

A Study on The Influence of Quality of Service on Customer Satisfaction Towards Hotel Industry

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Abstract: The study aims to determine the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction towards the hotel industry in Madurai. Understanding the interplay between customer satisfaction and the services provided to them is paramount for hotel managers. In today's competitive marketplace, organizations constantly strive to differentiate themselves by delivering exceptional customer service experiences. Quality of service encompasses various dimensions, including responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. When organizations consistently meet or exceed customer expectations across these dimensions, it leads to higher customer satisfaction. By identifying the key factors influencing customer satisfaction, hotels can allocate their resources effectively, tailor their service offerings, and prioritize areas for improvement. Additionally, this knowledge can assist in developing targeted training programmes for hotel staff to enhance their service delivery skills and foster a customer-centric culture. The sample size for this study is 240, and the purposive sampling method was used. Organizations that understand this relationship and proactively manage their service delivery processes stand to gain a competitive advantage. By consistently exceeding customer expectations, organizations can foster strong customer loyalty, increase customer retention rates, and drive positive business outcomes. Hence, the findings indicate that Tangible, Reliability, Assurance, and Empathy positively contribute to Overall SQ, while responsiveness does not significantly impact Overall SQ.

Keywords: Quality of Service Dimensions; Service Quality; Customer Satisfaction; Hotel Industry; Madurai; Training Programmes; Hotel Staff.

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1. Introduction

In the highly competitive landscape of the hotel industry, delivering exceptional service has become imperative for businesses aiming to attract and retain satisfied customers. The level of pleasure experienced by consumers is an essential factor in determining a company's level of success since it directly affects the amount of repeat business and positive word-of-mouth recommendations received, both of which promote customer loyalty. Hotels are required to place a strong priority on and continuously improve their quality of service in order to achieve high levels of client satisfaction. Quality of service is a multifaceted term that incorporates multiple characteristics, including but not limited to staff competency, responsiveness,

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reliability, tangibles, empathy, and assurance [2]. Quality of service is a multidimensional concept that encompasses various aspects. Because customers anticipate receiving consistent service throughout the entirety of their use, any industry that provides services must adhere to these parameters.

In addition, customer satisfaction refers to the degree to which customers' expectations regarding the services provided by a hotel are surpassed as a result of the customers' perceived experiences with those services. It takes into account a number of aspects, including the tidiness of the rooms, the promptness of the service, the kindness of the employees, the simplicity of the check-in and check-out procedures, and the overall value for the money. More and more studies are looking into the correlation between customer happiness and the quality of the services delivered to customers in various industries. However, due to the inherent peculiarities of the industry, the hospitality sector offers a one-of-a-kind and intricate working environment. Due to the fact that hotels operate as a combination of both tangible and ethereal components, it can be difficult to fulfil and surpass the expectations of hotel guests.

1.1. Conceptual Framework on Service Quality

The conceptual framework of service quality provides a systematic approach to understanding the multidimensional nature of the hotel industry. It guides researchers and practitioners in assessing, managing, and improving service quality to meet customer expectations and enhance guest experiences. The SERVQUAL framework, introduced by Parasuraman et al. [14], is currently considered the basic paradigm for service quality. This framework outlines five aspects of service quality, which are as follows:

Tangibles: This dimension refers to the physical appearance of the service environment, including facilities, equipment, and other visible aspects that influence the customer's perception of quality.

Reliability: Reliability represents the ability to provide consistent and accurate service performance, deliver promises, and perform services dependably.

Responsiveness: The desire and promptness of service providers to assist clients are at the centre of the concept of responsiveness.

Assurance: Customers are encouraged to have a sense of assurance when service providers demonstrate expertise, civility, integrity, and professionalism in their interactions.

Empathy: The ability of a service provider to care for their clients, provide them individualized attention, and comprehend their problems and requirements is what we mean when we talk about empathy

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Gao and Wu [3] examine hotel service quality dimensions. The findings indicate that service quality significantly impacts loyalty and customer satisfaction, emphasizing the essence of high-quality service in luxury hotels. Zheng et al. [22] focus on the budget hotel industry in China and examines the effects of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction and loyalty. The researchers investigate the SQ dimensions. The findings suggest that service quality dimensions significantly influence customer satisfaction and loyalty in the budget hotel sector.

