

Guest Perceptions of Service Quality in a Selected Hotel Franchise in South Africa

Senamile HD Motha*

Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Tshwane University of Technology, Email, senamilemotha@yahoo.com

Uwe P Hermann

Centre for Sustainable Tourism, Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Tshwane University of Technology

Antje I Lenhard

Centre for Sustainable Tourism, Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Tshwane University of Technology

**Corresponding Author*

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate the quality of services as perceived by tourists' staying at a selected hotel franchise in South Africa. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the overnight guests that had stayed at this hotel franchise. The 5 dimensions of the LODGSERV model, namely; reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles were measured. Cronbach's Alpha was employed to test the reliability of the study concepts and their attributes. A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to determine if the model is significant and whether the model is a good fit. The findings of the study suggest that the respondents are generally satisfied with the service quality at this hotel franchise. The tangibles dimension made up the largest portion of the hotel service offering. A service gap was found in the reliability dimension, however; responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles were all significant and fit the research model. This hotel franchise is in good standing as far as the provision of quality services are concerned. Therefore, it needs not only to maintain those standards but should endeavour to devise ways and means to enhance them, which will lead to higher customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Service quality; customer satisfaction; re-visit intentions

Introduction

Globally, service quality has been viewed as an important concept across most service industries including the tourism industry. Several studies have been conducted to measure the quality of services within the accommodation sub-sector of tourism (Didi et al., 2016; Shahin & Dabestani, 2010; Wu et al., 2015; Wu & Li, 2015). In relation to the above mentioned statements and in order to appropriately measure the quality of services within the accommodation sub-sector, the LODSERV model was developed. This aforementioned model was designed specifically to measure service quality within the accommodation sub-sector of hospitality (Knutson et al., 1990). The hospitality sector as a whole faces unique challenges as it demands high levels of customer service and continuous quality improvement. The quality of the services provided at accommodation establishments in a given country is one of the most important factors to the visitors from another country (Madani et al., 2012). Investigating, measuring and understanding, and the service quality perceptions of customers regarding the

services perceived by them, will enable the accommodation establishments to maintain their customer base and improve their competitiveness (Bhat, 2012).

Between 2012 and 2018, the accommodation sub-sector in South Africa has seen a significant increase in annual income (Stats SA, 2018). The largest contributors to the income achieved were hotels, motels and inns contributing 82%; followed by other accommodation establishments contributing 12% (Stats SA, 2013). An important factor that has attracted tourism related activities in the different regions of South Africa has been the growth and upgrading of the accommodation facilities. The sub-sector has grown exponentially to meet the demand for accommodation related facilities (Rogerson, 2013) associated with the growth of the tourism industry (prior to the Covid-19 pandemic).

In South Africa insufficient research has been conducted to investigate service quality provided at graded hotels within a hotel franchise. Researchers in South Africa have previously focused on service quality, overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions for a combination of franchised and non-franchised hotels, both graded and non-graded for local hotels, groups and franchises (see Kleynhans & Zhou, 2012; Mhlanga, 2018; Nomnga & Mhlanga, 2015; Ntimane & Tichaawa, 2017; Nunkoo et al., 2020; Petzer et al., 2009; Tefera & Govender, 2016). This study aimed to investigate the tourists' perceptions of the quality of services provided at the selected hotel franchise of an international origin. The study will look closely at the service quality dimensions of the LODGSERV model, namely: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles; and how these impact on overall customer satisfaction. The study will contribute to service quality research within the accommodation sub-sector. More service quality research within this sub-sector in South Africa will provide an insight on how the services offered are perceived by the customers consuming them. The results have indicated what is most important to the customers when staying at the hotel properties. This information is very useful for hotel management teams to help them understand how their customers perceive the services they offer to them, in order to apply the necessary improvements to achieve higher customer satisfaction ratings and encourage repeat visits.

Following the introduction, the literature review of the study is presented. The key terms, namely: service quality, customer satisfaction and re-visitation intentions are discussed. The literature review is followed by methodology section. The results of the study were achieved by using descriptive analysis, reliability tests, CFA and SEM tests. These results are presented and discussed. The implications of the study are discussed followed by the conclusion.

