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## Hotel service quality and its impact on achieving competitive advantage: An exploratory study in first-class hotels in Baghdad

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### Abstract

This study addresses the role of hotel service quality and its impact on achieving competitive advantage by surveying the opinions of employees and customers in first-class hotels in Baghdad. The objectives of the study were to examine the extent to which hotel service quality influences customer attraction and retention, to measure the relationship between service quality and hotels' competitive capability, and to provide recommendations for improving hotel performance by focusing on service quality. The main dimensions investigated were service quality represented by reception quality, room cleanliness, responsiveness, safety, and employee skills and competitive advantage, defined as the ability to stand out from competitors by delivering services that exceed expectations and achieve customer satisfaction. The key findings revealed a strong positive relationship between hotel service quality and customer satisfaction. High-quality services were shown to enhance hotel image, increase the likelihood of repeat visits, and highlight the importance of investing in employee training and improving the work environment to raise service efficiency and strengthen market positioning. Furthermore, safety and professionalism in customer interactions were identified as crucial factors in attracting guests. The main recommendations emphasize the need to adopt international quality standards in service delivery, continuously develop employee skills through training, focus on customer satisfaction as a tool for achieving sustainable competitiveness, and utilize feedback to improve service levels.

**Keywords:** Hotel service quality, competitive advantage, customer satisfaction, employee training, service standards, Baghdad hotels, hospitality management, customer retention, service efficiency, market positioning

### Introduction

The issue of quality holds a prominent position in the strategies of any service organization, as it is considered one of the most important competitive factors for attracting a larger number of customers. Enhancing the level of quality requires providing comprehensive capabilities, competencies, and expertise across all areas, with the aim of creating a competitive advantage, improving profitability for service organizations, and achieving customer satisfaction, which has become a fundamental objective. Achieving this goal necessitates a continuous effort to understand customer needs and expectations and to provide services that meet those needs, ensuring their satisfaction and loyalty to the organization.

Regarding hotel organizations, the application of quality standards has become essential for attracting and retaining customers in a highly competitive environment. In practice, the quality of services provided by these organizations represents a distinctive and inspiring experience for customers and is considered an effective competitive tool that organizations can leverage. Consequently, these organizations commit to implementing international standards that ensure the quality of their services and adopt an approach centered on customer value as a core principle for achieving quality in their services, with the ultimate goal of satisfying customers and maintaining their connection with the organization.

### Chapter One

#### Research Methodology

##### 1. Problem

Amid the growing interest in the concept of hotel service quality and the pursuit of organizational excellence, many organizations face challenges in improving the quality of their hotel services, despite its crucial role in achieving customer satisfaction. From this

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perspective, the following problem can be posed: there is a failure to achieve competitive advantage

- What is the role of hotel service quality in achieving customer satisfaction?

To address the various theoretical and practical aspects of this topic, the following sub-questions can be formulated:

- What is meant by hotel services?
- What is meant by hotel service quality, and what are its main dimensions?
- What are the methods for measuring hotel service quality?
- What is the concept of customer satisfaction, and what are its measurement methods?
- What is the relationship between perceived hotel service quality and customer satisfaction?

## 2. Significance

This study holds considerable importance in highlighting the relationship between hotel service quality and customer satisfaction. Its significance lies in:

- Clarifying the nature of hotel service quality, its importance in attracting and retaining customers, and achieving their satisfaction.
- Enriching knowledge and increasing understanding related to the study through both the theoretical and practical frameworks.

## 3. Objectives

- The objectives of this research are to:
- Identify the concepts related to hotel service quality.
- Identify the concepts related to customer satisfaction.
- Assess the level of customer satisfaction with the quality of services provided by the hotel.

## 4. Hypotheses

The study proposes that there is a positive relationship between the quality of hotel services and customer satisfaction. In other words, when high-quality hotel services are provided, the likelihood of achieving customer satisfaction increases; conversely, when service quality is low, customer satisfaction decreases.

Within the context of this study, the factors affecting hotel service quality may include several aspects, such as:

- Customer reception and service.
- Quality of rooms and facilities.
- Quality of food and beverages (if the hotel provides dining services).
- Cleanliness and maintenance.
- Speed and efficiency in service delivery.
- Communication and interaction with customers.
- Flexibility in meeting customer needs.

Customer satisfaction can be measured using various indicators, such as visit repetition rates, customer evaluations, attrition rates, and recommendations to others.

In summary, the main hypothesis of the study posits that improving hotel service quality will lead to increased customer satisfaction, which may ultimately contribute to business growth, higher recommendations, and brand loyalty.

## Reasons for Choosing the Research Topic

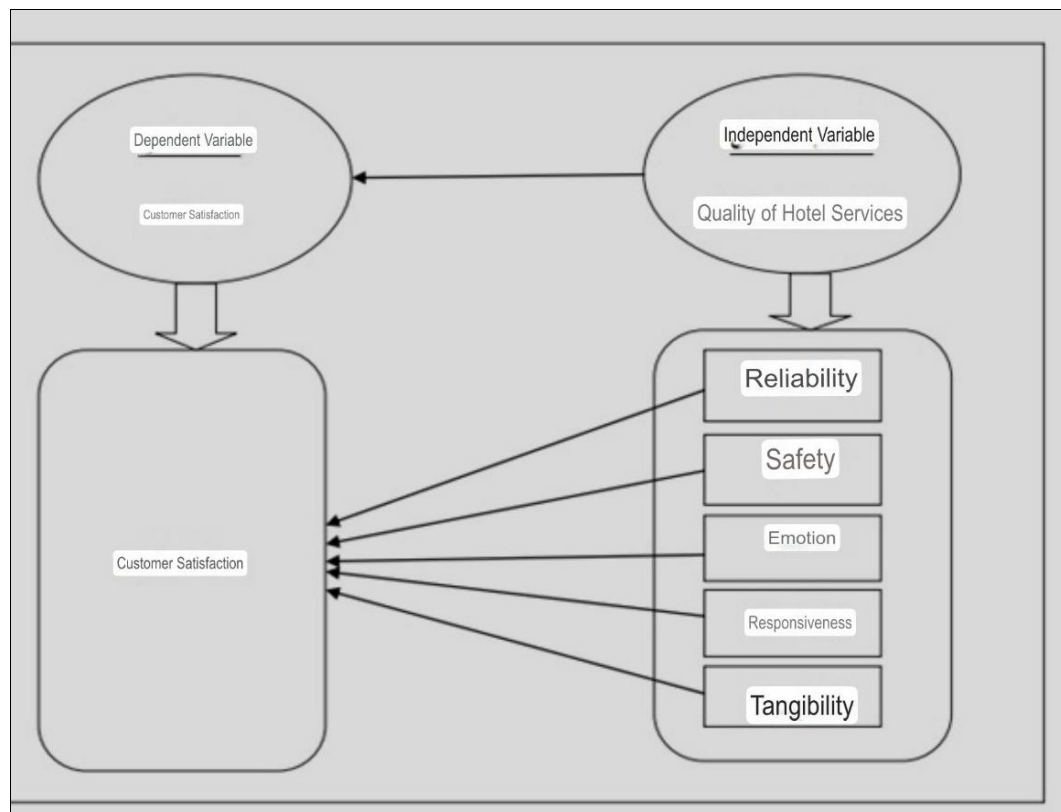
The reasons for selecting this research topic are as follows:

- **Objective motives:** Due to the significant importance of hotel service quality and its role in achieving customer satisfaction, as the customer represents the rationale for the existence of the organization.
- **Personal motives:** The topic falls within the researcher's field of specialization.
- **Personal interests:** A tendency to study marketing-related topics.

## 5. Research Framework

The study model was designed in light of the research problem and its hypotheses, focusing on the relationship between the independent variable hotel service quality, with its dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance) and the dependent variable, customer satisfaction. This relationship is illustrated in the following figure.

On the practical side, the case study method will be employed, along with the use of tools and data sources for analysis.



**Fig 1: Study Model**

## 6. Operational Definitions of Research Variables

This section involves specifying how each variable will be measured in a way that allows the researcher to understand its relationship with the phenomenon under study. The following are possible operational definitions for some variables:

### 1. Hotel Service Quality

- Use a validated scale to measure hotel service quality, such as the SERVQUAL scale.
- Assess service quality through customer evaluations of various aspects, including reception, cleanliness, food, room service, and others.
- Analyze data extracted from customer reviews on online booking platforms or review websites.

### 2. Customer Satisfaction

- Measure customer satisfaction using a satisfaction scale that evaluates customer interaction with hotel services.
- Analyze evaluations and comments left by customers after their hotel experience.
- Use customer surveys to assess their level of satisfaction and overall experience at the hotel.

### 3. Factors Affecting Service Quality

- Identify the factors influencing hotel service quality, such as reception, cleanliness, food, and additional services.

- Assess the level of implementation of these factors by hotel staff.

### 4. Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction

- Analyze the factors that customers consider important in their hotel experience, such as service quality, price, location, and comfort.
- Examine the impact of different factors on customer satisfaction by analyzing data collected from surveys or interviews.

These are some operational definitions of the research variables regarding the role of hotel service quality in achieving customer satisfaction. Additional definitions can be tailored according to the specific context and objectives of the study.

### Questionnaire: The Role of Hotel Service Quality in Achieving Customer Satisfaction

The researcher aimed to highlight certain factors that affect your experience in hotels and how they influence your level of satisfaction as a customer.

The researcher relied on the questionnaire as a tool for collecting research data. The questionnaire included items covering various aspects of hotel service quality and customer satisfaction.

**Table1:** Five Questions for the First Independent Variable (Hotel Service Quality)

Sr. No	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The services provided by the hotel management are distinguished from those of competing hotels.					
2.	The hotel management staff are distinguished by elegance and a professional appearance.					
3.	The staff are always ready to promptly respond to customer requests.					
4.	Customer requests are completed in a timely manner.					
5.	The hotel management records customer information continuously and systematically.					
6.	Hotel staff possess sufficient knowledge to answer customer inquiries.					
<b>Questions for the Second Dependent Variable (Competitive Advantage)</b>						
Sr. No.	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Using the company's penetration strategy contributes to lowering the prices of its services compared to competitors in the same market.					
2.	Penetration focuses on utilizing various distribution methods to deliver diverse services to all targeted market segments.					
3.	Adaptation identifies new organizational methods to implement all the company's tourism activities and achieve competitive advantage.					
4.	Quality involves managerial, technical, and behavioral concepts used to make the provided hotel service more acceptable to guests.					
5.	Flexibility leads to reduced time, increased productivity, and faster growth to maintain a new competitive advantage.					
6.	Implementing a differentiation-focused strategy establishes a strong competitive position within the targeted tourism market.					

## Chapter Two

### Introduction

Hotel service quality has become a key concern for managers, as quality represents the vital artery that supplies hotels with fresh resources, such as increased customers and higher profitability. Additionally, quality plays a crucial role in achieving the competitive advantage of the hotel, especially amid intense local and international competition. This is due to the continuous growth in the number and diversity of hotels, which raises customer expectations regarding service quality. Providing high-quality services benefits the hotel organization directly.

To address the topic of hotel service quality, this chapter is divided into:

- **Section One:** The Concept of Hospitality.
- **Section Two:** General Overview of Hotel Services.
- **Section Three:** Fundamentals of Hotel Service Quality.

### Section One

#### Hospitality

The hotel industry is one of the oldest industries and holds significant importance, especially within the tourism sector. In modern times, hotels are considered essential, as it is difficult to imagine a developed country without hotels that accommodate travelers (1).

#### Subsection One: Concept of Hospitality and Its Historical Development

This subsection addresses the concept of hospitality and then explores the historical stages it has gone through to reach its current form.

#### First: Definition of a Hotel

A hotel is a place where a resident, tourist, guest, or client obtains all the services they could receive at home, but in return for a pre-agreed fee.

