

Evaluating Service Quality as a Predictor of Guest Satisfaction in Hotels

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the relationship between perceived service quality and guest satisfaction in hotels and the most important dimension of service quality. The study was conducted by using quantitative and cross sectional survey method with 100 adult guests from selected three, four and five star hotels in India. The SERVQUAL framework was adapted to include only performance dimensions and 25 items to assess service quality, which included tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Five items on a five-point Likert scale were used to measure guest satisfaction. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression were used. The internal consistency of all constructs was acceptable to good ($\alpha = .794-.887$). Guest satisfaction was relatively high ($M = 3.84$, $SD = .84$) and each of the service quality dimensions was positively correlated with satisfaction ($r = .421-.653$, all $p < .001$). The regression model was statistically significant, $F(5, 94) = 26.99$, $p < .001$, with an adjusted R^2 of .568, indicating that 58.9% of the variance in guest satisfaction was explained by the regression model. Responsiveness was the strongest predictor ($\beta = .423$, $p < .001$), followed by reliability ($\beta = .201$, $p = .014$), empathy ($\beta = .165$, $p = .028$), and assurance ($\beta = .158$, $p = .038$). In the bivariate model, tangibles was positively associated with satisfaction, but was not associated in the multivariable model ($\beta = .120$, $p = .134$). The results suggest that the hotel managers should focus on quick help, effective service procedures, reliable service delivery, employee assurance, and personalized service. The results also indicate that satisfaction may not be distinguishable from interpersonal and process-related factors, even with physical facilities.

Keywords: service quality; guest satisfaction; hotels; SERVQUAL; responsiveness; multiple regression

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1. Introduction

Hotels provide an experience, not just a product. In addition to assessing the physical environment, guests also rate the accuracy of reservations and bills, the speed of service, the knowledge and courtesy of the employees, safety, and the understanding of individual needs by the employees. The reason these evaluations are important is that guest satisfaction is created over the entire experience of staying at the hotel and can affect future patronage, recommendations, online reviews, and the hotel's competitive position. Where physical assets can be replicated, the uniformity and responsiveness of service delivery can offer a more lasting opportunity for differentiation. Service quality and customer satisfaction are conceptually different and related. In the service-quality literature, quality is defined as an overall assessment of service quality, and satisfaction is a post-consumption feeling that occurs when the service quality experienced is compared to the service quality expected (Oliver, 1980; Parasuraman et al., 1985). Cronin and Taylor (1992) also suggested that perceived performance can be directly measured and that service quality is an antecedent of satisfaction. This distinction is particularly relevant for empirical hotel research: the predictor should be a measure of the perceived service performance, while the outcome should be a measure of satisfaction, but not include the construct of service quality or loyalty intentions. The SERVQUAL framework is still one of the most influential ways of structuring service-quality perceptions. It is a measure of service quality in terms of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The scale was created in general service contexts and has been criticized for dimensional instability and the use of gap scores based on expectations and performance, but can be useful when adapted to a specific sector and validated in context (Ladhari, 2009). The dimensions of SERVQUAL have been adapted in hotel studies several times, but the relative importance of these dimensions has been different in various countries, hotel segments, guest types and star categories (Akbaba, 2006; Kumarasinghe et al., 2019; Nunkoo et al., 2020; Wu & Ko, 2013). This variation makes for a practical research problem. A hotel manager cannot spend the same amount of money on all aspects of the guest experience and bivariate relationships do not tell whether a dimension is important, even if the other dimensions are taken into account at the same time. For instance, physical facilities might be correlated with satisfaction but not account for unique variance when responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy are controlled. A multi-variable predictive design is thus required to determine the most powerful actionable drivers of satisfaction. Thus, the present study aims to assess the service quality as a predictor of guest satisfaction of 100 guests of selected three, four and five star hotels in India. It employs a streamlined, performance-focused SERVQUAL-

based instrument and a five-item guest-satisfaction scale. The study makes three contributions. First, it provides an internally consistent measurement of the five service-quality dimensions and satisfaction. Second, it estimates the unique predictive contribution of all five dimensions in one regression model. Third, it converts statistical ranking of predictors to practical priorities for hotel management.