Literature review

Prior to the global freeze of the international and domestic travel as a result of COVID-19, tourism was one of the largest industries globally and viewed as a new engine of growth for many developing countries such as South Africa (Brand South Africa, 2012). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2020) the growth of the tourism industry in recent years has been overshadowed by the effects of the imposed travel restrictions. These have led to the closure of accommodation establishments and air travel, as a result of the COVID-19 (corona virus disease of 2019) lockdown globally. This has resulted in tourism being one of the most affected industries in the world. In order to regain its international market-base post-lockdown it is essential for tourism service providers such as accommodation establishments to assess and reinvigorate the provision of quality services.

Service quality

Service quality can also be viewed as the extent of the difference between the customer's service perceptions and expectations (Boshoff, 2014), and quality in tourism-related services.

It is essentially about balancing customer perceptions and their expectations (Bhat, 2012). According to a study by Gagić, Tesanovic and Jovicic (2013) service quality may produce high levels of customer satisfaction and results in higher sales revenue. The perceptions of the primary dimensions of service quality; including service quality, visitor satisfaction, emotions and behavioural intentions, positively influence overall service quality (Wu & Li, 2015). Hotel grading has also been found to encourage improvements in service quality (Walker & Johnson, 2009). Hotel grading ensures that the customers receive reliable and comparable quality of services (Tefera & Govender, 2014). Grading provides a quality assurance for customers and assists them in logically anticipating the quality of services they should expect to receive from the different accommodation establishments (TGCSA, 2016).

To appropriately measure service quality, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988), proposed the SERVQUAL model popularly known as the Service Quality model. This model suggests that there may be gaps between customers' expectations and their perceptions of the actual service received. This model is used to measure customers' expectations of services offered and the perception of services received. The model focuses on assessing service quality on 5 dimensions, namely; tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988, 1994). A number of researchers have criticised the SERVQUAL model due to its generic appeal, thereby using it as a base to create a number of service quality models that are specific to each service industry. The LODGSERV model by Knutson et al. (1990) was also developed from the SERVQUAL model to measure service quality within the accommodation sub-sector. The model also consists of the same 5 service quality dimensions but applied to an accommodation setting.

Customer satisfaction

The accommodation sub-sector is a highly competitive environment, therefore to gain and maintain a competitive advantage, careful attention needs to be paid to the quality of services provided. When customers are satisfied with the services provided, the business may become both sustainable and profitable (Kosmaczewska & Pereira, 2014). Wu and Li (2015) found that customer satisfaction positively influences behavioural intentions. This may lead to positive word-of-mouth, brand loyalty and repurchase behaviour (Morawakage & Kulathunga, 2013; Kruger, Saayman & Hermann, 2014). When hotel guests expect a certain level of service at a given hotel, that hotel establishment needs to know and understand the needs of their clientele and should consistently deliver the expected service and exceed the level of service that is required. By doing this they are most likely to satisfy their guests, encourage repeat business, and improve the reputation of the hotel establishment (Kasavanna & Brooks, 2009).

Re-visit intentions

The key to retaining customers is customer satisfaction. Customers are able to recognise and value the exceptional service offered to them. Over time, they then show loyalty behaviours, which include continuous purchasing and increased referrals (Kotler, 2010). According to Huang and Hsu (2009) another contributing factor for repeat visits and repurchase intentions is when customers have had a satisfactory experience in the past at a specific destination, they are more likely to visit that destination again. Therefore, customers have a positive attitude towards a destination that they were previously satisfied with.

Ara and Zargar (2018) investigated the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions within the hotel business context, and found that attributes represented by tangibles, responsiveness and empathy dimensions were found to have a significant impact on the return intentions of hotel guests. Moreover, service quality was found to be positively correlated with customer satisfaction and revisit intentions, and

customer satisfaction was also positively correlated with revisit intentions (Ara & Zargar, 2018).

Methods

Data for this study was collected from the hotel guests that had stayed at the hotel properties under the selected hotel franchise, for at least one night. This study made use of a descriptive quantitative research approach through a survey research design. A self-administered survey was developed based on previous studies by Knutson et al. (1990), Naidoo (2012) and Du Plessis and Saayman (2011) and was used to collect the research data. The research questionnaire was divided into 3 sections. Section A consisted of the demographic factors, Section B consisted of the attributes of service quality and customer satisfaction, and Section C covered the re-visit intentions.