A hotel is also defined as an economic, social, and technical unit within a larger system, consisting of rooms equipped with beds to host guests and provide them with comfort. In addition, a hotel includes a set of important subsidiary activities, such as:

- **Reception and Registration:** Where guests are received, registered, and provided with the necessary information about the hotel and its services.
- **Food Services:** Providing meals and beverages in the hotel's restaurants and cafeterias.
- **Accommodation Services:** Cleaning rooms, changing beds, and providing essential supplies for guests during their stay.
- **Recreational and Entertainment Services:** Such as swimming pools, fitness centers, and other recreational facilities that provide enjoyable experiences for guests.
- **Administrative and Operational Services:** Such as general management, finance, marketing, human resources, and maintenance, which work to operate the hotel efficiently and effectively. These partial activities work together to ensure a distinctive and comfortable stay experience for guests.

The hotel is also defined as the economic, social, and technical unit of the main complex system, containing beds for accommodating guests. It consists of a set of partial activities, the most important of which are: front office activity, housekeeping activity, food and beverage activity, marketing and sales activity, management and events activity, financial activity, and security activity, which influence each other and operate jointly to achieve specific

objectives. The hotel is also defined as a building or a large house that provides accommodation, food, and other services for travelers and those seeking lodging.

The hotel is also defined as a service institution that provides integrated services, including accommodation, food and beverages, recreation, entertainment, and others, to service recipients who wish to purchase them wholly or partially according to their purchasing power and the period they desire.

### **Characteristics and Importance of Hospitality**

#### **First: Characteristics of Hospitality**

Hotels are characterized by a number of features, as follows: There are common services that all hotels strive to provide, the most important of which are offering accommodation, food, and beverages to customers in exchange for a specified fee.

- The human element is considered the primary component in the hotel industry. Despite the use of modern technology, machinery, and equipment in many hotel departments, the first and foremost factor in hotel service remains the human element. A reception employee cannot be entirely replaced by a machine that receives guests, provides a welcome, and displays a good smile, while still conveying the feeling of being at home.
- The services provided by hotels, such as rooms, food, and beverages, are tangible services, but the main factor that determines customers' impressions and attitudes toward the hotel is intangible, relying on the spirit, behavior, and skills of the staff.
- This is the seasonality of hotel activity, where demand increases in the summer season and decreases in other seasons, usually in winter. Seasonal resorts will find that their occupancy levels drop significantly in winter, so a decision must be made on whether it is "better" to remain open during the winter season.
- Hotel activity is sensitive to political events, such as wars, as well as to the economic conditions of the countries that send visitors. A strong currency enables its citizens to travel and spend generously in countries with weak currencies. In the hotel industry, room nights cannot be stored; a night not sold to others represents a loss, the same applies to food services.
- The hotel industry is capital-intensive, as it requires very large amounts of investment.

#### **Second: Importance of Hospitality**

- Providing employment opportunities, as the hotel industry is one of the largest industries in the world in terms of job creation. Most studies have confirmed that building a hotel room creates three direct and indirect jobs. Naturally and logically, an increase in hotel activity due to a higher flow of tourists to a destination means an increase in employment, as hotel demand results in the engagement of a growing number of workers, thereby reducing unemployment.
- Developing remote areas where hotels are established, as hotels help improve the infrastructure of the geographical area.
- Increasing national income through foreign currency.
- Developing related industries, particularly in marketing, restaurants, cafes, transportation, and traditional

industries.

- **Promoting culture and cultural exchange:** Hotels can play an important role in enhancing cultural exchange and social interaction among visitors from different cultures and backgrounds. The presence of tourists in hotels provides an opportunity to learn about the local culture and share experiences.
- **Enhancing domestic tourism:** In addition to attracting international tourists, hotels also support domestic tourism, allowing citizens to enjoy vacations and trips within their country, increasing their spending in the local economy and promoting economic growth.
- **Stimulating foreign investment:** Hotels can be part of foreign direct investment strategies, where hotels are built and operated by foreign investors. This can contribute to technology transfer, infrastructure development, and strengthening economic relations between countries.
- **Supporting sustainability and environmental conservation:** Many hotels are moving towards sustainable practices to protect the environment, such as using environmentally friendly technologies and managing resources efficiently. Therefore, hotels play an important role in supporting sustainable tourism and conserving natural resources.
- Giving the host country a dimension of safety, good hospitality, and improving the level of services and cleanliness.
- Strengthening acquaintance and bringing peoples closer, as behavioral cultural exchange occurs through the interaction of tourists with staff.
- The hotel sector is the largest and most important sector within the tourism industry, not only because it provides tourists with accommodation requirements, but also because it represents the most significant element in terms of total tourism expenditures; thus, the hotel sector is considered the core component of the tourism economy and its vital element.

### **Second Requirement**

#### **Classification of Hotel Establishments**

There are several classifications given to hotels depending on the method of categorization, as follows:

##### **First: Classification of Hotels by Ownership**

- **Locally Owned Hotels:** A group of local hotels owned by a national company or companies.
- **Privately Owned Hotels:** Independent hotels owned by an individual or a group of individuals in the form of a private Sector Company.
- **Jointly Owned Hotels:** Hotels whose ownership is shared between the public and private sectors in the form of stocks and shares.

##### **Second: Classification of Hotels by Type of Services**

- **Full-Service Hotels:** Hotels that provide a wide range of services to guests in addition to accommodation, such as food and beverages, room service, laundry services, health services, and conference and event services.
- **Budget Hotels:** Hotels that provide guests with rooms containing basic simple amenities at reasonable economic prices.

**Third: Classification of Hotels by Stars**

- **Five-Star Hotels:** The most luxurious type of hotels, offering comprehensive services at high prices.
- **Four-Star Hotels:** Hotels that also provide comprehensive services but at a lower level than five-star hotels.
- **Three-Star Hotels:** Hotels below the four-star level, lacking the additional services available in the higher category.
- **Two-Star Hotels:** Budget hotels with lower-quality furnishings and commonly shared public areas, such as bathrooms.
- **One-Star Hotels:** Very modest hotels in terms of services and number of rooms. (1)

**Fourth: Classification of Hotels by Grades**

- **Excellent Grade:** The most prestigious type of hotels, offering all hotel services at high prices corresponding to the quality of services provided. (2)
- **First Grade:** Hotels representing a high level, providing a variety of services with excellent quality.
- **Second Grade:** Most of these hotels do not have private bathrooms; bathrooms are shared among several rooms, providing modest hotel services of the "third grade."
- **Third Grade:** Popular hotels with basic prices and limited services.