1.1 Research Objectives

1. To assess guests' perceptions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and overall satisfaction.
2. To determine the bivariate relationship between each service-quality dimension and guest satisfaction.
3. To evaluate the unique effect of each SERVQUAL dimension on guest satisfaction when the five dimensions are entered simultaneously.
4. To identify the strongest service-quality predictor of guest satisfaction in the sampled hotels.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How do guests evaluate the five dimensions of hotel service quality and their overall satisfaction?
2. Are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy positively associated with guest satisfaction?
3. Which SERVQUAL dimensions independently predict guest satisfaction?
4. Which dimension is the strongest predictor of guest satisfaction?

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Conceptualizing Service Quality

The basic gap model of service quality suggests that customers judge quality based on their perceptions of the service and their expectations of the service (Parasuraman et al., 1985). SERVQUAL operationalized this logic into five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Tangibles include physical facilities, equipment, cleanliness and employee appearance. Reliability involves delivery of accuracy and dependability. Responsiveness is the willingness and speed in assisting customers. Assurance is about knowledge, courtesy, safety and trust. Empathy is a personal touch and understanding of the customer's needs. SERVQUAL has been the subject of much discussion. Its expectation component, dimensional stability, and its applicability to various sectors have been doubted and adapted to the sectors and measured only in terms of performance. Cronin and Taylor (1992) discovered that a performance-based approach can offer a more parsimonious representation of service quality and that service quality comes before satisfaction. Brady and Cronin (2001) later suggested a hierarchical model where the quality of interaction, environmental quality, and

outcome quality all contribute to overall quality perceptions. These developments do not make SERVQUAL redundant, but rather they facilitate a careful adaptation, a clear separation of constructs and an empirical reliability assessment in each context (Ladhari, 2009). The present research thus adopts the five SERVQUAL domains as a theoretical organizing framework and only measures guests' perceptions of actual hotel performance. This option eliminates the need for respondents to complete a second expectation battery and makes the instrument more congruent with the study's predictive function. The resulting measure is closest to a SERVQUAL based, performance-only scale, not a traditional gap score SERVQUAL instrument.

2.2 Guest Satisfaction and Expectation Confirmation

According to expectation-confirmation theory, satisfaction is a result of the comparison between expectations and performance. If performance is satisfactory or better, confirmation or positive disconfirmation results in satisfaction, if performance is less than satisfactory, negative disconfirmation results in dissatisfaction (Oliver, 1980). Satisfaction is thus a global evaluation of the stay, informed by multiple service encounters and attributes. Interchangeable items are not suitable for measuring service quality and satisfaction. Service quality is a judgment of the service delivery, while satisfaction is a guest's affective and cognitive assessment of the service experience. Cronin and Taylor (1992) demonstrated that service quality is a determinant of satisfaction, and Zeithaml et al. (1996) found that service quality is a determinant of consequential behavioral intentions. The present study keeps this distinction by employing five satisfaction items that are directed toward overall satisfaction, expectations, decision satisfaction, service satisfaction, and the overall stay experience. The dependent-variable scale does not include revisit and recommendation intentions to avoid the confounding of loyalty with satisfaction.

2.3 Service Quality in the Hotel Context

The service quality of a hotel is multidimensional because the service is provided through repeated interactions with the hotel, which involve the physical evidence of the hotel, the reservation, the arrival, the housekeeping, the food and beverage, the maintenance and the departure. The dimensions of SERVQUAL can change in the hospitality context as Saleh and Ryan (1991) showed. Choi and Chu (2001) identified that the quality of staff service, room quality and value were significant factors in determining hotel guest satisfaction and repeat patronage in Hong Kong. Karatepe and Avci (2002) also found that performance-based service-quality scores to be predictive of satisfaction in Northern Cyprus. In a business-hotel context, Akbaba (2006) has validated the usefulness of SERVQUAL but has also identified some differences in the components of the original structure, which further emphasizes the need for

