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## Service Quality and Behavioural Intention In Hotel Industry: A Path Model Analysis

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**Abstract-** *Hotel Industry is a highly competitive industry especially after the introduction of globalization. The success of service providers in the industry rest on their level of understanding and delivery of services to their customers. The service quality is the non-price weapon at the hands of the service providers. Hence, the present study focuses on the study of linkage between the service qualities and behavioral intention among the guests in the hotel industry. The study was conducted among the guests stayed at corporate hotels at Kanniyakumari, Rameshwaram and Madurai. The study concluded that the value added service quality have a significant impact on behavioral intention among the guests especially through the core, special service quality and overall customers satisfaction.*

**Key words:** Service quality, Behavioral Intention, Path Analysis, Structural Equation Model.

### I INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a highly competitive industry, and tourism factor can no longer compete on the basis of cost alone. Quality is a key element for the competitiveness of the tourism industry. The World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2003), has designed six standards for tourist product or service. One of the important aspects in the tourism industry is the hotel industry since it provides accommodation and foods to the tourists. (Gaurav et al., 2010). In order to attract new customers and retain their existing customers in the hotel industry, effective policies of customer's satisfaction and loyalty is highly essential (Tse, 2001). The service quality offered by the hotels is playing an important role in the determination of the customer's satisfaction in hotel industry (Kim and Cha, 2002). These qualities included safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity and harmony (Sharma and Upadhyaya, 2009). The policies improving the quality of tourism services should be matched with the features of destination and customers' expectations (Domini, 2010).

In a service industry priding itself in its superlative quality of personal touch; naturally the hotels pay a lot of attention to relationship marketing and customer relationship management. Apart from tangibles, delicious food and beverages, communication, price fairness, customers orientation etc. the essence of service in hotels comes from warmth and friendly nature of them. The flexibility, going the extra mile, making impossible things possible, consistency in the delivery of service, personalized service, anticipating guest needs and the sweet smile of the guest relations executive, the timely greeting of the guard and the doorman, the empathy of the front office assistants are the important pre requisites for the sources of the hotels. Those who provide customers with quality services can have a stronger competitive position in today's dynamic market place (Stuant and Tax, 1996; Wong et al., 1999).

The relationship qualities in hotels are having a positive impact on customer retention (De Wulf et al. 2001; Verhoef, 2003). Kin et al., (2006) was one of the first studies to examine predictors and art comes of relationship quality within the hotel industry. Budhwar (2005) identified the service quality in hotel is one of the success factors for hotel. Syed et al., (2006) identified the factors leading to

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customers satisfaction in hotel industry namely responsiveness of frontline employees, price, food quality and appearance of hotel. The service providers those who provide customers with quality services can have a stronger competitive position in today's dynamic market place (Kit et al.,2001). The hotel industry is a demanding sector that stresses the provision of high-level customer's service and continuous quality improvement. There has been a pressing need to encourage local consumption and attract the arrival of visitors. In this context, this paper discusses the identification of quality attributes in hotel industry and its consequences.

### Conceptual Framework of the Study

#### Service Quality Factors in Hotel Industry Operations

Terziovski and Dean (1998) defined quality as the fitness to use and conformance to specification and requirements. Parasuraman et al., (1990) identified five dimensions of service quality encompasses tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Gronroos (1990) argues there are six elements in service quality as professionalism and skills, attitudes and behaviour; accessibility and flexibility, reliability and worthiness; recovery; and reputation and credibility. Shock and stefaneli (1992) advocated four marketing mix considerations for the design and planning of hotel services. Darley and Gilbert (1985) suggested that the physical dimension of a business can also influence the degree of success of a business like hotel. The product offering by the hotel plays a determinant role in the service quality of hotel industry. Monroe (1989) identified that the price of the items on the menu can also greatly influence customers because price has the capability of attracting or repelling them, especially since price functions as an indicator of quality (Lewis and Shoemaker, 1997). Grewal et al. (1998) indicated that the price offering for the hotel needs to be in accord with what the market expects to pay by avoiding negative deviation.

Kin et al. (2006) examined predictors and outcomes of relationship quality with the hotel industry. The measurement developed by him includes:

- a) **Physical Environment:** "Stevens et al., 1995." "Garbarino and Johnson, 1999"
- b) **Food Quality:** "Mattila, 2001" "MacLaurin and Mac Laurin (2000)"
- c) **Customer Orientation:** "Fornell et al., 1996" "Gustafsson et al., 2005" and "Bore and Johnson, (2000)"
- d) **Communication Level:** "Scanlan and McPhail, 2000" "Jeyacharan et al., (2005)" and "(Parsons, 2002)."
- e) **Relationship Benefits:** "Reynolds and Beally, 1999" "Gurinner et al., (1998)"
- f) **Price Fairness:** "Kin et al., 2006". "Oh (2000)" "Raraweera and Neely (2003)"

In the present study, the included service quality variables related to the hotel have been identified with the help of above said conceptual framework. In total, 32 variables related to service quality in hotel industry have been noticed and summarized in table 1.