**Fifth: Classification of Hotels by Location**

- **City Center Hotels:** Hotels located within the city limits, with grades ranging from excellent to third grade. Their sizes range from fifty to three hundred rooms, and ownership varies between private, mixed companies, and suburban hotels.
- **Suburban Hotels:** Established due to high land costs, where companies build hotels in the city suburbs where prices are lower.
- **Airport Hotels:** Hotels created to serve air travelers and transit passengers. Their grades range from excellent to second grade.
- **Coastal Hotels:** Hotels located near important coastlines, with grades ranging from four to five stars.

**Chapter Two****General Aspects of Hotel Services**

- Hotels provide a variety of services to their customers in order to satisfy their needs and fulfill their desires, thereby achieving their satisfaction. These services have many characteristics similar to other services, in addition to features that distinguish them from other types of services.
- **First Requirement: Concept of Hotel Services**
- Before defining hotel service, it is necessary to understand the definition of service. The American Marketing Association defined service as "intangible products exchanged from the producer to the user; they cannot be transferred or stored, they perish quickly, and are generally difficult to define because they come into existence at the same time they are purchased or consumed. They consist of intangible elements, often involving significant customer participation, without transfer of ownership, title, or attribute." (1)

- Service is defined as "an intangible activity primarily aimed at satisfying the desires and requirements of customers." (2)
- Service is also defined as "a series of designed actions and activities that enhance the beneficiary's level of satisfaction. These services are provided by a supplier, which may be represented by individuals or through equipment, through which the customer receives the service." (3)

**First: Characteristics of Service**

The most prominent characteristics are as follows:

- **Intangibility:** The most distinguishing feature of a service from a good is that it is intangible, meaning it has no physical existence beyond being produced or prepared and then consumed or utilized when needed. Practically, production and consumption occur simultaneously, which leads to another sub-feature: the difficulty of inspecting or dividing the service before purchase.
- **Inseparability:** Inseparability refers to the degree of connection between the service itself and the person providing it. The degree of inseparability with the provider is much higher in services compared to goods, which may require the presence of the service recipient at the place of service delivery.
- **Heterogeneity:** This characteristic refers to the difficulty and often inability to standardize services, especially those that heavily rely on human delivery.
- **Fluctuating Demand:** Demand for certain services is characterized by fluctuation and instability. It varies not only across seasons but also from day to day, and even from hour to hour within the same day.

**Second: Definition of Hotel Service**

Hotel service is defined as a combination of elements, including tangible ones such as food and beverages, and emotional or sensory elements, which are divided into two parts: the mental image or the way the hotel presents itself to current or prospective customers, or the way customers perceive the hotel, reflected in its activities, practices, and various orientations, as well as the overall atmosphere of the hotel, or what customers expect to gain from the hotel.

It is also defined as "the activity related to the accommodation and provision of lodging and meals for guests, regardless of the means of accommodation, whether hotels, resorts, furnished apartments, or hostels."

It has also been defined as intangible activities that satisfy desires and are not primarily associated with selling a good or another service. Producing a service may require the use of tangible goods, but such use does not result in the transfer of ownership of those tangible goods.

**Second Requirement: Characteristics of Hotel Service**

This section addresses the main characteristics of hotel service, which are as follows:

**First: Seasonality of Activity**

Due to variations in the level and volume of tourism activity from one period to another throughout the year, and its relation to climatic, natural, and social conditions in each country, as well as tourists' preference for hotel stays during specific periods and seasons, hotel activity is characterized by seasonality.

### Second: Service Nature of Activity

The essence of hotel activity is the provision of hotel services such as lodging, accommodation, meals, and beverages, as well as other services like entertainment for guests, booking flights and cruises, and other related services.

### Third: High Proportion of Fixed Assets

The non-human element in hotel composition refers to the portion of capital invested in hotel construction and equipment. This portion, along with other fixed assets, represents a large part of the investor's capital in hotel projects, reaching up to 90% of the total capital, while the remaining percentage is allocated to other expenses such as operations, labor, and others.

### Fourth: Human Element of Activity

This refers to the fact that hotel activity is based on the use of the human element to achieve its general objectives. The success of this activity depends on the efficiency and capability of this element, such as treating tourists well and

performing required tasks with high spirit, along with personal qualities of the human element, including honesty, dedication, and integrity, among others.

### Fifth: Variation in the Nature of the Hotel Product

The hotel product consists of three main elements: accommodation, meals, and entertainment, in addition to other services. This product differs from any tangible product because tangible products possess physical attributes. Therefore, the hotel product, with its distinctive intangible characteristics, requires effective management and good organization to deliver it to tourists in the best possible way.

### Third Requirement: Life Cycle of Hotel Service

Hotel service, like any other service, has a life cycle that depends on the target audience being marketed to, in accordance with visitors' motivations. The service life cycle can be used as a tool for marketing strategy planning. These cycles, regardless of their type, generally consist of four stages: introduction, growth, maturity, and decline. (1)

