



The Evaluation of Complaint Handling Processes in Five Star Hotels and its Reflection on Customers' Satisfaction

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Abstract

A study was conducted on the “evaluation of customers’ complaints handling and its reflection on customer’s satisfaction in five star hotels. The study targeted the category of managers and administrative people of different positions related to the handling of customers’ complaints. The main objective of the study was to know the extent of applying the mechanism of customers’ complaints handling in these hotels, and the reflection of this on the satisfaction of their customers and the creation of confidence in them, which eventually brings about loyalty to those hotels. In addition, the study seeks to identify the most important procedures used in these hotels to resolve these complaints. To achieve this, a random sample comprising 200 managers and administrative people of concern regarding customers’ complaints in hotels were selected. However, only 153 valid for analysis questionnaires were recovered, that is 76.5% of the total number of the questionnaires distributed. The results showed that the process of handling complaints in these hotels affects customers’ satisfaction. All independent variables explained the variation occurring in the dependent variable, where all these dimensions showed the impact on customers’ satisfaction, some of which had a direct impact and some had an indirect impact. Based on the above-mentioned facts and the results of the study, the researchers recommend that it is necessary for five star hotels to focus on complaints handling processes. Furthermore, the process should be evaluated effectively, and a clear plans and mechanisms of action should be developed because of their effective role in the creation of customers’ satisfaction and loyalty in hotels. The results also showed a significant shortage in the procedures, regulations and instructions in these hotels. Weakness in the management system, and lack of interest of these hotels to address complaints in a radical way to ensure that they will not be repeated later with other customers is essential. Hence, the effective role of the customers’ complaints handling process is clear in influencing their satisfaction and creating desired loyalty towards the five star hotels in Jordan.

Keywords: Complaint handling, customer satisfaction, loyalty, continuity, Jordan.

Introduction

Most organizations emphasize that paying attention to customers’ complaints contributes to gaining their loyalty to the organization and increasing their connection with them. Failure to search for the causes of these problems and complaints may lead them to go to other competing organizations or they may even distort the reputation of the organization through their words.



Unfortunately, most complaints provided by customers are not handled effectively, making these customers unhappy with the organization services (Rashad, 2006). Consumer loyalty towards the organization may occur through the level of service provided, where the impact of this may differ from the customer who submits the complaints compared to the one who does not, in addition to the comparison between the complainants who were satisfied and those who were not after the complaint was submitted (Sandra, Dhruv, et al., 2008), where complacency affects repurchase once again, which is stemming from the fairness of distribution and treatment (Ing-Long & Chi-Ying Huang, 2013).

So, the need for an effective system to deal with customer complaints is obvious, particularly in the service sector as it is important for achieving their satisfaction and keeping them. The starting point for the effective functioning of this system may be through investigating the complaint, which is considered as one of the means to increase the customer's commitment and build his/her loyalty. Unfortunately, most companies are not sufficiently familiar with how to deal successfully with the service and the impact of complaint processing strategies or otherwise they fail to do so (Tax, Brown and Chandrashekar, 1998). This is because most complainants were dissatisfied with their recent experiences with regard to the handling of complaints, using the theory of justice. Perhaps the most important sectors that should be interested in this aspect is the tourist hotel sector, especially the five star hotels, due to the size of the services provided to their customers, which is reflected on the tourism sector. This hotel activity depends on the human element no matter how much machinery and equipment used are developed, as the success of hotels activity depends on the ability and excellence of employees, which makes the hotel management interested in authorizing front office staff to accept customer complaints and take appropriate action along with response to this complaint if they can. Otherwise, they should refer the matter to the specialists who are able to handle complaints effectively within the strategy of complaints management in order to achieve full customer satisfaction and creating his loyalty and recommending others to deal with the organization for the welcome and response to solve the problem and provide fair and urgent compensation (Ogbeide, et al., 2017).

As hotels provide services and not tangible goods, attention must be paid to the rules and scientific principles found by studies on hotel fields to acquire information that qualifies them to perform their tasks efficiently and effectively. In any case, the system may fail when the services provided to customers are not the services promised. This is because customer's satisfaction is linked with loyalty to the brand and its reputation and the repetition of the purchase process, while dissatisfaction may lead to changing the desired behaviour by requesting the return of the money paid, or changing the service or fixing or other requirements, which may lead to negative word of mouth (Harris, 2013).

Complaints may arise as a result of an unsatisfactory product or any error committed by employees and service providers in different sectors, including hotels, and may be caused by the customer himself. It is not important who caused this, but the most important is to handle these complaints with an effective mechanism in order to maintain continuous relations with customers, which provides the high degree opportunity to deal with these hotels and create a good image of them. Whatever tries and efforts these hotels have made to please their customers, any lack of work must occur or appear that may make customers dissatisfied, as they desire to always get the best.

People who complain about services provided to them are usually dissatisfied with the administration's reactions to their complaints. The issue is not only that it is a work done, but the



most important thing is to find effective ways to handle complaints. It is evident that there is a gap between the expectations of service providers and those of customers (Friele et al., 2015).

The failure to provide the service might be due to several reasons, including errors in credibility and tangible material things, lack of information, high cost of service, the most important failure is to handle complaints. Service organizations in all cases cannot avoid the failure of service resulting from human errors in submission. This is the opposite of industrial organizations where the fault ratio in them is zero (Lizar & Ferry, 2009). Failure is associated with providing services that offer less than customers' expectations. This might have a negative impact on the spoken word that could jeopardize the reputation of the organization and its brand name.

Hence it can be said, that customers' complaints are not a negative thing for the organization. On the contrary, they might provide an opportunity for the organization to identify its problems and weaknesses of procedures in the provision of services in order to come up with solutions to handle these problems. This will have a positive impact on the customers' awareness regarding the organization professionalism. This increases the level of satisfaction and loyalty towards it (Gurau, & Calin, 2012).