sector and cultural adaptation. Marković and Raspor (2010) found that reliability, staff competence and empathy, accessibility and tangibles are important hotel quality factors in Croatia. In a subsequent study, Marković and Raspor Janković (2013) determined that reliability, accessibility, and tangibles were significant predictors of hotel satisfaction, while empathy and staff competence were not significant when other dimensions were added. Wu and Ko (2013) created a hierarchical scale specific to the hotel and showed that guests combine multiple dimensions to assess overall service quality. There is still more recent evidence of contextual variation. Kumarasinghe et al. (2019) found that there were differences between domestic and international guests in five-star hotels. Nunkoo et al. (2020) revealed that the relationship between service quality and satisfaction was moderated by the star rating of the hotel, with infrastructure and expertise being significant for lower star ratings, safety and room quality for three-star ratings, and waiting time and customer interaction for four- and five-star ratings. Padma and Ahn (2020) emphasized the role of rooms and employee interactions in satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the context of online reviews of luxury hotels. The research also indicates that the use of technology in service is gaining importance in the process of quality assessment, while the quality of service delivery is still the main focus, and this is an area that needs to be developed (Ayvaz-Çavdaroglu et al., 2024).

2.4 Hypothesis Development

2.4.1 Tangibles and Guest Satisfaction

Tangibles provide visible cues that guests use before and during service encounters. Clean rooms, attractive facilities, modern equipment, professional employee appearance, and well-maintained public areas can reduce perceived risk and signal managerial competence. Hotel studies have linked room quality, physical aspects, and infrastructure to satisfaction, although their importance varies by segment and star rating (Choi & Chu, 2001; Kang et al., 2004; Nunkoo et al., 2020).

H1: *Tangibles positively and significantly predict guest satisfaction.*

2.4.2 Reliability and Guest Satisfaction

Reliability reflects whether a hotel keeps promises, handles reservations correctly, provides accurate bills, solves problems effectively, and delivers consistent service. Because hotel stays involve coordinated services and time-sensitive commitments, service failures can affect several parts of the guest experience at once. Prior hotel research has frequently identified reliability as a central factor in perceived quality and satisfaction (Akbaba, 2006; Marković & Raspor, 2010; Marković & Raspor Janković, 2013).

H2: *Reliability positively and significantly predicts guest satisfaction.*

2.4.3 Responsiveness and Guest Satisfaction

Responsiveness concerns prompt attention, availability, efficient processes, and willingness to

help. Delays at check-in, slow responses to requests, and difficulty obtaining assistance are highly visible service failures. Conversely, rapid and willing support can recover problems before they affect the overall stay. Evidence that waiting time and customer interaction matter in higher-category hotels supports a positive link between responsiveness and satisfaction (Nunkoo et al., 2020).

H3: *Responsiveness positively and significantly predicts guest satisfaction.*

2.4.4 Assurance and Guest Satisfaction

Assurance is communicated through courtesy, professional knowledge, confidence, safety, and secure transactions. Hotel guests temporarily place their personal security, possessions, payment information, and comfort in the hands of the service provider. Employees who communicate clearly and act competently reduce uncertainty and strengthen trust. Assurance has been identified as a relevant hotel-quality factor, although its relative contribution can differ between domestic and international guests and across hotel categories (Akbaba, 2006; Kumarasinghe et al., 2019).

H4: *Assurance positively and significantly predicts guest satisfaction.*

2.4.5 Empathy and Guest Satisfaction

Empathy captures individual attention, understanding of specific needs, personalized service, genuine concern, and action in guests' best interests. Hospitality is inherently relational, and personalized responses can transform a routine stay into a memorable experience. Service-experience research shows that interactions with employees can shape emotions and satisfaction (Ali et al., 2016). However, previous hotel findings regarding the unique statistical contribution of empathy have been mixed, making further testing valuable.

H5: *Empathy positively and significantly predicts guest satisfaction.*

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model treats the five service-quality dimensions as simultaneous predictors of guest satisfaction. Each path represents a direct statistical relationship, while the multiple-regression model estimates the unique contribution of each dimension after controlling for the others.