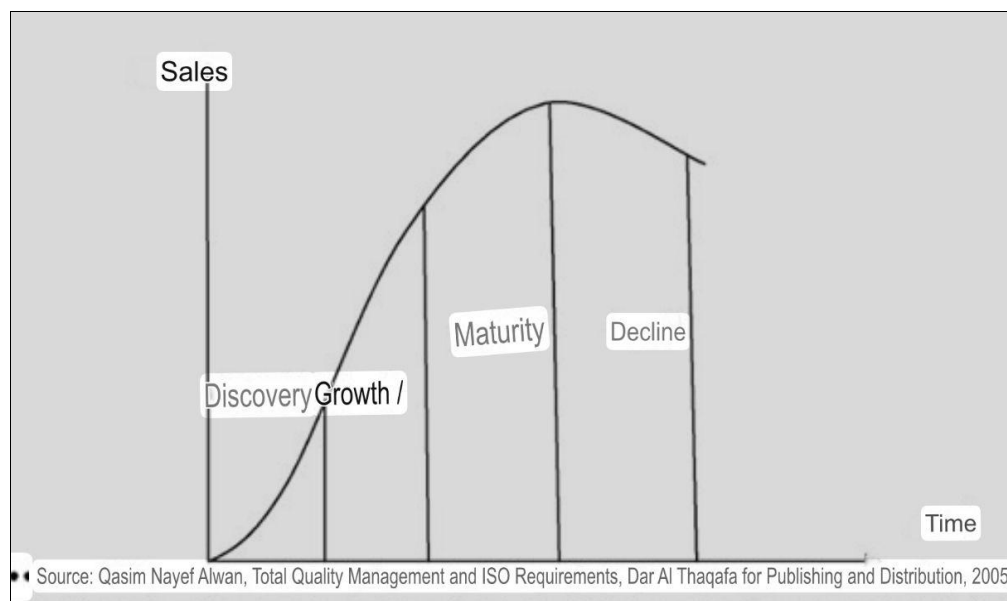


Fig 2: Life Cycle of Hotel Service

### First: Introduction Stage

At the beginning, hotel establishments attract a small number of visitors; this is the introduction stage. During this period, hotels experience lower sales and higher costs. At this stage of the life cycle, hotel operations involve a high degree of risk and exposure to failure.

### Second: Growth Stage

The growth stage is the second phase of the service life cycle, during which the hotel's sales and profits begin to rise at increasing rates as customers become familiar with the service and accept it, leading to higher demand. Additionally, competition emerges from other establishments offering the same service. Competition brings significant changes to the hotel's marketing strategy. Instead of merely finding ways for customers to try the new service, the focus now shifts to convincing them of the brand value of the new service. Since some services are easily imitated, marketers must attract customers by providing additional services. To maintain its sales level, the

establishment must develop a supporting advantage.

This stage is characterized by the following:

- An increasing volume of sales at a rising rate;
- Entry of a large number of competitors into the market;
- Profits begin to rise rapidly;
- Prices start to stabilize.

### Third: Maturity Stage

In this stage, customers clearly recognize the differences between the types and brands available in the market. The sales curve continues to rise but at a decreasing rate, eventually declining toward the end of this stage, indicating a noticeable decrease in profit levels. Competition among rivals centers on maintaining market share, with some resorting to price reductions to retain their share.

This stage is characterized by the following:

- Stability in the services provided by establishments;
- Intensified competition;
- Exit of lower-level establishments from the market.

#### Fourth: Decline Stage

In this stage, the level of services provided by the hotel decreases due to the emergence of new services that better meet customer needs. At this stage, the service is provided only if explicitly requested by the customer. Eventually, the decline in demand forces service providers to stop production. Therefore, there should be:

- Introduction of a new service to restart the life cycle.

This stage is characterized by the following:

- Decrease in the level of services provided by hotel establishments;
- Reduction in competition intensity;
- Decline in profits;
- Decrease in capital;
- Transfer of market share and sales.

### Chapter Three

#### The Impact of Hotel Service Quality on Competitive Advantage

The impact of hotel service quality on competitive advantage is an important topic that attracts attention in the hospitality and tourism sector. In this context, previous research can be reviewed and the factors that make service quality a source of competitive advantage analyzed as follows:

- **Review of Previous Studies:** Previous studies on the impact of service quality on competitive advantage are essential for understanding the relationship between these two elements. Such studies may include customer surveys and opinion polls, as well as theoretical studies addressing how competitive advantage can be achieved through service quality improvement.
- **Analysis of Factors That Make Service Quality a Source of Competitive Advantage**

Factors contributing to making service quality a source of competitive advantage include:

- **Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty:** Hotel service quality affects the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty, making them prefer to stay at the hotel and recommend it to others.
- **Service Excellence:** Hotels can achieve competitive advantage by offering unique and distinctive services to guests, such as special offers, event organization services, or unique hospitality experiences.
- **Customer Relationship Management:** Hotels that build strong and solid relationships with their guests can achieve a competitive advantage through effective customer relationship strategies that focus on meeting customer needs personally.

It is important to analyze comprehensively the factors that influence the transformation of service quality into a competitive advantage, which can contribute to the hotel's success in the hospitality market.

#### First Requirement: Previous Studies

Based on the review of previous studies related to the research topic, the most important ones are as follows:

- **Study by Iyad Fathi Al-Aloul (2010-2012):** A master's thesis titled Measuring the Quality of Services Provided by Jawwal from the Customers' Perspective

in Gaza Strip, based on the Gap Theory using the SERVQUAL measurement model. The study indicated that customers positively evaluated the actual service quality, but it did not reach their expected level, highlighting opportunities for improvement and development of the services provided by the company. The results also showed that customers give relatively greater importance to the network dimension, followed by the dimensions in order: tangibility, reliability, empathy, responsiveness, and assurance.

- **Study by Najm Al-Azzawi:** A doctoral dissertation titled Measuring Perceived Quality of Hotel Services from the Customer's Perspective. This study addressed the issue of the mismatch between customers' perceptions of the provided hotel services and the expected quality level, aiming to enhance the quality of hotel services.
- **Study by Boubaker Abbassi (2008-2009):** A master's thesis titled The Role of Internal Marketing in Developing Hotel Service Quality. This study concluded that it is essential for hotel establishments to improve their service quality by adopting and implementing the concept and elements of internal marketing, particularly in light of global economic openness and Algeria's anticipated entry into the World Trade Organization.
- **Study by Mohamed Ahmed Mohrez (2014-2015)** Published in Tishreen Journal for Research and Scientific Studies, titled The Effect of Knowledge on Improving Hotel Service Quality. This study aimed to highlight the impact of different types of knowledge on improving hotel service quality and emphasized the importance of applying knowledge in the hotels under study to enhance service quality and achieve competitive advantage.