Therefore, people managing these hotels should accept the complaints of their customers and their proposals and encourage them to express their opinion on the nature and quality of services provided to them. There has been no significant development in the theoretical concept regarding consumers' evaluation of organizations reactions to their complaints and the level of their response (Schoefer & Ennew, 2004).

Ensuring customers' satisfaction could be achieved by understanding who really the satisfied consumer are, and what motivated them to prefer a certain organization to other ones. Reaching this means to keep these customers as long as possible with the organization and their ability to attract new customers for the organization, so organizations began to think seriously to build and rebuild satisfaction culture. This requires them to get rid of their errors and deal with each consumer to make him feel special as a guest (Hoopes, 2010).

Customer satisfaction is valuable to the service provider in order to ensure continuity of success. Visits by researchers too many five star hotels in Jordan, conducting personal interviews with the management and following - up on customers' complaints, it was found that there is a clear failure in dealing with these complaints. The absence of an effective system to address them, is a clear deficiency in the mechanism of dealing with customers' complaints following them up seriously, and finding radical solutions, which should begin by training employees on how to deal with these different types of customers to ensure that the problem does not recur. This is because the lack of attention to the problems of those people may cause bigger problems, or the absence of customers at all. This is why researchers are interested in studying the process of handling complaints in five-star hotels practically. They called for paying attention to this aspect, and for providing human resources necessary to deal with the customers' demands.

Recognizing the error is one of the easiest ways to provide better services. Is there a process to handle customer complaints in five star hotels? Do these hotels recognize and verify the problem? Is this problem evaluated and prioritized? Is there a plan developed to investigate complaints submitted by customers? Is there an actual response to the problem? Do the administration concerned in these hotels follow up the complaint submitted by customers? Is the management of the hotels interested in addressing the administrative system, which caused the occurrence of this complaint? Is there a real impact of handling the complaints process in five star hotels on customers' satisfaction?



The tourists have become better educated and more aware than before, and this leads the hotels to pay more attention to their needs and identify the problems that may face them while they are there, and always seek to provide additional forms of paid services to win the satisfaction of the tourist who can come with ten others. The main factor in the tourism industry is the focus on the quality of service and human resources used to satisfy the needs of tourists and the struggle to maintain their satisfaction that is what hotels seek to achieve with their customers, although it is difficult to achieve unlimited diversity of customers' expectations (Marinescu & Ispas, 2012).

This confirms that tourism industry is the largest in the world; it can improve and develop the economy of many countries. To achieve this, effective shopping programs and good quality services must be developed in order to improve the performance of organizations and achieve customers' satisfaction because of their significant impact (Jumadi, Dwi, et al., 2017).

Hence, the importance of the study emerges, and stems from the vital role played by tourism in the economy. This leads us to have great interest in the tourism product. Since hotels are the most important components of the tourism product, we must strive to provide the best services to our customers and all tourists in a systematic and scientific manner. This ensures efficient and effective performance. Protects hotels from competitors and increases their market share, which is in turn reflected on the state local economy. Likewise, the importance of the subject increases in the absence of a clear and effective mechanism at five star hotels to deal with customers' complaints. Because the completion of tasks effectively and without errors is almost impossible, so these hotels must have the courage to recognize the existence of errors in them, and deal with them in a satisfactory manner to their customers. Through in-depth interviews with customers, tourists and staff, researchers found that these hotels do not pay much attention to customers' complaints or follow them up to reach to a proper handling in a timely manner. Hotels also do not recognize the long-term negative effects on the hotel reputation, its market share and customer satisfaction.

Customer complaints also contribute to providing adequate information to hotels about the problems that customers may face, which contributes to giving a clear picture of the prevailing errors and how to handle them. Thus, complaints can be said to be an important source of information. In this study. The researchers sought to identify and determine the methodology used to handle customers' complaints, evaluate them and underline strengths and weaknesses of this system. In addition, they try to teach hotel management how to listen to customers' complaints in order to update their policies and internal systems to provide better services to their customers. Understanding customers' complaints' is a key element in identifying their expectations concerning the services provided by the hotel and the most important problems facing them, determining how to follow up and developing plans and tactics appropriate to develop and modify them up to the required level of customers' expectations and create loyalty in them to hotels? Moreover, the importance of this study stems from its contribution to the achievement of high efficiency among employees to identify complaints and their reasons in order to reach effective solutions through focusing on the customer and how to maintain him by giving the staff new opportunities to train on how to serve and deal with customers, especially in the face of fierce competition and open markets, where the satisfaction of the customer one time is not enough. Different organizations strive for continuity as long as possible, by ensuring the loyalty of the customer and the repeated dealing with him.

Accordingly, the main objective of this study is to see the extent of applying complaints handling processes by five star hotels and the reflection of that on the satisfaction of their customers. This is done by identifying the reality of complaints in these hotels, and the level of accepting and



recognizing customers' complaints. Then, the study tries to determine the existence of a mechanism of handling complaints in these hotels and their ability to evaluate the problem and how to give it the required priority.

