	16.7	11.1	72.2	<i>(0.000)</i>
Nationality					
Ghanaian	249	11.7	17.8	70.5	<i>7.820</i>
Non-Ghanaian	109	6.5	18.7	74.8	<i>(0.098)</i>
Monthly income(GH¢)					
Less than 500	43	2.0	16.0	82.0	
500-999	87	20.0	20.3	59.7	
1000-1499	56	14.2	18.4	67.4	
1500-1999	47	13.3	31.0	54.7	<i>31.675**</i>
2000 and above	100	2.1	20.6	77.3	<i>(0.011)</i>

Significance level $p \leq 0.051$

Source: Field survey, 2012

Similarly, a significant relationship ($p = 0.050$) was established between overall perception of service quality and guests' level of education. Based on this result, the hypothesis that, there is no significant relationship between guests' overall perception of service quality and their level of education was rejected.

Guests with primary/basic education were noted to have a higher perception of service quality (80%) than their other counterparts while those who perceived overall service quality to be moderate were mostly postgraduates (24%). This finding is consistent with the research done by Webb (1998) which is related to the study of expectations of consumers with respect to service quality. Webb's study showed that the respondents with a lower level of education had a higher perception level regarding service quality. The reason for this could be that, traditionally, people with low levels of education are not exposed to much information on service quality in hotels and may therefore find little or no problem with service quality in the hotels.

Like educational attainment, a significant relationship ($p = 0.018$) was detected between overall perception of service quality and guests' religious affiliation. Relatively more Muslim guests (79%) than guests belonging to the other religious groups were found to perceive overall service quality to be high while those who perceived overall service quality to be moderate were mostly Atheists (36%).

A significant relationship ($p = 0.000$) was also established between guests' overall perception of service quality and their occupation. Based on this result, the hypothesis that, there is no significant relationship between guests' overall perceptions of service quality and their occupation was rejected. Relatively more (96%) guests who were retirees were found to perceive overall service quality as high while more guests (24%) who were professionals perceived service quality as moderate. This finding confirms that of Venn and Fone (2005) who found that

a higher perception of service quality was significantly associated with the retired whereas lower levels were associated with those working or students.

As shown in Table 10, a significant relationship ($p = 0.011$) was detected between overall perception of service quality and the monthly income of guests. Interestingly, the majority (82%) of guests who perceived service quality to be high were those who earned less than GH¢500. The reason for this observation could be that this group mostly patronized the non-star rated hotels (See Table 8) where much was not expected in terms of service quality. This was followed by guests who earned GH¢2000 and more (77.3%). Traditionally, it is expected that the more you pay the better service you receive. This might be the reason for the high perception of guests earning more than GH¢2000. On the other hand, those who perceived service quality in the hotels to be moderate comprised relatively more (31%) of guests who earned 1500-1999 Ghana cedis.

In contrast, no significant relationship ($p = 0.282$) was established between overall perception of service quality and guests' ages. Based on this result, the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between guests' overall perception of service and their age failed to be rejected. However, Table 10 shows that guests who were aged 60 years and above had relatively high (84.6%) perceptions than guests who were younger. Age has largely been considered a critical factor in services marketing, in that it makes it possible for the marketer to determine how desires and needs change and evolve when the individual grows (Stafford, 1996).

Similarly, there was no significant relationship ($p = 0.098$) between overall perception of service quality and the nationality of guests. Based on this result, the hypothesis that, there is no significant relationship between guests' overall perception of service quality and their nationality failed to be rejected. More than half of both Ghanaian guests (71%) and non-Ghanaian guests (75%) perceived service quality to be high. This observation implies that guests' overall perceptions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region were not influenced by their nationality even though there could be variations in perceptions regarding the various dimensions and specific attributes of service quality as discussed in the subsequent sections.

Among the eight socio-demographic variables used, five variables including gender, level of education, religious affiliation, occupation and income were found to be significantly related to the overall perception of service quality. This implies that the demographic variables which showed statistically significant relationships in the levels of perceptions of service quality are influential factors on the overall service quality. It may therefore be beneficial for managers in hotels to develop new strategies based on these findings. In other words, segmenting guests on the basis of their gender, level of education, religious affiliation, occupation and income could be considered for marketing efforts to be targeted appropriately. Mullin et al. (2000) acknowledged that market segmentation is one of the key strategies that create a bridge between managerial analysis and managerial action. Knowing guests from their demographic data can

assist hotel managers to identify areas that need improvement regarding service quality.

Table 11 shows that a significant relationship at $p \leq 0.05$ existed between perceived service quality and only one travel characteristic – status of guest. The majority (82.2%) of the repeat guests perceived service quality in the hotels to be moderate while more (23%) first time guests perceived service quality to be high. Even though overall perception did not show any significant relationship with the other travel characteristics, Table 11 shows some interesting results. Most of the guests across the various travel characteristics groupings perceived service quality in the hotels to be moderate, with percentage ratings ranging between 56 percent and 88 percent.

Table 11: Perception of service quality and travel characteristics

Travel characteristics	N	Overall perception			X ² Statistic (p-value)
		Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	
Purpose of visit					
Business	206	10.8	71.6	17.6	5.740 (0.837)
Conference	20	18.2	63.6	18.2	
Visiting friends & relations	34	5.7	71.4	22.9	
Vacation	51	5.9	76.5	17.6	
Education/Research	22	8.3	75.0	16.7	

Table 11 (continued)

Other	25	22.2	55.6	22.2	
Length of stay					
1-5 days	238	11.9	67.6	20.5	4.225
6-10 days	58	4.7	81.4	14.0	(0.376)
More than 10 days	62	9.3	74.4	16.3	
Travel party					
Alone	218	9.0	70.6	20.4	8.142
In a group	63	18.3	71.7	10.0	(0.228)
With spouse	46	4.3	73.9	21.7	
With family	23	13.0	73.9	13.0	
Other	8	0.0	87.5	12.5	
Status of guest					
First time guest	184	15.6	61.5	22.9	21.661*
Repeat guest	174	4.1	82.8	13.0	(0.000)

Significance level $p \leq 0.05$

Source: Field survey, 2012

Guests' perceptions of service quality dimensions and attributes

Customers are likely to view services as an aggregate of dimensions or a variety of attributes that may, in different ways, contribute to their perceptions of service quality, satisfaction and purchase intentions (Marković & Raspor, 2010).

Perceptions of hotel service quality are the degree to which hotel guests find various service quality dimensions and hotel attributes important in enhancing their satisfaction with the hotel stay. To identify which service quality dimensions and attributes were perceived higher and/or lower, descriptive statistics such as percentages and means were used. Table 12 presents the averages of performance of the five dimensions and 48 attributes evaluated by the respondents.

On the whole, the *assurance* dimension was the highest perceived dimension (mean = 3.90). This was followed by *tangibles* (mean = 3.78), *empathy* (mean = 3.74) and *responsiveness* (mean = 3.60). The lowest perceived dimension was *reliability* (mean = 3.41). The averages vary from 2.99 (*availability of transport facilities*) to 4.18 (*staff are friendly*). Overall, hotel guests' highest perceptions were with the service quality attributes "Staff are courteous and respectful" (86%, mean = 4.18) and "Staff are friendly" (85.8%, mean= 4.17).

This suggests that staff of hotels in the Western Region are friendly and also show courtesy and respect in their interactions with guests. Furthermore, guests highly assessed the attributes "Room is clean and comfortable" (80.2%, mean = 3.98), "Staff willingness to help guests" (76.5%, mean = 3.95) and "The hotel recognizes the guest" (76.8%, mean = 3.97). Traditionally, the most critical areas for guests when they are forming opinions about hotels have been known to be the cleanliness and appearance of bedrooms and bathrooms. This confirms the understanding of the critical areas in the hotel that need to be kept clean, and the specific tasks that are vital to making that all-important first impression to guests.

It is also a known fact that hotel guests are pleased when staff show willingness to help by going the extra mile. Recognizing guests in hotels makes them feel important. Recognizing and remembering a guest is one of the most effective ways that hotels can earn a guest's trust; and it really does not require a high degree of technology or an overly complex set of processes. It might involve something as simple as welcoming and greeting and asking if they need any assistance, or addressing guests by their name. These indicate that a hotel's staff has one of the crucial roles in performing high service quality.

Table 12: Guests' perception of service quality dimensions and attributes (N= 358)

Attributes	Agree (%)	Mean response	Std. mean error
<i>Tangibles</i>			
The hotel has a clean environment	80.4	3.89	0.060
Outside appearance of the hotel is attractive	67.6	3.67	0.061
The hotel's interior design is attractive	72.3	3.80	0.057
The hotel has modern-looking equipment	60.6	3.59	0.060
The hotel has comfortable furniture	64.5	3.65	0.060
Hotel staff appears neat and professional	74.3	3.88	0.059
The lobby area is attractive	60.1	3.48	0.060
The hotel has adequate parking space	74.9	3.83	0.063
My room is clean	80.2	3.98	0.053
My room is well ventilated	76.6	3.91	0.056
My room has functioning gadgets and appliances	70.1	3.75	0.059
My room is well decorated and attractive	65.4	3.71	0.561
The hotel has clean bathrooms and toilets	77.1	3.85	0.058

Table 12 (continued)

The hotel offers complementary items (soap, shampoo, etc.)	55.6	3.43	0.063
The hotel has visually appealing brochures	24.3	2.01	0.066
<i>Overall rating</i>	73.2	3.78	0.048
<i>Reliability</i>			
The hotel is easily accessible	80.4	3.95	0.055
The hotel has efficient reservation/booking system	70.4	3.83	0.052
The hotel has reliable supply of water and electricity	50.0	3.32	0.065
The hotel has efficient check-in procedure	74.0	3.84	0.052
The hotel has efficient check-out procedure	71.2	3.78	0.053
Staff performs services right the first time	45.0	3.25	0.060
Staff performs services at the time promised	43.9	3.13	0.058
The hotel has efficient telephone and internet system	39.4	3.09	0.070
The hotel has accurate billing system	59.2	3.66	0.053
The hotel has efficient food and beverage service	33.8	2.43	0.070
There is accurate information about hotel services	41.9	3.10	0.061
There is an advance information about prices	60.3	3.52	0.063
The hotel has timely housekeeping services	77.9	3.88	0.052
There is availability of transport facilities	36.3	2.99	0.068
<i>Overall rating</i>	52.0	3.41	0.048
<i>Responsiveness</i>			
Hotel staff shows a sincere interest in solving my problems	72.9	3.85	0.059
Staff are always willing to help me	76.5	3.95	0.058
Staff are never too busy to respond to my requests	51.1	3.26	0.062
Staff are readily available to provide services	57.5	3.45	0.061
Hotel staff provides prompt service without delays	49.4	3.31	0.069
<i>Overall rating</i>	61.5	3.60	0.058
<i>Assurance</i>			
Staff are well-trained and knowledgeable	41.9	3.10	0.060

Table 12 (continued)

Staff are skillful and experienced	48.9	3.30	0.060
Staff have good communication skills	57.8	3.47	0.064
Staff are friendly	85.8	4.17	0.054
Staff are courteous and respectful	86.0	4.18	0.053
Behaviour of staff instills confidence in me	71.5	3.91	0.054
I feel safe and secure in my stay in the hotel	78.5	4.06	0.058
Staff addresses me by my name	40.2	3.08	0.079
The hotel has convenient operating hours	76.5	3.98	0.079
<i>Overall rating</i>	<i>74.1</i>	<i>3.90</i>	<i>0.052</i>
<i>Empathy</i>			
Staff understands my specific needs	52.8	3.27	0.056
Staff have time to listen to my complaints	76.3	3.95	0.056
The hotel gives me special attention	56.7	3.43	0.060
The hotel has my best interest at heart	61.2	3.68	0.053
The hotel recognizes me as a guest	76.8	3.97	0.052
<i>Overall rating</i>	<i>64.7</i>	<i>3.74</i>	<i>0.052</i>

*Mean (1.0 - 1.49 = very low; 1.5 - 2.49 = Low; 2.5 - 3.49 = Moderate; 3.5 - 4.49 = High; 4.5-5.0 = Very high)

Source: Field survey, 2012

However, the lowest perception attribute was “availability of transport facilities” (36.3%, mean = 2.99), which suggests that hotels in the Western Region do not provide enough transport facilities that could enhance service quality. This was expected because anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that most of the hotels in WR do not have transport facilities for their guests though some hotels do have vehicles that are only used to run errands for the hotel. Nevertheless, few hotels provide shuttle services and also have tour buses that

could be hired by guests. Observation has also shown that most of the guests who patronize hotels either go with their personal vehicles or company vehicles.

It is evident from Table 14 that the majority (74%) of the guests perceived the *assurance* dimension higher than all the other dimensions. Assurance attributes such as “Staff are courteous and respectful” (mean = 4.18), “Staff are friendly” (mean = 4.17) as well as guests “feeling safe and secured in the hotel” (mean = 4.06) were highly assessed. This supports González, Comesaña and Brea’s (2007) study on the factors that influence satisfaction and generate the loyalty of visitors to Natal. Similarly, Boon-itt and Rompho (2012), in their study on service quality dimensions in Thai hotels, found the attribute *friendly staff* to be among the highly perceived attributes. The attribute “Staff addresses me by my name” (mean = 3.08) was the least perceived attribute from the assurance dimension.

Tangibles was perceived as the second highest dimension by 73% of the guests. Guests perceived the attributes “My room is clean” (mean = 3.98), “My room is well ventilated” (mean = 3.91) and “The hotel has clean bathrooms and toilets” (mean = 3.85) to be high while their lowest perceived attribute was “The hotel has visually appealing brochures” (mean = 2.01). This observation suggests that the brochures used by most of the hotels were not attractive enough.

Sixty-five percent (65%) of the guests perceived *empathy* as the third highest dimension of service quality (mean = 3.74). Attributes that were highly assessed under this dimension were “The hotel recognizes me as a guest” (mean = 3.95) and “Staff have the time to listen to my complaints” (mean = 3.95). On the

other hand, “Staff understand my specific needs” (mean = 3.27) was perceived as the least from this dimension.

Responsiveness was perceived as the fourth highest (mean = 3.60) dimension by 62 percent of hotel guests. Among the attributes from this dimension, guests perceived “Staff are always willing to help me” (mean = 3.97) and “Hotel staff show sincere interest in solving my problems” (mean = 3.85) higher than the rest. This finding is consistent with that of Juwaheer and Ross (2003), who studied guests in hotels in Mauritius; and Hussain and Nadiri (2005) in their study on service quality in hotels in north Cyprus. This was repeated in the study of Campos and Marodin (2012) on perceptions and expectations of hotel services in Brazil. The latter authors found, in addition to “problem solving”, “quality of staff service”, “safety installations”, “service in the allotted time” and “cleanliness”. On the other hand, the lowest perceived attribute was “Hotel staff provide prompt service without delays” (mean = 3.31).

Reliability was the least (mean = 3.41) perceived dimension of service quality. This observation contradicts that of Juwaheer and Ross (2003) who analyzed the perceptions of hotel guests in Mauritius and concluded that the *empathy* dimension was the least perceived. Attributes that received the highest perception scores were “The hotel has timely housekeeping services” (mean = 3.88), “The hotel has efficient check-in procedure” (mean = 3.84) and “The hotel has efficient reservation/booking system” (mean = 3.83). However, the following attributes obtained the lowest scores: “The hotel has efficient food and beverage service” (mean = 2.43), “There is availability of transport facilities” (mean =

2.99), “The hotel has efficient telephone and internet system” (mean = 3.09), “There is accurate information about hotel services” (mean = 3.10) and “The hotel has efficient telephone and internet system” (mean = 3.09).

Ghanaian and Non-Ghanaian guests’ perception of service quality attributes

Having explored the general perception of service quality attributes by hotel guests in the Western Region, this section then compares Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests’ perceptions, to find out whether there were differences in opinion with regard to the service quality attributes. The One-Way ANOVA was used and results are presented in Table 13.

The results from Table 13 show differences in perception between Ghanaian guests and non-Ghanaian guests with regard to some of the attributes. These include the attribute “The hotel offers complimentary items” (Ghanaian, mean = 2.63; non-Ghanaian, mean = 2.48). This clearly shows the importance that non-Ghanaian guests attach to little issues such as the provision of complimentary items like soap and shampoo by the hotels. The higher perception scores for the Ghanaians could be explained by the fact that they have become used to the situation and therefore did not deem it so important. Other attributes were “reliable supply of water and electricity” (Ghanaian, mean = 2.54; non-Ghanaians, mean = 2.40). This can also be explained by the fact that the Ghanaian guests are familiar with the problem of frequent power outages coupled with intermittent water supply.

While the Ghanaian guests agreed (mean = 2.62) that the hotel staff perform services right the first time, the non-Ghanaian guests disagreed (mean =

2.45). With regard to the attribute “Staff performs services at the time promised”, the Ghanaians agreed (mean = 2.50) while the non-Ghanaians disagreed (mean = 2.39). Some differences in opinion between Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests were also observed for the following attributes: “Staff have good communication skills” (Ghanaians, mean = 2.56; non-Ghanaians, mean = 2.45); “The hotel has efficient food and beverage service” (Ghanaians, mean = 2.52; non-Ghanaians, mean = 2.20); and “There is accurate information about hotel services” (Ghanaians, mean = 2.51; non-Ghanaians, mean = 2.38).

These findings could be explained by the fact that the non-Ghanaian guests might have had higher expectations regarding the standard of service in hotels in the Western Region. Shanahan and Hyman (2007), in their study on desired hotels attributes for American tourists vacationing in China and Ireland, found that tourists generally perceived that hotels in developing countries had lower standards than those in the developed countries.

Table 13: Ghanaian and Non-Ghanaian guests' perceptions of service quality attributes

Service quality attributes	Mean			
	Ghanaian	Non-Ghanaian	Total Mean	Std. Dev.
<i>Tangibles</i>				
The hotel has a clean environment	2.62	2.77	2.66	0.710
Outside appearance of the hotel is attractive	2.49	2.57	2.52	0.755
The hotel's interior design is attractive	2.59	2.61	2.60	0.702
The hotel has modern-looking equipment	2.42	2.44	2.43	0.777
The hotel has comfortable furniture	2.42	2.56	2.46	0.783
Hotel staff appear neat and professional	2.57	2.75	2.63	0.686
The lobby area is attractive	2.43	2.40	2.42	0.773
The hotel has adequate parking space	2.59	2.62	2.60	0.729
My room is clean	2.67	2.78	2.70	0.636
My room is well ventilated	2.63	2.66	2.64	0.691
My room has functioning gadgets and appliances	2.49	2.70	2.55	0.738
My room is well decorated and attractive	2.49	2.61	2.53	0.704
The hotel has clean bathrooms and toilets	2.62	2.61	2.66	0.665
The hotel offers complementary items (soap, shampoo, etc.)	2.63	2.48	2.61	0.716
The hotel has visually appealing brochures	1.95	2.26	2.04	0.834
<i>Overall score</i>	<i>2.51</i>	<i>2.58</i>	<i>2.55</i>	<i>0.724</i>
<i>Reliability</i>				
The hotel is easily accessible	2.73	2.64	2.70	0.646
The hotel has efficient reservation/booking system	2.58	2.72	2.63	0.626
The hotel has a reliable supply of water and electricity	2.54	2.40	2.58	0.758
The hotel has efficient check-in procedure	2.59	2.78	2.65	0.643
The hotel has efficient check-out procedure	2.62	2.62	2.62	0.644
Staff performs services right the first time	2.62	2.45	2.50	0.759
Staff performs services at the time promised	2.50	2.39	2.43	0.774
The hotel has efficient telephone and internet system	1.96	2.27	2.05	0.857
The hotel has accurate billing system	2.47	2.54	2.49	0.673
The hotel has efficient food and beverage service	2.52	2.20	2.30	0.877
There is accurate information about hotel services	2.51	2.38	2.45	0.799
There is advance information about prices	2.41	2.43	2.42	0.791
The hotel has timely housekeeping services	2.63	2.82	2.69	0.633
There is availability of transport facilities	1.98	2.12	2.02	0.842
<i>Overall score</i>	<i>2.47</i>	<i>2.47</i>	<i>2.43</i>	<i>0.648</i>
<i>Responsiveness</i>				
Hotel staff shows sincere interest in solving my problems	2.57	2.66	2.60	0.706
Staff are always willing to help me	2.65	2.72	2.67	0.647

Table 13 (continued)

Staff are never too busy to respond to my requests	2.53	2.48	2.50	0.735
Staff are readily available to provide services	2.57	2.40	2.48	0.737
Hotel staff provides prompt service without delays	2.50	2.40	2.45	0.826
<i>Overall score</i>	2.56	2.53	2.56	0.729
<i>Assurance</i>				
Staff are well-trained and knowledgeable	2.35	2.30	2.34	0.803
Staff are skillful and experienced	2.44	2.41	2.43	0.788
Staff have good communication skills	2.56	2.45	2.49	0.805
Staff are friendly	2.74	2.80	2.78	0.568
Staff are courteous and respectful	2.74	2.90	2.79	0.553
Behaviour of staff instills confidence in me	2.63	2.66	2.64	0.623
I feel safe and secure in my stay in the hotel	2.70	2.72	2.71	0.604
Staff address me by my name	2.49	2.21	2.35	0.884
The hotel has convenient operating hours	2.63	2.82	2.70	0.578
<i>Overall score</i>	2.58	2.58	2.64	0.635
<i>Empathy</i>				
Staff understands my specific needs	2.56	2.49	2.51	0.698
Staff have the time to listen to my complaints	2.65	2.68	2.66	0.658
The hotel gives me special attention	2.53	2.46	2.49	0.712
The hotel has my best interest at heart	2.52	2.56	2.35	0.642
The hotel recognizes me as a guest	2.66	2.77	2.69	0.609
<i>Overall score</i>	2.58	2.59	2.55	0.662
Grand mean	2.54	2.55	2.55	0.679

Note: N = 249 Ghanaians (69.6%), 109 Non-Ghanaians (30.4%)
Scale: 1.00 – 2.49 = Disagree, 2.50 – 3.00 = Agree

Source: Field survey, 2012

The results also indicate differences in the perception scores for Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests regarding the following statements: “The hotel staff are never too busy to respond to my requests” (Ghanaians, mean = 2.53; non-Ghanaians, mean = 2.48); “Staff are readily available to provide services” (Ghanaians, mean = 2.57; non-Ghanaians, mean = 2.40); “Hotel staff provides prompt service without delays” (Ghanaians, mean = 2.50; non-Ghanaians, mean = 2.40); “Staff understands my specific needs (Ghanaians, mean = 2.56; non-

Ghanaians, mean = 2.49) and “The hotel gives me special attention” (Ghanaians, mean = 2.53; non-Ghanaians, mean = 2.46). It was also observed that though both the Ghanaian and the non-Ghanaian guests disagreed on the attribute “Staff addresses me by my name”, the extent of disagreement was higher for the non-Ghanaians (Ghanaians, Mean = 2.49; non-Ghanaians, mean = 2.21). This scenario can be explained by the fact that the Ghanaian culture encourages addressing superiors by their titles rather than names. Foreigners, and especially the non-Africans, prefer to be addressed by their names rather than their titles.