Analyzing the results of the previous studies, the first study focused on measuring service quality in a telecommunications company from the customers' perspective, the second study focused on perceived hotel service quality, the third study examined the role of internal marketing in developing hotel service quality, and the last study investigated the effect of knowledge on improving hotel service quality.

It is observed that most of these studies did not examine the direct relationship between hotel service quality and customer satisfaction, which is the focus of the present research.

#### Second Requirement: Importance of Studying Customer Satisfaction with Hotel Service Quality

The interest in studying customer satisfaction with hotel service quality and understanding their opinions about it is relatively recent. Most studies have focused on countries where the private sector plays a major role in providing hotel services, as competition among hotel establishments is available to attract the largest number of customers by offering high-quality services. Profit plays a decisive role in their continuity, growth, and improvement of services.

Many organizational studies have concluded that fulfilling customer desires and expectations and gaining their trust are essential criteria to consider when evaluating the success of hotel establishments. Some studies have focused on understanding customer opinions and judgments regarding

the services provided to them, as the effectiveness of these hotel establishments is linked to their ability to meet customers' service needs. Several studies have highlighted the importance and benefits of knowing customers' opinions about services as a key indicator of hotel service quality.

Furthermore, the emphasis on studying customer satisfaction with hotel service quality stems from the fact that the ultimate goal of hotel service quality is to ensure customer comfort, as their satisfaction is an essential component of the service. Providing hotel services requires effective interaction between service providers and the beneficiaries (customers); customer satisfaction can be considered a measure of hotel service quality because it provides information on the success of service providers according to customer evaluations and the extent to which their expectations are met.

Therefore, understanding customer opinions and impressions and attempting to measure their satisfaction with services is a means to create effective service delivery systems and establish appropriate pricing policies for the hotel services provided. When examining the services offered by hotel establishments, many studies consider customer opinions as one of the key criteria for measuring hotel service quality. (1)

### Factors Affecting Customer Perceptions of Hotel Service Quality

Several key factors influence customer perceptions of hotel service quality:

- **Face-to-Face Service:** From the customer's perspective, a positive impression of the service occurs during direct interaction with the service provider. The customer draws on previous experiences regarding

reception, speed of service delivery, accuracy, and other aspects.

- **Service Cues or Indicators:** These are key factors affecting customer perceptions of hotel service quality. Since services are intangible, customers look for tangible cues or manifestations of the service in every interaction with the service provider.
- **Mental Image:** Beyond the direct impression from face-to-face service and evaluation of service cues, customer perceptions can be influenced by the mental image or reputation of the service provider. The service provider's image is understood as perceptions retained in the customer's memory. This image may be less stable, such as working hours or ease of access, or more affective, such as reliability, skill, empathy, or friendliness.
- **Price:** The price of services in hotel establishments can have a significant impact on perceptions of quality and satisfaction because services are intangible and often difficult to assess before consumption. Price is frequently used as a proxy indicator, influencing expectations and perceived quality. If the price is very high, customers are likely to expect high service quality, and these perceptions will be shaped by their expectations. Conversely, if the price is low, customers may doubt the service provider's ability to deliver high-quality service.

The following figure illustrates the factors affecting customer perceptions of service quality:



### Using the Gap Model to Analyze Hotel Service Quality

A group of researchers identified two models for evaluating service quality, one of which is the Gap Analysis Model. This model primarily relies on five gaps that can be adapted according to the type of service provided.

The Gap Model, known as SERVQUAL, emerged in the 1980s as a result of studies conducted by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, aiming to identify and analyze sources of service quality problems and provide guidance on how to improve them.

This model also illustrates how service quality is created and identifies the gaps that may cause problems in delivering the service as expected. It allows for assessing the degree of alignment between customer expectations and the actual service provided.

Service Quality (Gap) = Perceptions - Expectations

Berry and his colleagues (1985) concluded that the core focus of quality analysis according to this model is the gap between customers' perceptions of the actual service performance and their expectations. This gap depends on the nature of the gaps associated with service design and delivery. The model is built on identifying the steps that should be considered when analyzing hotel service quality. This model identifies the gaps that cause failure in delivering the desired hotel service quality, as follows:

- **Gap 1:** This gap arises from the difference between customer expectations and management's perception of these expectations. It may result from management's inability to understand customer needs, desires, and expected service specifications. This is often referred to

as the “Research Gap.”

- **Gap 2:** This gap indicates a lack of alignment in service specifications despite management understanding customer expectations. The expectations are not translated into specific service standards or delivery systems. This is called the “Design Gap.”
- **Gap 3:** This gap emerges from the difference between the specified service and the service actually delivered to customers. It primarily stems from behavioral factors and relates to the interaction between the service provider and the customer.
- **Gap 4:** This gap occurs due to discrepancies between the actual service delivered and the promises made to customers regarding the service. If the service is not delivered as promised, it indicates a lack of credibility and trust. This is referred to as the “Communication Gap.”
- **Gap 5:** This gap concerns the difference between the expected service and the perceived service. It represents the cumulative effect of all previous gaps and serves as the basis for judging the overall quality of the hotel’s performance, known as the “Service Reality Gap.”

In practice, the Gap Model helps hotel management achieve multidimensional insights into service quality, including:

- The ability of hotel management to understand customer needs and expectations.
- The effectiveness of organizational structure and adequacy of resources in translating customer expectations into actual service specifications.
- The performance level and motivation of hotel staff in delivering services that meet the specified quality standards.
- The credibility of the establishment and the level of customer trust in it.
- Level of Customer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction with Hotel Services.

### Analyzing the Relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Hotel Service Quality

Hotel establishments always need to study their customers in terms of needs, desires, and expectations. A customer’s perception of the quality of hotel services alone is insufficient to retain them; these establishments must go beyond mere perception of service quality to achieve customer satisfaction. True service reflects the customer’s perspective rather than that of the service provider. As discussed, quality and service are closely linked, and delivering quality service results in customer satisfaction, which becomes the main motivation for returning to the hotel.