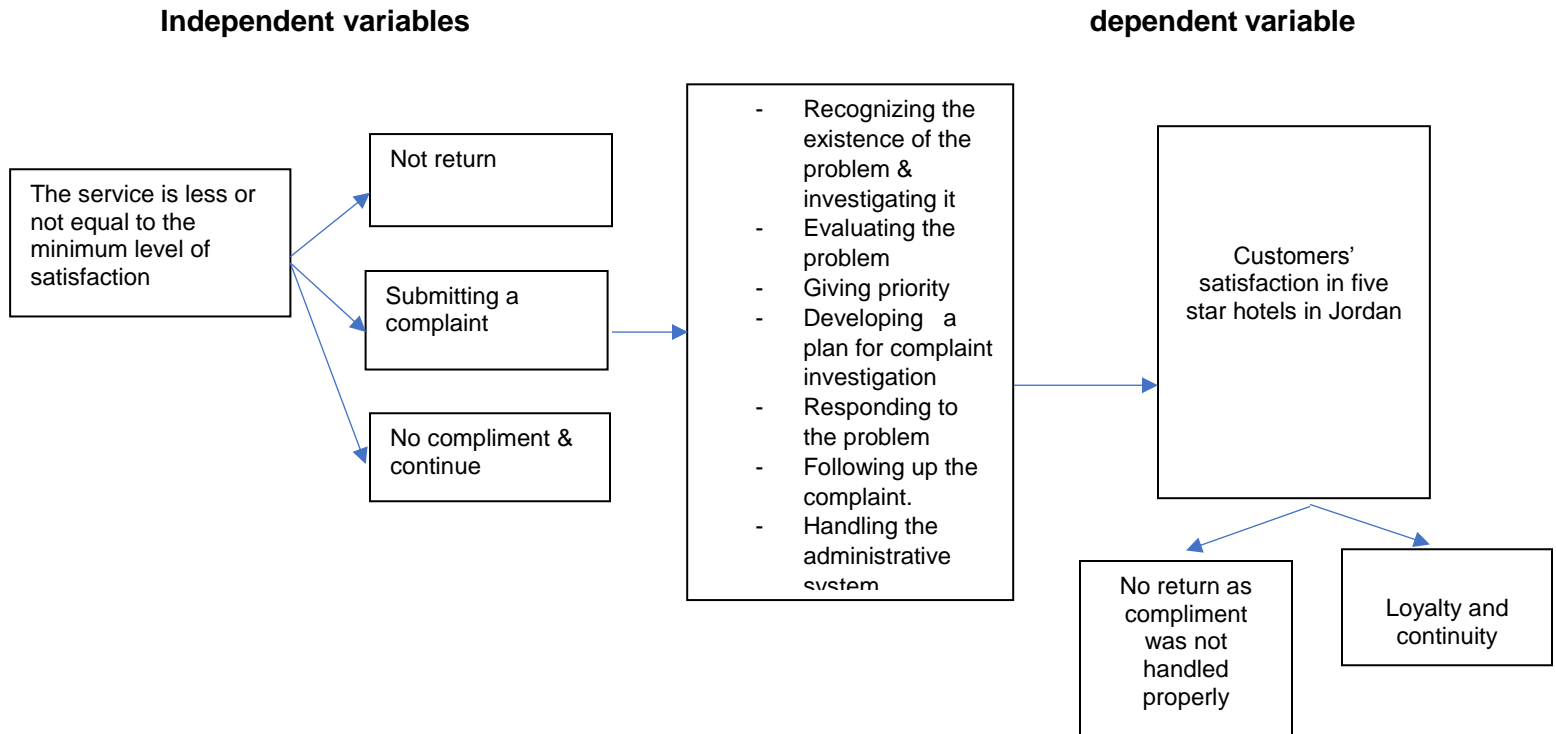
This study aims to highlight the existence of a clear mechanism to investigate customers' complaints to reach a fair and effective solution. The study also aimed to see whether there is a response from hotel management to the existing problem and whether hotels are able to follow up the complaint and respond to the customer after he submits the complaint, to see the extent of clarity, fairness and integrity used in the hotels, and whether the customers them self-had access to complaints handling procedures.

Many hotels may fail in some of these procedures, which are used to manage customers' complaints. More importantly, however, this study is intended to see the extent of hotels understanding and benefiting from the complaint submitted by the customer, in improving and developing administrative services in the long term and how to register the complaint to avoid the recurrence of such problems in the future. They also clarify the impact of handling complaints on customers' satisfaction. This will lead us to propose an effective mechanism to handle customers' complaints in five star hotels to decision-makers and form a rule in the area of handling complaints in order to reach the satisfaction of their customers and maintain their loyalty.

Study model (framework)

Based on an extensive literature review, the model on page 6 was proposed. It explains the process of handling complaints submitted by customers and its impact on creating their satisfaction. To determine the independent variables that might affect the dependent variable, Commonwealth Ombudsman, 2009) was used. An explanation of how variables are measured is shown below. (See the study model in Figure 1)

Figure (1):Study model:



Literature Review

The customer has become familiar with all available alternatives, which makes organizations seriously interested in bringing the customer satisfaction so as to ensure his or her loyalty and continuity with them. This is because many customers face multiple problems while products are delivered to them, and they may not be satisfied as they require, which makes them depart from the organization without a complaint or giving opinion. This may adversely affect it and its activity. However, some customers submit a complaint to get a solution to their problem that makes them satisfied.

For this reason, organizations became interested in obtaining information about complaints submitted by customers, so that they can identify weaknesses either in their structure or even their operations. The cost of winning a new customer is much higher than that of maintaining the current customer cost. A study conducted on Schindlerhof Hotel confirmed that the customer is maintained for life by giving value to him (Customer Value), (Voss and Gruber, 2005). The flow of information should be verified, both formally and informally, in order to enhance the effectiveness of this process. It was found that 80% of complaints take more time than that required to process them (Sitko- Chuancharoen, et al., 2010).

Sometimes the complaint is due to product mismatch with customers' expectations, and errors may occur due to poor planning of organization and quick delivery of the product. So the identification of the problem may be clear, but the lack of understanding and awareness of the problem by decision makers may lead to incorrect solutions, where complaints vary from one customer to another. For this reason, specific criteria and mechanisms must be set to deal with



it, and these will be addressed in this study by identifying customer complaint handling mechanisms and the extent of their reflection on customer satisfaction in five star hotels.