In order to test hypothesis two (H_02) which states that “there is no significant difference in the overall perception of service quality between Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests” an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the overall perception of Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians on the quality of services in hotels. The results are presented in Table 14.

There was no significant difference in the level of perception of Ghanaians (mean = 2.062, SD = 0.540) and non-Ghanaians [(mean = 2.122, SD = 0.490); $t(346) = -0.971, p = 0.314$]. This suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean overall perception of service quality for Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests. Therefore, the hypothesis (H_02) failed to be rejected. The magnitude of the difference in the means of Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians was very small (eta squared = 0.003). This means that only 0.3 per cent of the variance in overall perception is explained by nationality.

Table 14: Difference in overall perception between Ghanaian and Non-Ghanaian guests

Nationality	Overall perception of service quality				
	Mean	Mean diff.	Std. Dev.	F-value	P-value (t)
Ghanaian	2.06	0.003	0.540	-0.971	0.314
Non-Ghanaian	2.12		0.490		(346)

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Field survey, 2012

Service quality attributes and hotel category

Assessment of guests' perceptions of service quality among the different categories of hotels was based on a five-point Likert scale which was collapsed to 3 points (1- 1.49 = disagree 1.50 – 2.49 = neutral, 2.50 – 3 = agree). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was conducted in order to compare the means of the different categories of hotels, and the results are presented in Table 15.

The 1-3 star hotels had the best service quality perception (grand mean = 2.63) followed by the guest houses (grand mean score = 2.47) and the budget hotels (grand mean = 2.28). It appears therefore that there is a relationship between service quality perception and category of hotel. This observation can be explained by the fact that the 1-3 star hotels have better facilities and are therefore expected to provide better services. It is also a known fact that the star-rated hotels offer better services than the non star-rated ones.

In terms of *tangibles*, the 1-3 star hotels (dimension mean = 2.64) and guest houses (dimension mean = 2.56) were perceived by guests to provide better services than the budget hotels (dimension mean = 2.31). The 1-3 star hotels (mean = 2.73) and guest houses (mean = 2.73) were found to perform better than the budget hotels (mean = 2.49) in the area of “clean environment” (Table 15).

This observation may not be far-fetched because anecdotal evidence suggests that most of the budget hotels in the Western Region are located in areas that may be described as not so clean. Surprisingly, it was observed that the guest houses had the highest perception scores in the following areas: easy accessibility (mean = 2.86), clean room (mean = 2.82), well ventilated room (mean = 2.77), functioning gadgets and appliances (mean = 2.77) and attractive interior design (mean = 2.73). This implies that relatively, the guest houses performed better than the 1-3 star and budget hotels in these areas.

With reference to the *reliability* of services, the 1-3 star hotels performed better (dimension mean = 2.53) than the guest houses (dimension mean = 2.26) and budget hotels (dimension mean = 2.19). Specifically, relatively higher scores were recorded for the 1-3 star hotels in the areas of timely housekeeping services (mean = 2.81), check-in (mean = 2.77) and check-out (mean = 2.72) procedures. This suggests that the 1-3 star hotels performed relatively better in these areas than the guest houses and budget hotels. However, concerning the issue of reliable supply of water and electricity, the guest houses were perceived to provide better services (mean = 2.81) as compared to the 1-3 star (mean = 2.68) and budget hotels (mean = 2.24).

Table 15: Mean distribution of service quality attributes by hotel category

Service Quality Perception Indicator	Mean				Std. Dev.
	1-3 Star	Guest house	Budget	Total Mean	
<i>Tangibles</i>					
The hotel has a clean environment	2.73	2.73	2.49	2.66	0.710
Outside appearance of the hotel is attractive	2.60	2.59	2.27	2.52	0.755
The hotel's interior design is attractive	2.67	2.73	2.37	2.60	0.702
The hotel has modern looking equipment	2.52	2.45	2.17	2.43	0.777
The hotel has comfortable furniture	2.61	2.45	2.08	2.46	0.783
Hotel staff appears neat and professional	2.75	2.36	2.35	2.63	0.686
The lobby area is attractive	2.51	2.41	2.20	2.42	0.773
The hotel has adequate parking space	2.68	2.45	2.45	2.60	0.729
My room is clean	2.76	2.82	2.52	2.70	0.636
My room is well ventilated	2.70	2.77	2.45	2.64	0.691
My room has functioning gadgets and appliances	2.62	2.77	2.33	2.55	0.738
My room is well decorated and attractive	2.63	2.64	2.25	2.53	0.704
The hotel has clean bathrooms and toilets	2.74	2.68	2.45	2.66	0.665
The hotel offers complementary items (soap, shampoo, etc.)	2.69	2.45	2.45	2.61	0.665
The hotel has visually appealing brochures	2.23	1.59	1.64	2.04	0.834
<i>Dimension mean</i>	2.64	2.56	2.31	2.55	0.724
<i>Reliability</i>					
The hotel is easily accessible	2.71	2.86	2.63	2.70	0.646
The hotel has efficient reservation/booking system	2.70	2.64	2.41	2.63	0.626
The hotel has reliable supply of water and Electricity	2.68	2.82	2.24	2.58	0.758

Table 15 (continued)

The hotel has efficient check-in procedure	2.77	2.59	2.35	2.65	0.643
The hotel has efficient check-out procedure	2.72	2.45	2.40	2.62	0.644
Staff performs services right the first time	2.57	2.36	2.34	2.50	0.759
Staff performs services at the time promised	2.48	2.45	2.29	2.43	0.774
The hotel has efficient telephone and internet system	2.23	1.73	1.65	2.05	0.857
<i>Dimension mean</i>	<i>2.61</i>	<i>2.29</i>	<i>2.40</i>	<i>2.56</i>	<i>0.729</i>
<i>Assurance</i>					
Staff are well-trained and knowledgeable	2.40	2.18	2.22	2.34	0.803
Staff are skillful and experienced	2.52	2.23	2.26	2.43	0.788
Staff have good communication skills	2.57	2.50	2.26	2.49	0.805
Staff are friendly	2.84	2.77	2.62	2.78	0.568
Staff are courteous and respectful	2.84	2.82	2.65	2.79	0.553
Behaviour of staff instills confidence in me	2.69	2.68	2.49	2.64	0.623
I feel safe and secure in my stay in this hotel	2.77	2.86	2.49	2.71	0.604
Staff addresses me by my name	2.30	1.95	2.03	2.21	0.884
The hotel has convenient operating hours	2.78	2.82	2.47	2.70	0.578
<i>Dimension mean</i>	<i>2.70</i>	<i>2.62</i>	<i>2.52</i>	<i>2.64</i>	<i>0.635</i>
<i>Empathy</i>					
Staff understands my specific needs	2.58	2.50	2.34	2.51	0.689
Staff have time to listen to my complaints	2.72	2.86	2.45	2.66	0.658
The hotel gives me special attention	2.59	2.55	2.39	2.54	0.712
The hotel has my best interest at heart	2.61	2.59	2.30	2.35	0.642
The hotel recognizes me as a guest	2.75	2.82	2.50	2.69	0.609
<i>Dimension mean</i>	<i>2.65</i>	<i>2.66</i>	<i>2.39</i>	<i>2.55</i>	<i>0.662</i>
Grand Mean	2.63	2.47	2.28	2.55	0.679

Note: scale 1 – 1.49 = disagreed, 1.50 – 2.49 = neutral, 2.50 – 3 = agreed

Source: Field survey, 2012

Regarding the *responsiveness* dimension, the 1-3 star hotels were better perceived by guests to provide better services (dimension mean = 2.61) while those in the guest houses (dimension mean = 2.29) and budget hotels (dimension mean = 2.40) had average perceptions. The highest perception scores were observed for guest houses in the following service areas: staff's willingness to help (mean = 2.82), responding to guests' requests (mean = 2.73), readily available to provide services (mean = 2.73) and providing prompt service without delays (mean = 2.59). This implies that the guest houses performed relatively better in these areas than the 1-3 star and budget hotels.

Concerning the *assurance* dimension, all the three hotel categories were perceived to provide better services (1-3 star: dimension mean = 2.70, guest houses: dimension mean = 2.62, budget hotels: dimension mean = 2.52). However, guests in all the three categories of hotels were divided in their perception of the item "Staff addresses me by my name". In addition, guests in the budget hotels were not sure about the items "Behaviour of staff instills confidence in me" (mean = 2.49) and "I feel safe and secure in my stay in this hotel" (mean = 2.49) while they were highly perceived by guests in the 1-3 star hotels and guest houses. However, it was observed that all the three categories of hotels were positively perceived in terms of the friendliness of staff and the courtesy and respect that they show in service delivery.

With respect to the *empathy* dimension, the guest houses (dimension mean = 2.66) and the 1-3 star hotels (dimension mean = 2.65) were perceived by guests to provide better services while the budget hotels were averagely (dimension

mean = 2.39) perceived. Specifically, the highest perception scores were observed with the guest houses category for the items “Staff have time to listen to my complaints” (mean = 2.86) and “The hotel recognizes me as guest” (mean = 2.82). The 1-3 star and guests houses had a better appraisal than the budget hotels for all the empathy items.

To test the hypothesis (H_03) which states that “There is no significant difference in the perceptions of service quality between star-rated and non star-rated hotel guests”, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the overall perception of guests in star-rated and non star-rated hotels on the quality of services delivered in hotels in WR. The results are presented in Table 16.

There was a significant difference in the level of perception of guests in star-rated hotels (mean = 2.25, SD = 0.915) and non-star-rated hotels [(mean = 2.73, SD = 0.957); $t(341) = -19.483, p = 0.000$]. Based on this result, the hypothesis was rejected. As such it was concluded that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of service quality between star-rated and non star-rated hotel guests. However, the magnitude of the difference in the means of guests of star-rated and non-star-rated hotels was very small (eta squared = 0.0029). This means that only 0.3 per cent of the variance in overall perception is explained by hotel category.

Table 16: Difference in perception between star-rated and non star-rated hotel guests

Hotel category	Overall guests perception of service quality				
	Mean	Mean diff.	Std. Dev.	F-value	P-value (t)
Star-rated	2.25	0.0029	0.915	-19.483	0.000
Non star-rated	2.73		0.957		(341)

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Field survey, 2012

Service failures of the hotels

Having evaluated the specific service quality attributes used in the scale, respondents were asked to indicate any service quality problems they observed during their stay in the hotels. This was considered relevant to the study as it sought to identify issues that were not covered in the scale used and which could be incorporated into the scale for future research. The responses obtained are described in Table 17.

From Table 17, the two major problems observed were *delayed/poor service delivery* (41.9%) and *inexperienced staff* (36.0%). This was followed by *poor internet connectivity* (17.9%), *poor water supply* (15.1%), *no restaurant service* (13.7%) and *mal-functioning electrical and plumbing fittings* (13.4%). The service quality problems observed by guests could be categorized under the tangibles and reliability dimensions of service quality.

Table 17: Service failures of the hotels

Problems observed	Frequency (N=358)	Percentage (%)
Delayed/poor service delivery	150	41.9
Inexperienced staff	129	36.0
Poor internet connectivity	64	17.9
Poor water supply	54	15.1
No restaurant service	49	13.7
Mal-functioning electrical and plumbing fittings	48	13.4
Lack of recreational facilities	34	9.5
The presence of mosquitoes	28	7.8
Poor TV reception	26	7.3
No back up electricity	23	6.4
Poor billing system	23	6.4
Poor laundry services	15	4.2
Lack of transportation	15	4.2
Inadequate space for car parking	13	3.6

Source: Field survey, 2012

In a similar vein, Narangajavana and Hu (2008) identified four aspects of service performance observed by hotel guests for improving service quality: they were service delivery, hotel employees, guest amenities and surroundings, and prestige. Other aspects of service performance in hotels that could be improved to enhance service quality are quality of reception hall, guestroom and restaurant,

technique of employee, decoration and atmosphere of hall (Ryu, Han & Kim, 2008; Han, Back & Barrett, 2009); and safety of room, courtesy of attendants, and savour and variation of food (Shi & Su, 2007; Han, Back & Barrett, 2009).

Summary

This chapter explored guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region. Guests' overall perceptions of service quality in relation to their background characteristics have been examined. Most of the guests were found to perceive overall service quality in the hotels to be high while significant relationships were detected between overall perceptions of service quality and some background characteristics of guests. Service quality dimensions have also been explored by respondents' characteristics and some significant differences were found between some of the dimensions and guests' characteristics. The specific service quality attributes used in the study were also examined, and it was observed that some of the attributes were highly perceived than others. There were differences in the perceptions of Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests regarding specific attributes. An assessment of guests' perceptions of service quality among the different categories of hotels revealed that the 1-3 star hotels performed better than the other categories. Among the major service quality problems observed by hotel guests were delayed/poor service delivery and inexperienced staff.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DIMENSIONS AND DETERMINANTS OF SERVICE QUALITY IN HOTELS

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the underlying dimensions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region. It presents the structure of guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels by identifying the factors that account for their perceptions of service quality in hotels. The chapter ends with a discussion on the determinants of guests' perceptions of service quality in terms of socio-demographic and travel characteristics.

Structure of guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels

After assessing the general responses on the various service quality attributes, it was important to further understand the underlying structure of the factors that account for guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region. This was to help identify how the specific factors interacted to influence guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels in the region.

Factor analysis was employed to identify the structure of the underlying dimensions of hotel service quality perceptions. The data satisfied all the requirements for using factor analysis. The analysis was performed on the 48 explanatory variables and the results are presented in Table 18. The Principal Components Analysis (PCA) method was employed using varimax rotation which reduced the 48 explanatory variables to four (4) underlying dimensions or factors that account for guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels in the Western

region. Following Hair et al. (2006), items with eigenvalues equal to or greater than 1, factor loadings above 0.4 and factors which contain at least three items were retained.

Table 18: Structure of factors accounting for guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels

Variable included in the factor	Factor loadings	Eigen value	% of variance explained	Cronbach's alpha
<i>Factor I: Attitude of staff</i>				
Staff performs services at the time promised	0.791			
Hotel staff provides prompt service without delays	0.755			
Staff are skillful and experienced	0.727	10.011	47.669	0.906
Staff are readily available to provide services	0.722			
There is an advance information about prices	0.704			
The hotel gives me special attention	0.702			
Staff are never too busy to respond to my requests	0.696			
Staff are well-trained and knowledgeable	0.688			
Behaviour of staff instills confidence in me	0.677			
Staff are always willing to help me	0.672			
Staff addresses me by my name	0.670			
<i>Factor II: Tangible facilities</i>				
The hotel has comfortable furniture	0.787			
My room is well decorated and attractive	0.748			
The hotel's interior design is attractive	0.744			
My room is clean and comfortable	0.737			
The hotel has modern-looking equipment	0.729	1.634	7.782	0.906
Outside appearance of the hotel is attractive	0.702			
The hotel has clean bathrooms and toilets	0.681			

Table 18 (continued)

The hotel has a clean environment	0.653			
Hotel staff appears neat and professional	0.594			
My room is well ventilated	0.591			
<i>Factor III: Assurance</i>				
Staff are courteous and respectful	0.880			
Staff are friendly	0.824			
The hotel has convenient operating hours	0.716	1.418	6.754	0.865
The hotel has timely housekeeping services	0.645			
The hotel recognizes me as a guest	0.621			
I feel safe and secure in my stay in the hotel	0.564			
<i>Factor IV: Service efficiency</i>				
There is availability of transport facilities	0.751			
The hotel has efficient telephone and internet system	0.737	1.162	5.534	0.721
The hotel has efficient food and beverage service	0.691			
The hotel has efficient check-in procedure	0.533			
The hotel has efficient check-out procedure	0.530			
Total		14.225	67.739	

Note: KMO measure of sample adequacy = 0.937; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = 4999.111; Sig = 0.000; Total Variance Explained = 67.7%; *Cronbach's alpha for the factor. Mean of scale for factors: I = 2.39, II = 2.55, III = 2.74, IV = 2.12

Source: Field survey, 2012

Four factors emerged as underlying dimensions of service quality perceptions of guests in hotels in the Western Region. These four factors together explained 67.7% of the total variance. This output therefore means that about 32.3% of other factors that are not explained by the calculated factors might have accounted for guests' perception of the services delivered by hotels in the Western

Region of Ghana. The factors identified, nonetheless, contributed to the different explanation of the total variance as shown in Table 18. Each factor was labeled in accordance with its composing items.

Factor I, labelled *attitude of staff*, was made up of eleven (11) items and refers mainly to the hotel's ability of staff to provide reliable and accurate service to guests. The factor accounted for an eigenvalue of 10.011 and explained approximately 48% of the total variance with a high internal reliability of 0.906 Cronbach's alpha value. Eigenvalue is the sum of squares of the loading of all the variables of a factor and provides a measure of the variance of the whole data accounted for by the factor (Wheeler, Shaw & Bar, 2006). This implies that service attitude of staff is a particularly important contributor to service quality perceptions of hotel guests. The factor loadings of individual items in this factor were relatively high, ranging from 0.791 to 0.670. Among the items, "Staff performs services at the time promised" recorded the highest factor loading (0.791) while the lowest factor loading (0.670) was recorded by the item "Staff addresses me by my name". This finding is consistent with the observation made by Markovic and Raspor (2010) that hotel service reliability and accuracy bordering on the attitude of staff is an important determinant of perceived service quality.

Factor II (*tangible facilities*) described the tangible aspects of service quality in hotels in the Western Region. This included the physical aspects of the hotels, the equipment used to provide services and the appearance of staff. The second factor which had ten (10) items contributed about 8 per cent towards the

total variance with an eigenvalue of 1.634, and a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.906. The item with the highest factor loading (0.787) for this factor was "The hotel has comfortable furniture" while the item "My room is well ventilated" was the lowest contributor to Factor II.

Factor III, labeled *assurance*, comprised six (6) items relating to issues such as courtesy, trustworthiness, respect, friendliness of hotel staff and guests' safety. The factor accounted for an eigenvalue of 1.418 and explained approximately 7% of the total variance. The item "Staff are courteous and respectful" was the highest ranked with a factor loading of 0.880 while "I feel safe and secure in my stay" was noted as the item with the lowest factor loading (0.564). This factor recorded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.865 indicating a high internal reliability for the factor.