TABLE 1

Variables in Service Quality in Hotels (SQH)

Sl.No	Variables in SQH	Sl.No	Variables in SQH
1.	Visually attractive building exteriors	17.	Knowledgeable staffs
2.	Reasonable food prices	18.	Information on innovative services
3.	Friendly service by the staffs	19.	Tasty food
4.	Parking area	20.	Information about new events
5.	Consistent communication through news letters or direct mail	21.	Personal relationship
6.	Discount offer	22.	Clear and elegant dining equipment
7.	Consistent quality of food and beverage	23.	Special treatments
8.	Special deals	24.	Tele marketing services
9.	Attracting dining area	25.	Confidence of the staffs
10.	Reasonable beverages prices	26.	Rational calculation of the prices
11.	Staffs always willing to help	27.	Appearance of food
12.	Easy to move around in their	28.	Recognition of the staff
13.	Special discounts	29.	Information about special promotion programmes
14.	Mass media advertisement	30.	Understands the specific needs of the staff
15.	Appropriate illumination	31.	Details on pricing
16.	Appropriate price charge	32.	Personal care on individual needs

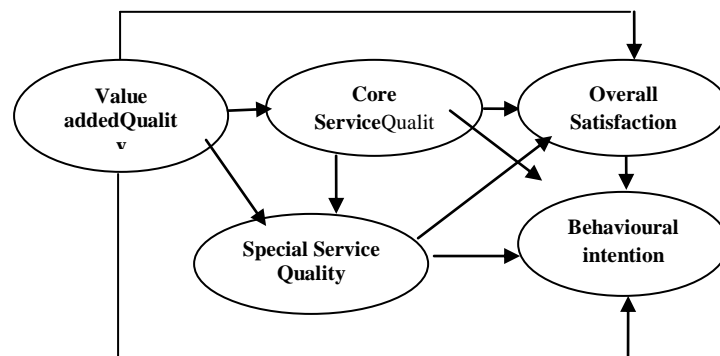
**Overall Customers Satisfaction:** "Stevens et al., 1995", "Syed and Cardoym, 2006", "Sheetal and Verma, 2004"

**Behavioural Intention:** “(Heller et al., 2003)”, “(Petrick, 2004)”, “(Tian et al., 2002)”.

**Literature Reviews:** “Kin and Cha (2002)”, “Clark and Wood (1999)”, “Gustafsson et al., (2005)”, “Parsons (2002)”, “Bhattachariya and Friedman (2001)”

**Related Reviews:** “(Crompton and Willson, 2002)”, “Yan and Uysal (2005)”, “(Balogu, 2001; Mazanec, 2000; and Lee et al., 1997)”, “Murphy et al., (2000)”, “Oh (2000)” and “Morasis and Norman (2001)”

FIGURE 1  
Conceptual Model



### Objectives of the Study

Based on the proposed research model, the objectives of the present study are:

- i) To identify the important service quality factors, its outcomes and its validity; and
- ii) To measure the casual path relationship between the service qualities and behavioral intention among the guests in hotel industry.

### Hypotheses

Based on the above said objectives, the following hypotheses are generated:

- H<sub>1</sub>:** The higher perception on value added quality, the higher the core service quality among the guests.
- H<sub>2</sub>:** The higher perception on value added quality, the higher the tour service quality among the guests.
- H<sub>3</sub>:** The more perception on value added quality, the higher overall satisfaction among guests.
- H<sub>4</sub>:** The higher perception on value added quality, the higher behavioral intention among guests.
- H<sub>5</sub>:** The higher perception on value added quality, the higher perception on service quality.
- H<sub>6</sub>:** The more perception on core service quality in hotels, the more overall satisfaction among the tourists.
- H<sub>7</sub>:** The higher perception on core service quality in hotels, the higher behavioral intention among the guests.
- H<sub>8</sub>:** The more perception on special service quality in hotels, the higher overall satisfaction among the guests.
- H<sub>9</sub>:** The higher perception on special service quality in hotels, the more behavioral intention among the guests and
- H<sub>10</sub>:** The higher the overall satisfaction. the more behavioral intention among the guests.

### Study Site and Sample

The important tourist's centers at South Tamil Nadu namely Kanniyakumari, Rameswaram and Madurai were purposively selected as the study sites. The data for this study were collected by a well-designed interview schedule which is developed in English only. The sample size of the study was determined with the help of n =

In the present study, the sample size came to 588. It was equally divided into three important tourist centers. A total of 196 guests stayed at corporate hotels at each centers were included as the sample of the present study. The interview schedules were used by the investigators. The interviews were conducted at major hotels in the above said three tourists centers.