Handling Customer Complaints

Most of the definitions agree that all forms of organizations are unable to meet the their customers' expectations, and customers were disappointed as their wishes were not satisfied as the customer continues to deal with the organization if satisfied with the place and service provided to him, which contributes to the dissemination of good reputation of the organization for others. This helps the organization to maintain its customers and win others as well (Ibraheem, 2014). It is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the activities and services provided by the organization or lack of it.

Complaints are defined as a reflection of customer's self-assertion, which includes an emotional factor, and it is also a means of expressing satisfaction, which must be extemporaneously. Complaints handling brings about customer satisfaction. This requires a behavioural approach that takes into consideration customer emotions. In order to effectively implement customer complaint process, five approaches are adopted based on psychological and consulting methods. First, to start listening carefully to the type of problem the customer is experiencing and his emotions towards it. Then, focus on the response to complaint and on its importance for him. After that, focus on accepting the customer's opinions and assumptions without rejecting them and then look for a solution instead of looking for the reason of the complaint. Finally, interview customers and communicate face-to-face with them. The application of all these approaches may improve the quality of complaints process handling (Shibata, 2012).

The customer's protest against the service provided or being not satisfied with it makes the organization begin to investigate the subject of the complaint in order to find quick solutions, as dealing with these complaints efficiently and effectively and with more attention prevents the recurrence of the compliment and reduces dispute with customers (Saudi Investment Bank, 2014). Whatever the way of submitting the compliment, in general, there is fairness in terms of the procedures used in handling customers' complaints online and offline, where the customer who submitted the complaint online must feel the same degree of satisfaction with the solutions presented to him compared to the customer who submitted the same complaint in the traditional way (Offline). This creates a type of justice in resolving complaints successfully and effectively in both ways (Kendra. et al., 2013).

Thus, it is clear that the complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the products of the organization or how it deals with customers (Less and Reid, 2012).

Thus, the complaint can be expressed as the customer's expectations that were disappointed and that the organization has failed to satisfy them, and particularly the quality of service provided and the way of dealing with the customer (Rashad, 2006: 474).

Complaints may have to do with a number of reasons, such as failure to provide the service, inappropriate level of service, or even dissatisfaction with the organization's policy. The reason may be the manner the staff member handles the compliments, his attitude, or that the staff member does not accept or agree on the way the compliment is handled, especially if the procedures are not clear to him, and more importantly, the reason is the failure of the organization to find appropriate administrative solutions to the submitted complaint.

The complaint is usually related to a variety of different factors, the most important of which is the



degree of customer dissatisfaction with the product and the importance of the product to him, as well as the size of the expected benefit. The personality and experience of the customer also plays an important role in submitting the complaint to the organization. The more important the complaint is, the greater the benefit gained from it in return for its cost and the specific circumstances limiting it, such as time and the ability to edit it. Although the compliment may give customers material or moral compensation, many of them do not access to that, either because they do not know how to submit a compliment and to which party the document should be directed or because they were not convinced of the complaint importance and its return.

This shows the importance of handling customers' complaints and their effective role in the success and sustainability of the organization and its practical reputation, but why we see that some organizations neglect many complaints submitted by customers. Is there really a clear mechanism to handle this? The main purpose of handling customers' complaints and following them up is to reach customers' satisfaction and then the continuity to deal with the organization. Customer complaints have become very important for many organizations as a feedback to develop and improve their services to create loyalty among their customers. (Shuangping, Yonghui, et al., 2015).

Customer's satisfaction

Satisfaction is the key of success for any organization, where knowing the customer's opinion regarding the services provided by the organization will contribute to improving performance to meet their expectations (www.qmsrs.com). Satisfaction is also defined as the customer's conviction that the performance of the product is equal to or greater than his or her expectations; otherwise it expresses dissatisfaction, which is to judge the quality of the product resulting from comparing customers' expectations concerning the service and its actual performance (Al-Khafaji, 2012, p. 84). The customers' satisfaction is the post-purchase evaluation judgment and the role of consumption (Teresa, David, 2011).

However Kotler and Keller (2016) define customer satisfaction as a feeling of happiness, joy, or frustration as a result of comparing the perceived performance of the commodity or service with its expectations. If performance or experience is less than expected, the consumer is dissatisfied, but if they are within the expectations, the consumer is satisfied with him, and if they exceed his expectations, the highest degree of satisfaction and pleasure is achieved.

The customer satisfaction is linked to buying again, but satisfaction alone is not enough to retain the customer, but satisfaction should lead to loyalty in order to create a competitive advantage for the organization. The satisfaction also defined by Aljiloni (2014) as the customers' opinion resulting from the gap between his understanding of the product used and his expectations. Satisfactory behaviours include: repetition of purchase, positive talk about the product, organization, and loyalty through a deep commitment to repeat purchase.

The most important determinants of customers' satisfaction are: the expectations about the product performance in terms of its characteristics, benefits and costs, in addition to the perceived performance of the product resulting from its usage, and finally matching by finding the difference between the level of expectations and the actual level of performance (Saudi Investment Bank, 2014: 14- 13). We should not mix between customers' satisfaction about the service and the service quality, as satisfaction is the result of comparison between expected service and perceived service, while the quality of service is related to the comparison between the desired service and the perceived service (Doren, Jan, 1996).