Mukherjee and Kumar [11] conducted a comparative study between business and leisure hotels using various service quality dimensions, including tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The findings highlight the differential effects of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction in business and leisure hotels.

Özdemir and Arslan [13] investigate the effects of quality of services on customer satisfaction and customer perceptions within the hotel industry. The research examines service quality dimensions, such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The findings reveal the significant impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and its influence on perceptions such as positive word-of-mouth and repeat patronage.

Rahman et al. [17] investigate five-star hotels in Malaysia. The researchers explore SQ dimensions. The findings highlight the significant influence of service quality on customer satisfaction within the hotel industry.

Wang et al. [20] explore the impact of hotel service quality on tourist satisfaction and loyalty. The researchers investigate service quality dimensions, including tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The findings emphasize the positive relationship between service quality, tourist satisfaction, and loyalty, highlighting the importance of delivering high-quality service in the hotel industry.

Tsai et al. [18] investigate the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and behavioural intention in upscale hotels. It explores the mediating role of perceived value in this relationship. The findings suggest that service quality positively influences perceived value, leading to higher customer satisfaction and stronger behavioural intention.

Jiang et al. [5] investigate the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and retention in the Chinese hotel business, emphasising the function that perceived value plays as a mediator in this relationship. The researchers look at many aspects of service quality and the influence those aspects have on perceived value, client satisfaction, and loyalty.

Mulaik et al. [12] passengers on the Southern Railway were the subject of a study, and the researchers discovered that service quality predicts passenger satisfaction.

Park et al. [16] explore the influence of hotel service quality on hotel loyalty. The research examines dimensions of service quality and their impact on different dimensions of hotel loyalty. The findings reveal that service quality significantly influences hotel loyalty, including attitudinal, behavioural, and composite loyalty. The study emphasizes the importance of delivering high-quality service to enhance hotel loyalty.

Kim and Lee [8] examine the relationship between perceived value, customer happiness, and customer loyalty in high-end hotels in South Korea, with a particular emphasis on service quality's role in each of these factors. This study investigates facets of service quality and the consequences of those facets on perceived value, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. The findings reveal that the quality of service has a substantial effect on perceived value, customer satisfaction, and loyalty, highlighting the necessity of providing quality service delivery in cultivating customer loyalty.

Wang et al. [21] explore the impact of hotel service quality on online reviews using data from TripAdvisor. It examines the dimensions of service quality and their effects on customers' review ratings and sentiments. The findings indicate that service quality significantly influences online reviews, highlighting the service quality in shaping customers' perceptions and opinions shared on online platforms.

Al-Ababneh and Al Khattab [1] investigate the connection between high levels of service quality, satisfied customers, and continued business in emerging markets. It investigates the possibility that customer pleasure moderates the connection between service quality and loyalty. According to the study's findings, customer satisfaction helps partially moderates the influence of service quality on customer loyalty. This highlights the importance of providing great service to increase customer happiness and create loyalty in the long run.

Han et al. [4] investigate the impact of hotel service quality on perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioural intentions among foreign guests. It explores the dimensions of service quality and their effects on perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. The findings indicate that service quality positively influences perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioural intentions, highlighting the importance of delivering quality service to enhance the overall guest experience. Mathurajothi et al. [10] studied student satisfaction towards University Libraries through service quality of the library services.

Liu, [9] examines perceived service quality's effect on hotel industry customer satisfaction, considering the moderating role of switching costs. The study investigates dimensions of service quality and their impact on customer satisfaction, considering the costs associated with switching hotels. The findings indicate that perceived service quality positively influences customer satisfaction when switching costs increase.

Kim et al. [7] investigate the influence that the quality of hotel service has on the behaviours that tourists intend to engage in. It investigates many aspects of service quality, such as tangibles, dependability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. According to the study's findings, service quality has a major impact on the behavioural choices made by passengers. These findings highlight the significance of providing high-quality service to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Kandampully et al. [6] explore customer loyalty with a specific focus on the hospitality industry. The study discusses various factors influencing customer loyalty, including service quality, customer satisfaction, and other psychological and behavioural aspects. It provides valuable insights into the relationships among these factors and offers future research directions in customer loyalty.