### Interview Schedule Design and Research Variables

The interview schedule was divided into two important parts. The first part covers the background of the guests. Whereas the second part includes the variables in service qualities in hotel industry overall satisfaction and behavioral intention of the guests. The variables are measured at five point scale. A pre-test was conducted among 20 each guests at Kanniyakumari, Rameswaram and Madurai centers. Based on the feedback, the final draft was designed to collect the data.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted in two stages. Firstly, the EFA [Exploratory Factor Analysis] was used to identify the important service quality factors in hotel industry. Secondly, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was administered to test the reliability and validity of variables included in each concept of the study. At the third stage, the relationship between various service quality factors, overall satisfaction and behavioral intention among the guests were empirically tested by using structural equation modeling (SEM). LISREL-8 procedure (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1996) and the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method of estimation were adopted (Yoon, et al., 2001). Out 588 interview schedules, the fully usable schedules are 239 only which shows the yielding rate of 40.65 per cent to the total of 588 guests.

### Service Quality Factors in Hotel Industries

The score of thirty two variables in service quality of hotels are included for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Initially, the test of validity of data for factor analysis have been examined with the help of Kaiser-Meyer-Ohlin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The acceptance criterion of KMO measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity are 0.5 and significance of chi-square less than or equal to 5 per cent level (Fabrigar et al., (1999)). The variables which are having the factor loading of less than 0.5 in all extracted factors and the variables which are having higher factor loading in more than one factors have been excluded from EFA. The factor which is having a lesser Eigen value of 1.0 is also excluded from the extracted factors (Charles, 2008). Since the test of validity of data for factor analysis is satisfied, the EFA have been executed. The EFA results in three service quality factors which together explain 68.20 per cent variance. The number of variables in each factor, its reliability co-efficient, eigen value and per cent of variation explained is summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3  
Service Quality Factors in Hotel Industry

Sl. No	Service Quality factors	Number of variables	Reliability Co-efficient	Eigen value	Percent of variation explained	Cumulative percent of variation explained
1	Core Service quality	8	0.7843	5.1445	22.37	22.37
2	Value added Service	8	0.8139	4.8029	20.28	43.25
3	Special Service quality	7	0.7602	4.7346	20.59	63.84
KMO measure of sampling adequacy : 0.7674				Bartlett's test of sphericity : Chi-square value : 89.08*		

### Significant at zero per cent level.

The important service quality factors is core service quality since its Eigen value and the per cent of variation explained is 5.1445 and 22.37 per cent respectively. It consists of 8 variables with the reliability co-efficient of 0.7843. The second and third service factors in hotels are value added service quality and special service quality since it's Eigen values are 4.8029 and 4.7346 respectively. The per cent of variation explained by these two factors are 20.88 and 20.59 per cent respectively. All the narrated three important service quality factors explain the variables in service quality to an extent of 63.84 per cent. The last two factors consist of 8 and 7 variables with the reliability co-efficient of 0.8139 and 0.7602 respectively.

### Reliability and Validity of Variables in the Concepts

In total, there are five concepts used in the study. These are three service quality factors, customers' satisfaction and behavioural intention among customers in hotel industry. The score of the variables in five concepts included in the present study are taken for Confirmatory Factor Analysis in order to examine its reliability and validity. The overall reliability has been tested with the help of Cronbach alpha. The standardized factor loading of the variables in all five concepts are greater than 0.60 which shows the content validity of the concepts (Anderson and Gelling, 1988). The significance of 'V' statistics of the standardised factor loading of the variables

in all concepts reveals the convergent validity (Bollen and Long, 1993). It is also supported by the composite reliability and average variance extracted since these are greater than 0.50 and 50.00 per cent respectively. The cronbach alpha is greater than 0.60 (Nunnally, 1978). The analysis reveals the reliability and validity of variables in all the concepts included for the study.

### Customers view on Important Concepts in Hotel Industry

In total, five important concepts have included for examining the linkage between service quality and behaviour intention among the guests in hotel industry. These are core science quality, value added service quality, and special service quality. Overall satisfaction and behavioural intention. The level of perception on the above five concepts have been derived by the mean score of all variables in each concept. The standard deviation and the inter correlation between the perception on each concept have been computed and presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5  
Customers' view on the Concepts in the Present Study

Sl.No	Concepts	Mean	Standard Deviation	Inter Correlation among				
				1	2	3	4	5
1.	Core Service quality	3.5157	0.4786		0.3969*	0.2965*	0.3118*	0.2744*
2.	Value added service quality	3.9708	0.5217			0.3242*	0.3646*	0.2903*
3.	Special Service quality	3.4865	0.4903				0.3969*	0.3011*
4.	Customer satisfaction	3.2241	0.4886					0.3842*
5.	Behavioural intention	2.8969	0.3967					

\*Significant at five per cent level.