The importance of measuring satisfaction emerges by identifying customers' satisfaction, diagnosing the reasons for not achieving the organization objectives, knowing the targeted group benefits from the service, in addition to avoiding repetition of the same errors, and knowing the ability of the management model used to achieve customer satisfaction. (Al-Khafaji, 2015, p. 85-86). Satisfaction measurement helps to understand customer needs and expectations, how to achieve them, develop the product for customer satisfaction and expectations, and identify customer orientation, (Silvestri, 2017). Customer satisfaction is measured through a set of core dimensions including: transaction procedures and delivery on time without delay and along with simplicity and clarity of procedures efficiency, staff efficiency and their good dealing with customers, staff response to customers' needs ,carrying out their work at the required time, and finally the effectiveness of services provided by the organization through the customer service office, and providing things necessary for them and their comfort.

Hypotheses Development: Study Hypotheses

Customers' complaints handling process

Most service sectors are still unable to develop a clear mechanism to handle any shortfall that may occur in their services to customers since this has negative effects on them (Rashad, 2006).

The following hypothesis illustrates this.

Ho1: There is no mechanism to handle customers' complaints in five star hotels.

Recognizing the existence of a problem

The statement of the complaint is an opportunity for the organization to review its services and fill the gap between the customers' expectations and what the organization provides them. Therefore, the verification and recognition of the complaint quickly ensures the customer that the concerned complaint is taken care of by the hotel management (Commonwealth Ombudsman, 2009: 20) the following hypothesis stems:

Ho1.1: five star hotels do not admit that there is a problem and do not check it out.

Evaluation of the problem and giving priorities

Customers evaluate their complaints from three main angles. The first one is the final result they obtained after the complaint is submitted. The second is the complaint procedure used about the complaint. The third one is how employees dealt with them while handling the complaint (Rashad, 2006). The nature of the complaints varies greatly, and the subject of the complaint may appear either through the information provided by the customer or through a thorough investigation. Early evaluation of the problem is essential in order to effectively handle the complaint. It might be led by a person or a specialized team especially in organizations that receive a large number of complaints and need screening or other specialists if the problem is complex or difficult (Commonwealth Ombudsman, 2009: 21).

Based on the above, the following hypothesis was developed:

Ho1.2: Problems are not evaluated in five star hotels and are not given the required priorities.

Develop a plan to investigate the complaint



The positive experience of customers in dealing with the service organization can mitigate the negative effects of poor procedures used to handle their complaints. (Rashad, 2006). Handling complaints requires clear and written steps that must clarify what is required to be investigated. After that, prepare a list of steps related to the investigation, determine the time needed to solve the problem, determine the required treatment to be achieved and as the customer seeks, whether the expectations are real or need to be managed, and finally write and record any other considerations related to the complainant submitter and keep this information confidential.

This means that hotel management must have a set of written clear strait forward procedures, showing the complaints handling process that must be prepared in advance. (Commonwealth Ombudsman, 2009: 23) Hence, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Ho1.3: Five star hotels do not plan to investigate complaints Submitted by customers.

Response to the complaint

It is interesting to note that the complaints submitted by customers are merely an expression of dissatisfaction with the performance and products of the organization, as explained earlier. The failure to respond to compliment, may cause them to reach official authorities in the country through suing the organization in court and demanding substantial compensation. So, successful management is the one that is fully aware that its success will not happen and continue without customers' satisfaction and meeting their needs, desires and expectations as well. If this does not happen, the administration must listen to customers' complaints, respond quickly to them in order to maintain their reputation and prestige, and not to give the opportunity to competitors to get a part of its market share.

When the investigation of the complaint is completed, the complainant must be informed of the results obtained, even in case of some shortcomings of the complaint that remains under investigation, since the initial clarification of the point reached will be met with great satisfaction and welcome from the complainant. This report can be either verbal or written as preferred by the customer, and it gives the impression about the hotel's response to his complaint, (Commonwealth Ombudsman, 2009: 25).

The following hypothesis was also developed:

Ho1.4: Five star hotels do not respond to customer problems.

Follow-up of complaint

The attention of the organization to its customers after the purchase process and the follow-up of their complaints and handling is necessary especially for the customer who cares about the organization attention paid to him after the completion of this purchasing process, especially the maintenance and guarantee processes and other things. The existence of a guarantee of the product makes the customer comfortable about the organization. This affects the customer satisfaction and the extent of his continuity to deal with the organization. The hotel's follow-up to the customer's complaint and satisfaction with the procedures and solutions provided to him, is a good application through which to give the complainant an opportunity to learn about the procedures followed by the hotel, the handling of the complaint and finding solutions. The complainant has the right to receive detailed information on the method and way of working on the complaint, to handle it, and find solutions to it.



Based on the above, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Ho1.5: five star hotels do not follow up customers' complaints.

Handling the administrative system:

In all cases, handling customers' complaints helps organizations shed light on their weaknesses, both in terms of the product and performance, and determines the need for their personnel to train or monitor their work. This also contributes to motivate the organization to take new and positive measures for their products and performance at work, which contributes significantly to continuous communication with new customer orientations. The handling of complaints is the task of customer service staff who listen to the customer, apologize, or provide compensation. The complaints management focuses on following up procedures that seek to identify the causes of the problem and the resulting amendments to be made to prevent recurrence of errors later (Rashad, 2006: 474).

The grievance of the customer is not the last step in handling the complaint efficiently and effectively. The complaint may indicate the existence of a problem in the hotel management system, which indicates a defect that might be repeated in other cases. This should be taken into account by the hotel when the complaint is completely resolved. (Commonwealth Ombudsman, 2009: 26). Hence, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Ho1.6: Five star hotels do not care about their administrative system, which resulted in complaints from customers.

Customer Complaints Process → Customer Satisfaction

Some organizations ignore the complaints of their customers. The reason for this is that the senior management is not satisfied with the credibility of the complaints submitted by the customers, and that it is merely a manifestation of the defects of their products for personal purposes, and that paying attention to this is a waste of time and effort, as these do not pose any danger to the organization. The reason why complaints did not reach senior is the concealment of it by the recipients in order to appear before their bosses in good image and without any failure in their work.