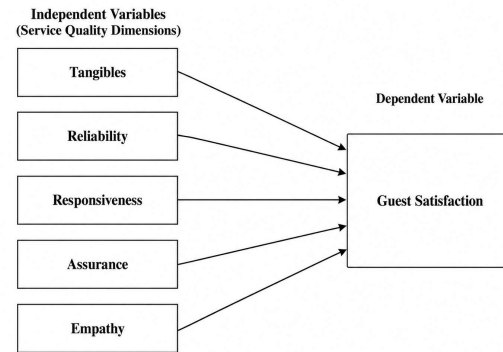


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study was of a positivist approach, quantitative research design, cross sectional and explanatory design as per the principles of quantitative research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The design was descriptive, as it summarized the guest characteristics and perceptions, correlational, as it measured the association between the constructs, and explanatory, as it estimated the unique predictive effect of five service-quality dimensions on guest satisfaction. The design was cross-sectional with data collected once from each respondent. The word predictor is used in a statistical sense and not in a causal sense because there was no temporal precedence or experimental control.

3.2 Study Setting, Population, and Sample

The study was carried out with the guests of selected three, four and five star hotels in India. Data were collected during a two-month survey period in 2026. The target population consisted of adult domestic and international hotel guests who had stayed at the hotel for at least one night and were willing to participate. The respondents were selected using non-probability convenience sampling method because they were selected based on their accessibility and willingness. To prevent restricting the study to a single star level, coverage was maintained across the three hotel categories. A total of 100 questionnaires were used in the final data set. All respondents had complete values for the 30 quantitative scale items. There were 32 guests at three-star hotels, 38 guests at four-star hotels, and 30 guests at five-star hotels. There are five service-quality predictors in the regression model, and the small, non-probability sample is recognized as a limitation in terms of statistical precision and generalizability.

3.3 Research Instrument and Measures

A structured questionnaire was used to gather data with four sections. Demographic and stay-related data collected in Section A included gender, age group, education, occupation, domestic or international guest status, hotel category, purpose of visit, and length of stay. In Section B, service quality was assessed using 25 items, five items for each SERVQUAL dimension. Section C assessed guest

satisfaction with five items that were specifically directed to satisfaction with the stay. There was an optional open comment section for suggestions for improving the service. The service-quality items were modified for the hotel setting and reworded as perceptions of actual performance. These ranged from cleanliness of the room and modern facilities for tangibles, accurate reservations and reliable service for reliability, prompt response and efficient processes for responsiveness, courtesy, safety and knowledge for assurance, and individual attention and understanding of guest needs for empathy. Satisfaction items measured overall satisfaction, expectation fulfillment, satisfaction with decision to stay, satisfaction with services, and overall stay experience. The answers to B and C were given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The five items for each construct were averaged to obtain composite scores ranging from 1.00 to 5.00. Favorable perceptions were indicated by higher scores.

Table 1. Operationalization of study constructs

Construct	Cod e	Ite ms	Illustrative content	Role
Tangibles	TAN	5	Facilities, cleanliness, equipment, employee appearance	Predict or
Reliability	REL	5	Promised service, reservation and billing accuracy, consistency	Predict or
Responsiveness	RES	5	Prompt response, timely requests, availability, process efficiency	Predict or
Assurance	ASS	5	Courtesy, confidence, safety, knowledge, transaction security	Predict or
Empathy	EMP	5	Individual attention, understanding, personalization, concern	Predict or
Guest Satisfaction	GS	5	Overall satisfaction, expectations,	Outcome

Construct	Cod e	Ite ms	Illustrative content	Role
			decision and stay satisfaction	

3.4 Reliability and Measurement Quality

There were three approaches to measurement quality. The first approach was to map items directly to the identified SERVQUAL dimensions and to make them applicable to the common service encounters of hotels. Second, the wording of the questionnaire was reviewed for clarity, consistency, and separating service quality from satisfaction prior to administration. Third, internal consistency was assessed in the final sample by Cronbach's alpha. An alpha of .70 or higher was considered acceptable for research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Since the sample size was 100 and the main purpose of the study was predictive regression with known dimensions, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were not used.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Eligible guests who met the inclusion criteria were invited to participate through convenience sampling at the selected hotels. Respondents completed the structured questionnaire with reference to the hotel stay they had experienced. Participation was voluntary, no direct personal identifiers were collected, and responses were treated confidentially. After data screening, 100 usable questionnaires were retained for analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data were screened for completeness and valid Likert values. Frequencies and percentages described the sample; means and standard deviations summarized the constructs; and Cronbach's alpha assessed reliability. Pearson correlation measured bivariate associations. Multiple ordinary least squares regression was then used to estimate the unique predictive effect of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy on guest satisfaction. Statistical significance was evaluated using two-tailed tests at $\alpha = .05$. Analyses were reproduced from the supplied workbook using Python-based statistical routines, including SciPy and statsmodels.