Factor IV (*service efficiency*) captured the dimension of guests' perceptions in the provision of efficient services in the hotels. Issues bordering the availability of transport facilities, efficient telephone and internet system, efficient food and beverage service, efficient check-in and check-out procedures formed this factor. The factor scored an eigenvalue of 1.162 and explained about 5% of the total variance, with a relatively lower Cronbach' alpha of 0.721. The item "Availability of transport facilities" recorded the highest factor loading (0.757) for this factor while the lowest (0.530) was recorded for the item "The hotel has efficient check-out procedure".

These factors were extracted based on four criteria: (1) the eigenvalue greater than 1 criterion, (2) proportion of variance explained criterion, (3) scree

plot criterion, and (4) minimum communalities criterion (Larose, 2006). All the 48 items had factor loadings of over 0.40. The adequacy of the sample was measured by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic. The KMO Measure of Sample Adequacy is a measure which tests whether the relationship or partial correlations among variables are good enough from such a sample while the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity checks whether the correlations between the derived factors are significant enough to indicate their appropriateness. Generally, according to Field (2004), a KMO of between 0.7 and 0.8 is considered good and 0.5, the barest minimum. Hence, a KMO of 0.937 and a p -value of 0.000 for the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (4.999.111) indicate that the responses from the sample for the study were adequate for the analysis and the derived factors appropriate for further analysis.

A reliability analysis was further performed to test the reliability of the scale and internal consistency of the extracted factors. Thus, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated (Table 18). The reliability alphas for the four factors were quite high (over 0.7). These reliability coefficients show a very reliable data since a Cronbach's alpha (α) of 0.7 is generally considered an appropriate lower limit for a social or exploratory research (Hair et al., 2006). The grand mean score for the four factors were 2.39, 2.55, 2.74 and 2.12 respectively. Since the analysis yielded four underlying important dimensions, the research objective that sought to determine the underlying dimensions of service quality for hotels in the Western region is thus measured.

The findings of the factor analysis revealed that the main dimensions of perceived service quality in hotels were “attitude of staff”, “tangible facilities”, “assurance” and “service efficiency”. Therefore, the factor analysis technique provides four important dimensions that help to explain guests’ perceptions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region. With the exception of service efficiency and attitude of staff, the two other dimensions are consistent with Yilmaz (2009) which also extracted four dimensions including empathy. On the contrary, Karatepe and Avci (2002), Ekinçi et al. (2003) and Nadiri and Hussain (2005) found only two dimensions namely, tangibles and intangibles. Markovic and Raspor (2010) also found four dimensions namely, reliability, empathy and competence of staff, accessibility and tangibles.

Previous studies conducted in the hotel sector also identified different outcomes with regard to the number and interpretation of dimensions guests use to assess service quality in hotels (Akan, 1995; Wong et al., 1999; Choi & Chu, 2001; Markovic, 2003; Akbaba, 2006). This implies that the dimension structure depends on the measurement context. However, results to a certain extent, revealed similarities as the most common factors of perceived service quality in the hotel industry appear to be “reliability” and “tangibles”. As well, these dimensions are consistent with dimensions in the present study. This means that guests in hotels in the Western Region usually perceive service quality as reliable and error-free service performed efficiently with courteous, professional and neat hotel employees and visually appealing physical facilities in a secured and safe environment.

Determinants of guests' perception of service quality and socio-demographic and travel characteristics

Having explored the underlying dimensions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region by way of factor analysis in the previous section, this section investigates the extent to which views on contributors to guests' perception differ, with respect to socio-demographic and travel characteristics. Socio-demographic characteristics used include nationality, gender, age, level of education and occupation. Travel characteristics used were purpose of visit, length of stay, travel party and status of visit. The independent sample t-test and the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were employed to investigate the differences, and the results are presented in Tables 19 and 20.

Considering the gender of respondents, the *t*-test analysis conducted revealed a significant difference ($p = 0.01$) for only Factor IV (service efficiency). The females had a high perception (mean = 2.56) for this factor whereas the males had a moderate perception (mean = 2.22). With Factor I (attitude of staff), both males and females perceived it to be high with a mean value of 2.54 for males and 2.58 for females. The same pattern of reasoning was observed for Factor II (tangible facilities) and Factor III (assurance).

Table 19 also indicates that both Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians had high perceptions but no marked differences existed in their perceptions as regards *attitude of staff* ($p = 0.74$), *tangible facilities* ($p = 0.45$), and *assurance* ($p = 0.063$). The table, nevertheless, indicates a significant difference ($p = 0.00$) in the perception of *service efficiency* between Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests.

Table 19: Determinants of guests' perception of service quality by socio-demographic characteristics

Characteristic	N	Attitude of staff	Tangible facilities	Assurance	Service efficiency
Gender					
Male	289	2.54	2.63	2.77	2.22
Female	69	2.58	2.70	2.80	2.56
		<i>p</i> =0.664	<i>p</i> =0.432	<i>p</i> =0.709	<i>p</i> =0.016
Nationality					
Ghanaian	249	2.54	2.63	2.74	2.18
Non-Ghanaian	109	2.57	2.68	2.86	2.47
		<i>p</i> =0.749	<i>p</i> =0.458	<i>p</i> =0.063	<i>p</i> =0.001
Age					
18-39 years	200	2.59	2.64	2.75	2.30
40-59	135	2.50	2.63	2.81	2.21
60 and above	14	2.55	2.64	2.78	2.27
		<i>p</i> =0.524	<i>p</i> =0.536	<i>p</i> =0.395	<i>p</i> =0.535
Level of education					
Primary/Basic	11	2.80	2.70	2.80	1.80
Sec./High Sch.	73	2.57	2.65	2.67	2.33
Tertiary/University	187	2.51	2.61	2.77	2.25
Postgraduate	87	2.59	2.69	2.86	2.32
		<i>p</i> =0.619	<i>p</i> =0.840	<i>p</i> =0.278	<i>p</i> =0.315
Occupation					
Self-employed	80	2.44*	2.57*	2.62*	2.24
Professional	245	2.53	2.60*	2.80	2.25

Table 19 (continued)

Retired	12	2.81*	2.91*	2.96*	2.53*
Student	21	2.56	2.72	2.72	2.00*
		$p=0.054$	$p=0.022$	$p=0.009$	$p=0.050$

Mean (1.0 - 1.49 = Low perception 1.5 - 2.49 = moderate perception; 2.5 - 3.00 = high perception)

Source: Field survey, 2012

Similarly, guests in the different age categories had no marked differences in their perceptions of all the four (4) factors that determine guests' perception of service quality in hotels in the Western Region. However, *attitude of staff*, *tangible facilities* and *assurance* were highly perceived while *service efficiency* was moderately perceived across the age groupings.

The one way ANOVA test revealed a significant difference across the various occupational groupings on *attitude of staff* ($p = 0.05$). Within occupation, professionals (mean = 2.53), retirees (mean = 2.81), and students (mean = 2.56) perceived *attitude of staff* to be high while the self-employed perceived it to be moderate (mean = 2.44). Post-hoc comparisons by the use of Tukey HSD test revealed that the perception of hotel guests who were retirees (mean = 2.81) was significantly different from that of guests who were self-employed (mean = 2.44).

With regard to *tangible facilities*, significant differences were noted to exist across the different occupational groupings though they all perceived *tangible facilities* to be high. The Post-hoc Tukey HSD test again indicated that the level of perception of guests who were retired (mean = 2.91) was significantly

different from that of guests who were professionals (mean = 2.60) and those who were self-employed (mean = 2.57). In the same vein, there were observed differences ($p = 0.00$) in perception about the *assurance* factor within the different occupation groups. Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test showed that the perception of the retired (mean = 2.96) was significantly different from that of the self-employed (mean = 2.62). Factor four (service efficiency) was perceived to be moderate by the self-employed (mean = 2.24), professionals (mean = 2.25), and students (mean = 2.00). However, guests who were retired perceived *service efficiency* to be high (mean = 2.53). Again, the Tukey HSD test of comparison identified that the perception of the retired (mean = 2.53) was significantly different from that of students who visited the hotels (mean = 2.00). This shows that hotel guests who were retired were more likely to be satisfied than guests who were professionals, self-employed and students.

With reference to level of education, no significant differences were observed across the various levels for all the four factors. Hotels across the various levels of education perceived the factors attitude of staff, tangible facilities and assurance to be high while the fourth factor (service efficiency) was moderately perceived. However, it was observed that guests with primary/basic education had relatively higher perception for the factors service reliability (mean = 2.80) and tangible facilities (mean = 2.70). Guests with postgraduate education also perceived the assurance and security factor relatively higher (mean = 2.86).

From Table 20, no significant differences were detected for all the factors across the various groupings regarding the purpose of visit. Guests staying for

business purposes had high perceptions for all the factors except *service efficiency* which received a moderate perception. The same pattern of reasoning was observed with guests visiting friends and relations, on vacation and for education/research purposes. However, guests staying for conference purposes perceived the tangible facilities and the assurance factors to be high (mean = 2.59 and 2.64 respectively) while the factors service reliability and service efficiency were moderately perceived (mean = 2.36).

The one-way ANOVA results revealed that there were some significant differences in guests' perceptions in respect of the length of stay for *attitude of staff* ($p = 0.02$) and *service efficiency* ($p = 0.00$). Those staying for six days and more had a high perception for all the factors except *service efficiency*. Those staying for 1-5 days perceived the factors tangible facilities and assurance and security to be high while *attitude of staff* and *service efficiency* were perceived as moderate.

On travel party, Table 20 shows that there were no significant differences with any of the factors. However, with the exception of those staying in a group who had moderate perceptions for the factors attitude of staff and service efficiency, all the other groups had high perceptions for all the factors except service efficiency.

Table 20: Determinants of guests' perceptions of service quality by travel characteristics

Travel characteristics	N	Attitude of staff	Tangible facilities	Assurance	Service efficiency
Purpose of visit					
Business	206	2.51	2.63	2.76	2.29
Conference	20	2.36	2.59	2.64	2.36
VFR	34	2.68	2.66	2.89	2.09
Vacation	51	2.69	2.76	2.84	2.41
Education/Research	22	2.67	2.58	2.75	2.29
Other	25	2.22	2.44	2.78	1.78
		$p=0.188$	$p=0.718$	$p=0.569$	$p=0.172$
Length of stay					
1-5 days	238	2.48*	2.59	2.72	2.13*
6-10 days	58	2.81*	2.79	2.91	2.42
More than 10 days	62	2.56	2.67	2.81	2.42*
		$p=0.028$	$p=0.191$	$p=0.086$	$p=0.002$
Travel party					
Alone	218	2.72	2.54	2.71	2.27
In a group	63	2.43	2.57	2.60	2.32
With spouse	46	2.72	2.76	2.87	2.33
With family	23	2.61	2.65	2.70	2.26
Other	8	2.88	3.00	2.88	2.25
		$p=0.149$	$p=0.249$	$p=0.161$	$p=0.982$
Status of guests					
First-time guest	184	2.40	2.53	2.69	2.13
Repeat guest	174	2.71	2.76	2.87	2.41
		$p=0.000$	$p=0.001$	$p=0.002$	$p=0.001$

Mean (1.0 - 1.49 = low perception 1.5 - 2.49 = moderate perception; 2.5 - 3.00 = high perception)
 Source: Field survey, 2012

Significant differences were observed between first time guests and repeat guests for all the factors: attitude of staff ($p = 0.00$), tangible facilities ($p = 0.00$), assurance and security ($p = 0.00$) and service efficiency ($p = 0.00$). Clearly, the repeat guests had relatively higher perception scores than the first-time guests. Specifically, the repeat guests perceived the attitude of staff factor to be high (mean = 2.71) while the first time guests perceived it to be moderate (mean = 2.40). However, both groups had high perceptions for the factors tangible facilities and assurance while they had a moderate perception for *service efficiency*. This observation can be attributed to the fact that the repeat guests had higher perceptions because of their previous experience which they may have used as a benchmark in their evaluation of the attitude of staff factor.

Summary

This chapter has explored the underlying dimensions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region. The service quality attributes used for the study were subjected through factor analysis after which four factors emerged as factors accounting for guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels in the Western Region. These were labelled service reliability, tangible facilities, assurance and security and service efficiency. The service reliability factor was found to have the best predictive ability for perceived service quality in hotels in the WR. The extents to which these factors differ with respect to guests' background characteristics were also investigated. Significant differences were found to exist between some background characteristics of guests and the service quality factors.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SATISFACTION AND REPURCHASE INTENTIONS OF GUESTS

Introduction

This chapter presents guests' satisfaction with service quality in hotels as well as their repurchase intentions. The chapter begins with an analysis of guests' satisfaction with service quality in hotels, and the extent to which satisfaction varies with socio-demographic characteristics. This is followed by an examination of guests' repurchase intentions towards hotels, and the extent to which their intentions vary with socio-demographic characteristics. The results of analysis of the predictors of satisfaction of hotel services are also presented in this chapter. The relationships existing among satisfaction, repurchase intentions and perceived service quality have also been examined. The chapter ends by assessing the importance of service quality and satisfaction in predicting repurchase intentions.

Guests' satisfaction with service quality in hotels

In this section the satisfaction of hotel guests is examined. This is done in order to identify the proportion of guests who were satisfied and those who were dissatisfied with the experience they had in the hotels. Six items were used to measure satisfaction and the results are presented in Table 21. The reliability of these attributes was assured with a Chronbach's alpha value of 0.890.

Table 21: Satisfaction of hotel guests (N=358)

Attribute	% in Agreement	Mean	Standard deviation
I am satisfied with my decision to stay in this hotel	62.3	2.50	0.709
My choice of this hotel was a good one	62.0	2.52	0.668
My experience in this hotel has been enjoyable	65.9	2.55	0.679
I am satisfied with the hotel	63.4	2.49	0.740
I had value for money	55.3	2.37	0.780
Taking everything into consideration, this hotel is an excellent one	52.2	2.35	0.758
<i>Overall score</i>	<i>60.2</i>	<i>2.46</i>	<i>0.722</i>

Scale: 1 – 1.49 = low, 1.50 – 2.49 = average, 2.50 – 3 = high

Source: Field survey, 2012

Table 21 shows that, on the whole, a little over half (60%, mean = 2.46) of the guests were satisfied while the rest (40%) were dissatisfied with hotel services. Similarly, Karunaratne and Jayawardena (2010) also found more than half (75%) of guests expressing their satisfaction with the services offered by five star hotels in Sri Lanka. The 40 percent of hotel guests who were dissatisfied is an important observation which deserves equal attention. This suggests that there are still service quality defects that need to be identified and rectified. Normally, most guests are unwilling to complain about services rendered to them, and therefore the few that complain has to be taken seriously.

The mean scores of the specific items ranged from 2.35 to 2.55. The lowest rated satisfaction item was “Taking everything into consideration, this hotel is an excellent one” (52.2%). The highest rated item was “My experience in this hotel has been enjoyable” (65.9%). Specifically, guests agreed that they were satisfied with their decision to stay in the hotel (mean = 2.50); that their choice of the hotel was a good one (mean = 2.52); and that their experience in the hotel had been enjoyable (mean = 2.55). They, however, expressed ambivalence as to whether they were highly satisfied (mean = 2.49), whether they had value for money (mean = 2.37), and whether they considered the hotel to be an excellent one (mean = 2.35).

Satisfaction and guests’ socio-demographic characteristics

Hotel guests’ satisfaction and their socio-demographic profile is an important factor in the hotel industry. Hence, this section explores the extent to which satisfaction varies with guests’ socio-demographic characteristics. The independent samples *t*-test statistics was used on variables that were measured along dichotomous scale (nationality, gender) while the one-way ANOVA technique was employed on variables with three or more categories (age, level of education, occupation). The existence of significant differences was determined by comparing the *p*-value with the level of significance set (0.05). Table 22 presents the mean responses of guests’ satisfaction by socio-demographic characteristics.

Table 22: Satisfaction by guests' socio-demographic characteristics

Variables	N	Mean response	F-value (p-value)
Nationality			
Ghanaian	249	2.57	7.044
Non-Ghanaian	109	2.64	(0.293)
Gender			
Male	289	2.58	0.011
Female	69	2.61	(0.761)
Age			
18 – 39	206	2.60	0.975
40 – 59	139	2.57	(0.378)
60 and above	13	2.80	
Level of education			
Primary/basic	11	2.62	0.500
Secondary/high school	73	2.64	(0.682)
University/college	187	2.55	
Postgraduate	87	2.62	

Table 22 (continued)

Occupation			
Self-employed	80	2.57	1.120
Professionals	245	2.55	(0.349)
Retired	12	2.86	
Students	21	2.67	

Note: Scale 1 – 1.49 = disagreed, 1.50 – 2.49 = neutral, 2.50 – 3 = agreed. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Source: Field survey, 2012

When the *p*-values were compared with the significance level set, no significant differences were established between satisfaction and any of the socio-demographic characteristics. This indicates that guests' socio-demographic characteristics had no influence on their satisfaction levels. However, some interesting results were observed. On the average, both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests agreed that they were satisfied with the hotel services although the extent of agreement was higher for non-Ghanaian guests (mean = 2.64) than their Ghanaian counterparts (mean = 2.57). The reason for this observation could be that the non-Ghanaians were likely to have stayed in better quality facilities such as 3-star hotels and guest houses.

Both male and female guests registered high scores for satisfaction, implying that they were satisfied with the services rendered by the hotels. This observation is consistent with Raza et. al. (2012) who noted that, in Romania, no

significant difference existed in guests' overall satisfaction in terms of gender. However, it was observed that the extent of agreement was higher for females (mean = 2.61) than males (mean = 2.58).

A similar observation was made with respect to age. Here guests who were over 60 years were found to express a relatively higher level of satisfaction than their other counterparts. The reason for this observation could be that the hotel employees might have shown a lot of courtesy and respect towards them, and this may have contributed to their satisfaction level since, traditionally, the Ghanaian culture promotes a greater respect for the elderly.

Similarly, all guests across the various educational groupings expressed satisfaction with the services offered by the hotels, but this was much higher among the secondary/high school leavers (mean = 2.64).

Like others, guests across the various occupational groupings agreed that they were satisfied with services provided by the hotels. However, the extent of agreement was higher among the retirees (mean = 2.86). The result validates the earlier finding that individuals above 60 years were satisfied with the services rendered to them.

Repurchase intentions of hotels guests

As the satisfaction of hotel guests has been examined, this section further examines the repurchase intentions of hotel guests. Four attributes were used to measure the repurchase intentions of hotel guests and the results are presented in

Table 23. The reliability of these attributes was assured with a Chronbach's alpha value of 0.890.

It is evident from Table 23 that more than half (62%, mean = 2.48) of the guests were willing to repurchase the services offered by the hotels in the Western Region while about 38 percent of them were not willing to repurchase the services of the hotels.

Table 23: Repurchase intentions of hotel guests (N=358)

Attribute	% in Agreement	Mean	Standard deviation
I would like to stay in this hotel another time	62.0	2.47	0.747
I will recommend this hotel to others	68.2	2.56	0.694
I wish I could stay longer in this hotel	58.7	2.39	0.791
I will choose this hotel instead of others	61.5	2.50	0.693
<i>Overall score</i>	62.3	2.48	0.729

Scale: 1 – 1.49 = disagree, 1.50 – 2.49 = neutral, 2.50 – 3 = agree

Source: Field survey, 2012

On the average over, 60% of the respondents indicated that they would like to stay in their hotels another time (62.0%, mean = 2.47) while others showed that they would recommend their hotels to others (68.2%, mean = 2.56). Moreover, 61.5% (mean = 2.50) indicated that they would choose their hotels instead of others.

In the business context, over 60 percent positive repurchase intentions means a 60 per cent return business, which is crucial for the survival of every business entity. This implies that hotels in the Western Region were assured of favourable repurchase intentions of over 60 % which is good for business and for sustainable financial returns.

Repurchase intentions and guests' socio-demographic characteristics

This section explores the extent to which repurchase intentions vary with socio-demographic characteristics. The independent samples *t*-test and ANOVA statistics were used. The existence of significant differences was determined by comparing the *p*-value with the level of significance set (0.05). Table 24 presents the mean responses of guests' repurchase intentions by socio-demographic characteristics.

Comparing the *p*-values with the significance level set, no significant differences were observed for any of the socio-demographic variables. This suggests that guests' socio-demographic characteristics had no influence on their decision to repurchase the services of the hotels. However, some interesting observations were made. On the average, both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests agreed that they would repurchase hotel services, but this was much higher among the Ghanaians. This suggests that the Ghanaian guests were more willing than their non-Ghanaian counterparts to repurchase the services of hotels in the Western Region.