A total of 4 hotel properties were included in this study, all belonging to the same hotel franchise in the Gauteng province of South Africa, comprising of 3 and 4 star hotels. All the hotel properties were graded by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA). The name of the hotel franchise is held in confidentiality due to a gatekeeper agreement and to uphold ethical integrity. A total of 420 questionnaires were distributed and 323 of these questionnaires were fully completed and deemed useful for the analysis of the results. Thus the response rate achieved was 76.90%. The survey was conducted from the 1st of May 2019 and concluded on the 27th of September 2019. The questionnaires and informed consent forms were distributed with the help of the front desk personnel during hotel checkout processes. The target population for this study was the hotel guests that were checking out of the different hotels thus, each had spent at least 1 night at the property. A non-random sampling approach, being the convenience sampling method, was therefore used when selecting the respondents for this study. This non-systematic approach allows the researcher to select participants that are within close proximity to them (Jennings, 2010). The researcher and the front desk personnel would target the hotel guests that came to the hotel reception to check out.

Results

The research data was subjected to 4 different tests. The descriptive analysis, Cronbach's Alpha tests, CFA and SEM. Descriptive analysis was used to collect information, describing different traits from the respondents (Atmowardoyo, 2018; Nassaji, 2015). Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the reliability of the study concepts (Gursoy, Uysal, Sirakaya-Turk, Ekinici, Baloglu, 2015). CFA and SEM were both employed in order to determine the validity of the study concepts, which are the 5 service quality dimensions taken from the LODGSERV model (Mokoena & Dhurup, 2017).

Descriptive results

These results are presented in Table 1. The results indicated that the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 82 years, the median age being 38 years for all hotels. Most respondents were male (55.73%), 41.61% have a university qualification (diploma or degree), 72.27% were employed full time, and the majority were married individuals (47.52%). Most of the respondents were from the Gauteng province (27.10%) which was within the geographical location of the research study, implying a large localised appeal of the properties. Most respondents were first time visitors (50.46%), and most of them had been booked by a travel booker (31.46%). Lastly, most respondents had travelled for the purpose of attending meetings (29.28%).



Table 1: Service quality attributes and customer satisfaction

Visitor experience statements		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Attributes		Results in %				
1	The hotel is in a good location	0.93	2.48	8.05	53.56	34.98
2	The hotel is safe and secure	0	1.24	6.52	50.31	41.93
3	The hotel reception and public areas are visually appealing	0.62	0	4.95	52.01	42.41
4	The hotel reception is clean and neat	0.31	0.93	6.50	44.89	47.37
5	The hotel's equipment is in good working order	0.93	5.26	15.17	46.75	31.89
6	The services received at the hotel were delivered on time	0.93	2.17	10.22	47.99	38.70
7	The hotel is well maintained in general	0.62	2.48	11.76	50.77	34.37
8	The hotel rooms are clean	0.62	0.62	9.32	48.14	41.30
9	The hotel rooms are well maintained	0.62	3.11	13.35	49.38	33.54
10	The hotel restaurant, bar, conference venues and other public areas (public toilets and swimming pool facilities) are clean and well maintained	0.31	1.24	13.04	48.14	37.27
11	The hotel's food and beverage offering, was of good quality	0.62	3.12	12.77	42.37	41.12
12	The hotel staff are helpful	0.62	0.93	4.64	40.25	53.56
13	The hotel staff are well trained and experienced	0.62	0.93	7.45	43.17	47.83
14	The hotel staff made me feel special and valued	0.31	1.24	8.36	37.77	52.32
15	The hotel staff acted professionally	0.62	1.24	4.33	38.08	55.73
16	The hotel staff are neat and presentable	0.64	0	3.54	47.59	48.23
17	The hotel staff were enthusiastic	0.62	1.24	8.39	46.27	43.48
18	The hotel staff was friendly	0.62	1.86	5.59	40.68	51.24
19	The hotel check-in and check-out procedures were efficient	0.31	1.56	9.66	44.86	43.61
20	I perceive that hotel management supports hotel staff	0	1.88	18.75	42.50	36.88
21	The hotel's reputation matched my expectations	0.93	0.93	13.71	47.04	37.38
22	I received value for my money	1.24	1.86	10.56	42.86	43.48
23	I am happy with the overall service experience	0.93	1.86	10.25	41.93	45.03
24	I am happy with the Internet/Wi-Fi connectivity	2.48	3.42	12.11	40.99	40.99