The regression model was specified as:

$$GS = \beta_0 + \beta_1TAN + \beta_2REL + \beta_3RES + \beta_4ASS + \beta_5EMP + \epsilon$$

where GS denotes guest satisfaction; TAN, REL, RES, ASS, and EMP denote the five service-quality composites; β_0 is the intercept; β_1 - β_5 are regression coefficients; and ϵ is the error term. Multicollinearity was evaluated using variance inflation factors (VIFs), residual independence with the Durbin-Watson statistic, normality with residual tests and distributional inspection, and homoscedasticity with the Breusch-Pagan test (Field, 2018; Hair et al., 2019).

4. Results

4.1 Data Screening and Respondent Profile

The dataset contained 100 respondents and no missing values across the 30 quantitative items. All item responses fell within the valid range of 1 to 5, and the stored composite means matched recomputed item averages. The sample was nearly balanced by gender, with 48% male and 47% female. The largest age group was 25-34 years (32%), followed by 35-44 years (28%). Most respondents held a bachelor's degree (40%) and were employed (43%). Domestic guests represented 61% of the sample. Four-star hotel guests formed the largest category (38%), while leisure or holiday travel was the most common purpose (39%). Most respondents stayed two to three nights (42%).

Table 2. Respondent characteristics (N = 100)

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	48	48
	Female	47	47
	Other	3	3
	Prefer not to say	2	2
Age group	18-24	12	12
	25-34	32	32
	35-44	28	28
	45-54	18	18
	55+	10	10
Education	Secondary or below	10	10
	Diploma	18	18
	Bachelor's	40	40
	Master's	24	24
	Doctorate	5	5
	Other	3	3
Occupation	Student	10	10
	Employed	43	43
	Self-employed	24	24
	Unemployed	7	7
	Retired	10	10
	Other	6	6
Guest status	Domestic guest	61	61
	International guest	39	39
Hotel	3-star	32	32
	4-star	38	38

Variable	Category	n	%
category	5-star	30	30
Purpose of visit	Business	31	31
	Leisure/Holiday	39	39
	Family/Personal	17	17
	Event/Conference	9	9
	Other	4	4
Length of stay	1 night	15	15
	2-3 nights	42	42
	4-6 nights	31	31
	7+ nights	12	12

4.2 Reliability and Descriptive Statistics

All six multi-item constructs exceeded the .70 reliability criterion. Cronbach's alpha ranged from .794 for tangibles to .887 for guest satisfaction, indicating acceptable-to-good internal consistency. Guest satisfaction had a mean of 3.84 (SD = .84). Reliability had the highest mean among the service-quality dimensions (M = 3.73), followed by responsiveness (M = 3.70), tangibles (M = 3.69), assurance (M = 3.67), and empathy (M = 3.58). The comparatively lower empathy mean suggests the greatest room for improvement in individualized attention and understanding of guest needs, while the reliability mean indicates relatively favorable perceptions of dependable service.

Table 3. Construct reliability and descriptive statistics

Construct	Items	Cronbach α	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Tangibles	5	.794	3.69	0.76	2.0	5.0
Reliability	5	.860	3.73	0.80	1.4	5.0
Responsiveness	5	.843	3.70	0.75	2.0	5.0
Assurance	5	.828	3.67	0.85	1.4	5.0
Empathy	5	.863	3.58	0.84	1.4	5.0
Guest Satisfaction	5	.887	3.84	0.84	1.0	5.0

Note. All constructs were measured on a 1-5 scale; higher scores indicate more favorable perceptions.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

All five service-quality dimensions were positively and statistically significantly correlated

with guest satisfaction. Responsiveness showed the strongest relationship ($r = .653$, $p < .001$), followed by reliability ($r = .561$, $p < .001$), tangibles ($r = .497$, $p < .001$), empathy ($r = .451$, $p < .001$), and assurance ($r = .421$, $p < .001$). Intercorrelations among the five predictors ranged from .220 to .466, suggesting that the dimensions were related but not redundant.