Table 24: Repurchase intentions by socio-demographic characteristics

Variables	N	Mean response	F-value (p-value)
Nationality			
Ghanaian	249	2.53	0.453
Non-Ghanaian	109	2.50	(0.517)
Gender			
Male	289	2.53	0.611
Female	69	2.57	(0.576)
Age			
18 – 39	206	2.54	1.873
40 – 59	139	2.51	(0.155)
60 and above	13	2.86	
Level of education			
Primary/basic	11	2.78	1.168
Secondary/high school	73	2.61	(0.322)
Tertiary/University	187	2.49	
Postgraduate	87	2.54	
Occupation			
Self-employed	80	2.57	1.337
Professionals	245	2.13	(0.224)

Table 24 (continued)

Retired	12	2.83
Students	21	2.63

Note: Scale 1 – 1.49 = disagreed, 1.50 – 2.49 = neutral, 2.50 – 3 = agreed. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Source: Field survey, 2012

Regarding gender, male and female guests both agreed to repurchase the services of the hotels, although this was much higher among the females. Also, it was observed that the extent of agreement was higher for females than males. This observation can also be explained by the fact that, traditionally, females feel more secure with familiar environments.

A similar observation was made with the variable age, where guests aged 60 years and above had a relatively higher score (mean = 2.86) than guests in the other age categories. This observation can be explained by the fact that the Ghanaian culture promotes respect for the elderly, and that because the hotel staff might have shown some courtesy and respect towards the elderly, their decision might have been influenced.

With the exception of guests with university/college education who expressed doubt (mean = 2.49) as to whether they would repurchase hotel services, all the others indicated their willingness to repurchase hotel services. Guests who were not sure about their repurchase intentions might have had the intention of not repurchasing the services of the same hotel they stayed in but to try a different hotel.

In terms of occupation, all guests across the various occupational groupings agreed that they would repurchase the services of the hotels, except for the self-employed who were not sure (mean = 2.13). However, the extent of agreement was higher (mean = 2.83) for the retired, implying that they were more willing to return to the hotels for another stay.

Predictors of satisfaction with hotel services

The binary logistic regression analysis was used to determine the best predictors of guests' satisfaction of hotel services. Satisfaction of guests was considered as the dependent variable, with the two possible outcomes being satisfied and dissatisfied. The independent variables employed in the model were the factors that determine hotel guests' perceptions of service quality. Table 25 shows the predictors of the overall satisfaction of hotel guests, the Wald values, the Odds ratio and the p-values.

As can be noted on Table 25, *attitude of staff* and *tangible facilities* were the significant variables in the model. In contrast, *service efficiency* and *assurance* were noted not to play any significant role in guests' satisfaction. The results revealed a positive significant relationship between *attitude of staff* and guests' satisfaction. It was observed that a unit increase in *attitude of staff* results in an increase of individual's satisfaction by 1.197.

In terms of probability, it was observed that a unit improvement in *attitude of staff* is likely to result in a 3.3 times increase in guests' overall satisfaction level. Similarly, a positive relationship was established between guests'

Table 25: Binary logistic regression on overall satisfaction

Predictors	Wald			
	B	Value	Odds Ratio	P-value
Attitude of staff	1. 197	10. 414	3. 310	0. 001*
Tangible facilities	1. 190	11. 042	3. 287	0. 001*
Assurance	0. 458	1.161	1. 580	0. 281
Service efficiency	0. 370	1. 255	1. 448	0. 263
<i>Constant</i>	-5. 977	38. 432	0. 003	0. 000

* $p < 0.05$, Chi square = 186.659, df = 3, p = 0.000

Cox & Snell R square = 0.415; Nagelkerke R square = 0.658
 Overall Percentage Accuracy in Classification = 91.4%
 Positive Predictive Value = 91.3%
 Negative Predictive Value = 8.7%

Source: Field survey, 2012

satisfaction and assessment of tangible facilities of the hotels. Evidence suggests that a unit increase in the assessment of the tangible facilities result in 1.190 increase in the satisfaction of guests. With reference to the odds ratio, it was detected that an increase in guests' assessment of the tangible facilities is more likely to lead to increase in satisfaction by 3.29 times.

services and keeping promises had the greatest impact on overall customer satisfaction. *Tangible facilities* turned out to be the second most important dimension affecting overall guest satisfaction.

Overall guest satisfaction, repurchase intentions and perceived service quality

In order to assess the interaction or interdependence among satisfaction, repurchase intentions and perceived service quality, with reference to the conceptual framework of the study, a three (3) by three (3) correlation matrix was developed. The detailed result is presented in Table 26.

Table 26: Relationships between the main measures

Measures	1	2	3
(1) Overall guest satisfaction	1		
(2) Repurchase intention	0.691**	1	
(3) Perceived service quality	0.157**	0.099	1

N=358; ** p<0.01(two-tailed)

Source: Field survey, 2012

The analysis reveals that there was a strong positive relationship between guests' satisfaction and guests' intention to repurchase the services of hotels ($r = 0.691$; $N=358$; $p<0.01$). Many studies have also reported a direct positive relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions (Bolton,

1998; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Fornell, 1992; Oliver, 1980). These studies established that overall customer satisfaction with a service is associated with customer loyalty and repurchase intentions. This further shows that overall satisfaction explains 47.7% of the variance in their repurchase intention. Thus, overall satisfaction helps to explain nearly forty-eight percent (48%) of the variance in a guest's repurchase intention. Based on this result, the hypothesis (H₀₅) that *there is no significant relationship between guests' satisfaction and their repurchase intentions* was rejected. As such it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between guests' satisfaction and their repurchase intentions.

The above finding is consistent with Bitner, Booms, and Tétréault (1990) and Jones and Suh (2000) who found that overall satisfaction with an organization had a direct impact on how likely customers were to reuse the service. Again, in a banking environment, Ganesh et al. (2000) found a direct link between dissatisfaction and switching behaviour and that satisfaction was a strong antecedent to intention to repurchase.

Aside this, a relatively weak positive relationship ($r = 0.157$, $N = 358$, $p < 0.01$) was realized between perceived service quality and guest satisfaction. As evident from the result, guest perception about service quality was able to account for only 2.5% of the variance in guest satisfaction. This result also rejects the hypothesis (H₀₄) that *there is no significant relationship between guests' satisfaction and perceived service quality* and therefore concludes that there is a

significant relationship between guests' satisfaction and their perceived service quality.

The above finding is consistent with Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) who suggested that there existed a positive or direct relationship between perceived service quality and customers' satisfaction. This is also in line with Lee et al. (2000) and Saravana and Rao (2007) who acknowledged that customer satisfaction is based upon the level of service quality provided by the service provider. To throw more light on this relationship, Su et al. (2002) carried out a study to find out the link between service quality and customer satisfaction, and came up with the conclusion that there existed a great dependency between both constructs and that an increase in one is likely to lead to an increase in the other. Other research findings that confirmed the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction include Anderson and Mittal (2000), Chang and Wang (2011), Cronin et al., (2000), Edward and Sahadev (2011), Hellier et al. (2003), Lai et al. (2009), Lam et al. (2004), Roig et al. (2009) and Yang and Peterson (2004).

However, perceived service quality was observed to have no significant relationship with repurchase intention ($r = 0.099$; $N = 358$; $p > 0.01$). Therefore, the results fail to reject the hypothesis (H_{06}) that *there is no significant relationship between perceived service quality and repurchase intention*. This finding is consistent with Ahmed et al. (2010) which found no direct relationship between the two constructs but observed that customer satisfaction mediates a relationship between service quality and customers' repurchase intentions. Contrary to this

finding, there are many studies, such as Cronin and Taylor (1992), about service quality as antecedent to repurchase intentions. Moreover, Boulding et al. (1993) found positive relationships between service quality and repurchase intentions.

Importance of service quality and satisfaction in predicting guests' repurchase intentions

Both service quality and customer satisfaction have been widely recognized as antecedents of repurchase intentions. However, it is believed that hotel owners and/or managers would like to know which of these variables exerts the strongest influence on repurchase intentions. To assess the effect that overall satisfaction and perceived service quality had on guests' intention to repurchase hotel services, a binary logistic regression analysis was employed. The binary logistic regression was used because the possible outcomes of repurchase intentions were two (repurchase and not repurchase). Again, binary logistic regression is noted to have the ability to analyze all types of predictors without limitation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

The dependent variable (repurchase intentions) was a binary variable with only two possible outcomes which were coded: 1, if a guest intends to repurchase the services of hotels; and 2, if the guest has no intention to repurchase hotel services. The independent variables for this analysis, which are perceived service and overall satisfaction of guests, were coded so as to reflect an ascending order of levels of magnitude. Perceived service was coded low, moderate and high while the overall satisfaction was coded satisfied and not satisfied. The output

from Table 27 included the Odds ratio (B), Wald value, regression coefficient (β) and the significance (P) which shows the degree to which the individual predictors (perceived service quality and overall satisfaction) influence the entire model. For a predictor to contribute significantly to the model, the predictor should have a significant value less than 0.05.

Table 27: Binary logistic regression on repurchase intentions

Predictors	n	β	Wald Value	Odds Ratio (B)	P
<i>Perceived service quality</i>					
Low (ref)	36		16.080	1	
Moderate	258	2.464	11.596	11.746	0.001*
High	64	0.875	1.569	2.400	0.210
<i>Overall satisfaction</i>					
Dissatisfied (ref)	64			1	
Satisfied	294	3.374	43.993	29.202	0.000*
Constant		-5.933	45.453	0.003	0.000

* $p < 0.05$, Chi square = 186.659, $df = 3$, $p = 0.000$
 Cox & Snell R square = 0.658
 Overall Percentage Accuracy in Classification = 87.9%
 Positive Predictive Value = 91.3%
 Negative Predictive Value = 8.7%

Source: Field survey, 2012

From Table 27, it can be observed that a variance of between 41.5% and 65.8% in guests' repurchase intention was explained by the model. As indicated by the Pseudo R squared (Cox & Snell R squared and Nagelkerke R squared). The regression model correctly classified about 87.9% overall. For guests who were

predicted to have repurchase intentions, the model picked 91.3% of them while it picked only about 8.7% of guests predicted not to have repurchase intentions.

It is interesting to note that two variables, satisfied guests and guests with moderate perceived service quality, contributed significantly to the model (hotel guests with moderate perception, $p = 0.001$; satisfied hotel guests, $p = 0.000$). With perceived service quality, it was observed that guests with moderate perception of the services delivered by the hotels was the only predictor under perceived service quality that had significant influence on the repurchase intentions of hotel guests as shown by the p-value (0.001).

The Odds ratio of this variable (11.746) suggests that guests with moderate perception of service quality in the hotels were about twelve times (12) more likely to repurchase the services of hotels than guests with low perception of the quality of services rendered by the hotels. In their confidence interval, guests with moderate perception of service expressed about three (3) times the lower limit and forty-eight (48) times the upper limit of the 95% confidence interval as guests who perceived the services as poor or low. As regards the overall satisfaction of guests in hotels, it was realized that satisfied guests were about twenty-nine (29) times more likely to have a repurchase intention than guests who were dissatisfied ($p = 0.000$; Odds ratio = 29.202), as shown in Table 28. Again, Table 28 indicates that satisfied guests recorded a Wald value of 43.993 and expressed a 95% confidence interval of about eleven (11) times the lower limit and seventy-nine (79) times the upper limit of dissatisfied guests.

The above analysis therefore implies that guests' satisfaction was found to be relatively more important in predicting repurchase intentions than perceived service quality. This finding is consistent with earlier studies that revealed that customer satisfaction is a better predictor of intentions to repurchase than service quality (Ravald & Gronroos, 1996). Evidence is also provided by Cronin and Taylor (1992) who found a much stronger relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions than the relationship between service quality and repurchase intentions. In the literature and from practitioners' point of view, customer satisfaction is more influential on repurchase intentions (Dabholkar, 1995). Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1994) also revealed in their analyses that customer satisfaction is likely to achieve a greater level of statistical significance when both service quality and customer satisfaction have a significant effect on repurchase intentions.

Similarly, relatively current literature supports satisfaction as a reliable predictor of repurchase intentions (Cho et al., 2004; Novatorov & Crompton, 2002; Tian-Cole et al., 2002; Yoo, Cho, & Chon, 2003). For instance, Tian-Cole et al. (2002), who conducted a study on satisfaction, and behavioural intentions in the leisure and recreation field, found that visitors' future behavioral intentions were expected to be influenced positively by both overall service quality and overall satisfaction. The level of customer satisfaction has also been found to be positively associated with repeat visit intentions (Alegre & Cladera, 2009; Alegre & Garau, 2010; Choi & Chu, 2001; Ladhari, 2009; Ryu, Han & Kim, 2008). The findings of these studies confirm that both service quality and customer

satisfaction have a direct and positive impact upon customers' intention of revisiting the same service setting.

Summary

This chapter provided a synthesis of guests' perceived service quality, their satisfaction and their repurchase intentions for hotels in the Western Region of Ghana. A direct relationship was found between perceived service quality and guests' satisfaction. It was also found that there was a very strong significant relationship between guests' satisfaction and their repurchase intentions. However, the relationship between service quality and repurchase intentions was weak and not significant, implying that guests in hotels in the Western Region formed their repurchase decisions based on their satisfaction level. In this case, satisfaction could be said to serve as a proxy for good service quality.

CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter is the concluding chapter of the study. It presents a summary of the study including major findings. This is followed by conclusions drawn based on the findings, and implications of the findings for practice. The contribution of the study to knowledge is also presented in this chapter. This is followed by recommendations made for enhancing and improving service quality in hotels in WR. Finally, the chapter presents some limitations of the study and avenues for future research.

Summary

This study sought to assess service quality perceptions, satisfaction and repurchase intentions of guests in hotels in the Western Region (WR) of Ghana. The study specifically explored guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels in terms of overall perception and perceptions of service quality dimensions and specific attributes. The perceptions of Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests were compared; guests' perceptions of service quality were examined with reference to hotel category; the underlying dimensions of service quality in hotels were determined; guests' satisfaction and repurchase intentions for hotels were explored; and finally, the relationships among perceived service quality, satisfaction and repurchase intentions of hotel guests were examined.

To achieve these objectives, questionnaires which produced 358 valid responses were used to collect data on a sample of 374 hotel guests from a sample of 53 hotels in the WR. The study employed quantitative methods of analysis, using SPSS 17.0. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and percentages were calculated and used to describe and summarize the data. For further analyses, the study employed inferential statistics such as the chi-square test of independence, the independent samples t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), exploratory factor analysis (EFA), correlation analysis and binary logistic regression analysis.

Main findings

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the hotel guests perceived service quality to be high; 60 percent were satisfied with hotel services; and 62 percent were likely to repurchase the services of the hotels.

A strong positive relationship was detected between guests' satisfaction and their intentions to repurchase the services of hotels. No significant relationship was established between perceived service quality and repurchase intentions. Guests' satisfaction was found to be relatively important in predicting repurchase intentions than perceived service quality.

There were some differences in the perceptions of Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian guests with regard to specific service quality attributes. For example, whereas the Ghanaian guests were less concerned with issues such as inadequate supply of complementary items (Shampoo, soap etc.), unreliable water supply,

delayed service, untrained, unskillful and inexperienced staff, and staff not addressing guests by their names, their non-Ghanaian counterparts were more concerned.

There were service quality defects with specific service quality attributes. Brochures were not visually appealing; services were not performed right the first time and at the time promised. There were problems with telephone and internet service, food and beverage service, information about hotel services, and transport facilities. Slow response to guests' requests, delayed service; and failure to anticipate the needs of guests also formed part of the areas of concern.

Some service quality attributes were perceived highly by all guests. The hotels had clean environment and attractive outside appearance, beautiful interior design, modern equipment, and comfortable furniture. The hotel staff were professionally dressed. The hotels had attractive lobby area and adequate parking space. Their rooms were clean, comfortable and well decorated with good ventilation, and clean bathrooms. The hotels had friendly, courteous and respectful staff who exhibited behaviours that instilled confidence in the guests. Guests' safety and security were also assured.

Guests staying in the hotels perceived the assurance dimension to be the highest while reliability was the lowest perceived dimension of service quality. The assurance dimension was highest perceived dimension by guests in all the three hotel categories. Guests were noted to have exceptionally good perceptions for the courtesy, respectfulness and friendliness of hotel staff while their lowest perception was with the availability of transport facilities.

The 1-3 star hotels and guest houses were better perceived by guests in terms of the tangibles dimension. The star-rated hotels performed better in the area of the reliability of services and the responsiveness domain while the empathy dimension was highly perceived by guests in the guest houses and star-rated hotels.

Four factors (service reliability, tangible facilities, assurance and security, service efficiency) were identified as the underlying dimensions of service quality perceptions of guests in hotels in the WR. The results demonstrated that *attitude of staff* and *tangible facilities* were the best predictors of satisfaction of hotel guests in the WR. Significant differences were also observed between first time guests and repeat guests for all the factors.

Significant relationships were established between perceived service quality and guests' background characteristics such as gender, level of education, religious affiliation, occupation, monthly income and status of guest. The perception of the retired guests was significantly different from the other guests. The retirees were found to be satisfied than guests who were professionals, self-employed and students.

Conclusions

Drawing together the findings reported in this study, several conclusions emerge. First, the perceptions of guests concerning services rendered by hotels in the WR can be described as mixed. This is based on the fact that guests were noted to be happy with aspects of service relating to the tangibles such as the

cleanliness and beautiful interior design of the hotels while they were unhappy with issues mostly relating to the intangible aspects of service quality such as provision of prompt service without delays.

Nationality played an important role in guests' perceptions with specific service quality attributes. The non-Ghanaian guests were noted to have different opinions, and perceived some aspects of the hotel services differently from their Ghanaian counterparts.

The study concludes that guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels are influenced by their background characteristics such as, gender, occupation and level of education. The majority of female guests perceived service quality to be high; guests with lower levels of education were noted to have good perceptions of service quality; and the retired were also found to perceive service quality as high.

The category of hotel has a significant influence on guests' perceptions of quality of services rendered by hotels. Guests in the star-rated hotels rated services higher than their counterparts in the guest houses and budget hotels. It can therefore be said that highly rated hotels are likely to offer better services than the lowly rated ones.

It can be concluded that guests in hotels in the WR form their perceptions largely based on four factors or dimensions, which can be translated as reliable and dependable service performed efficiently in a safe and secured environment using visually appealing facilities. The attitude of staff dimension was the most

important predictor of service quality in hotels in the WR, followed by the tangible facilities, assurance and security and service efficiency dimensions.

Based on the finding that satisfaction is a better predictor of guests' repurchase intentions than perceived service equality, it can be said that hotel guests who were satisfied would repurchase the services of the hotel. It also suggests that a highly perceived service quality does not necessarily translate into a positive repurchase intention, and that satisfaction plays an important role in the repurchase intentions of guests.

The study confirms that there is a relationship between service quality and guests' satisfaction and a relationship between satisfaction and repurchase intentions. The results indicate that guests who expressed satisfaction with the service quality in the hotels also indicated their desire to stay in the hotels if they get a second chance. The extent of guests' satisfaction has a large influence on their repurchase intentions. Provision of better services by hotels first satisfies guests and then influences their future purchase intentions. Chen (2008) recommended that satisfied customers are more inclined towards retaining a relationship with existing companies, bringing about positive repurchase intentions in the future. This suggests that if overall service quality is high, guests' satisfaction will also be high, all things being equal; and highly satisfied guests will have a positive repurchase intention.

It can be said that irrespective of the satisfaction level with regard to the quality of hotel services, patrons will always expect improvement of products or services rendered. This is because service quality is a dynamic phenomenon and

possible changes in perception might evolve over time. Therefore the findings of this study are not mutually exclusive.

Hotel guests' perceptions of service quality could serve as a valuable input for the hotel industry. Their perceptions could be a good pointer to the kind of services they expect the hotels to deliver. The preferences of the non-Ghanaian guests for instance, could motivate the hotels to expand their service scope in order to meet international standards.

Implications for practice

The observation that not all guests perceived service quality as high implies that there were still service quality shortfalls. Thus, hotels were not doing everything right, not adopting the right service strategies in order to satisfy all their guests. The current levels of perceived service quality in hotels needs to be improved to ensure guests' satisfaction and future repurchase.

The service quality defects that were identified also fall within the service reliability dimension, and have implications for managers and practioners in the hotel industry. This observation suggests that managers and practioners in the hotel industry do not pay particular attention to little details as addressing guests by their names, and having attractive brochures with accurate information.

It is important for managers of hotels in the WR to take note of the pointers of service quality defects. The emergence of attitude of staff and tangible facilities as the best predictors of guests' perceptions of service quality in hotels

in the WR of Ghana is an indication that more attention should be paid to the two domains.

Knowing how guests perceive service quality and being able to measure service quality can benefit managements of hotels in the WR of Ghana. Measuring service quality can help them to obtain reliable data that can be used to monitor and maintain improved service quality. Using the SERVPERF scale to assess service quality enables management to better understand the various dimensions and how they affect service quality. This will help them to identify those that have strengths and weaknesses in order for the necessary improvements to be made.