On the other hand, many researchers see that customer dissatisfaction is not a prerequisite for a complaint. There are some people who leave and look for an alternative as not all complainants are dissatisfied with the organization in terms of its products or performance, but notes may be to avoid some minor flaws, (Customer Service - Customer Complaints, 39-40).

Satisfaction is due to consumers' perception of the performance of the product or service and its relation to his expectations. If the consumer's experience is not equal to or below his expectations, he will be dissatisfied, whereas if the experience about a particular product or service is greater or equal to his expectations, he will be satisfied. (Leon, Joseph, 2015:41)

The achievement of customer satisfaction will require hotel management to keep abreast of all environmental changes and their reflection on the internal procedures used to handle customers' complaints (Al-Jilani & Helmi, 2014).



So, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Ho2: There is no trace of complaints processing in five star hotels on their customer satisfaction.

Figure (1) summarizes the hypothetical relationship between all variables

Research Methodology

The study followed the descriptive-analytical approach by taking into account the theoretical framework and previous studies, as well as analysing the data and testing hypotheses through the questionnaire prepared for this purpose.

A questionnaire was prepared and developed comprising of many relevant paragraphs related to the independent variable and dependent variables distributed on the five-dimensional Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). The questionnaire was divided into two main parts: the first part dealt with personal data about the staff involved in filling out the questionnaire; the second part was allocated to complaints handling evaluation of in five star hotels and their reflection on customers' satisfaction.

Study population and data collection

This study was conducted in Jordan during the summer of 2017. There are 31 five star hotels in Jordan, the oldest of which was established in 1962 and the latest in 2005, according to statistics issued by the Jordanian Hotel Association, Ten (10) hotels were selected randomly, and they were contacted to participate in this study, the managers and staff concerned who were chosen to fill out the questionnaire were met in order to clarify all the items, how to fill out questionnaire, and they were motivated to deal with the questionnaires seriously.

The study population included departments and divisions managers, the concerned staff especially front desk personnel in five star hotels in Jordan. 200 questionnaires were distributed equally among the hotels at a rate of 20 questionnaires per one. 153 questionnaires were collected, that is 76.5% of the sample size.

Table (1): Sample characteristics

| Variable | categories | Frequency | Percent |
|----------|------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender | Male | 116 | 75.8 |
| | Female | 37 | 24.2 |
| | total | 153 | 100.0 |
| Age | 1 | 42 | 27.5 |
| | 2 | 60 | 39.2 |
| | 3 | 45 | 29.4 |
| | 4 | 4 | 2.6 |
| | 5 | 2 | 1.3 |
| | | 153 | 100.0 |
| Income | 1 | 19 | 12.4 |
| | 2 | 9 | 5.9 |
| | 3 | 15 | 9.8 |
| | 4 | 16 | 10.5 |



| | | | |
|-----------------|-------|-----|-------|
| | 5 | 18 | 11.8 |
| | 6 | 12 | 7.8 |
| | 7 | 16 | 10.5 |
| | 8 | 10 | 6.5 |
| | 9 | 18 | 11.8 |
| | 10 | 12 | 7.8 |
| | 11 | 8 | 5.2 |
| | | 153 | 100.0 |
| Education level | 1 | 28 | 18.3 |
| | 2 | 33 | 21.6 |
| | 3 | 82 | 53.6 |
| | 4 | 10 | 6.5 |
| | TOTAL | 153 | 100.0 |
| Experience | 1 | 30 | 19.6 |
| | 2 | 64 | 41.8 |
| | 3 | 30 | 19.6 |
| | 4 | 29 | 19.0 |
| | TOTAL | 153 | 100.0 |

The sample consisted of 75.8% males, 24.2% females, 27.5% of them aged 25-35 years, 29.4% 46-55 years, 2.6% 56-65 years, and 1.3% 66 years and older. 12.4% of them were marketing managers, 5.9% general managers, 9.8% human resources managers, 10.5% public relations managers, 11.8% managers of front desks, 7.8% managers of events & conferences, 10.5% room service managers, 6.5% managers of food and drink, 11.8% customer service managers, 7.8% sales managers, 5.2% managers of security and protection. A total of 18.3% of the sample had a secondary level or less education, 21.6% had a diploma, 53.6% a bachelor degree, 6.5% were postgraduates. 19.6% of the sample had less than five years' experience, 41.8% from 5-10 years, 19.6% from 11-15 years, and 19% had more than 15 years of practical experience.

Validity and reliability:

Table (2): Factor analysis: independent variable constructs

| Variables | Descriptions | Factor loading | Reliability |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1 | admit the existence of a problem | .579 | .791 |
| 2 | | .607 | |
| 3 | | .665 | |
| 4 | | .668 | |
| 5 | | Delete | |
| 6 | | .588 | |
| 7 | | .817 | |
| 8 | | Delete | |
| 9 | | .525 | |
| 10 | | .651 | |
| 11 | Evaluated problem and give priority. | .801 | .775 |
| 12 | | .820 | |
| 13 | | .735 | |
| 14 | | Delete | |
| 15 | | .576 | |
| 16 | | Delete | |



| | | | |
|----|---|-----------------|------|
| 17 | | Delete | |
| 18 | | .610 | |
| 19 | Developed a plan to investigate complaints reported by customers. | .749 | .814 |
| 20 | | .880 | |
| 21 | | .816 | |
| 22 | | .695 | |
| 23 | | .622 | |
| 24 | | Delete | |
| 25 | Respond to customer problems. | .768 | .842 |
| 26 | | .875 | |
| 27 | | .762 | |
| 28 | | .750 | |
| 29 | | .736 | |
| 30 | | Delete | |
| 31 | | Delete | |
| 32 | | Delete | |
| 33 | Follow customers' complaints. | .755 | .805 |
| 34 | | .781 | |
| 35 | | .882 | |
| 36 | | .874 | |
| 37 | | .552 | |
| 38 | care about their management system | .584 | .784 |
| 39 | | .586 | |
| 40 | | - Delete | |
| 41 | | .736 | |
| 42 | | .753 | |
| 43 | | .757 | |
| 44 | | .692 | |
| 45 | | Delete | |