Table 4. Pearson correlations among study constructs

Construct	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Tangibles	3.69	0.76	—					
2. Reliability	3.73	0.80	.421**	—				
3. Responsiveness	3.70	0.75	.425**	.466**	—			
4. Assurance	3.67	0.85	.390**	.350**	.220*	—		
5. Empathy	3.58	0.84	.313**	.346**	.306**	.319**	—	
6. Guest Satisfaction	3.84	0.84	.497**	.561**	.653**	.421**	.451**	—

Note. $N = 100$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

The five-predictor model was statistically significant, $F(5, 94) = 26.99$, $p < .001$, with $R^2 = .589$ and adjusted $R^2 = .568$. Thus, the model explained 58.9% of the observed variance in guest satisfaction. The overall composite of the five service-quality dimensions was also strongly associated with satisfaction ($r = .739$, $p < .001$), but the multivariable model was used for hypothesis testing because it isolates the unique contribution of each dimension.

Responsiveness was the strongest predictor ($\beta = .423$, $p < .001$), followed by reliability ($\beta = .201$, $p = .014$), empathy ($\beta = .165$, $p = .028$), and assurance ($\beta = .158$, $p = .038$). Tangibles had a positive coefficient but was not statistically significant after the other dimensions were controlled ($\beta = .120$, $p = .134$). The unstandardized responsiveness coefficient indicates that, holding the other dimensions constant, a one-point increase in responsiveness was associated with an estimated .475-point increase in guest satisfaction.

Regression diagnostics did not indicate serious assumption violations. Predictor VIFs ranged from 1.24 to 1.49, well below conventional concern

thresholds. The Durbin-Watson statistic was 2.18, residual normality tests were nonsignificant (Shapiro-Wilk $p = .077$; Jarque-Bera $p = .188$), and the Breusch-Pagan test did not indicate heteroscedasticity ($p = .349$). These results support interpretation of the ordinary least squares estimates.

Table 5. Multiple regression predicting guest satisfaction

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	VIF
Constant	-.0375	0.375	—	-.0999	.320	—
Tangibles	0.134	0.089	0.120	1.510	.134	1.45
Reliability	0.211	0.085	0.201	2.494	.014	1.49
Responsiveness	0.475	0.088	0.423	5.385	<.001	1.41
Assurance	0.157	0.075	0.158	2.108	.038	1.28
Empathy	0.166	0.074	0.165	2.239	.028	1.24

Note. $N = 100$. $R^2 = .589$; adjusted $R^2 = .568$; $F(5, 94) = 26.99$, $p < .001$. B = unstandardized coefficient; β = standardized coefficient; VIF = variance inflation factor.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

Four of the five hypotheses were supported. Reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy made positive and statistically significant unique contributions to guest satisfaction. The tangibles hypothesis was not supported in the multivariable model, despite a significant positive bivariate correlation. This distinction is important: tangibles were related to satisfaction, but their unique effect was not distinguishable from zero once the other service-quality dimensions were considered.

Table 6. Summary of hypothesis tests

Hypothesis	Path	β	p	Decision
H1	Tangibles → Guest Satisfaction	.120	.134	Not supported
H2	Reliability → Guest Satisfaction	.201	.014	Supported
H3	Responsiveness → Guest Satisfaction	.423	<.001	Supported
H4	Assurance → Guest Satisfaction	.158	.038	Supported

Hypothesis	Path	β	p	Decision
	Satisfaction			
H5	Empathy → Guest Satisfaction	.165	.028	Supported