3. Research Methodology

This study's research design is descriptive. The research methodology was primary and secondary data. The study relies heavily on the primary data gathered through a structured questionnaire to obtain respondents' opinions. The investigation is limited to Madurai. The study used the Purposive Sampling Method to acquire its data [23]. The questionnaire was a Likert-type scale in which 5 = extremely content and 1 = extremely unsatisfied [24]. The distribution of 300 questionnaires resulted in the receipt of 272 questionnaires. As a result of the examination of these questionnaires, 32 were omitted due to insufficient responses. Ultimately, 240 questionnaires were utilised for this research. The analysis utilised reliability and descriptive statistics [25]. According to the Cronbach alpha test, this study's entire spectrum of reliability ranges between 0.856 and 0.911, indicating higher reliability factors overall (fig. 1).

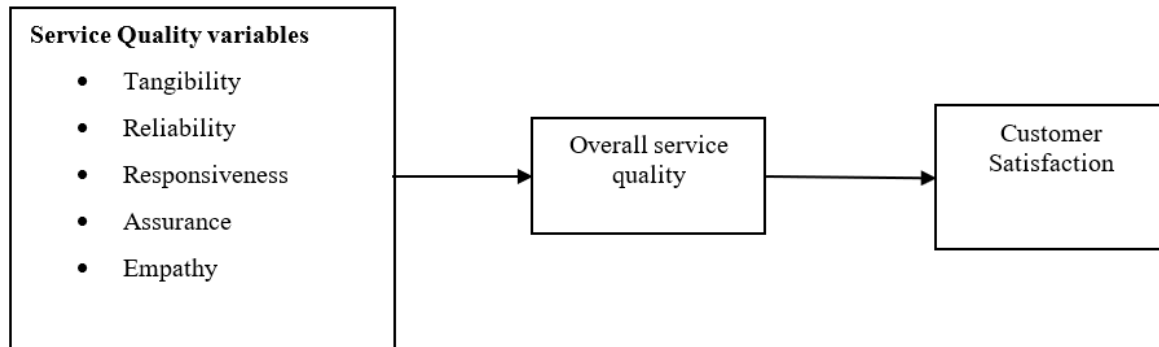


Figure 1: The conceptual model

4. Results and Discussion

The respondents were categorized into different age groups. The highest percentage (41.7%) falls within the age range of 26-35, indicating a significant presence of individuals in their late twenties and early thirties [26]. The next largest group comprises those aged 36-45, accounting for 22.5% of the respondents. The age groups below 25, 46-60, and 60 and above represent 15.4%, 15.0%, and 5.4% respectively (fig.2).