Table (3): Factor analysis: dependent variable constructs

| Variables | Descriptions | Factor loading | Reliability |
|-----------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| 46 | Purchase | .689 | .906 |
| 47 | | .754 | |
| 48 | | .864 | |
| 49 | | .737 | |
| 50 | | .661 | |
| 51 | | .792 | |
| 52 | | .710 | |
| 53 | | .608 | |
| 54 | | .759 | |
| 55 | | .805 | |

Content validity and construct validity were used to test the validity of study measures based on extensive literature review and interviews with the managers of departments and centers in five star hotels in Jordan, and content validity was supported. After collecting data, the researchers test construct validity via principal component analysis with varimax rotation (Hair et al., 1998). Tables 1 and 2. All items loaded strongly (0.5) on their appropriate factors which supported their uni-dimensionality (Hair et al., 1998). All questions in study measures were deleted because factor loading were less than cut point. Reliability was operationalized using internal consistency method value for study measures. These values exceed recommended minimum 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978), and this result establishes the reliability of all the theoretical constructs.



First hypothesis

There is no mechanism (process) to address customers' complaints in five star hotels in Jordan.

Table (4): One sample t test

| variable | Mean | Std. Deviation | T | Sig |
|----------|------|----------------|--------|------|
| 1 | 4.13 | .555 | 25.185 | .000 |
| 2 | 3.85 | .445 | 23.614 | .000 |
| 3 | 2.96 | .688 | -.799 | .425 |
| 4 | 3.96 | .479 | 24.864 | .000 |
| 5 | 3.99 | .530 | 23.079 | .000 |
| 6 | 2.98 | .647 | -.500 | .618 |

From the first general hypothesis stemmed the following sub-hypotheses

Ho1.1: five star hotels in Jordan do not admit the existence of a problem and they do not investigate it.

The results of one sample (t-test) showed that the average responses of the respondents to the first dimension was 4.13 with a standard deviation of (0.555). Since the value of ($t = 25.185$ and $P < .05$), we reject the hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Ho1.2: problems in five star hotels in Jordan are not evaluated and are not given priority.

The results of the one sample t-test the mean of respondent attitude towards depicted the five star hotels in Jordan are evaluated and give priority equal 3.85 with standard deviation equal .445 because ($t=23.614$ and $P<.05$) so we reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternative which state the problems in five star hotels in Jordan are evaluated and give priority.

Ho1.3: five star hotels in Jordan have not developed a plan to investigate complaints reported by customers.

The results of one sample t-test the mean of respondent attitude towards depicted five star hotels in Jordan have develop a plan to investigate complaints reported by customers. Equal 2.96 with standard deviation equal .479 because ($t= -.799$ and $P>.05$) so we accept the null hypotheses and reject the alternative which state five star hotels in Jordan don't have developed a plan to investigate complaints reported by customers.

Ho1.4: five star hotels in Jordan do not respond to customer problems.

The results of one sample t-test the mean of respondent attitude towards depicted five star hotels in Jordan respond to customer problems equal 3.96 with standard deviation equal .479 because ($t=24.864$ and $P<.05$) so we reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternative which state five star hotels in Jordan respond to customer problems.

Ho1.5: five star hotels in Jordan do not follow customers' complaints.

The results of one sample t-test the mean of respondent attitude towards depicted five star hotels in Jordan follow customers' complaints equal 3.99 with standard deviation equal .530 because ($t=23.079$ and $P<.05$) so we reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternative which five star hotels in Jordan follow customers' complaints.

Ho1.6: five star hotels in Jordan do not care about their management system, which caused



customers' complaints.

The results of one sample t-test the mean of respondent attitude towards depicted five star hotels in Jordan care about their management system, which caused customers' complaints equal 2.98 with standard deviation equal .647 because ($t = -.500$ and $P > .05$) so we accept the null hypotheses and reject the alternative which state five star hotels in Jordan don't care about their management system, which caused customers' complaints.

Second hypothesis

Ho2: There is no effect of using familiar on purchase decision.

Ha2: There is effect of using familiar on purchase decision.

Table (5): Result of interaction regression

| Variables | Model 1 | | |
|---|----------------|---------|------|
| | B | t-value | Sig |
| admit the existence of a problem | .274 | 2.547* | .012 |
| Evaluated problem and give priority. | .068 | .965 | .336 |
| Developed a plan to investigate complaints reported by customers. | .130 | 1.390 | .167 |
| Respond to customer problems. | .393 | 3.227* | .002 |
| Follow customers' complaints. | .181 | 1.588 | .115 |
| care about their management system | .346 | 4.710* | .000 |
| | R ² | .430 | |
| | F | 18.368* | |

*Sig<.05

The results of the multiple regression analysis shown in Table 5 indicate that the process of handling complaints in five star hotels in Jordan affects customer satisfaction ($F = 18.368$, $P < 0.01$) and from the value of R², which reflects the selection coefficient which indicating the ration of the variation in the independent variable due to the change in the independent variable. The results indicated that the value of R² was 0.430. This value indicates that the value of R² was 0.430 and this value reflects that the independent variable explains 43% of the variation in the dependent variable. This value reflects the quality of the study model.