5. Discussion

The study clearly demonstrates that service quality in the hotel is a strong statistical predictor of guest satisfaction. The five SERVQUAL dimensions together accounted for 58.9% of the variance in guest satisfaction, and the overall service-quality composite had a strong positive correlation of .739 with satisfaction. The findings are in line with the theoretical framework that perceived service quality is the antecedent of guest satisfaction (Cronin and Taylor, 1992) and with the results of previous hotel studies, where guest satisfaction is influenced by several service attributes, not just one single one (Choi and Chu, 2001; Marković and Raspor Janković, 2013; Wu and Ko, 2013). The results also highlight the need for simultaneous modelling, as all five service quality dimensions were significantly correlated with satisfaction at the bivariate level, but only four of them were statistically significant when included in the regression model. This suggests that the SERVQUAL dimensions are not equally important in determining guest satisfaction. Responsiveness had the highest unique relationship with satisfaction, followed by reliability, and then empathy and assurance. Thus, the positive correlations should not be taken as a sign that all dimensions of service quality need to be given the same strategic attention by the hotel manager.

Responsiveness was the most important factor in guest satisfaction, indicating that guests are especially concerned with the promptness of responses, timely delivery of requested services, staff availability, streamlined check-in and service procedures, and staff willingness to help. Responsiveness can be particularly important as it can compound the impact of other service failures if there are delays. For instance, a maintenance problem, a discrepancy in reservations, or a missing amenity can be acceptable if the employees respond promptly and solve the problem, but it can be a big problem if the guests have to wait or keep asking for help. This is in line with previous research findings that waiting time and customer interaction have a significant impact on four and five-star accommodation (Nunkoo et al., 2020). It also reinforces the overall concept that employees are a key part of the hospitality service experience. Responsiveness is particularly significant from a management point of view because it is actionable. Hotels can enhance this dimension by having the right staffing, measurable service-response standards, effective escalation processes, digital guest-request systems and empowering frontline staff to solve common issues quickly.

Reliability was the second highest predictor of guest satisfaction, meaning that guests appreciate accurate reservations and bills, timely service delivery, problem solving, and consistency in service across various encounters. The result is similar to the results of previous studies, in which reliability was found as one of the most important factors in the quality of hotel services and customer satisfaction (Akbaba, 2006; Marković & Raspor, 2010; Marković & Raspor Janković, 2013). In the hospitality industry, reliability is especially crucial, as guests plan their trips, budgets, and expectations based on the hotel's promises. Good and courteous service can't make up for mistakes, poor service, or not providing what was promised. Guest satisfaction was also statistically significantly influenced by Assurance. Courtesy, employee knowledge, professionalism, safety, confidence and secure transactions can help to minimize uncertainty and make guests feel comfortable while they are staying. The influence of assurance was less than that of responsiveness and reliability, but it was still found to be significant when the other service quality dimensions were held constant, indicating that assurance has an independent contribution to guest satisfaction. Although the mean of empathy was the lowest of the five service-quality dimensions, it also showed a significant positive correlation with satisfaction. This is a significant discovery as it shows that there is a gap in service and a potential for improvement in the areas of individualized attention, understanding of guest needs, personalized service, and genuine concern. This is in line with the service-experience studies that indicate that employee interaction and emotional reactions may affect overall satisfaction (Ali et al., 2016).

Tangibles were highly correlated with guest satisfaction, but were not found to be a statistically significant unique contributor in the full multiple-regression model. This does not imply that cleanliness, modern equipment, good facilities, or the appearance of the staff are not important. Instead, it suggests that after the shared variance with reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy was accounted for, there was not enough additional variance in satisfaction to be statistically significant in this sample that could be attributed to tangibles. There are a number of possibilities. Firstly, tangible quality can be a threshold or hygiene factor, meaning that guests take rooms, facilities, cleanliness and physical appearance for granted as a minimum requirement. Once these minimum standards are achieved, interpersonal and process-related aspects of service may become more important in differentiating the overall guest experience. Second, the sample consisted of guests from three-, four-, and five-star hotels, and previous studies indicate that the significance of infrastructure, room quality, waiting time, and customer interaction may differ among the various hotel categories (Nunkoo et al., 2020). Third, tangibles can have an indirect effect on guest satisfaction via other service quality perceptions, not

a direct effect at all. These possibilities could be explored in future studies with larger samples by testing for differences between hotel categories, interaction effects, and potential nonlinear relationships.