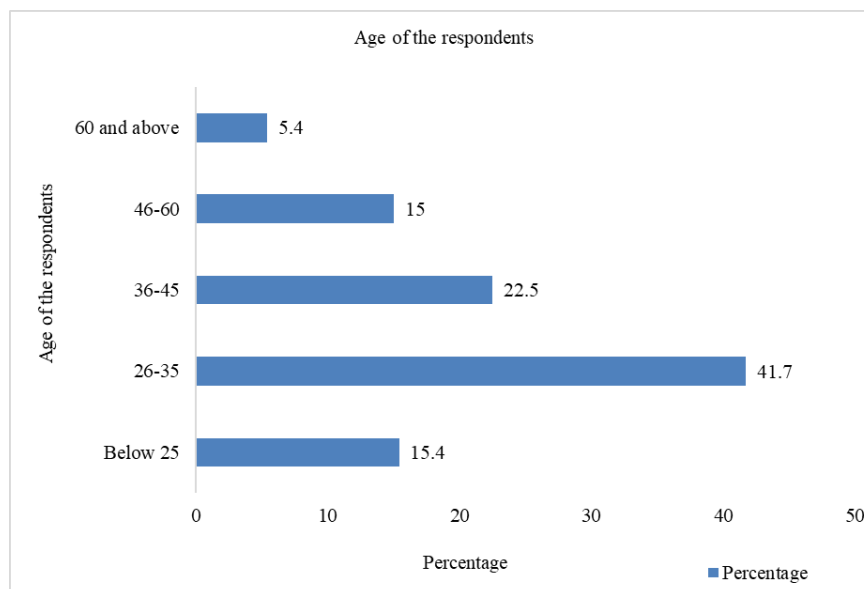


Figure 2: Age of the respondents

4.1. Gender of the Respondents

Figure 3 shows that most respondents (69.2%) are male, while the remaining 30.8% are female.

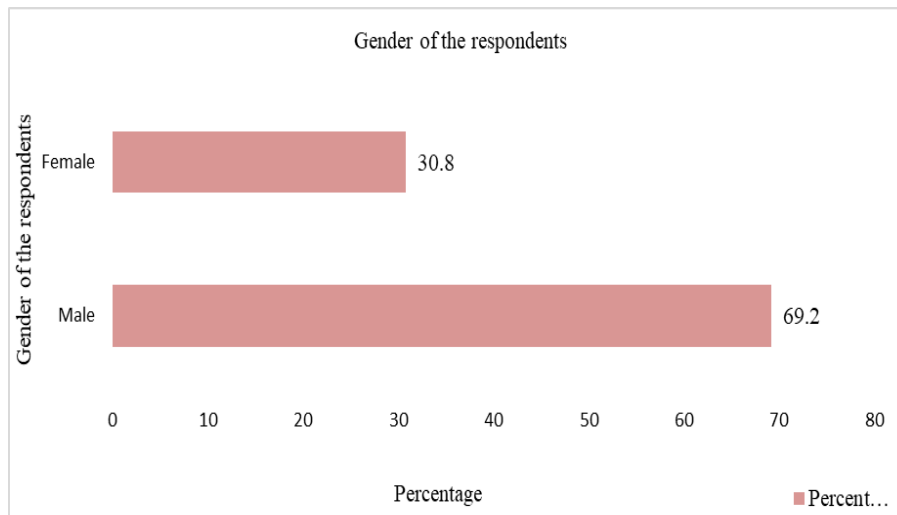


Figure 3: Gender of the Respondents

4.2. Marital Status

The respondents' marital status is divided into three categories [27-29]. The highest percentage (58.8%) represents single individuals. The married category accounts for 25.8% of the respondents, and the remaining 15.4% are unmarried (figure 4).

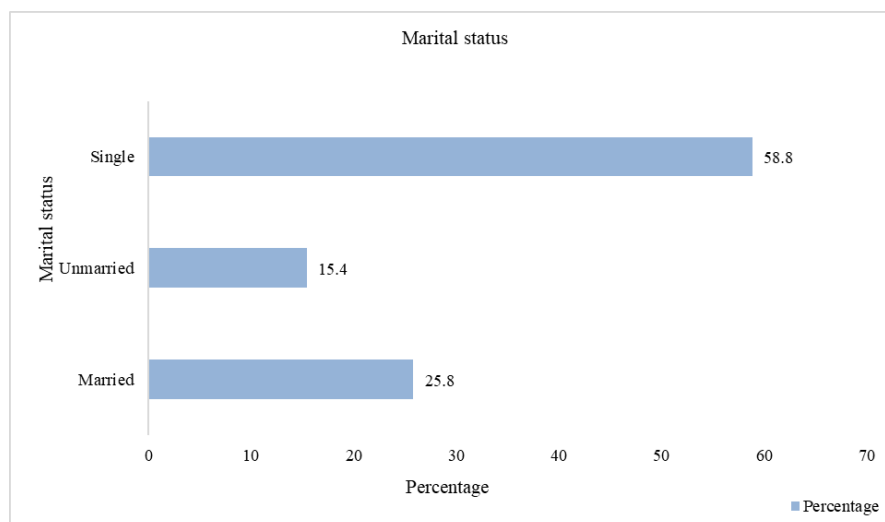


Figure 4: Marital Status

4.3. Educational Qualification

The educational qualifications of the respondents are classified into several categories [30]. The highest percentage (30.8%) holds a degree, followed by post-graduates at 16.7%. Diploma holders represent 24.6%, while +2 (higher secondary education) holders account for 14.6%. SSLC (Secondary School Leaving Certificate) holders comprise the lowest percentage at 6.3% and 7.1% fall under the "Others" category (figure 5).