The visitor experience statements on the questionnaire were then grouped under the 5 service quality dimensions as prescribed by Knutson et al. (1990). Under the reliability dimension, attributes such as the timely delivery of services, knowledge and experience of hotel staff, professionalism of hotel staff as well as value for money, are included. According to the results, 46.15%, which makes up the majority of the respondents, were generally satisfied with the attributes of the reliability dimension at the different hotels. Under the responsiveness dimension, attributes such as helpfulness of hotel staff and enthusiasm, professionalism as well as the efficiency of check-in and check-out procedures are included. According to the research results, most of the respondents rated these attributes between “agree” (43.79%) and “strongly agree” (46.88%), confirming great satisfaction experienced with the attributes under this dimension. Very few respondents (0.51%) expressed strong dissatisfaction with the attributes belonging under this dimension. Under the assurance dimension, attributes such as hotel safety and security, and the reputation of the hotel property(ies), are included. The majority of the respondents rated the attributes under this dimension as “agree” (48.67%) and “strongly agree” (39.65%) expressing a great sense of satisfaction with their experience. Under the empathy dimension, attributes such as the ability of the hotel staff to make the hotel guests feel special and valued, and friendliness, have been included. A total of 51.78% of the respondents rated the attributes under this dimension as “strongly agree” and 39.22% as “agree”, making up the majority of respondents, and expressing a great sense of satisfaction with the attributes under empathy. The tangibles dimension make up the largest portion of this section of the questionnaire with a significant number of attributes. These include physical aspects such as hotel location; appearance, design and decor; cleanliness and maintenance; condition of all

hotel facilities; food and beverage offering; neatness of hotel staff; hotel management support toward hotel staff; and the internet or Wi-Fi connectivity. Similar to the other 4 dimensions, most of the respondents for this study indicated a great sense of satisfaction with the experience they had concerning the attributes of tangibility. Their responses ranged between “agree” (47.25%) and “strongly agree” (39.19%). Only 2.04% rated their experience pertaining to the attributes under this dimension as “disagree” and 0.72% as “strongly disagree”, thereby expressing a poor sense of satisfaction with these attributes.

According to the results, some respondents (27.85%) were aware that the hotel properties were graded, and others (26.90%) were not aware. Most respondents (62.02%) were aware that the hotel properties belong to a franchise. Most respondents (82.08%) indicated that the hotel brand meets their services expectations, and the majority (85.22%) indicated that they would consider staying at these hotels on their next stay, and most of them (88.37%) would also recommend the hotels to others.

Reliability results

The reliability results for the 5 service quality dimensions are presented in Table 2. below

Table 2: Reliability of service quality dimensions

Service Quality Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha
RELIABILITY	
The services received at the hotel were delivered on time	0.8856
The hotel staff are well trained and experienced	0.8455
The hotel staff acted professionally	0.8562
I received value for my money	0.8477
I am happy with the overall service experience	0.8460
Test scale	0.8820
RESPONSIVENESS	
The hotel staff are helpful	0.8196
The hotel staff were enthusiastic	0.7099
The hotel check-in and check-out procedures were efficient	0.7197
Test scale	0.8195
ASSURANCE	
The hotel is safe and secure	0.4171
The hotel's reputation matched my expectations	0.4171
Test scale	0.5887
EMPATHY	
The hotel staff made me feel special and valued	0.6744
The hotel staff was friendly	0.6744
Test scale	0.8056
TANGIBLES	
The hotel is in a good location	0.9033
The hotel reception and public areas are visually appealing	0.8976
The hotel reception is clean and neat	0.8942
The hotel's equipment is in good working order	0.8965
The hotel is well maintained in general	0.8912
The hotel rooms are clean	0.8916
The hotel rooms are well maintained	0.8924
The hotel restaurant, bar, conference venues and other public areas (public toilets and swimming pool facilities) are clean and well maintained	0.8960
The hotel's food and beverage offering, was of good quality	0.8962
The hotel staff are neat and presentable	0.8956
I perceive that hotel management supports hotel staff	0.8993
I am happy with the Internet/Wi-Fi connectivity	0.909
Test scale	0.9048

Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure and determine the reliability of the study concepts. The test is reliable when the score achieved is 0.70 and above (Gursoy et al., 2015). The test results

for the individual hotel properties were as follows; Hotel A was 0.9509, Hotel B was 0.9417, Hotel C was 0.9417 and Hotel D was 0.9240. Based on these results, the visitor experience statements pertaining to the service quality dimensions and their attributes are reliable for all the hotels.

The 5 service quality dimensions were also tested using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the reliability of the dimensions and their attributes. The overall test scale for the reliability dimension is 0.8820, which is a positive result and entails that this dimension is reliable. All the attributes under this dimension tested reliable between the values 0.8455 and 0.8856. The responsiveness dimension was deemed reliable, and achieved a positive result of 0.8195. The attributes under the assurance dimension are reliable with test values between 0.7099 and 0.8196, however, the overall test scale for assurance is 0.5887, and is therefore unreliable. This is the only dimension among the 5 that is not reliable. The empathy dimension achieved a positive result of 0.8056, and is therefore reliable. However, the attributes under empathy tested at 0.6744 which is a negative result. Lastly, the test scale for the tangibles dimension is a positive result of 0.9048, and the attributes under this dimension tested between the values 0.8912 and 0.909 which are also positive results. As a result of the overall reliability the study further analysed the data by means of CFA and SEM.

CFA and SEM results

CFA and SEM tests were used in order to test the reliability and validity of the dimensions of service quality. The reliability dimension was highly associated with overall service experience with the services provided. At the same time, reliability was the least associated with timeous delivery of services. According to the SEM results, this dimension was not a good fit as the fit indices were insignificant (RMSEA = 0.291, CFI = 0.859; SRMR = 0.059). The responsiveness dimension was highly associated with the attribute concerning enthusiasm of hotel staff, however, was least associated with the helpfulness of hotel staff. According to the SEM results, this dimension was a good fit as the fit indices were significant (RMSEA = 0.000, CFI = 1.000; SRMR = 0.000). The assurance dimension had a high association with hotel safety and security, and the lowest association with the reputation of the hotel. The model was found to be significant as the indices were a good fit to the data (RMSEA = 0.000, CFI = 1.000, SRMR = 0.000).

The empathy dimension was highly associated with the attribute "The hotel staff made me feel special and valued", and least associated with the friendliness of staff. The SEM results indicated that the model was a good fit because the indices displayed significant results (RMSEA = 0.000, CFI = 1.000, SRMR = 0.000). The tangibles dimension was found to be highly associated with hotel maintenance, however, the least associated with WI-FI connectivity. The SEM results achieved for RMSEA was 0.099, which is a negative result. Overall, the model was a good fit since 2 indices indicated significant results (CFI = 0.909, SRMR = 0.047). Reliability was the only dimension of service quality that was insignificant because the fit indices were not all significant.

Figure 1 presents these results.