Another implication is that management will get much more useful data if they base their assessment of service quality more explicitly on dimension scores, rather than a general overall score where results are aggregated. The result suggests that practioners have to pay attention to the specific items in the dimension, as dimension scores and items within the dimensions give very useful information about aspects of service quality that needs improvement. The use of these scores is likely to result in more appropriate decision-making.

Attitude of staff which emerged as the most important factor predicting service quality in the hotels could provide the basis for developing service delivery training programmes for service staff in the hotels, to improve service quality in order to ensure guests' satisfaction and repurchase of hotel products or services.

The significant relationships established between gender, level of education, religious affiliation, occupation and income on one hand and guests, perceived service quality can be used to segment the market for hotels. As observed from the study, there were certain aspects of service quality that appealed to the non-Ghanaian guests more than their Ghanaian counterparts.

Contribution to knowledge

One significant contribution of this study to knowledge is the development of a performance-only scale (HOSQUAL) for measuring service quality in hotels. A number of scales have already been developed, notably LODGSERV (Knutson et al., 1991), LODGQUAL (Getty & Thompson, 1994), and SERVQUAL (PZB, 1988), which this work builds on by incorporating other areas of hotel service quality such as water and electricity supply; food and beverage service; transport facilities; accessibility, prompt service; and staff knowledge and skill, which have become topical hotel service quality concerns. The results of the exploratory factor analysis also yielded four key areas where assessment of the hotel service quality can be based namely, attitude of staff, tangible facilities, assurance and service efficiency.

The original SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman et al. 1988, 1991) or adapted formats have been mostly used to measure service quality in hotels. However, there are only a few published studies about the performance-only (SERVPERF) measurement of service quality in the hotel industry. This study therefore serves as an addition to the number of studies that have used a

performance-only scale to measure service quality in hotels, such as, Babakus and Boiler, 1992; Boulding et al., 1993; Brady, Cronin and Brand, 2002; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Nadiri and Hussain, 2005; Yilmaz, 2009.

This study also contributes to the theoretical orientation of service quality and literature related to guests' perceptions of service quality in the hotels by identifying some important attributes such as "addressing guests by their names" and "supply of complementary items such as soaps and shampoos".

In this study, service quality in hotels was assessed using a performance-only scale. The results of the study demonstrate that the scale consists of four dimensions: attitude of staff, tangible facilities, assurances, and service efficiency. Attitude of staff (relating to reliability) emerged as the best predictor of service quality perceptions of guests in hotels in the WR, supporting previous empirical studies in the hotel service quality literature (eg. Juwaheer, 2004; Yilmaz, 2009).

The use of the performance-only (HOSQUAL) scale provides useful information that hotel managers can employ for developing a service quality measurement scale, and planning service quality improvement strategies, to gain a competitive advantage and to encourage repurchase.

The results of the study also provide a baseline data that can over time assist other researchers to assess service quality in hotels. It also provides empirical basis for effective service quality management strategies and contributes to the scholarly debate in services marketing literature on service quality, satisfaction and repurchase intentions.

The study supports the growing body of literature on service quality dimensions by demonstrating that the service quality dimensions that most influence overall guest satisfaction and repurchase intentions in hotels are those of service reliability and tangibles. This finding is consistent with the literature that emphasized the quality of interaction where employees' knowledge, attitude and behaviour are highlighted (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Ko & Pastore, 2005; Zeithaml et al., 2006). For example, prior research in the marketing literature suggested that reliability has been the most important determinant of customer satisfaction and repurchase intention (Murray & Howat, 2002; Patterson & Spreng, 1997).

After analyzing the data, the five service quality dimensions originally used were reduced to four service quality dimensions (attitude of staff, tangible facilities, assurance and service efficiency). All the four service quality dimensions were found to vary with guests' occupation. The service efficiency dimension also varied with the gender and nationality of guests. There were significant relationships between the hypothesized relationships perceived service quality and guests' satisfaction; and between guests' satisfaction and their repurchase intentions for hotels in the WR.

Recommendations

Hotel managers and operators should pay more attention to the reliability aspects of service quality in their hotels. This is because guests had the lowest perception scores for the reliability dimension. In this regard, hotel managers should focus on improving specific items related to this dimension. These areas

include prompt, accurate and timely service delivery, providing accurate information about hotel services, training staff to acquire more knowledge in service quality, and also making staff to acquire the skills and experience they need to work in the hotel. This can be done when managers recruit qualified personnel who have the requisite skills and experience, and then train staff on the job through tailor-made short courses and workshops. Other areas of concern include the provision of efficient telephone and internet systems by acquiring well-functioning wireless network connections that have high speed.

Investors, hoteliers and managers should also pay attention to the physical facilities of the hotel if they are to improve service quality. Guests expect hotels to have modern-looking equipment and appealing physical facilities, including beautiful interior design and décor. They also expect a clean and neat environment coupled with neat and professional appearance of staff. It is also very important that managers pay particular attention to the way and manner services are delivered by hotel staff. This is because guests expect reliable and efficient services from hotels especially in the areas of booking and reservation, check-in and check-out, accurate bills and advance information about prices, and *efficient food and beverage services*. The hotel product is basically intangible, and thus could be best described as an experience. Hotel managers should therefore take into account the inanimate service environment so as to enhance guests' perceptions of service quality and achieve guest satisfaction.

Moreover, managers should ensure that hotel staff are well-trained and have experience in service delivery and communication skills, and as well

understand the level of service that hotel guests expect from them. It is worth noting that, though staff training results in additional costs to a hotel, it will also contribute immensely to the provision of improved service quality in hotels. It is recommended that the management of hotels allocate more funds for human resource activities such as recruiting and selecting the most suitable candidates for vacant positions and training staff on the job.

The Ghana Hoteliers Association together with managements of hotels in the region should collaborate with training institutions such as the training department of the GTA and the Tourism and Hospitality Management departments of the Takoradi Polytechnic to organize periodic training sessions for hotel staff. These training sessions can take the form of seminars, workshops and short tailor-made refresher courses. This would result in qualified staff who are well equipped with a better understanding of service excellence.

Guest service staff should be trained by their managers and supervisors to work across different departments, including food & beverage (restaurant & bar), and reception and accommodation. This will transform them into knowledgeable and skilled staff who would be able to work straight shifts and also handle variety of responsibilities (multi-skilled) in their role as service staff. It is also recommended that staff should have a friendly and approachable personality; genuine willingness to go the extra mile; a consistent approach to guest service; a positive, can-do attitude; high standards of service; smart appearance; and a winning smile.

Managements and employees of hotels must ensure that all 'moments of truth' result in a positive experience for the guests. A high quality service, according to Juwaheer and Ross (2003), does not mean doing one thing 100 percent right, rather doing several things one percent better. By assessing guests' perceptions of service quality, hotels can develop appropriate services to meet the needs of guests.

Hotel managers should also make use of management audits to continually evaluate and monitor the overall service environment from the guest's perspective. These audits will facilitate hotel managers' knowledge about the services they offer and the performances of service encounters; and to identify areas that need improvement and enhancement. This continuous evaluation and monitoring is necessary because service quality is a dynamic phenomenon which evolves over time, and continuous measurement will help to capture any possible changes.

It is also recommended that hotel managers devise operations and marketing strategies that focus on the service quality dimensions which can enhance customer satisfaction and, in turn, foster positive repurchase intentions. For example, as hotel guests were found to be influenced by the physical surroundings and equipment, every care should be taken by the management to ensure continuous improvement and maintenance in this physical evidence (including the appearance of service staff).

The satisfaction of hotel guests and their repurchase intentions can also be improved if maintenance departments of hotels work on the quality of hotel

furnishing, design and beauty of the physical environment. Satisfaction will be further enhanced by providing guests with the required attention where each individual guest is made to feel that the hotel staff understands their specific needs. Management is therefore encouraged to differentiate the service on the basis of these service quality dimensions.

Trainers of hotel staff should be encouraged by management to focus on enhancing and developing the skills and competencies of hotel staff in such areas as: ways and means of delivering the service professionally handling complaints, effective service encounters (the process in which a customer directly interacts with a service over a period of time which mainly refers to the interaction between a customer and a service provider or service delivery system), customer relationship management, and employee positive attitude building, will contribute to the improvement of the quality of services and this will in turn have a positive impact on guest satisfaction and repurchase intention (Zeithaml et al., 2006). Profitability will also be affected as higher levels of retention, repurchase intention and customer satisfaction lead to higher future revenues (Rust & Zahorik, 1993) and reduced costs of operations (Reichheld, 1996).

If the managements of hotels could identify areas of service quality shortfalls, through continuous monitoring and evaluation, they would be able to anticipate and, if necessary, amend service delivery methods. Identifying such shortfalls could help managements in setting their objectives and future actions and also allow managements to make better tailor marketing efforts to ensure that guest needs are met (Ekinici, Prokopaki & Cobanoglu, 2003).

It would be beneficial if the managements of hotels would institute measures to address some service failures that were observed by guests, such as, poor internet connectivity; mal-functioning electrical and plumbing fittings; the presence of mosquitoes, poor TV reception, poor laundry services; and back up electricity. The above recommendations together with suggestions for improving service quality in hotels made by guests (See Appendix 2) if implemented will help to improve service quality in hotels.

Limitations and avenues for future research

This research has some limitations which warrant some caution with interpretation and generalization of findings. First, the study was carried out in only one out of the ten regions of Ghana – the Western Region. Only guests who were lodging in the sampled hotels during the period of the study were used.

Again, the study was carried out using a performance-only (SERVPERF) measurement scale as opposed to the frequently used SERVQUAL scale. Therefore further studies could be done, applying the SERVPERF scale with a different sample or a sample of hotel guests in the other regions of Ghana.

The study looked at all categories of hotels (1-3 star hotels, guest houses and budget hotels). Therefore, a future study could be directed at only the 1-3 star hotels, which are expected to provide better quality service. Hotel managers' perspectives of service quality could also be explored. Also a study can focus on only the non-Ghanaian hotel guests' perceptions of service quality. Additionally,

future research could also assess hotel staffs' perceptions of service performance and compare them with guests' perceptions in order to identify the differences.

There is a further avenue to extend this research by performing longitudinal studies to enhance the usefulness of the data collected for this research. Thus, similar studies can be conducted regularly to help determine the changes in guests' perceptions of service quality, their satisfaction levels and repurchase intentions in hotels over time.

Finally, there are many other issues in the service quality literature that still need to be explored and some of such issues are how the hotel industry can use the service concept to formulate effective marketing strategies, and customer care programmes utilized by hotels.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aaker, D. A., Kumar, V., Day, G. S., Lawley, M., & Stewart, D. (2007). *Marketing research: The second Pacific prime edition*. Milton, QLD: John Wiley and Sons.
- Abdullah, A. A., & Hamdan, M. H. (2012). Internal success factor of hotel occupancy rate. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3 (22), 199-218.
- Ahire, S. L., Golhar, D. Y., & Waller, M. A. (1996). Development and validation of TQM implementation constructs. *Decision Sciences*, 27, 23-56.
- Ahmed, I., Nawaz, M. M., Usman, A., Shaukat, M. Z., Ahmed, N., & Wasim-ul-Rehman (2010). A mediation of customer satisfaction between service quality and repurchase intentions for the telecom sector in Pakistan: a case study of university students. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4 (16), 3457-3462.
- Akama, J. S., & Kieti, D. M. (2003). Measuring tourists' satisfaction with Kenya's wildlife safari: A case study of Tsavo West National Park. *Tourism management*, 21 (1), 876-896.
- Akan, P. (1995). Dimensions of service quality: A study in Istanbul. *Managing Service Quality*, 5 (6), 39-43.
- Akbaba, A. (2006). Measuring service quality in the hotel industry: A study in a business hotel in Turkey. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 25, 170-192.
- Albrecht, K. (1992). *The only thing that matters*. New York: Harper Business.

- Alegre, J., & Cladera, M. (2009). Analysing the effect of satisfaction and previous visits on tourist intentions to return. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(5/6), 670-685.
- Alegre, J., & Garau, J. (2010). Tourist satisfaction and dissatisfaction. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37(1), 52-73.
- Alexandris, K., Dimitriadis, N., & Markata, D. (2002). Can perceptions of service quality predict behavioural intentions? An exploratory study in hotel sector in Greece. *Managing Service Quality*, 12 (4), 224-231.
- Amoako, G. K., Arthur, E., Bandoh, C., & Katah, R. K. (2012). The impact of effective customer relationship management (CRM) on repurchase: A case study of (GOLDEN TULIP) hotel (ACCRA-GHANA). *African Journal of Marketing Management*, 4(1), 17-29.
- Amstrong, R. W., Mok, C., Go, F. M., & Chan, A. (1997). The importance of cross-cultural expectations in the measurement of service quality perceptions in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 16 (2), 181-190.
- Andaleeb, S. S., & Conway, C. (2006). Customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry: An examination of the transaction-specific model. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 20 (1), 3-11.
- Anderson, E. W., & Mittal, V. (2000). Strengthening the satisfaction-profit chain. *Journal of Service Research*, 3 (2), 107-120.

- Anderson, E. W., Fornell, C., & Lehmann, D. R. (1994). Customer satisfaction, market share and profitability: Findings from Sweden. *Journal of Marketing*, 58, (2), 53-66.
- Anderson, E.W., & Sullivan, M. W. (1993). The antecedents and consequences of customer satisfaction for firms. *Marketing Science*, 12(2), 125-143.
- Anderson, J. C., & Gerbing, D. Y. (1991). Predicting the performance of measures in a confirmatory factor analysis with a pretest assessment of their substantive validities. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76 (5), 732-740.
- Appaw-Agbola, E. T., & Afenyo Dehlor, S. (2011). Service quality in Ghana's tourism industry: A perspective from tourists and hotel managers in the Volta Region. *World Review of Business Research*, 1 (5), 110-125.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L., & Razavieh, A. (2002). *Introduction to research in education*. Belmont CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.
- Asubonteng, P., McCleary, K. J., & Swan, J. E. (1996). SERVQUAL revisited: A critical review of service quality. *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 10 (6), 62-81.
- Atilgan, E., Akinci, S., & Aksoy, S. (2003). Mapping service quality in the tourism industry. *Managing Service Quality*, 13 (5), 41-422.
- Augustyn, M. M., & Seakhoa-King, A. (2004). Is SERVQUAL scale an adequate measure of quality in leisure, tourism and hospitality? In (ed.) *Advances in Hospitality & Leisure*, 1, 3-24.

- Babakus, E. T., Cornwell, B., Mitchell, V., & Schlegelmilch, B. (2004). Reactions to unethical consumer behaviour across six countries. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 21 (4), 254-263.
- Babakus, E., & Boiler, G. W. (1992). An empirical assessment of the SERVQUAL scale. *Journal of Business Research*, 24 (3), 253-268.
- Babakus, E., Mangold, W. G. (1992). An empirical assessment of the SERVQUAL scale. *Journal of Business Research*, 24 (3), 253-268.
- Babbie, E. (2007). *The Practice of Social Research* (11th Ed.). Belmont, USA: Thompson Wadsworth.
- Badri, M. A., Abdulla, M., & Al-Madani, A. 2005. Information technology center service quality assessment and application of SERVQUAL. *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management*, 22(8), 819-848.
- Baker, D. A., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (1997). Effects of service climate on managers' and employees' rating of visitors' service quality expectations. *Journal of Tourism Research*. 36(1), 15-22.
- Baker, D. A., & Crompton, J. L. (2000). Quality, satisfaction and behavioural intentions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27 (3), 785-804.
- Bamossy, S. M., Askegaard, S., & Hogg, M. K. (2006). *Consumer behaviour: An European perspective* (3rd Ed.). London: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Baron, S., & Harris, K. (2003). *Services marketing: Texts and cases*. (2nd Ed.). Palgrave.
- Barrows, C. W., & Powers, T. (2008). *Introduction to management in the hospitality industry* (9th Ed.). New York: Wiley

- Barsky, J. D., & Labagh, R. (1992). A strategy for customer satisfaction. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 35 (3), 32-40.
- Bateson, J. E. G. (1977). Do we need service marketing? In *Marketing Consumer Services: New Insights*. Marketing Science Institute Report, 77-115.
- Bearden, W. O., & Teel, J. E. (1983). Selected determinants of consumer satisfaction and complaint reports. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 20(1), 21-28.
- Beeho, A. J., & Prentice, R. G. (1997). Conceptualizing the experience of heritage tourists, a case study of New Lanark World Heritage Village. *Tourism Management*, 18(2), 75-87.
- Bekko, C. P. (2000). Service intangibility and its impact on consumer expectations of service quality. *Journal of Service Marketing*, 14 (1), 9-26.
- Bennet, A., & Strydom, L. (2005). What is tourism? In Bennett, A., Jooste, C., & Strydom, L. (Eds). *Managing tourism services: A Southern African perspective* (3rd Ed.). Pretoria: Van Scaik Publishers.
- Bernhardt, K. L., Donthu, N., & Kennett, P. A. (2000). A longitudinal analysis of satisfaction and profitability. *Journal of Business Research* 47 (2), 161-171.
- Berry, L. L. (1980). Services marketing is different, in Lovelock C.H. (1984), *Services Marketing*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Englewoods Cliffs, 29-37.

- Bigné, J. E., Andreu, L., & Gnoth, J. (2005). The theme park experience: An analysis of pleasure, arousal and satisfaction, *Tourism Management*, 26(6), 833-844
- Bitner, M. J. (1990). Evaluating service encounters: The effect of physical surroundings and employee responses. *Journal of Marketing*, 15 (April), 69-82.
- Bitner, M. J., Booms, B. H., & Tetreault, M. S. (1990). The service encounter: Diagnosing favourable and unfavourable incidents. *Journal of Marketing*, 54, 71-84.
- Bitner, M. J., & Hubbert, A. R. (1994). Encounter satisfaction versus overall satisfaction versus service quality. In Rust, R. T., & Oliver, R. L. (Eds). *Service quality: New directions in theory and practice*, London: Sage, 72-94.
- Blackwell, R. D., Miniard, P. W., & Engel, J. F. (2001). *Consumer Behavior* (9th Ed.). London: Harcourt College Publishers.
- Blešić, I., Ivkov-Džigurski, A., Dragin, A., Ivanović, Lj., & Pantelić, M. (2011). Application of Gap Model in the researches of hotel services quality. *Turizam* 15 (1), 40-52.
- Bohrnstedt, G. (1983). Measurement, in Rossi, P., Wright, J., & Anderson, A. (Eds). *A hand book of survey research*. San Diego CA: Academic Press.
- Bojanic, D.C. (1991). Quality measurement in professional service firms. *Journal of Professional Services Marketing*, 7 (2) 27-36.

- Bolten, R. N., & Drew, J. H. (1991a). A multistage model of customers' assessment of service quality and value. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 17 (March), 375-385.
- Bolten, R. N., & Drew, J. H. (1991b). A longitudinal analysis of the impact of service changes on customer attitudes. *Journal of Marketing*, 55 (January), 1-9.
- Bolton, R. N. (1998). A dynamic model of examining moderating influences in a retailing context the customer's relationship with a continuous service provider: The role of satisfaction. *Marketing Science*, 17 (1), 45-65.
- Bondzie-Simpson, A. (2012). Customer expectations of service quality in the hotel industry, Central Region of Ghana. *Centerpoint Humanities Edition*, 14 (2), 223-244.
- Boon-itt, S., & Rompo, N. (2012). Measuring service quality dimensions: An empirical analysis of Thai hotel industry. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 3 (5), 52-63.
- Bosque, I. R. & Martin, H. S. (2008). Tourist satisfaction: A Cognitive-Affective Model, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(2), 551-573.
- Boulding, W., Kalra, A., Staelin, R., & Zeithaml, V. A. (1993). A dynamic process model of service quality: From expectations to behavioural intentions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 30 (1), 7-27.
- Brady, M. K., & Cronin, J. J. (2001). Some new thoughts on conceptualizing perceived service quality: A hierarchical approach. *Journal of Marketing*, 65 (July), 34-49.