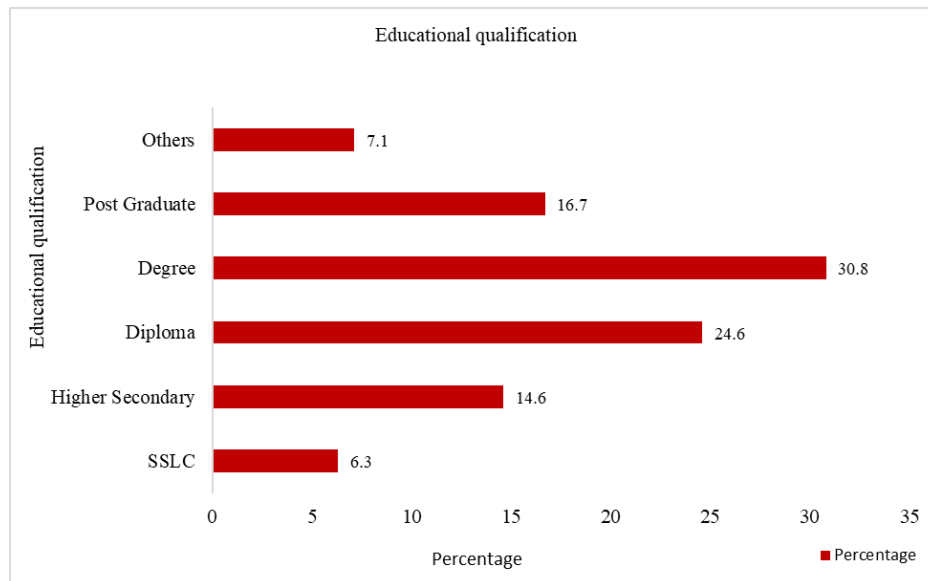


Figure 5: Educational Qualification

4.4. Occupation

The respondents' occupations are categorized into different groups. The largest percentage (38.3%) corresponds to self-employed individuals, indicating a significant presence of entrepreneurs or individuals running their businesses [31-33]. Professionals comprise 23.8% of the respondents, followed by the private sector at 20.0%. Government employees represent 14.6%, and the "Others" category has the lowest percentage at 3.3% (figure 6).

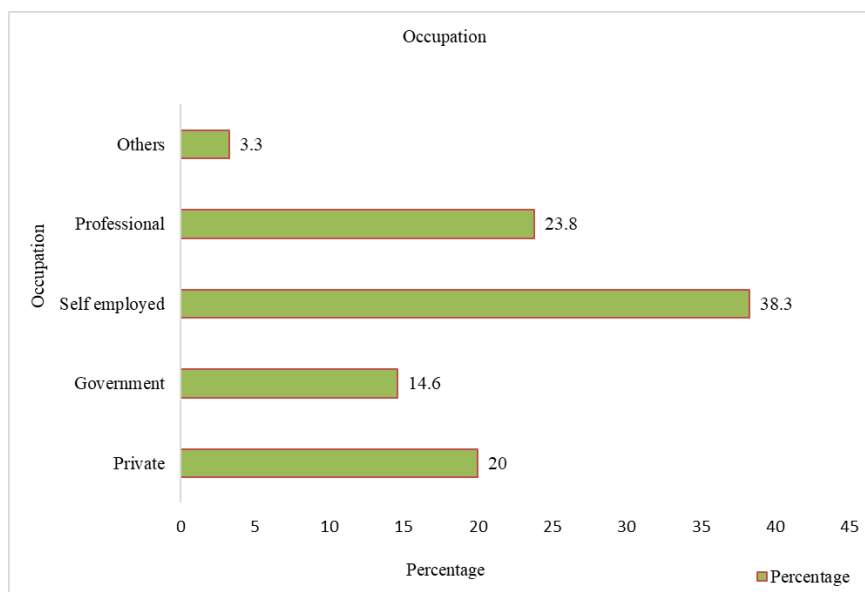


Figure 6: Occupation

4.5. Monthly Income Level (in rupees)

The respondents' monthly income levels are classified into different ranges. Most respondents (52.5%) fall within the 25001-35000 rupees income range [34]. The next significant group represents the income range of 15001-25000 rupees at 36.3%. Those with income levels below 15000 rupees account for 9.6%, while only a small percentage (1.7%) earn 35001 rupees and above per month (figure 7).