Customers form specific expectations regarding the service’s ability to fully satisfy their needs. If these expectations are met, the expected outcome is customer satisfaction; if not, it leads to dissatisfaction, as both reflect the emotional response to the evaluation of service consumption.

Hotel establishments strive to meet both actual and expected customer needs, enabling them to achieve their objectives. However, to ensure growth and advancement, profitability alone is insufficient; it must be linked to customer satisfaction. According to Kotler, a satisfied customer is more profitable for the hotel and less sensitive to price

increases, as retaining existing customers costs less than acquiring new ones. Existing or loyal customers are aware of the hotel’s ability to deliver the services they desire.

By focusing marketing strategies on the most profitable customer segments, hotels can achieve most of the required profits and increase market share without acquiring new customers. Dissatisfied or unhappy customers rarely share information about services delivered adequately or acceptably. Customers who submit complaints to management are more valuable than those who remain silent, as reporting complaints allows management to improve operations and provide better service. Customers whose problems are resolved satisfactorily are likely to return, and prompt resolution further increases their percentage.

Customers always require accuracy in the information provided, attention to their problems, and consistent demonstration of interest and respect.

In this context, there are five fundamental elements of customer satisfaction:

- **Expectations:** Customers form expectations regarding the service that will be provided to them.
- **Performance:** Customers use the product or receive the service and perceive its level of performance.
- **Comparison:** Customers compare their prior expectations with their perceptions of the service received.
- **Confirmation/Disconfirmation:** The comparison results confirm expectations when actual performance matches them.
- **Discrepancy:** Occurs when performance levels are unequal.

Thus, customers compare the actual service provided and its quality against their mental image of the service establishment with which they interact, enabling them to judge the service and determine their satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

From the above, it is evident that the quality of hotel services provided to customers constitutes a primary objective for the hotel establishment. Service providers must interact effectively with customers to deliver the required level of service during these interactions. This largely depends on the skills of frontline staff the first point of contact with the customer and also on the performance of those responsible for customer service. Service providers strive to determine whether they have achieved customer satisfaction through their performance. The relationship between hotel service quality and customer satisfaction is strong, as hotels work to assist customers in the present and shape their service intentions for the future.

Accordingly, there is a distinction between the components of the relationship between satisfaction and service quality: satisfaction affects the evaluation of hotel service quality, while also reflecting customers’ expectations of that service. Analysis of the Impact of Cultural and Technological Environment on Hotel Service Quality

The impact of the cultural and technological environment on hotel service quality can be multifaceted and diverse. The following points illustrate factors that may influence hotel service quality:

#### 1. Cultural Environment

- **Cultural Diversity:** In hotels that attract guests from different cultures, services must be varied and flexible

to meet the diverse needs and expectations of guests.

- **Cross-Cultural Communication:** Understanding guests' cultural habits, traditions, and preferences can significantly affect their experience in the hotel.
2. **Technology**
    - **Online Booking and Electronic Payment Systems:** The use of online reservation systems and electronic payment processes can streamline operations for guests, thereby improving the booking experience and saving time.
    - **In-Room Technology:** Features such as high-speed Wi-Fi, smart TVs, and lighting and climate control devices contribute to guest comfort and convenience.
  3. **Digital Guest Experience:** Providing mobile applications to manage bookings, communicate with hotel staff, and access essential information can enhance the guest experience and make it smoother.

#### **Training and Development**

- **Understanding Different Cultures:** Providing training for staff to understand different cultures and how to interact with guests in a way that meets their cultural needs.
  - **Technology Training:** Ensuring that employees are well-trained in using the technology available in the hotel and can provide technical support to guests when needed.
4. **Marketing and Communication Strategies:**
    - **Use of Social Media:** Maintaining a presence on social media platforms to engage with potential guests and provide support and information effectively.
    - **Service Personalization:** Understanding guests' needs through effective communication and offering services tailored to them.

In summary, understanding cultural and technological influences and adapting the hotel operations accordingly can help improve hotel service quality and enhance the overall guest experience.

### **Section Three - Tools for Evaluating Hotel Service Quality:**

There are several tools that can be used to evaluate hotel service quality. Some common tools include:

1. **Customer Satisfaction Surveys**
  - Surveys are distributed to guests after their stay to provide feedback and opinions on various aspects of the service, such as cleanliness, hospitality, food quality, facilities, reception, and staff interactions.
2. **Online Reviews**
  - Platforms such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com, and Google Reviews can be used to review guest ratings and opinions online. These reviews provide real-time insights into guest experiences and help identify strengths and weaknesses in hotel services.
3. **Performance Monitoring:**
  - Performance can be monitored through various metrics such as booking rates, occupancy rates, average length of stay, conversion rates, satisfaction levels, and

complaint rates. This information helps identify trends and develop strategies to improve service quality.

#### **4. Employee Reports**

- Staff can contribute by providing reports on guest experiences and observations during interactions. These insights can be used to identify areas for improvement and to develop training programs.

#### **5. Hotel Ratings and Awards**

- Hotels receive ratings and awards based on specific criteria, such as star ratings and quality certifications. These evaluations and awards reflect the level of quality and excellence in hotel services.

#### **6. On-site Inspections**

- Periodic inspection tours of various hotel departments can be organized to verify quality and ensure staff compliance with established standards and policies.

Providing mechanisms to evaluate hotel service quality helps hotels understand guest expectations and continuously enhance their experience.

Additional tools that can be used to evaluate hotel service quality include:

#### **7. Case Studies and Quality Analysis**

- Case studies can be conducted to analyze guest experiences and extract lessons learned. Quality analysis can also be performed to examine processes, identify problems, and uncover areas for improvement.
- **Self-Assessment Evaluations:** Hotels can implement self-assessment tools to measure hotel performance and ensure compliance with standards and best practices.
- **Staff Surveys:** Surveys can be conducted among employees to evaluate their satisfaction with the work environment, training programs, and understanding of managerial guidance. Employee satisfaction is essential for delivering excellent customer service.
- **External Inspections:** Hotels can benefit from external audits and evaluations conducted by accredited third parties to ensure compliance with standard regulations and achieve the highest levels of quality.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** KPIs can be defined to measure hotel performance in areas such as booking rates, occupancy rates, conversion rates, average length of stay, and guest satisfaction levels.
- **Organizational Culture Assessment:** Tools for assessing organizational culture can be used to understand the hotel's values and organizational behavior, and how these affect guest experience and employee performance.