- Brady, M. K., & Robertson, C. J. (2000). Searching for a consensus on the antecedent role of service quality and satisfaction: An exploratory cross-national study. *Journal of Business Research*, 51 (1), 53-60.
- Brady, M. K., & Robertson, C. J. (2001). Searching for a consensus on the antecedent role of service quality and satisfaction: An exploratory cross-national study. *Journal of Business Research*, 51(1), 53-60.
- Brady, M. K., Cronin, J., & Brand, R. R. (2002). Performance-only measurement of service quality: A replication and extension. *Journal of Business Research*, 55 (1), 17-31.
- Brochado, A., & Marques, R. C. (2007). Comparing alternative instruments to measure service quality in higher education. *Working Papers (FEP), University of Porto*, 165, 1-19.
- Butler, D., Sharon, L. O., & Turner, D. E. (1996). The effects of demographics on determinants of perceived health-care service quality: The case of users and observers. *Journal of Management in Medicine*, 10 (5), 8-20.
- Buttle, F. (1996). SERVQUAL: Review, critique, research agenda. *European Journal of Marketing*, 30 (1), 8-32.
- Caceres, R. C., & Paparoidamis, N. G. (2007). Service quality, relationship satisfaction, trust, commitment and business-to-business loyalty. *European Journal of Marketing*, 41, 836-867.
- Cadotte, E. R., Woodruff, R. B., & Jenkins, R. I. (1987). Expectations and norms in models of customer satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 24 (August), 305-314.

- Callan, R. J., & Bowman, L., (2000). Selecting a hotel and determining salient quality attributes: A Preliminary study of mature British travelers. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, (2), 97-118.
- Carman, J. M. (1990). Consumer perceptions of service quality: An assessment of the SERVQUAL dimensions. *Journal of Retailing*, 66 (Spring), 35 – 55.
- Caruana, A., Money, A. H., & Berthon, P. R. (2000). Service quality and satisfaction-the moderating role of value. *European Journal of Marketing*, 34(11/12), 1338-1353.
- Chang, H. H., & Wang, H.W. (2011). The moderating effect of customer perceived value on online shopping behaviour, *Online Information Review*, 35 (3), 333-359.
- Chen, C. F. (2008). Investigating structural relationship between service quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioural intentions for air passengers: Evidence from Taiwan. *Transportation Research Part A*, 42, 709-717.
- Chi, C. G. Q., & Qu, H. (2008). Examining the structural relationships of destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty: An integrated approach. *Tourism Management*, 29, 624-636.
- Cho, B. H., Lee, C. W., & Chon, T. J. (2004). Effect of customers' service quality satisfaction for repurchase of golf range user. *Korean Journal of Physical Education*, 42(2), 179-188.

- Choi, T. Y., & Chu, R. (2001). Determinants of hotel guests' satisfaction and repeat patronage in the Hong Kong hotel industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 20, 277-297.
- Churchill, G. A., & Surprenant, C. (1982). An investigation into the determinants of customer satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 19, 491-405.
- Cooper, D. R., & Schindler, P. S. (2001). *Business research methods* (7th Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 44 (5-6), 31-46.
- Crick, A., & Spencer, A. (2011). Hospitality quality: New directions and new Challenges. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 23 (4), 463-478.
- Crompton, J. L., & MacKay, K. J. (1989). Users perceptions of the relative importance of service quality dimensions in selected public recreation programmes. *Leisure Sciences*, 4, 367-375.
- Crompton, J. L. & Love, L. L. (1995). The predictive validity of alternative approaches to evaluating quality of a festival. *Journal of Travel Research*, 34, 11-24.
- Cronin, J. J. Jr., & Michael, H. M. (1989). Satisfying customer expectations: the effect on conflict and repurchase intentions in industrial marketing channels. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 17, 41-49.
- Cronin, J. J., & Taylor, A. S. (1992). Measuring service quality: A re-examination and extension. *Journal of Marketing* 56 (July), 55-68.

- Cronin, J. J., & Taylor, A. S. (1994). SERVPERF versus SERVQUAL: reconciling performance-based and perceptions minus expectations measurement of service quality. *Journal Marketing*, 1 (58), 12-131.
- Cronin, J. J., Brady, M. K., & Hult, G. T. M. (2000). Assessing the effects of quality, value, and customer satisfaction on consumer behavioural intentions – in service environments. *Journal of Marketing*, 76 (2), 193-218.
- Crosby, P. (1984). *Quality without tears: The art of hassle free management*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Dabholkar, P. A. (1995). A Contingency framework for predicting causality between customers satisfaction and service quality. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 22(1), 101-108.
- Dabholker, P. A., Shepherd, C. D., & Thorpe, D. J. (2000). A comprehensive framework for service quality: An investigation of critical conceptual and framework issues through a longitudinal study. *Journal of Retailing*, 76(2), 131 – 139.
- De Vaus, D. (2002). *Surveys in social research* (5th Ed.). London: Routledge.
- Devlin, J. (2002). An analysis of choice criteria in the home loans market. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 20(5), 212-226.
- Dimitriades, Z. S. (2006). Customer satisfaction, loyalty and commitment in service organizations: Some evidence from Greece. *Management Research News*, 29 (12), 782 – 800.

- Djaziri, D., & Gam, A. (2013). Service quality measurement scale: The case of hotel management. *E-marketing*. [online] www.hellocootonfr/service-quality-perception-measure.
- Dotchin, J. A., & Oakland, J. S. (1994a). Total quality management in services: Part two service quality. *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management*, 11 (3), 27 – 42.
- Edvardsen, B., Tomasson, B., & Ovretveit, J. (1994). *Quality of service: Making it really work*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Edward, M. & Sahadev, S. (2011). Role of switching costs in the service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction and customer retention linkage. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 23 (3), 327-345.
- Eiglier, P., & Langeard, E. (1987). *Servuction, Le marketing de services*. Paris: McGraw Hill.
- Ekinci, Y., & Riley, R. (1998). A critique of the issues and theoretical assumptions in service quality measurement in the lodging industry: Time to move the goal post? *Hospitality Management*, 17, 349-362.
- Ekinci, Y., Prokopaki, P. & Cobanoglu, C. (2003). Service quality in Cretan accommodations: Marketing strategies for the UK holiday market. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 22, 47-66.
- Ekinci, Y., Riley, M., & Fife-Schaw, C. (1998). What school of thought? The dimension of the resort hotel quality. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 10 (2), 63-67.

- Faullant, R., Matzler, K., & Füller, J. (2008). The impact of satisfaction and image on loyalty: The case of Alpine ski resorts. *Managing Service Quality*, 18 (2), 163-178.
- Fick, G. R., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (1991). Measuring service quality in the travel and tourism industry. *Journal of Travel Research*, 8 (4), 330-345.
- Fisher, R. A. (1950). *Statistical methods for research workers*. London: Oliver & Boyd.
- Fisher, E., & Arnold, S. J. (1994). Sex, gender, identity, gender role attitudes and consumer behaviour. *Psychology and Marketing*, 11 (2), 163-182.
- Fisk, R. P., Brown, S. W., & Bitner, M. J. (1993). Tracking the evolution of the service marketing literature. *Journal of Retailing*, 69 (1), 60-103.
- Fitzsimmons, J. A., & Fitzsimmons M. J. (2001). *Service Management: Operations, strategy, and information technology* (3rd Ed.). New York: Irwin McGraw-Hill.
- Fogarty, G., Catts, R., & Forlin, C. (2000). Identifying shortcomings in the measurement of service quality. *Journal of Outcome Measurement*, 4 (1), 425-447.
- Fornell, C. (1992). A national customer satisfaction barometer: The Swedish experience. *Journal of Marketing*, 56, 6-21.
- Fridgen, J.D. (1996). *Dimensions of Tourism*. East Lansing, Michigan: The Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Motel Association.
- Frochot, I., & Hughes, H. (2000). HISTOQUAL: The development of a historic houses assessment scale. *Tourism Management*, 21, 157-167.

- Frost, F.A., & Kumar, M. (2000). INTSERVQUAL: An internal adaptation of the GAP model in a large service organization. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 14 (5), 358-377.
- Gabbie, O., & O'Neill, M. A. (1996). SERVQUAL and the Northern Ireland hotel sector: A comparative analysis – Part 1. *Managing Service Quality*, 6 (6), 25-32.
- Gabbie, O., & O'Neill, M. A. (1997). SERVQUAL and the Northern Ireland hotel sector: A comparative analysis – Part 2. *Managing Service Quality*, 7(1), 43-49.
- Gabbot, M., & Hogg, G. (1997). *Contemporary Services Marketing Management: A Reader*. London: The Dryden Press.
- Ganesh, J., Arnold, M. J. & Reynolds, K. E. (2000). Understanding the customer base of service providers: An examination of the differences between switchers and stayers. *Journal of Marketing*, 64, 65-87.
- Gaur, S. S., & Agrawal, R. (2006). Service quality measurement in retail store context: A review of advances made using SERVQUAL and RSQS. *The Marketing Review*, 6 (4), 317-330.
- Getty, J. M., & Getty, R. L. (2003). Lodging quality index (LQI): Assessing customers' perceptions of service quality delivery. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 15 (2), 94-104.
- Getty, J., & Thompson, K. (1994). A procedure for scaling perceptions of lodging quality. *Hospitality Research Journal*, 18 (2), 75-96.

- Ghana Statistical Service (2012). Population and housing census report.
Retrieved on October 13, 2013 from <http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/>.
- Ghobadian, A., Speller, S. & Jones, M. (1994). Service quality: concepts and models. *International Journal of Quality*, 9 (11), 43-66.
- Giese, J. L., & Cote, J. A. (2000). Defining consumer satisfaction. *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, [Online] 00 (01) Available:
<http://www.amsreview.org/amsrev/theory/giese01-00.html>.
- González, A. E. M., Comesaña, R. L., & Brea, F. A. J. (2007). Assessment tourist behaviour intentions through perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. *Journal of Business Research*, 60, 153-160.
- Gotlieb, J. B., Grewal, D., & Brown, S. W. (1994). Customer satisfaction and perceived quality: Complementary or divergent constructs? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 7 (6), 875- 887.
- Grönroos, C. (1982). *Strategic management and marketing in the service sector*. Helsinki: Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration.
- Grönroos, C. (1983). *Strategic management and marketing in the service sector*. Boston, MA: Marketing Science Institute.
- Grönroos, C. (1984). A service quality model and its marketing implications. *European Journal of Marketing*, 18 (4), 36 -44.
- Grönroos, C. (1988). Service quality: The six criteria of a good perceived service quality. *Review of Business*, 9 (Winter), 10-13.
- Grönroos, C. (1990). *Service management and marketing: Managing the moment of truth in service competition*. Toronto: Lexington Books.

- Grönroos, C. (1998). Marketing Services: The Case of a missing product. *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 13(4), 322-338.
- Grönroos, C. (2000). *Service management and marketing: A customer relationship management approach*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Grönroos, C. (2001). The perceived service quality concept: A mistake? *Managing Service Quality*, 11 (3), 150-152.
- GTA/WR (2011). Registered and licensed hotels in the Western Region.
- GTA/WR (2012). Registered and licensed hotels in the Western Region.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tathan, R. K. (2006). *Multivariate data analysis* (6th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Hellier, P. K., Geursen, G. M., Carr, R. A., & Rickard, J. A. (2003). Customer repurchase intention: A general structural equation model. *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(11/12), 1762-1800.
- Han, H., Back, K.J., & Barrett, B. (2009). Influencing factors on restaurant customers' revisit intention: The roles of emotions and switching barriers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 19(9), 563-572.
- Heung, V.C.S., Wong, M.Y., & Qu, H. (2000). Airport-Restaurant service quality in Hong Kong: An application of SERVQUAL. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 41(3), 86-97.
- Hoffman, K. D., & Bateson, J. E. G. (2006). *Services marketing: Concepts, strategies and cases* (3rd ed.). Mason, Ohio: Thomson South-Western.

- Holbrook, M. B., & Corfman, K. P. (1985). Quality and value in the consumption experience: Phaedrus rides again. In J. Jacoby, & J. Olson (Eds.), *Perceived Quality* (31-57). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Homburg, C., & Gierring, A., (2001). Personal characteristics as moderators of the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty- An empirical analysis. *Psychology & Marketing*, 18 (1), 43-66.
- Howat, G., Murray, D., & Crilley, G. (1999). The relationships between service problems and perceptions of service quality satisfaction, and behavioral intentions of 40 Australian public sports and leisure center customers. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 17, 42-64.
- Hu, H. H., Kandampully, J., & Juwaheer, T. D. (2009). Relationships and impacts of service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and image: An empirical study. *The Service Industries Journal*, 29 (2), 111-125.
- Huei, C. T., & Easvaralingam, Y. (2011). Perceptions of service quality, corporate image and customer loyalty in the hotel industry of Malaysia. *The 2nd International Research Symposium in Service Management*, Yogyakarta, INDONESIA, 26-30 July 2011. 126-135.
- Ibrahim, M. F., & Ng, C. W. (2002). Determinants of entertaining shopping experiences and their link to consumer behaviour: Case studies of shopping centres in Singapore. *Journal of Retail and Leisure property* 2 (4), 338-357.

- Iglesias, M. P., & Guillen, M. J. Y. (2004). Perceived quality and price: Their impact on the satisfaction of restaurant customers. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 16 (6), 373-379.
- Ingram, H., & Daskalakis, G. (1999). Measuring quality gaps in hotels: The case of Crete. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 11(1), 24-30.
- Inkumsah, W.A. (2011). Measuring customer satisfaction in the local Ghanaian restaurant industry. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 2222-2839. Retrieved October 2, 2012, from <http://www.iiste.org>
- International Journal of Quality Management*, 22, 913-949.
- Ismali, I. (2006). Service quality, client satisfaction and loyalty towards audit firms: Perceptions of Malaysian public listed companies. *Managerial Auditing Journal*, 21 (7), 738-756.
- Iyiade, A. (2009). Self esteem, gender, and socio economic status as factors in hotel brand loyalty. Retrieved September 13, 2012, from <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Self+Esteem,+Gender+and+Socio->
- Jabnoun, N. & Khalifa, A. (2005). A customised measure of service quality in the UAE. *Managing Service Quality*, 15 (4), 374-388.
- Jain, S. K., & Gupta, G. (2004). Measuring service quality: SERVQUAL versus SERVPERF scales. *Vikalpa*, 29 (2), 25 -37.
- Jiang, P., & Rosebloom, B. (2005). Customer intention to return online: price perception, attribute-level performance, and satisfaction unfolding over time. *European Journal of Marketing*, 39 (1/2), 150-174.

- John, R.D., & Cole, C.A. (1986). Age differences in information processing: Understanding deficits in young and elderly consumers. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13 (3), 297-315.
- Johns, N., & Tyas, P. (1996). Use of service quality gap theory to differentiate between food service outlets. *Services Industries Journal*, 16 (3), 321-346.
- Johns, N., Avci, T., & Karatepe, O. M. (2004). Measuring service quality of travel agents: Evidence from Northern Cyprus. *The Service Industries Journal*, 24 (3), 82-100.
- Johnston, C., & Mathews, B. P. (1997). The influence of experience on service expectations. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 8 (4), 290-305.
- Johnston, R. (1995). The determinants of service quality: Satisfiers and dissatisfiers. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 6 (5), 53-71.
- Jones, T.O., & Sasser, W.E. (1995). Why satisfied customers defect. *Harvard Business Review*, 73(6), 88-99.
- Jones, M. A., & Suh, J. (2000). Transaction-specific satisfaction and overall satisfaction: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 14(2), 147-159.
- Jun, S., Hyun, Y. J., Gentry, J. W., & Song, C.S. (2001). The relative influence of affective experience on consumer satisfaction under positive versus negative discrepancies. *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction*

- and Complaining Behavior*, 14, 141-153.
- Juran, J. M. (1988). *Juran on planning for quality*. New York: The Free Press.
- Juwaheer, T. D. (2003). A study of hotel guest perceptions in Mauritius. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 15 (2), 105-115.
- Juwaheer, T. D. (2004). Exploring international tourists' perceptions of hotel operations by using a modified SERVQUAL approach: a case study of Mauritius. *Managing Service Quality*, 14 (5), 350-364.
- Juwaheer, T. D., & Ross, D. L. (2003). A study of hotel guest perceptions in Mauritius. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 15 (2), 105-115.
- Juwaheer, T. D. (2011). Gender bias in hotel guests' perceptions of service quality: an empirical investigation of hotels in Mauritius. *e-Review of Tourism Research*, 9(5), 164-189.
- Kandampully, J. (1998). Service quality to service loyalty: A relationship which goes beyond customer services. *Total Quality Management*, 9 (6), 431-443.
- Kandampully, J. (2000). The Impact of Demand Fluctuation on the Quality of Service: a Tourism Industry Example. *Managing Service Quality*, 10(1), 10 -18.
- Kandampully, J. (2002). *Services management: The new paradigm in hospitality*. Frenchs Forest NSW: Pearson Education Australia.

- Kandampully, J., & Hu, H. H. (2007). Do hoteliers need to manage image to retain loyal customers? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 19 (6), 435- 443.
- Kandampully, J., & Suhatanto, D. (2000). Customer loyalty in the hotel industry: The role of customer satisfaction and image. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 12 (6), 346-351.
- Kandampully, J., Mok, C., & Sparks, B. (2001). *Service quality management in hospitality, tourism and leisure*. New York: The Haworth Hospitality Press.
- Kandampully, J., Mok, C., & Sparks, B. (2003). *Service quality management in hospitality*. India: Jaico Publishing house.
- Kang, G. D., & James, J. J. (2004). Service quality dimensions: An examination of Grönroos's service quality model. *Managing Service Quality*, 14 (4), 266 -277.
- Kaplan, R. M. & Sakuzzo, D. P. (1993). *Psychological testing principles, applications and issues*. Belmont: Brooks/Cole.
- Karatepe, O. M., & Avci, T. (2002). Measuring service quality in the hotel industry: Evidence from Northern Cyprus. *Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality research*, 3 (1), 19- 32.
- Karunaratne, W. M. K. K., & Jayawardena, L. N. A. C. (2010). Assessment of customer satisfaction in a five star hotel-A case study. *A Tropical Agricultural Research*, 21(3), 258-265.

- Kassim, N. M., & Bojei, J. (2002). Service quality: Gaps in the telemarketing industry. *Journal of Business Research*, 55 (11), 845- 852.
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57 (1), 1 - 22.
- Kim, H. D., & Lough, N. L. (2007). An investigation into relationships among constructs of service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention in Korean private golf course. *The ICHPER SD Journal of Research*, 1(2), 14-22.
- Kim, H. Y., & Chung, J. E. (2011). Consumer purchase intention for organic personal care products. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 28(1), 40-47.
- Kivela, J. J. (1997). Restaurant marketing: Selection and segmentation in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 9(3), 116-123.
- Kleynhans, I. C., & Zhou, P. (2012). Service quality at selected hotels in Pretoria, South Africa. *African Journal of Business Management*, 6(45), 11342-11349.
- Knutson, B. J., Stevens, P., Wullat, C., Patton, M., & Yokoyama, F. (1991). LODGSERVE: A service quality index for the lodging industry. *Hospitality Research Journal*, 14 (1), 277-284.
- Knutson, B. J., & Patton, M. E. (1993). Restaurants can find gold among silver hair: Opportunities in the 55+ market. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure*. 1(3), 79-91.

- Ko, Y. J., & Pastore, D. (2004). Current issues and conceptualizations of service quality in the recreation and sports industry. *Sports Marketing quarterly*, 13 (2), 159-167.
- Ko, Y. J., & Pastore, D. L. (2005). A hierarchical model of service quality for the recreational sport industry. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 14 (2), 84-97.
- Kotler, P. (1991). *Marketing management: Analysis, planning, implementation and control*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kotler, P. (2003). *Marketing Management*. (11th Ed.). European: Prentice Hall.
- Kotler, P., Bowen, J. T., & Markens, J. C., (2003). *Marketing for hospitality and tourism*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Kozak, M. (2000). A critical review of approaches to measure satisfaction with tourist destinations. *Tourism Analysis*, 5, 191- 196.
- Kozak, M. (2001). A critical review of approaches to measure satisfaction with tourist destinations. In J.A. Mazanec, G. Crouch, J.R. Brent Ritchie and A. Woodside (eds) *Consumer Psychology of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure*, 2, 303-320). Wallingford: CABI Publishing.
- Kpingbi, M. (2011). [Discussion on service quality in hotels in the Western Region] (Personal communication, 19 August, 2011.
- La Barbera, P. A., & Mazursky, d. (1983). A longitudinal assessment of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction: the dynamic aspect of the cognitive process. *Journal of marketing research*, 20, 393-404.