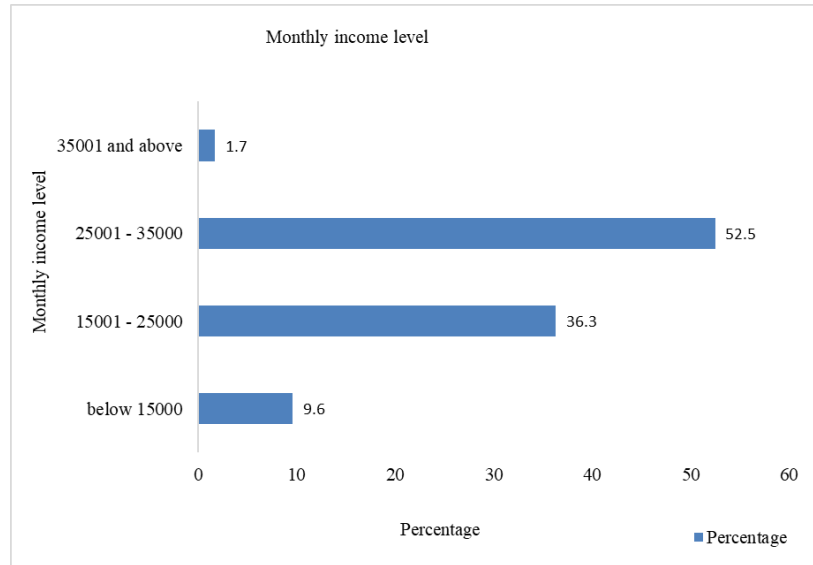


Figure 7: Monthly Income Level (in rupees)

According to the findings presented in Table 1, Cronbach's Alpha for each of the 33 items falls between the ranges of 0.856 to 0.911, demonstrating that the measure's consistency and reliability are adequate to be regarded as satisfactory [35-38].

Table 1: The reliability of SQ dimension and customer satisfaction

S. No.	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of variables	Ave	SD	"t" statistics
1	Tangibility	0.889	5	3.873	0.817	3.788*
2	Reliability	0.856	5	3.712	0.698	5.112*
3	Responsiveness	0.881	4	3.719	0.811	4.277*
4	Assurance	0.872	5	3.872	0.671	1.896
5	Empathy	0.861	3	3.809	0.837	3.709*
6	Overall Service Quality	0.875	5	3.883	0.553	5.093*
7	Customer satisfaction	0.911	6	3.977	0.972	4.873*

Source: Primary data

4.6. Validity, Reliability and One-dimensionality

The constructs' validity and reliability are evaluated using canonical factor analysis (CFA) and the fit of a structural equation modelling (SEM), utilising a variety of indicators of model fit. In order to proceed with the analysis of the Structural Equation Model (SEM), it is essential first to evaluate the constructs' validity and reliability [39]. This process includes establishing the scales' unidimensionality, reliability, and whether they have convergent and discriminant validity [15]. It was determined, via Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), whether or not the 33 indicators had been correctly allocated to their respective constructs [40].

Researchers used the maximum likelihood estimation approach to get an estimate for the CFA model. According to Venkateswaran [19], the SEM model uses AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) graphics, a popular software for structural equation modelling. We used several model fit indices to determine whether or not the model was adequate. These were the chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio (2/df), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), the Internal Consistency Index (IFI), the Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Parsimonious Goodness-of-Fit Index (PGFI) [41].