They also show a significant direct effect which is admitting the existence of a problem ($\beta = .274$, $P < .05$), respond to customer problems ($\beta = .393$, $P < .05$) and care about their management system ($\beta = .346$, $P < .05$) on customer satisfaction. But there is no effect of Evaluated problem and give priority ($\beta = .068$, $P > .05$), developed a plan to investigate complaints reported by customers ($\beta = -.130$, $P > .05$) and follow customers' complaints ($\beta = -.181$, $P > .05$) on customer satisfaction

Discussion and Conclusions

1-The study results indicate that the complaint handling process in five star hotels in Jordan affect the satisfaction of customers. All the independent variables which reflect the dimensions of handling the complaints that were studied explain 43% of the change or variation in the dependent variable, which may result in getting back to the hotel.



2- The results showed that five star hotels in Jordan recognized the existence of a problem when customers submitted any complaint about the services provided, where there was a gap between the expectations of customers and services hotels provide as they are classified as five star hotels. This led to complaints by customers about some services provided by certain hotels, because of the lack of written and clear procedures to address complaints.

3- The study also showed that five star hotels in Jordan are working to evaluate the problem and give priority to solving the problems because of their clear impact on the satisfaction of their customers.

4- The results indicated that there is no clear plan in five star hotels in Jordan included in procedures for handling complaints of customers in order to investigate the complaint. This also confirms that the service sectors are still unable to develop a clear mechanism to address any failure or to find solutions to complaints reported, and this has negative effects on them.

5- As for the level of response to the problem, it has been shown that five star hotels in Jordan do not fall short in this respect and respond immediately to complaints from customers. So many complaints are responded to verbally by customers and are solved directly. However, more complex complaints, which are difficult to resolve directly by the employee, take longer time to be responded to, either by telephone or by e-mail.

6- The results also explained the interest of five star hotels in Jordan to follow up the complaint from customers very carefully and considered a priority in the work because of the clear impact on their satisfaction and gain their confidence.

7-The results revealed that many customer complaints were caused by weakness in the administrative system and their lack of interest in dealing with the problem in a radical manner for not repeating it later with other clients, which also confirmed the weakness of procedures used in handling complaints which can be mitigated through the experience of positive clients in dealing with the organization, which must work hard to keep up with all the changes to reflect on the procedures and systems that are incurred and contribute alone.

8- The results also showed a positive effect and relationship between the dimensions of customer complaints handling and satisfaction.

The existence of problems, response to customer problems and caring about their management system, showed direct impact on customer satisfaction, while evaluating the problem, giving priority to it, developing a plan to investigate complaints submitted by customer, following up customer's complaint, did not show any direct impact on customer satisfaction levels.

Managerial implications and recommendations

Through the previous results, which were discussed and linked to the previous studies, the researchers decided to propose the following recommendations to the decision makers in the 5-star hotels in Jordan, in order to make the customer complaints handling system more effective and efficient and to be able to win customer satisfaction and confidence:



1-All five star hotels in Jordan should focus on the complaints handling system and evaluate it effectively, because it has a role in creating customer satisfaction and sustainability of operations. They should also develop a clear plan and a specific working mechanism for this and follow them in line with the objectives of these hotels.

2 - Focus on the handling of complaints in a radical way to ensure that the problem is not repeated, through the review of the administrative system adopted within the hotel and treatment commensurate with the requirements of work.

3- Draw the attention of decision-makers in five star hotels in Jordan to the need to pay attention to the customers' complaints and not to fail in the procedure, regulations and instructions followed in their hotels, because of the clear impact on customer satisfaction and creating loyalty in them towards these hotels.

4-The need for continuous work by decision-makers in five star hotels to search for whatever new and effective to solve and follow the complaints of customers and addressing them through current social networks which are most frequently used by their customers, through training employees working in the hotels and increasing their levels of awareness, who is responsible for receiving and following-up complaints of customers and finding solution for them, as all are important issues.

5- Five star hotels in Jordan should work on a common system for managing customer complaints.

6- The five star hotels in Jordan should inform their clients of the complaint mechanism followed by preparing brochures in more than one language and focusing on the most used language in hotels. In addition to determining the mechanism of communication to submit a complaint.

7- The website of the hotel must include an icon that leads to a page containing all information relating to complaints.

8- The on-site webmasters should evaluate all information about the complainant on an ongoing basis.

9- Providing five star hotels in Jordan with information related to their rights and responsibilities within the hotel in several languages, which should also be available on the hotel's home page.

10 - The need for consultants inside and outside the hotel to provide the required consultations during the investigation stages of the complaint.

11- Proposing an online form where the customer can submit a complaint and communicate with him through this to reach the appropriate solutions.

12- The management of the hotel should provide a professional team to respond to its services or procedures through social networking sites, especially negative comments, because they have a significant impact on the reputation of the hotel and its market share. However, this team is able to resolve these problems and answers to these comments when they appear on the hotel page or on any link within the social networks.



Challenges: Limitation and directions for future research

One of the most important obstacles faced by researchers is the difficulty in entering the workplace of the employees in the hotels under study, because of the intensive security precautions to maintain the safety of the customers, which necessitated the need to obtain the necessary permits, in addition to the difficulty in convincing managers and employees in the hotels to fill out the questionnaire while on site, thinking that this is a violation of the privacy of the hotel and the disclosure of secrets that must be protected especially in the face of intense competition. The lack of time did not allow the researchers to distribute the questionnaire in all the Jordanian cities, and it was difficult to coordinate the working times and going to those hotels, which obliged the researchers to do this work during the holidays and vacation times, in addition to the limited possibilities available and not enough participants to distribute the biggest number of questionnaires to.

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