- Lacey, R. Suh, J. & Morgan, R. M. (2007). Differential effects of preferential treatment levels on relational outcomes. *Journal of Service Research*, 9(3), 241- 256.
- Ladhari, R. (2009). Service quality, emotional satisfaction and behavioural intentions: A study on hotel industry. *Managing Service Quality*, 19 (3), 308-331.
- Lai, F., Griffin, M. Babin, B. J. (2009). How quality, value, image, and satisfaction create loyalty at a Chinese telecom. *Journal of Business Research*, 62, 980-986.
- Lam, S.Y., Shankar, V., Erramilli. K.M. & Murthy, B. (2004). Customer value, satisfaction, loyalty, and switching costs: An illustration from a business-to-business service context. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 32(3), 293-311.
- Landrum, H., Prybutok, V.R., & Zhang, X. (2007). A comparison of Megal's service quality instrument with SERVPREF. *Information and Management*, 44 (1), 104-113.
- Laroche, M., Ueltschy, L. C., Shuzo, A., & Cleveland, Y. P. P. (2004). Service quality perceptions and customer satisfaction: Evaluating the role of culture. *Journal of International Marketing*, 12 (3), 58-85.
- Larose, D. (2006). *Data mining methods and models*. NJ, USA: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

- Lau, P. M., Akbar, A. K., & Fie, D. Y. G. (2005). Service quality: A study of luxury hotels in Malaysia. *The Journal of American Academy of Business*, 7 (2), 46- 55.
- Lazer, W., & Layton, R. (1999). Quality of hospitality service: A challenge of the millennium. *Hotel Online*, April 1999. Retrieved December 5, 2012, from http://www.hotelonline.com/Trends/EI/EI_ServiceChallenge.html
- LeBlanc, G. (1992). Factors affecting the evaluation of service quality in travel agencies: An investigation of customer perceptions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 30 (4), 10- 21.
- Lee, H., Lee, Y., & Yoo, D. (2000). The determinants of perceived service quality and its relationship with satisfaction. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 14 (3), 217- 231.
- Lee, E.J. & Overby, J.W. (2004) Creating value for online shoppers: Implications for satisfaction and loyalty. *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, 17, 54-67.
- Lee, Y.P., & Chen, C.Y. (2009) Banking service quality in Vietnam: A comparison of customers' and bank staff's perceptions. *The Journal of International Management Studies*, 4(2), 140-146.
- Legohérel, P. (1998). Quality of tourist services: The influence of each participating component on the consumer's overall satisfaction regarding tourist services during a holiday. Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Tourism and Hotel Industry in Indo-China and Southeast Asia. *Development, Marketing and Sustainability, Phuket*, 47 -54.

- Lehtinen, J. R., & Lehtinen, U. (1982). *Service Quality: A Study of Quality Dimensions*. Unpublished working paper, Service Management Institute, Helsinki.
- Lehtinen, U., & Lehtinen, J. R. (1991). Two approaches to service quality dimensions. *The Services Industries Journal*, 11 (3), 287- 303.
- Lemon, K. N., Rust, R. T., & Zeithaml, V.A. (2001). What drives customer equity. *Marketing Management*, 10(1), 20-25.
- Leverin, A., & Liljander, V. (2006) Does relationship marketing improve customer relationship satisfaction and loyalty? *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 24(4), 232-251.
- Lewis, B. R., & Mitchell, V. W. (1990). Defining and measuring the quality of customer service. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 8 (6), 11-17.
- Lewis, R. C., & Booms, B. H. C. (1983). "The marketing aspects of service quality", in Berry, L. L., Shostack, G., & Upah, G. (Eds), *Emerging Perspectives on Services Marketing*. American Marketing Association, Chicago, 12, 99 -107.
- Li, Z.H. (2010). Measuring customer perceptions of hotel service quality based on a SERVPERF Approach. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 6(1), 22-28.
- Llosa, S., Chandon, J. L., & Orsingher, C. (1998). An empirical study of SERVQUAL's dimensionality. *The Services Industries Journal*, 18 (2), 16- 44.

- Lockyer, T. (2005b). Understanding the dynamics of the hotel accommodation purchase decision. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17 (6), 481-492.
- Lovelock, C. H. (1981). Why marketing needs to be different for services. In J. Donnelly, & W. George (Eds.), *Marketing of Services* (5 - 9). Chicago: American Marketing.
- Lovelock, C. H. (2001). *Services marketing: people, technology, strategy*, (4th Ed). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Lovelock, C. H., & Gummesson, E. (2004). Wither service marketing? In search of new paradigm and fresh perspectives. *Journal of Service Research*, 47, 9-20.
- Lovelock, C. H., Patterson, P. G., & Walker, R. H. (2001). *Services Marketing: Australia and New Zealand*: Pearson Education.
- Luk, S. T. K., & Layton, R. (2004). Managing both outcome and process quality is critical to quality of hotel services. *Total Quality management*, 25 (3), 259 -278.
- Luo, X., & Homburg, C. (2007). Neglected outcomes of customer satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing*, 71(2), 133- 149.
- MacKay, K.J., & Crompton, J.L. (1988). A conceptual model of consumer evaluation of recreation service quality. *Leisure Studies*, 7, 41-49.
- Mack, R., Mueller, R., Crotts, J., & Broderick, A. (2000). Perceptions, corrections and defections: Implications for service recovery in the restaurant industry. *Managing Service Quality*, 10, 339-346.

Making tourism the lead sector of Ghana's economy-National tourism marketing strategy (2009-2012). Retrieved on October 20, 2012 from <http://www.touringhana.com>.

Mano, H., & Oliver, R. L. (1993). Assessing the dimensionality and structure of the consumption experience: Evaluation, feeling, and satisfaction, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20, 451-66.

Marković, S. (2003). Measuring service quality in the hospitality industry: An attributive approach. *PhD Dissertation. University of Rijeka, Croatia*.

Marković, S. (2004). Measuring service quality in the Croatian hotel industry: A multivariate statistical analysis. *Naše gospodarstvo* 50 (1/2), 27 -33.

Marković, S. (2006). Expected service quality measurement in tourism higher education. *Naše gospodarstvo* 52 (1-2), 86 -95.

Marković, S., & Raspor, S. (2010). Measuring perceived service quality using SERVQUAL: A case study of the Croatian hotel industry. *Journal of Management*, 5 (3), 195 -209.

Markovic, S., Horvat, J., & Raspor, S. (2004). An application of SERVQUAL scale in health tourism sector: An exploratory study. In: *Proceedings of International Conference Days of Turistica ENCUEN TRO S2004 – "strategic partnerships for the development of tourist destinations"*, TURISTCA College of Tourism Portoroz, University of Primorska, Portoroz, Slovenija.

Marshall, K. P., & Smith, J. R. (2000). SERVPERF utility for predicting neighbourhood shopping behaviour. *Journal of Nonprofit and Public*

Sector marketing, 7 (4), 45 -57.

- Martinez Caro, L., & Martinez Garcia. (2008). Developing a multidimensional and hierarchical service quality model for travel agency industry. *Tourism Management*, 29 (706- 720).
- Mattila, A. S., Grandey, A. A., & Fisk, G. M. (2003). The interplay of gender and affective tone in service encounter satisfaction. *Journal of Service Research: JSR*, 6(2), 136 – 145.
- Matzler, K., & Fuller, J. (2008). Customer delight and market segmentation: An application of the three-factor theory of customer satisfaction on life style groups. *Tourism Management*, 9, 116-126.
- Matzler, k., Renzl, B., & Rothenberger, S. (2006). Measuring the relative importance of service dimensions in the formation of price satisfaction and service satisfaction: A case study in the hotel industry. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 16 (3), 179-196.
- McAlexander, J. H., Kaldenberg, D. O., & Koeing, H. F. (1994). Service quality measurement. *Journal of Healthcare Marketing*, 14 (3), 34- 39.
- McQuitty, S., Finn, A., & Wiley, J. B. (2000). Systematically Varying Customer Satisfaction and its Implications for Product Choice. *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, retrieved August 11, 2012, from <http://www.amsreview.org/articles/mcquitty10-2000.pdf>
- Measurement of service quality. (2012). Retrieved from http://www.12manage.com/methods_Zeithaml_servqual.html.
- Mei, A. W. O., Dean, A. M., & White, C. J. (1999). Analyzing service quality in

- the hospitality industry. *Managing Service Quality*, 9 (2), 136-143.
- Mensah, I. (2009). Customers' perception of food service quality: The case of Cape Coast. *Journal of Business and Enterprise Development*, (2), 138 - 154.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1998). Data management and analysis methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (179-210). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miller, J. A. (1977). Exploring satisfaction, modifying models, eliciting expectations, posing problems, and making meaningful measurements. In H. K. Hunt (Ed.), *Conceptualization and Measurement of Customer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction* (72-91). Cambridge, MA: Marketing Science Institute.
- Miller, L. E. (2004). AG EDUC 885: *Research methods*. The Ohio State University.
- Mittal, V., Ross, W. T. Jr., & Baldasare, P. M. (1998). The asymmetric impact of negative and positive attribute-level performance on overall satisfaction and repurchase intentions. *Journal of Marketing*, 62 (1), 33-47.
- Mohsin, A., & Lockyer, T. (2010). Customer perceptions of service quality in luxury hotels in New Delhi, India: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 22 (2), 160-173.
- Mullin, B., Hardy, S., & Sutton, W. (2000). *Sport marketing*, (2nd Ed.). Leeds: Human Kinetics.
- Murray, D., & Howat, G. (2002). The relationships among service quality, value,

- satisfaction, and future intentions of customers at an Australian sports and leisure, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Nadiri, H., & Hussain, K. (2005). Perceptions of service quality in North Cyprus hotels. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17 (4), 469 -480.
- Namkung, Y., & Jang, S. (2008). Are highly satisfied restaurant customers really different? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 20 (2), 142- 155.
- Narangajavana, Y., & Hu, B. (2008). The relationship between the hotel rating system, service quality improvement, and hotel performance changes: A canonical analysis of hotels in Thailand. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 9(1), 34-56.
- Narayan, B., Rajendran, C., & Prakash Sai, L. (2009). Scales to measure and benchmark service quality in the tourism industry: a second-order factor approach. *Bench marking: An International Journal*, 15 (4), 469- 493.
- Newman, J. (2000) Action Research: A Brief Overview; Forum: Qualitative Social Research; [Online Journal] Available at: <http://qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/1-00/1-00newman-e.htm> (Accessed March 1st, 2012).
- Nimako, S. A., & Mensah, A. F. (2013). Examining the relationships among antecedents of guests' behavioural intentions in Ghana's hospitality industry: A structural equation modeling approach. *Asian Journal of Business Management*, 5(2), 252-266.

- Novatorov, E. V., & Crompton, J. L. (2002). Reformulating the conceptualization of marketing in the context of public leisure services. *Leisure Studies*, 20 (1), 61-75.
- Nunnally, J.C. (1978). *Psychometric Theory*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Nusair, K., & Kandampully, J. (2008). The antecedents of customer satisfaction with online travel services: A conceptual model. *European Business Review*, 20 (1), 4- 19.
- O'Neill, M. A., Williams, P., MacCarthy, M., & Groves, R. (2000). Diving into service quality: The dive tour operator perspective. *Managing Service Quality*, 10 (3), 131 -40.
- O'Neill, M., & Palmer, A. (2001). Survey timing and consumer perceptions of service quality: An overview of empirical evidence. *Managing Service Quality*, 11(3), 182 -190.
- Oberoi, U., & Hales, C. (1990). Assessing the quality of the conference hotel service product: Towards an empirically based model. *Service Industries Journal*, 10, (4), 700 -721.
- Oh, H., & Parks, S.C. (1997). Customer satisfaction and service quality: A critical review of the literature and research implications for the hospitality industry. *Hospitality Research Journal*, 20 (3) 35 -64.
- Oliver R. L. (1993). A conceptual model of service quality and service satisfaction: Compatible goals, different concepts, in Swartz, T. A., Bowen, D. A., & Brown, S. W. (Eds), *Advances in Services Marketing and Management*, 2, New York: JAI Press.

- Oliver, R.L. (1994). Conceptual issues in the structural analysis of consumption emotions, satisfaction, and quality: Evidence in a service setting. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 21, 16-22.
- Oliver, R. L. (1980). A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17 (4), 460 – 469.
- Oliver, R. L. (1981). Measurement and evaluation of satisfaction process in retail settings. *Journal of Retail*, 57 (3), 25- 48.
- Oliver, R. L. (1997). *Satisfaction: A behavioural perspective on the customer*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Oliver, R. L. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 63(4), 33-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1252099>
- Olorunniwo, F., Hsu, M. K., & Udo, G. T. (2006). Service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions in the service factory. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 20 (1), 59 – 72.
- Olsen, S. O. (2002). Comparative evaluation and the relationship between quality, satisfaction and repurchase loyalty. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 30 (3), 240 – 249.
- Ongori, J. K., Iravo, M., & Munene, C. E. (2013). Factors affecting performance of hotels and restaurants in Kenya: A case of Kisii country. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 4(12), 897-928.
- Oppermann, M. (1999). Predicting destination choice – A discussion of destination loyalty. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 5(1), pp. 51–65.

- Oppermann, M. (2000). Tourism destination loyalty, *Journal of Travel Research*, 38(1), pp. 78–84.
- Owusu-Mintah, S. B., (2013). Perceptions of sports tourists about service quality in the Ghanaian hospitality industry at the 26th African cup of nations tournament. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 4 (9), 1054 – 1077.
- Padma, P., Rajendran, C., & Sai, L. P. (2009). A conceptual framework of service quality in healthcare: Perspectives of Indian patients and their attendants. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 2, 157 – 191.
- Palmer, A. (2005). *Principles of service marketing* (4th ed.). London: McGraw-Hill.
- Palmer, A. (2008). *Principles of Services Marketing* (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Pantouvakis, A. (2010). The relative importance of service features in explaining customer satisfaction comparison of measurement models. *Managing Service Quality*, 20 (4), 366-387.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A. & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64, (1), 12 – 40.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1998). Communication and control processes in the delivery of service quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 52, 36.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1985). Conceptual model of

- service quality and its implications for future research. *Journal of Marketing*, (49) (Fall), 41 – 50.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1986). *SERVQUAL: A multi-item scale for measuring customer satisfaction of service quality*. Cambridge, M. A: Marketing Science Institute.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1990). *Delivering quality services: Balancing customer perceptions and expectations*. New York: The Free Press.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1991). Refinement and reassessment of the SERVQUAL scale. *Journal of Retailing*, 67 (4), 420 – 450.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1993). Research note: More on improving service quality measurement. *Journal of Retailing*, 69 (1), 140 – 147.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1994). Reassessment and expectations as a comparison standard in measuring service quality: Implications for future research. *Journal of Marketing*, 58, 111 – 124.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Malhorta, A. (2005). E-S-QUAL: A multiple-item scale for assessing electronic service quality. *Journal of Service Research*, 7 (3), 213 – 233.
- Patterson, P. G., & Spreng, R. A. (1997). Modelling the relationship between perceived value, satisfaction and repurchase intentions in a business-to-business, services context: An empirical examination. *International*

Journal of Service Industry Management, 8(5), 414-434.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd). Newbury Park, London: Sage Publications.

Patton, M., Stevens, P., & Knutson, B. J. (1994). Internationalizing LODGSERV as a pilot study. *Journal of Hospitality and Leisure Marketing*, 2 (2), 39-55.

Paul, D. P. (2003). An exploratory examination of SERVQUAL versus SERVPERF for Prosthetic Dental Specialists. *Clinical Research & Regulatory Affairs*, 20(1), 89-101.

Peng, C.-Y. J., Harwell, M., Liou, S.-M., & Ehman, L. H. (2006). Advances in missing data methods and implications for educational research. In S. Sawilowsky (Ed.), *Real data analysis*, 31-78). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Peter, J. P., Churchill, G. A., & Brown, T. J. (1993). Caution in the use of difference scores in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19 (4), 655 – 662.

Petrick, J. F. (2004a). Are loyal visitors desired visitors? *Tourism Management*, 25(4). pp. 463–470.

Petrick, J. F. (2004b). The roles of quality, value, and satisfaction in predicting cruise passengers' behavioral intentions. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42 (2), 397 – 407.

Phillips, D. M. & Baumgartner, H. (2002). The role of consumption emotions in the satisfaction response. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 12 (3), 243-

- Pizam, A., & Ellis, T. (1999). Customer satisfaction and its measurement in hospitality enterprises. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 11 (7), 326 – 339.
- Poon, W. C., & Low, K. L. T. (2005). Are travelers satisfied with Malaysian hotels? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17 (3), 217 – 227.
- Qin, Y. (2005). A study on managing the gaps of hotel service quality expectations. *Services Systems and Services Management*, 1, 482 – 285.
- Qu, H., & Tsang, N. (1998). Service quality gap in China's hotel industry: A study of tourist perceptions and exceptions. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 22 (3), 252 – 267.
- Quality management in business (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.thecqi.org>.
- Ramsaran-Fowder, R. (2006). Identifying health care quality attributes. *Journal of Health and Human Services Administration*, 27 (4), 428 – 443.
- Ramsaran-Fowder, R. R. (2007). Developing a service quality questionnaire for the hotel industry in Mauritius. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 13 (1), 19– 27.
- Ranaweera, C., & Prabhu, J. (2003). On the relative importance of customer satisfaction and trust as determinants of customer retention and positive word of mouth. *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing*. 12(1), 82-90.
- Raspor, S. (2009). Statistical analysis of service quality and customer satisfaction

- in the hotel industry. *Masters Dissertation, University of Rijeka, Croatia.*
- Ravald, A., & Gronroos, C. (1996). The value concept and relationship marketing. *European Journal of Marketing*, 30(2), 19-30.
- Raza, M.A., Siddiquei, A.N., Awan, H.M., & Bukhari, K. (2012). Relationship between service quality, perceived value, satisfaction and revisit intention in hotel industry. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 4 (8), 788-805.
- Reichheld, F. F., & Sasser, W. E. (1990). Zero defection: Quality comes to services. *Harvard Business Review*, 68 (5), 105 – 111.
- Reichheld, F. F., (1996). *The loyalty effect*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Robinson, S. (1999). Measuring Service Quality: Current thinking and future requirements. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 17, (1), 21 – 32.
- Roig, J. C. F., Garcia, J. S., & Tena, M. A. M. (2009). Perceived value and customer loyalty in financial services. *Service Industry Journal*, 29, 775-789.
- Russel, M. (2005). Marketing education: A review of service quality perceptions among international students. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17 (1), 65 – 77.
- Rust, R., & Zahorik, A. J. (1993). Customer satisfaction, customer retention, and market share. *Journal of Retailing*, 69(2), 193-215.
- Rust, R. T., & Oliver, R. L. (1994). Service quality: Insights and managerial implications from frontier, in *Service Quality: New Directions in Theory*

and Practice, Rust, R., & Oliver, R. (Eds), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1 – 19.

Ryan, C., & Cliff, A. (1997). Do travel agencies measure up to customer expectations? An empirical investigation of travel agencies service quality as measured by SERVQUAL. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 6 (2), 1 – 32.

Ryu, K., Han, H., & Kim, T-H. (2008). The relationships among overall quick casual restaurant image, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27, 459-469.

Saleh, F., & Ryan, C. (1991). Analyzing service quality in the hospitality industry using the SERVQUAL model. *Services Industries Journal*, 11 (3), 324 – 343.

Salkind, N. J. (2000). *Exploring research* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Sánchez, P. M., Sánchez, F. Marin-Carrillo, G. M., & Gazquez-Abad, J. C. (2007). Effects of service quality dimensions on behavioural purchase intentions: A study on public-sector transport. *Managing Service Quality* 17 (2), 134 – 151.

Sánchez-Hernández, R., Martínez-Tur, V., Peiró, J. M., & Moliner, C. (2010). Linking functional and relational service quality to customer satisfaction and loyalty: differences between men and women. *Psychological Reports*, 106. 1-13.

- Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social research* (3rd ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Saravanan, R., & Rao, K. S. P. (2007). Measurement of service quality from the customer's perspective – An empirical study. *Total Quality Management*, 18 (4), 435-449.
- Sasu, S. (2011). An investigation of the branding practices of Ghanaian owned hotels in Accra. BSc. Ashesi University College.
- Schmit, M., & Allscheid, S. (1995). Employee attitudes and customer satisfaction: Making theoretical and empirical connections. *Personnel Psychology*, 48, 521-536.
- Scott, D., & Schieff, D., (1993). Service quality components and group criteria in local government, *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 4 (4), 42-53.
- Selnes, F. (1993). An examination of the effect of product performance on brand reputation, satisfaction and loyalty. *European Journal of Marketing*, 27(9), 19-35.
- Seth, N. Deshmukh, S.G. & Vrat, P. (2005). Service quality models: A review. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, 22(9), 913-949.
- Shanahan, K. J., & Hyman, M. R. (2007). An exploratory study of desired hotel attributes for American tourists vacationing in China and Ireland. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 13, 107-118.
- Shemwell, D. J., Yavas, U., & Bilgen, Z. (1998). Customer service provider relationships: An empirical test of a model of service quality,

- satisfaction and relationship oriented outcome. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 9 (2), 155 – 168.
- Shi, J. H., & Su, Q. (2007). Evaluation of hotel service quality based on customer satisfaction. *Service Systems and Service Management*, 9(11), 1-5.
- Sinha, A. K. (1985). Quality education: Review of the concept and empirical dimensions. *Indian Educational Review*, 20 (4), 1 - 19.
- Siu, N. Y. M., & Mo., J. C. W. (2005). Measuring service quality in internet banking: the case of Hong Kong. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 17(4), 99-116.
- Skogland, I & Siguaw. J. A. (2004). Are your satisfied customers loyal? *Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 45 (3), 221-234.
- Smith, R. A., & Houston, M. J. (1982). Script-based evaluations of satisfaction with services, in Berry, L., Shostack, G., & Upah, G. (Eds), *Emerging Perspectives on Services marketing*. Chicago: American Marketing Association, 59 – 62.
- Snipes, R. L., Thomson, N. F., & Oswald, S. L. (2006). Gender bias in customer evaluations of service quality: an empirical investigation. *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 20(4), 274- 284.
- Snoj, B., & Mumel, D. (2002). The measurement of perceived differences in service quality: The case of health spas in Slovenia. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 8 (4), 362 -379.
- SNV Interns Report (2009). Tourism destination baseline study on West Coast Destination Area. Retrieved on October 20, 2012 from

<http://www.ghanadistricts.com>.