The evaluation of these indices was the primary focus to establish whether the model provided a good match for the data. According to the findings, the chi-square statistics suggested a satisfactory fit for the model with a p-value of 11.378 ($p > 0.05$),

indicating that the model was accurate [42]. Standard model-fit measurements like the chi-square/degrees of freedom (2/df), CFI, RMSEA, NFI, IFI, and TLI are applied to evaluate how well the measurement model fits the data.

Notes from the model (Default)

- Number of distinct sample moments:28
- Number of distinct parameters to be estimated:23
- Degrees of freedom (28 - 23):5
- Chi-square = 12.006
- Degrees of freedom = 5
- Probability level = .000

The goodness of fit for the structural equation model (SEM) was evaluated using various model fit indices. The results indicate that the SEM model fits the data well [43]. The chi-square statistic yielded a value of 11.378 with a corresponding p-value greater than 0.05, indicating a good fit. The chi-squared/degree of freedom ratio was 2.2251, below the suggested threshold of 5.00. The comparative fit index (CFI) yielded a value of 0.9824, surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.90. Similarly, the goodness of fit index (GFI) and adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) were 0.9819 and 0.9688, respectively, exceeding the threshold of 0.90 (fig.8).

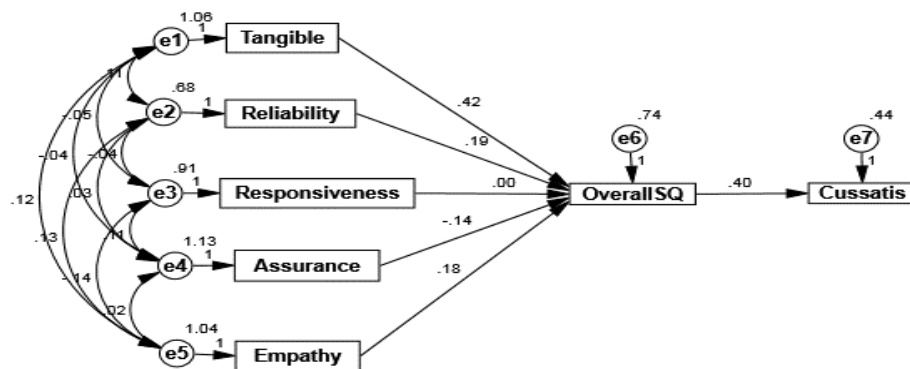


Figure 8: MODEL FIT: Linkage between the influence of SQ variables on Customer Satisfaction towards the Hotel Industry

The Normed Fit Index (NFI) Delta1 was 0.9804, meeting the criterion of being greater than or equal to 0.90. The incremental fit index (IFI) approached 1.00, with a value of 0.9893. The Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) was 0.9714, surpassing the suggested threshold of 0.90. The root means the square error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.0196, below the threshold of 0.08. Finally, the Parsimony Goodness-Of-Fit Index (PGFI) was 0.327, within the recommended range of 0.5. These findings collectively indicate that the SEM model fits the data well, providing confidence in accurately representing the relationship between variables (table 2).

Table 2: Model fit assessment -Standard Estimation of the Model

Path analysis			Unstandardized Estimate	S.E.	Standardised Estimate	C.R.	P	Hypothesis
OverallSQ	<---	Tangible	.415	.055	.416	7.546	.001	H1a: Accepted
OverallSQ	<---	Reliability	.190	.069	.153	2.753	.001	H1b: Accepted
OverallSQ	<---	Responsiveness	.002	.059	.001	.026	.979	H1c: Rejected
OverallSQ	<---	Assurance	-.144	.053	-.149	-2.720	.001	H1d: Accepted
OverallSQ	<---	Empathy	.180	.056	.179	3.212	.001	H1e: Accepted
Cussatis	<---	OverallSQ	.400	.042	.527	9.594	.001	H2: Accepted

Source: Primary data

4.7. Hypotheses Testing

Figure 8, Model Fit is a representation of the entire model. At a significance level of p less than 0.05, just one of the seven hypothesized routes in the model was insignificant, while the other five were significant. When selecting a hotel service, factors

other than responsiveness considerably affect total service quality. As a result, Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1d, and 1e may be validated at the 0.5 level of significance (p values greater than 0.001). The following is an interpretation of the conclusions based on the results of the path analysis:

The first version of Hypothesis H1a proposes that there is a correlation between tangible variables and overall service quality (referred to as Overall SQ). The unstandardized estimate for this connection is 0.415, which indicates a correlation between a one-unit rise in Tangible components and a 0.415-unit increase in Overall SQ. With a value of 7.546 for the Critical Ratio (CR), this association may be considered statistically significant (p 0.001).