Providing a diverse set of tools to evaluate hotel service quality helps identify areas needing improvement and develop effective plans to enhance guest experience and overall hotel performance.

#### **Data Collection Method**

The data obtained from the questionnaire were collected,

organized, and analyzed to extract the information relevant to the research using the simple linear regression equation:

$$Y = a + b x_i$$

A set of questions was designed to address the variables indicated in the research title. The questionnaire included 12

questions: six pertaining to the first variable (hotel service quality) and six pertaining to the second variable (achieving competitive advantage). The purpose of these questions was to obtain responses from the research sample, which helps assess the extent to which the participants rely on these variables in managing operations within hotel organizations.

**Table 2:** The frequency distribution of the sample members' responses the research for the questionnaire questions

Sr. No.	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
1	17.5	65	12.5	5	0
2	7.5	35	42.5	10	5
3	0	7.5	12.5	35	45
4	7.5	45	15	15	17.5
5	0	7.5	10	45	37.5
6	14	30	8	7	41
7	13	42.5	5	14.5	25
8	20	45	0	25	10
9	10	30	8	7	45
10	7.5	45	7.5	20	20
11	14	35	0	7.5	43.5
12	0	4	7	15	74

**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on statistical analysis.

**Table 3:** "The mean and standard deviation of the independent variable (hotel service quality) and the questionnaire items according to the questions."

Sr. No	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	The services provided by the hotel management are excellent in terms of service quality.	3.69	0.804
2	Hotel management staff are characterized by politeness and high professionalism.	3.76	0.831
3	There is a constant readiness of the staff to meet customer requests immediately.	3.68	0.802
4	The required service is provided to customers in a timely manner.	3.91	0.952
5	Hotels have customer-related information available in a timely manner.	4.04	0.734
6	Hotel staff possess sufficient information to respond to customer inquiries.	3.72	0.777

**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the statistical program.

It is observed from the aforementioned table that all responses of the research sample agree with the researcher that hotel service quality is of great importance in hotel organizations to achieve a competitive advantage. The table shows that the variables of the first aspect, measured by items (1-6) as a variable representing the importance and impact of hotel service quality, indicate that item (5) "The hotel management documents customer-related information

continuously" ranked first with the highest mean of (4.04), while item (3) "There is a constant readiness of the staff to meet customer requests immediately" recorded the lowest mean of (3.68). This indicates that the research sample is fully aware that the dimensions of hotel service quality are very important for achieving competitive advantage and for attaining success and growth in a competitive market.

**Table 4:** Quantitative Indicators and Architectural Readings Achieved for the Requirements of Osmotic Proposals

Sr. No.	Clause	Architectural Reading	Quantitative Indicator
1	The use of visual simulation programs to present the design's integrity in a format that conforms to previous ideas or is suitable for the design context	4.29	78.6%
2	Diversity and flexibility of programs in facing various climatic challenges within the available design capacities	3.76	73.1%
3	The degree of integration between educational programs to implement design tasks appropriate to the academic stage	3.68	73.6%
4	Addressing the degree with aspects of perception and identifying the appropriate method to make the architectural design idea the core of the task	3.98	79.4%
5	The degree leads to new and impactful results for architectural cognitive production for each academic stage individually	4.54	85.4%
6	The use of programs as a new strategy for design thinking with the employment of powerful tools (artificial intelligence - simulation - processing)	3.71	77.7%

**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on the results of statistical analysis

It is observed from the aforementioned table that all the responses from the research sample align with the researcher's view that achieving a competitive advantage is of significant importance in hotel organizations. Table No.

(2) shows that the variables of this aspect, measured through items (1-6), express the importance of competitive advantage. Item (5), which states that flexibility leads to reduced time, increased production, and rapid growth to

maintain a new competitive advantage, ranked first with the highest arithmetic mean of (5.04). Meanwhile, item (3), which addresses the adaptation of new organizational methods to implement all the company's tourism activities and achieve competitive advantage, received the lowest arithmetic mean of (3.68). This indicates that the research sample is fully aware that achieving competitive advantage is through increasing the focus on the quality of hotel service by staying adaptable and optimizing performance to seize opportunities in the competitive market.

## Chapter Four

### Conclusion and Recommendations

#### Conclusion

Risk management contributes to improving the organizational performance of organizations, as it achieves the desired outcomes with minimal losses and costs, and enhances the results of administrative and operational work. The findings confirmed that risk management contributes to improving the performance of both individuals and organizations through the identification of potential risks and addressing them positively.

Adopting a risk management approach helps direct efforts toward achieving the organization's goals efficiently and effectively, which strengthens its sustainability and reduces future negative impacts.

It was found that the application of risk management requires possessing high administrative and organizational skills that contribute to enhancing the decision-making process and reducing failure cases.

The results showed that there is a strong relationship between risk management and the overall strategy of the organization, as the success of strategic management requires integration with risk management.

Risk management can enhance the organization's competitive advantage by exploiting opportunities and reducing threats.

#### Recommendations

It is essential to give due attention to risk management and to regard it as an integrated scientific methodology that should be adopted as a fundamental strategy to ensure the continuity of organizations in a changing work environment. Efforts should be made to enhance the awareness of top management regarding the importance of implementing risk management as a strategic tool for development and the advancement of administrative work.

Employees at various administrative levels should be trained and qualified in risk management skills to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of its implementation.

Organizations should be encouraged to adopt modern technologies in the field of risk management in order to keep pace with rapid developments and emerging challenges.

Emphasis should be placed on integrating risk management into all future plans and programs of organizations to ensure the sustainability of their success.

Risk management must continuously adapt to the requirements of the modern competitive environment through the ongoing development of its mechanisms and methods.

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