Service Quality Dimensions

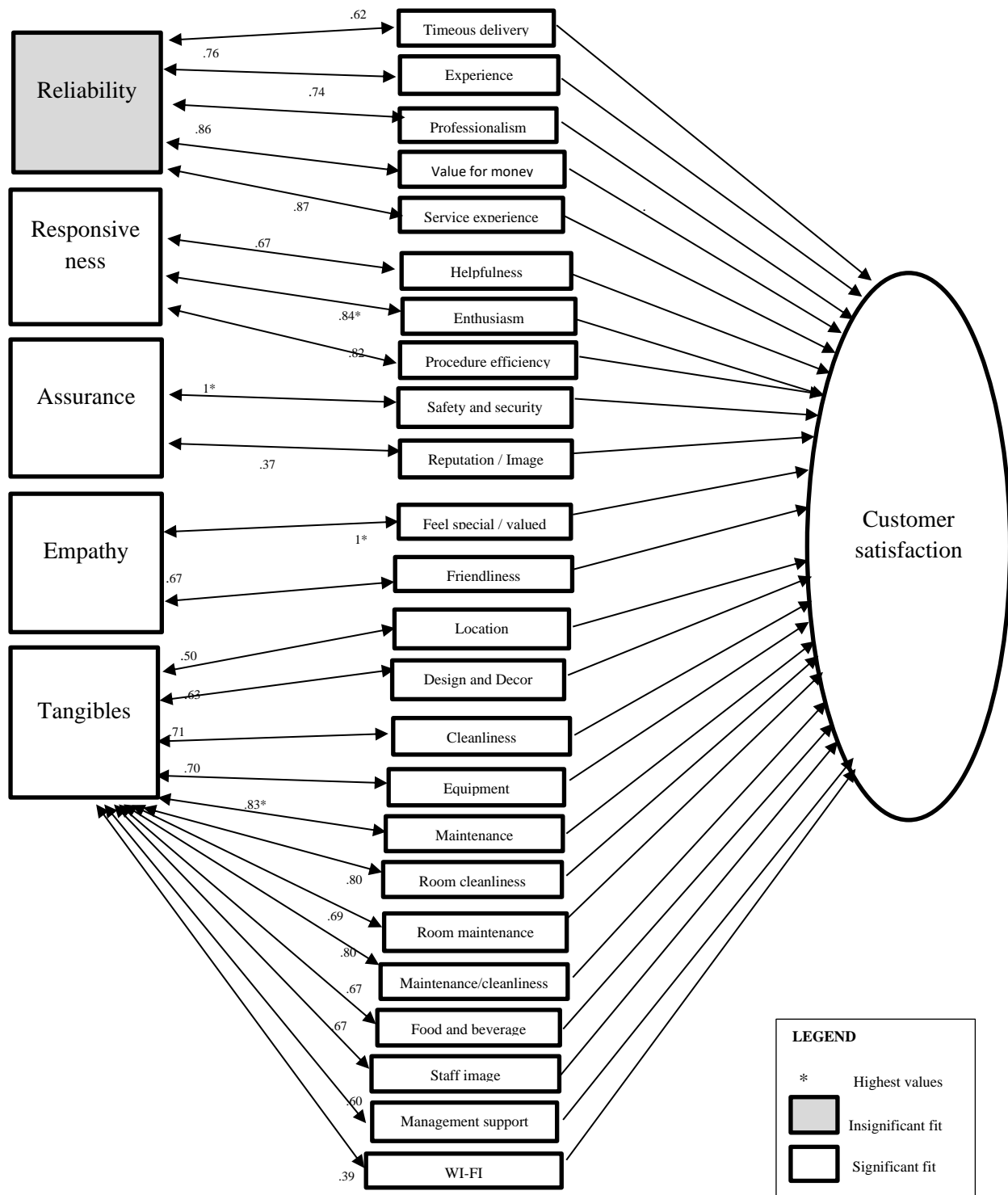


Figure 1: SEM figure

Discussion

Most of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the services provided at this hotel franchise. Since the services, facilities and the overall standard of the service provision are uniform across all the hotels within the franchise, the responses were consistent across all

the hotels. Most respondents across the hotels were also found to reside within the Gauteng province and had travelled for the purpose of attending meetings and conferences, thus business travellers. The study results are similar to that of Nunkoo et al. (2020) who conducted a study on service quality and customer satisfaction and found that most of the respondents were from within the host country. In addition, these results support the notion of Fenich, Hermann and Hashimoto (2012) who concluded that the Gauteng province attracts local business tourists. The geographic nature of the location of the study area is an urbanised area and tends to attract business travel more than leisure travel. Due to this result, the hotel properties within this franchise may be said to attract a customer base from an adjacent geographical area. A study conducted in South Africa on service quality and customer satisfaction within the accommodation sub-sector indicated that most respondents were South Africans, however, there was a fair representation of international visitors, that were also part of the study (Nunkoo et al., 2020). This study also provides an insight into the realm of domestic business traveller's service experiences, the results of which may assist managers of such properties at other locations and researchers in the field of corporate travel with information to provide enhanced services and to further promote the discourse in this field.