Factors such as the hotel's physical amenities, equipment, and look are essential in determining the level of happiness the customers feel they have received. Therefore, the evidence supports the acceptance of Hypothesis H1a. In line with the predictions of Hypothesis H1b, there is a correlation between Reliability and Overall SQ.

The unstandardized estimate is 0.190, which indicates that a one-unit increase in overall SQ leads to a 0.190-unit rise in overall reliability when there is an increase in the reliability of one unit. It suggests that customers value hotels that provide consistent and dependable service delivery, including timely and accurate service. The fact that this association has a CR of 2.753 and is statistically significant (p 0.001) provides more evidence to accept Hypothesis H1b. The correlation between Responsiveness and Overall SQ is the focus of consideration in Hypothesis H1c.

On the other hand, the unstandardized estimate is merely 0.002, which indicates that responsiveness has a negligible influence on Overall SQ. It leads one to believe that the customers' impressions of the hotel's promptness and desire to help may not significantly influence the customers' overall happiness. This link does not meet the criteria for statistical significance (p = 0.979), and the critical ratio (CR) of 0.026 is significantly lower than the cut-off point. Therefore, the conclusion is that Hypothesis H1c is insignificant.

Hypothesis H1d suggests a negative link between Assurance and Overall SQ. According to the unstandardized estimate of -0.144, a one-unit increase in assurance will likely result in a drop of 0.144 units in Overall SQ. Customers may have certain expectations regarding how hotel personnel provide assurance and trustworthiness; if such expectations are not realized, it may lead to a decline in customer satisfaction. This link is statistically significant (p 0.001) with a CR of -2.720, providing evidence for adopting Hypothesis H1d.

Hypothesis H1e proposes that there is a positive correlation between Empathy and Overall SQ. The unstandardized estimate is 0.180, which indicates that an increase of one unit in empathy leads to an increase of 0.180 units in Overall SQ. It implies that consumers respect and appreciate hotels that understand their requirements and concerns and adjust their services appropriately. It also suggests that customers enjoy hotels with excellent customer service. This link is statistically significant with a p-value of less than 0.001 and a CR of 3.212, providing evidence for adopting Hypothesis H1e.

The purpose of investigating the connection between Overall SQ and Customer Satisfaction (Cussatis) is the purpose of Hypothesis H2. According to the non-standardized estimate of 0.400, an increase of one unit in Overall SQ results in a rise of 0.400 units in Customer satisfaction. Hotel management and personnel should pay great attention to the hotel's concrete components, provide dependable services, display empathy towards customers, and carefully manage customers' expectations about assurance. Since this association has a CR of 9.594 and is statistically significant (p 0.001), we have evidence to support the acceptance of Hypothesis H2.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to analyse and gain a better understanding of the effect of the quality of service on the degree to which clients are satisfied with the hotel industry. The variables in the study, such as service quality and customer satisfaction, give researchers and managers more meaningful and practical suggestions for increasing service quality, creating and maintaining service quality, and achieving customer satisfaction. The level of service provided has a direct and significant impact on the degree to which the client is satisfied, which may encourage customers to choose a certain hotel service provider. According to the data, Tangible, Reliability, Assurance, and Empathy all have a good impact on Overall SQ; however, responsiveness does not significantly impact Overall SQ. In addition to this, on the whole, SQ has a favourable influence on Customer Satisfaction (Cussatis). In the highly competitive hotel industry, hotel managers can make educated decisions that will improve the quality of service and promote customer happiness. This will ultimately increase customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and improved company success.

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Ethics and Consent Statement: Authors of the work unanimously consent to make this publication available to all interested people for reading, teaching, and learning.

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