- Söderlund, M. (2006). Measuring customer loyalty with multi-item scales. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 17(1), 76-98.
- Söderlund, M. (1998). Customer satisfaction and its consequences on the customer behavior revisited: The impact of different levels of satisfaction on word-of-mouth, feedback to the supplier and loyalty. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 9 (2), 169 – 188.
- Söderlund, M., & Ohman, N. (2003). Behavioral intentions in satisfaction research revisited. *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, 16, 53-66.
- Soliman, A. A., & Abdullah, A. (2002). Service quality in Riyadh's Elite hotels: Measurement and evaluation. J. King Sand University: *Administration Science*, 14 (2), 83 – 103.
- Soriano, R. D. (2002). Customers' expectations factors in restaurant. *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management*, 19(8-9), 1055-1067.
- Spathis, C., Petridou, E., & Glaveli, N. (2004). Managing service quality in banks: Customers gender effects. *Managing Service Quality*, 14 (1), 90-102.
- Spreng, R. A., & Olshavsky, W. (1993). A desires congruency model of consumer satisfaction. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (Summer), 169 - 177.
- Spreng, R. A., & Singh, A. K. (1993). An empirical assessment of the

- SERVQUAL scale and the relationship between service quality and satisfaction, in *Enhancing Knowledge Development in Marketing*, David W. Cravens & Peter Dickson, eds., Chicago: *American Marketing Association*, 4, 1-6.
- Stafford, M.R. (1996). Demographic discriminators of service quality in the banking industry. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 10 (4), 6-22.
- Stevens, J. (1996). *Applied multivariate statistics for the social sciences* (3rd Ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Stevens, P., Knutson, B., & Patton, M. (1995). DINESERV: A tool for measuring service quality in restaurants. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 36 (2), 56- 60.
- Stringam, B. B., Gerdes, J., & Vanleeuwen, D. M. (2010). Assessing the importance and relationships of ratings on user-generated traveler reviews. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism*, 11(2), 73-92.
- Strydom, J.W., Cant, M.C. & Jooste, C.J. (2000). *Marketing Management* (4th edition). Cape Town: Juta & Co.
- Su, Q., Li, Z., Yong-Tao, S., & Chen, T. (2002). Conceptualizing consumers' perception of e-commerce quality. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 36 (5), 12-24.
- Su, A. V. L. (2004). Customer satisfaction measurement practice in Taiwan hotels. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 23, 397 -408.
- Suh, S. H., Lee, Y. H., Park, Y., & Shin, G. C. (1997). The impact of consumer

- involvement on the consumer's perception of service quality – Focusing on the Korean hotel industry. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 6 (2), 33- 52.
- Sureschandar, G. S., Rajendran, C., & Anantharaman, R. N. (2000b). The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction: a factor specific approach, *Journal of Services Marketing*, 16 (4), 363- 379.
- Sureshchandar, G.S., Chandrasekharan, R., Anantharaman R.N., & Kamalanabhan, T.J. (2002). Management's perception of total quality service in the banking sector of developing economy: a critical analysis. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 20 (4), 181-196.
- Suuroja, M. (2003). Service quality – main conceptualizations and critique. University of Tartu, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. Tartu: Tartu University Press. www.tyk.ut.ee
- switching barriers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28, Svensson, G.(2003). A generic conceptual framework of interactive service quality. *Managing Service Quality*, 13 (4), 267-275.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2001). *Using Multivariate Statistics* (4th Ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Tabassum, A., Rahman, T., & Jahan, K. (2012) Assessment of service quality in tourist hotels of Cox's Bazaar in terms of demographic characteristics of tourists. *World Journal of Social Sciences*, 2 (4), 44-64.
- Tan, K., & Kek, S. (2004). Service quality in higher education using an enhanced SERVQUAL approach. *Quality in Higher Education*, 10 (1), 17-24.

- Taylor, S. A., & Baker, T. (1994). An assessment of the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the formation of consumers' purchase intentions. *Journal of Retailing*, 7 (2), 163 -178.
- Teas, K. R. (1993). Expectations, performance evaluation, and consumers' perceptions of quality. *Journal of Marketing* 57 (October), 18 -34.
- Teas, K. R. (1994). Expectations as a comparison standard in measuring service quality: An assessment of reassessment. *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (January), 132 -139.
- Tian-Cole, S., Crompton, J., & Wilson, V. (2002). An empirical investigation of the relationships between service quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions among visitors to a wildlife refuge. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 34, 1-34.
- Tribe, J., & Snaith, T. (1998). From SERVQUAL to HOLSAT: Holiday satisfaction in Varadero, Cuba. *Tourism Management*, 19, 25 -34.
- Tsang, N. & Qu, H. (2000). Service quality in China's hotel industry: a perspective from tourists and hotel managers. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 12 (5), 316-326.
- Tse, D. K., & Wilton, P. C. (1988). Models of consumer satisfaction formation: An extension. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 25, 204-212.
- Tsoukatos, E., & Rand, G. K. (2006). Path analysis of perceived service quality, satisfaction and loyalty in Greek insurance. *Managing Service Quality*, 25 (5), 501- 519.
- Tsoukatos, E., Marwa, S., & Rand, G. K. (1994). Quality improvement in the

- Greek and Keyan insurance industries. *Archives of Economic History*, 16 (2), 93- 116.
- Ueltschy, L. C., Laroche, R. V. P., Tamilia, R. D., & Yannopoulos, P. (2004). Cross-cultural invariance of measures of satisfaction and service quality. *Journal of Business Research*, 57, 901-912.
- Ukwayi, J. K., Eja, E. I., & Unwanede, C. (2012). Assessment of tourist perceptions on service quality in the hotel industry in Cross River State. *Journal of Sociological Research*, 3(2), 1-10.
- UNCTAD Horwath special market report on hotel tourism and leisure. Retrieved on July 12, 2013 from <http://www.horwathhtl.com>.
- Veal, A. J. (2006). *Research methods for leisure and tourism: A practical guide* (3rd ed.). England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Venn, S., & Fone, D.L. (2005). Assessing the influence of socio-demographic factors and health status on expression of satisfaction with GP services. *Clinical Governance*, 2 (2), 118-125.
- Visitors to Ghana (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.ModernGhana.com>.
- Wadawi, J. K. (2010). A delphi survey on hotel service quality frameworks and their application. *Revista de Turism*, (9), 14-22.
- Walker, J. R., & Braunlich, C. G. (1996). Quality leadership in the service industries. *Hospitality Research Journal* 19 (4), 155- 164.
- Wallen, N. E., & Fraenkel, J. R. (2001). *Educational research: A guide to the process*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Wang, M., Wang, J., & Zhao, J. (2007). An empirical study of the effect of

- customer participation on service quality. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism*, 8 (1), 47 -73.
- WCDMA (2012). Report on tourism and its ancillary operations in the West Coast destination management area. Retrieved on June 23, 2012 from <http://www.ghanawestcoast.com>.
- Webb, D., (1998). Segmenting police customers on the basis of their service quality expectations. *The Service Industries Journal*, 18 (1), 72-100.
- Wei, C. C., & Ramalu, S. S. (2011). Students satisfaction towards the university: Does service quality matters. *International Journal of Education*, 3(2), 15-22.
- Wisniewski, M. (2001). Using SERVQUAL to assess customer satisfaction with public sector services. *Managing Service Quality*, 11 (6), 380- 388.
- Wisniewski, M., & Donnelly, M. (1996). Measuring service quality in the public sector: The potential for SERVQUAL. *Total quality management*, 7 (4), 357- 365.
- Wong, A., Mei, O., Dean, A. M., & White, C. J. (1999). Analyzing service quality in the hospitality industry using SERVQUAL model. *Managing Service Quality*, 9 (2), 136 -143.
- Wu, C. H. (2007). On the application of grey relational analysis and RIDIT analysis to Likert scale surveys. *International Mathematical Forum*, 2, (14), 675-687
- Wu, H. J., Liao, H. C., Hung, K. P., & Ho, Y. H. (2012). Service guarantees in the hotel industry: their effects on customer risk and service quality

- perceptions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 13(3), 757-763.
- Yang, Z., & Peterson, R.T. (2004). Customer perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty: The role of switching costs. *Psychology and Marketing*, 21(10), 799-822. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/mar.20030>
- Yap, K., & Sweeney, J. (2007). Zone-of-tolerance moderates the service quality-outcome relationship. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 21(2), 137-148.
- Yeung, M. C. H., Ging, L. E., & Ennew, C. T. (2002). Customer satisfaction and profitability: A reappraisal of the nature of the relationship. *Journal of Targeting, Measurement, Analysis and Marketing*, 11 (1), 24 -34.
- Yi, Y. (1990). A critical review of consumer satisfaction. In Zeithaml, V. (Ed.), *Review of Marketing* (pp. 68-123). Chicago: American Marketing Association.
- Yilmaz, I. (2009). Measurement of service quality in the hotel industry. *An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 20 (2), 375-386.
- Yoo, S. (2005). Service quality at hospitals. *Asia Pacific Advances in Consumer Research*, 6, 188- 193.
- Yoo, Y. S., Cho, K. M., & Chon, S. S. (2003). The effect of customer satisfaction on repurchase intention at golf practice ranges in South Korea. *Korean Journal of Sport Management*, 7 (2), 1-13.
- Yu, Y. T., & Dean, A. (2001). The contribution of emotional satisfaction to consumer loyalty. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*,

- 12(3), 234-250.
- Yuksel, A., & Yuksel, F. (2001). Comparative performance analysis: Tourists' perceptions of Turkey relative to other tourist destinations. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 7 (4), 333 -355.
- Zeithaml, V. A. (1988). Consumer perceptions of price, quality and value: A means-end model and synthesis of evidence. *Journal of Marketing*, 52 (3), 2 -22.
- Zeithaml, V. A., & Bitner, M. J. (1996). *Services marketing*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Zeithaml, V. A., & Bitner, M. J. (2000). *Services marketing*. Burr Ridge: McGraw-Hill.
- Zeithaml, V. A., & Bitner, M. J. (2001). *Services marketing: Integrating customer focus across the firms* (2nd Ed.), Boston, Tata: McGraw Hill.
- Zeithaml, V. A., & Bitner, M. J. (2003). *Services marketing: Integrating customer focus across the firm*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner, M. J., & Gremler, D. D. (2006). *Services marketing: integrating customer focus across the firm* (4th ed: 117). Singapore: McGraw-Hill.
- Zeithaml, V. A., Parasuraman, A., & Berry, L. L. (1985). Problems and strategies in services marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 49(2), 33-36.
- Zeithaml, V.A., Parasuraman, A., & Berry, L.L. (1990). *Delivering quality service: balancing customer perceptions and expectations*. New York: Macmillan.

- Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L. L., & Parasuraman, A. (1993). The nature and determinants of customer expectations of service. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 21(1),1-12.
- Zhang, X. A., Cao, Q., & Tjosvold, D. (2011). Linking transformational leadership and team performance: A conflict management approach. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(7), 1586-1611.
- Zhang, Y., Su, J. C., Olsen, S. C., Dubey, M. K., & He, S. (2011). Determinants of hotel room price: An exploration of travellers' hierarchy of accommodation needs. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality management*, 23(7), 972-981.
- ZhiHui, L. (2010). Measuring customer perceptions of hotel service quality based on a SERVPERF approach. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 6(1), 22-28.
- Zhou, L. (2004). A dimension-specific analysis of performance-only measurement of service quality and satisfaction in China's retail banking. *The Journal of Services marketing*, 18 (6/7), 534- 546.
- Zineldin, M. (2006). The quality of health care and patient satisfaction: and exploratory investigation of the 5Qs Model. *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance*, 19 (1), 60-92.
- Zins, A. H. (2001). Relative attitudes and commitment in customer loyalty models: Some Experiences in the Commercial Airline Industry. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 12 (3-4), 269-297.

APPENDIX 1

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

Survey on service quality, satisfaction and repurchase intentions of hotel guests in the Western Region

Questionnaire for hotel guests

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for accepting to take part in this survey on service quality, satisfaction and repurchase intentions of hotel guests in the Western Region. This survey is for a PhD research. The research is based on a selected sample, so your participation is critical. You are assured that any information that you provide shall be treated with strict confidentiality. Your anonymity is also guaranteed. Please try to answer every question, even though you may not be 100% sure of your answer. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the researcher on 0244871831 or afedua2003@yahoo.com.

STRUCTURE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

PART ONE: SERVICE QUALITY, SATISFACTION AND REOURCHASE INTENTIONS

SECTION A: Hotel Service Quality Attributes

SECTION B: Satisfaction Attributes

SECTION C: Repurchase Intentions Attributes

SECTION D: Overall Rating of Service Quality

PART TWO: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HOTEL GUESTS

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION

HOTEL CATEGORY:

HOTEL NUMBER:

ZONE:

FIELD VISITS


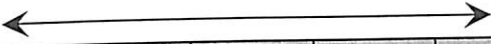
DATE:

TIME:

NUMBER OF VISITS:

PART ONE: SERVICE QUALITY, SATISFACTION AND REPURCHASE INTENTIONS

1. The following statements relate to your feelings about this hotel. For each statement, please show the extent to which you agree that this hotel has the attribute described by the statement by ticking the appropriate box. **1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree.** There is no right or wrong answer. What is important is a number that best shows your feelings about this hotel:

SECTION A. Hotel Service Quality Attributes	 Tick to show the extent to which you agree to these statements.				
	Strongly disagree		Strongly agree		
					
Tangibles	1	2	3	4	5
1. The hotel has a clean environment					
2. Outside appearance of the hotel is Attractive					
3. The hotel's interior design is attractive					
4. The hotel has modern looking equipment					
5. The hotel has comfortable furniture					
6. Hotel staff appears neat and professional					
7. The lobby area is attractive					
8. The hotel has adequate parking space					
9. My room is clean					
10. My room is well ventilated					
11. My room has functioning gadgets and appliances					
12. My room is well decorated and attractive					
13. The hotel has clean bathrooms and toilets					
14. The hotel offers complementary items (soap, shampoo etc.)					
15. The hotel has visually appealing brochures					
Reliability					
1. The hotel is easily accessible					

2.The hotel has efficient reservation/booking system					
3. The hotel has efficient check-in procedure					
4. The hotel has efficient check-out procedure					
5. Staff performs services right the first time					
6. Staff performs services at the time promised					
7. The hotel has efficient telephone and internet system					
8. The hotel has accurate billing system					
9. The hotel has efficient food and beverage service					
10. There is accurate information about hotel services					
11. There is advance and accurate information about prices					
12. The hotel has timely housekeeping services					
13. There is availability of transport facilities					
14. The hotel has reliable supply of water and electricity					
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5
1. Hotel staff shows a sincere interest in solving my problems					
2. Staff are always willing to help me					
3. Staff are never too busy to respond to my requests					
4. Staff are readily available to provide services					
5. Hotel staff provides prompt service without delays					
Assurance	1	2	3	4	5
1. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable					
2. Staff are skillful and experienced					
3. Staff have good communication skills					
4. Staff are friendly					

5. Staff are courteous and respectful					
6. Behaviour of staff instills confidence in me					
7. I feel safe and secure in my stay in the hotel					
8. Staff addresses me by my name					
9. The hotel has convenient operating hours					
Empathy	1	2	3	4	5
1. Staff understands my specific needs					
2. Staff have time to listen to my complaints					
3. The hotel gives me special attention					
4. The hotel has my best interest at heart					
5. The hotel recognizes me as a guest					
2. SECTION B. Satisfaction Attributes	1	2	3	4	5
1. I am satisfied with my decision to stay in this hotel					
2. My choice of this hotel was a good one					
3. My experience in this hotel has been enjoyable					
4. I am satisfied with the hotel					
5. I had value for money in this hotel					
6. Taking everything into consideration, this hotel is an excellent hotel					
3. SECTION C. Repurchase Intentions Attributes	1	2	3	4	5
1. I would like to stay in this hotel another time					
2. I will recommend this hotel to others					
3. I wish I could stay longer in this hotel					
4. I will choose this hotel instead of others					

4. OVERALL PERCEPTION OF SERVICE QUALITY

Please indicate your overall perception of service quality in this hotel. Tick (✓) the appropriate box.

- 1. Very high
- 2. High
- 3. Moderate
- 4. Low
- 5. Very low

PART TWO: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Please tick (✓) and provide details where appropriate

- 5. Nationality
.....
- 6. Gender 1. Male 2. Female
- 7. Age
.....
- 8. Religion
.....
- 9. Marital status
 - 1. Married
 - 2. Single
 - 3. Divorced
 - 4. Separated
 - 5. Widowed
- 10. Number of children
.....
- 11. Level of education
 - 1. Primary/basic
 - 2. Secondary/high school
 - 3. University/college
 - 4. Post graduate
 - 5. Other (Please specify).....
- 12. Occupation
.....

13. Monthly income in GH¢
- 1. Less than 500
 - 2. 500 – 999
 - 3. 1000 – 1499
 - 4. 1500 – 1999
 - 5. 2000 and above

14. Purpose of visit
- 1. Business
 - 2. Conference
 - 2. Visiting friends, relatives
 - 3. Vacation
 - 4. Education/research
 - 5. Other (Please specify)

15. For how long are you staying in this hotel?

16. Are you staying in the hotel alone?
- YES NO

17. If NO, with whom are you staying?
- 1. A group
 - 2. Spouse
 - 3. Family how many?
 - 4. Other (Please specify)

18. Is this your first or repeat stay in this particular hotel? (Please tick)

1. First stay 2. Repeat stay
19. Have you ever travelled to or lived in a foreign country?
1. YES 2. NO

20. Please state any service quality problems you have observed in this hotel.

.....
.....
.....
.....

22. I chose this hotel for the following reasons :(Please tick as many as applicable)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. A friend recommended this hotel | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The hotel has a good image | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The rating/class of the hotel | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Affordable room rates | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Good quality service | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Good quality food and beverage | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Attractive architectural design of the hotel building | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Location of the hotel | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Security and safety | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Efficient reservation system | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Clean environment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. I had no other choice | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Other (Please specify) | |

23. Kindly suggest ways by which hotel services can be improved.

.....
.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING SERVICE QUALITY IN HOTELS IN THE WESTERN REGION – MADE BY RESPONDENTS

1. Hotel staff should have good communication skills
2. Hotel staff should have good customer relations
3. Hotel staff should have good telephone manners
4. Regular maintenance of electrical gadgets
5. Improve service practices
6. Improve internet connectivity/Wifi
7. There should be regular change of bed sheets and pillow cases
8. Improve electricity supply
9. Improve on breakfast served
10. Provide transport services for guests
11. Improve the quality of television reception
12. Place television at the appropriate eye level
13. There should be constant supply of water
14. Improve service delivery
15. There should be prompt and efficient response to customer needs
16. Accessibility to the hotel should be improved
17. Spoilt items in rooms must be fixed
18. Staff should be well trained
19. Hotels should try to computerize their system

20. Complementary items must be changed daily
21. Restaurant services must be improved
22. Employ qualified staff at the front desk/reception
23. There should be a high level of professionalism
24. Improve maintenance culture
25. Provide laundry services
26. More staff should be engaged for effective work
27. Provide more recreational facilities
28. Pressing irons and boards should be provided on request
29. Ensure that all TV channels are working
30. The security gate must be clear of people standing around
31. Staff should have name tags/IDs
32. Retrain staff to maintain standards
33. Workers should clean professionally
34. Make available list of hotel services in a brochure and place in rooms
35. Menu cards should be reviewed to offer variety
36. There should be proper check on guests' laundry to avoid mix up
37. Room service must be done promptly