Most of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the services provided at the hotel properties, and the vast majority of these respondents were aware that the hotel property(ies) belongs to a hotel franchise. A total of 50.46% of the respondents are first time visitors to the different hotel properties and the rest are frequent visitors. The selected hotel franchise has attracted a mix of both existing business and new business. The relational benefits of being a part of a franchise is that the affiliation accelerates brand recognition which serves as a quality assurance of standardised products and services, that meet the expectations of the customers. These benefits have been found to encourage tourist loyalty to the brand which translates as repeat visits (Wadawi, 2011, Keshavarz & Hareeza Ali, 2015; Fredrick, 2019).

The 5 service quality dimensions; reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibles and their attributes; hotel location, appearance, cleanliness, overall maintenance, hotel facilities, Wi-Fi connectivity, overall service quality experience, value for money, hotel staff behaviour, accuracy in performing duties, and hotel staff presentation and neatness, were all evaluated. The attributes of the tangibles dimension made up the largest portion of the study. Respondents expressed a great sense of satisfaction with all the service quality dimensions and their attributes. These results state that the customers are generally satisfied with their overall service experience with the various aspects of the hotel franchise's offering. Mhlanga and Tichaawa (2016) found that the actual customer experience with the services provided may influenced by reliability, accessibility and tangibles dimensions of service quality and their attributes.

According to the SEM results, out of the 5 service quality dimensions reliability was an insignificant fit to the model. Therefore, it may be concluded that reliability has no significance toward customer satisfaction with service quality provision in this case. Essentially, customer satisfaction with the services provided by the selected hotel franchise is more dependent on and influenced by responsiveness, empathy, assurance and the tangibles, as these dimensions were a significant fit to the model. Similarly, Tabassum, Rahman and Jahan (2012), found a gap to exist in the reliability dimension of service quality. The gap existed between services provided and whether these were delivered according to what was promised and expected.

Implications of the study

The study was able to identify that some respondents are unaware that the different hotel properties were graded by the TGCSA. One of the advantages of being graded is that the right expectation can be applied to different hotel properties by the guests or potential guests. The

grading council should create awareness in order to educate the travellers on the implications of star grading and the service quality promise for peace of mind (Martin-Fuentes, 2016).

The study also revealed that some of their customers were unaware that the hotel properties they had stayed in belonged to a hotel franchise. Hotel managers have the opportunity to educate their customers of the other hotel properties under their franchise, in order to increase revenue and inspire loyalty toward the brand. Satisfied customers may potentially not only revisit the same hotel property, but also others within the franchise group.

Since most respondents had been booked by a travel booker to the different hotels, another opportunity to increase revenue is for hotel management teams to enhance the networking relationships with travel bookers in order to build and maintain these relationships to encourage repeat visits. These business relationships benefit the hotel franchise financially and improve the reputation of the hotels.

The attributes of the 5 service quality dimensions were also evaluated to determine the satisfaction of customers with the services provided. The study results reveal which dimensions responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles are most significant toward overall satisfaction with the service provision. Hotel management teams are able to identify the attributes of these dimensions and improve on them, in order to increase customer satisfaction ratings. Although this study took place at a selected hotel franchise, the lessons learned may provide an insight into the complexities of providing quality customer services at urban accommodation establishments in general, including unfranchised properties, guesthouses and private hosting providers such as AirBnBs.

Conclusions and future research recommendations

This study investigated the quality of services provided by a selected hotel franchise, as perceived by the hotel guests. The LODSERV model was used as the theoretical framework of the study, and the dimensions' reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles were evaluated. The results of this study provide an insight into the realm of service delivery at hotels situated in a major urban area, and which cater for a specialised customer base (domestic business tourists). More than half of the respondents had visited the hotel property(ies) for the first time, and the rest were repeat visits. Results show that this hotel franchise is in good stead in as far as the provision of quality services is concerned. Therefore, it needs to not only maintain these standards, but should also endeavour to devise ways and means to enhance them, which lead to higher customer satisfaction ratings. Responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles were found to significantly influence customer satisfaction with service quality provision at the selected hotel franchise. Reliability was found to be an insignificant fit to the model, and there had no influence toward achieving customer satisfaction with service quality provision. This study contributed to the discourse around the provision of service quality to domestic business travellers. However further opportunities exist to further investigate this field, in other corporate contexts such as conferences and events as well as the leisure market.

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