The results also have theoretical implications. The five dimensions of SERVQUAL yielded reliable composite measures, but each had a different impact on guest satisfaction. This further confirms the idea that SERVQUAL is more of a flexible tool to be used and tested in a particular service setting and not as a universal structure. The study also provides evidence for the conceptual distinction between service quality and guest satisfaction. The analysis used a different satisfaction measure, which enabled the five dimensions of service quality to be analyzed as antecedents of satisfaction without repeating service-quality content in the dependent variable. The nonsignificant coefficient of tangibles also adds to the body of knowledge on contextual variability of hotel service quality. The significance of the various dimensions may vary according to the nature of the guests, the type of hotel, the service setting and the expectations of the guests. The high coefficient for responsiveness indicates that the speed of service, availability of employees, and effective problem solving might be particularly relevant in modern hotel experiences, where guests are increasingly demanding quick and effortless service.

From a managerial perspective, the findings provide practical guidance by showing that service-quality dimensions should be prioritized according to their relative statistical association with guest satisfaction rather than treated as equally influential. Tangibles remain essential, particularly with regard to cleanliness, maintenance, physical comfort, and professional appearance, but the strongest relationships with satisfaction in this sample were associated with service processes and employee performance. Responsiveness therefore warrants the greatest managerial attention, followed by reliability, empathy, and assurance. Hotels can strengthen responsiveness by establishing measurable response-time standards for reception, housekeeping, maintenance, luggage assistance, and guest requests, while monitoring performance across shifts. Frontline employees should also be empowered to resolve common service problems without unnecessary escalation, supported by clear accountability procedures and service-recovery records. Reliability can be improved through reservation verification, billing checks, service handover procedures, and regular consistency audits across departments. Empathy can be strengthened by maintaining guest-preference information, encouraging personalized communication, providing flexible responses when appropriate, and training employees in active listening and needs recognition. Assurance can be supported through stronger product knowledge, consistent courtesy standards, transparent communication, secure payment procedures, and visible safety practices. At the same

time, hotels should continue to maintain high physical standards and prioritize renovations based on their likely impact on the guest experience rather than assuming that capital expenditure alone will automatically increase satisfaction.

6. Conclusion

This study evaluated service quality as a predictor of guest satisfaction using data from 100 hotel guests and a performance-only SERVQUAL-based questionnaire. The measurement scales were reliable, all five service-quality dimensions were positively correlated with satisfaction, and the combined regression model explained 58.9% of satisfaction variance. Responsiveness was the strongest predictor, followed by reliability, empathy, and assurance. Tangibles were positively related to satisfaction at the bivariate level but were not a significant independent predictor in the full model.

The central conclusion is that, in this sample, guest satisfaction was more strongly associated with the process and interpersonal dimensions of service delivery than with tangibles once the dimensions were considered simultaneously. Guests reported higher satisfaction where service was characterized by quick assistance, efficient processes, dependable delivery, knowledgeable and trustworthy staff, and individualized attention. Hotels seeking to strengthen guest satisfaction should therefore combine sound facility standards with disciplined service operations and employee-centered delivery.

The findings should be interpreted in light of several limitations. The convenience sample was modest and may not represent all hotel guests. The cross-sectional design supports statistical prediction but not causal inference. All variables were self-reported in the same questionnaire, creating the possibility of common-method effects. The dataset did not include hotel names, city-level location, exact collection dates, or hotel-level identifiers; therefore, property clustering and location-specific interpretation were not possible. The study combined three star categories but was not powered for detailed category-specific regression. Finally, the scale measured perceived performance only and did not calculate traditional SERVQUAL expectation-performance gaps.

Future research should replicate the model with larger probability or stratified samples, clearly identified geographic settings, and sufficient cases within each hotel category. Longitudinal or repeated-stay designs could examine whether improvements in responsiveness and reliability precede changes in satisfaction. Multilevel models could separate guest-level and hotel-level effects. Researchers could also test moderators such as domestic versus international status, travel purpose, length of stay, booking channel, and hotel star rating. Additional outcomes, including loyalty, recommendation, online-review intention, and willingness to pay, should be measured as constructs separate from satisfaction. Finally, future instruments may integrate digital-service attributes while retaining the human

interaction dimensions that remain central to hospitality quality.

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