The highly perceived concept by the guests is value added service quality and core service quality since its mean score are 3.9708 and 3.5157 respectively. The higher consistency in the perception on concepts is identified in the case of behavioural intention since its standard deviation is only 0.3967. The inter correlation between the perception on all five concepts included in the study are positive and significant at five per cent level. The average variance extracted by each pair of the concepts included in the present study is greater than its square of correlation co-efficient between them which reveals the discriminant validity among the concepts (KashyapandBojanic, 2000).

### Testing of Conceptual Model

The proposed conceptual model in Figure 1 was tested by using five constructs namely: destination image, core service quality, tour servqual, overall satisfaction and behavioural intention. The SEM analysis was used to examine the relationship between the each of constructs as hypothesized. The result of SEM is presented in Figure 2. The fit indices of the model are summarized in Table 6.

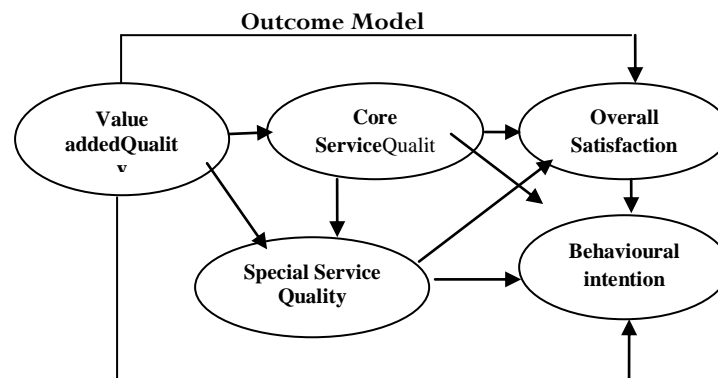
TABLE 6  
Goodness of Fit Indices of Model

Sl.No	Particulars	Criteria	Indicators
<b>I</b>	<b>Chi-square test</b>		
	Chi-square test	P<.05	P=.0134
<b>II</b>	<b>Fit indices</b>		
	GFI	>0.90	0.9318
	AGFI	>0.90	0.9573
	PGFI	>0.50	0.7391
	NFI	>0.90	0.9796
	NNFI	>0.90	0.9583
<b>III</b>	<b>Alternative indices</b>		
	CFI	>0.95	0.9891
	RMSEA	<0.05	0.0196
	RMR	<0.05	0.0245

The overall model indicates that the chi-square value is significant at two per cent level. Hence it is within the limit of the event ( $p<.05$ ) recommended by Hair et al., (1998). Furthermore, other indicators of goodness of fit are GFI=0.9218, RMSEA = 0.0196; RMR = 0.0245, NFI = 0.9796; NNFI = 0.9583; CFI = 0.9891; AGFI = 0.9473, PGFI = 0.6391 and NNFI = 0.9583. All these fit indices are satisfying the criteria established for the fitness of model (Hair et al., 1998). It also reveals that the hypothesized model fits the empirical data well.

### Result of SEM Model

The results of SEM model are presented in Figure 2. **FIGURE 2**



The value added service quality has a significant positive impact on core service quality ( $\beta = 0.8586^*$ ), thus supporting  $H_1$ . Due to their insignificances on structural co-efficients, however, the hypotheses of value added service quality has no positive effect on special service quality ( $H_2$ ), overall satisfaction ( $H_3$ ) and behavioural intention ( $H_4$ ) are not supported since their  $\beta$  values are not significant at five per cent level ( $\beta_2=0.0485$ ;  $\beta_3=0.1109$ ; and  $\beta_4 = 0.1017$ ). The core service quality, as hypothesized, has a significant positive impact on special service quality ( $\beta_5 = 0.8507^*$ ), thus supporting  $H_5$ . Nonetheless, it does not have a significant impact on overall satisfaction and behavioural intention ( $\beta_6=0.1811$ ;  $\beta_7=0.1382$ ) respectively. In addition, the special service quality has a significantly positive effect on overall satisfaction ( $\beta_8=0.7542^*$ ), supporting  $H_8$  while it does not appear to have a significant effect on behavioural intention ( $\beta_9=0.1203$ ), not supporting  $H_9$ . Finally, the overall satisfaction has a significantly a positive effect on behavioural intentions ( $\beta_{10}=0.1886$ ), supporting  $H_{10}$ . From the results, it is inferred that, an evident path is seen. The appeared path is: value added service quality Core service quality Special Service Quality ---, Overall satisfaction Behavioural intention. Note that the value added service quality does not directly but does indirectly influence the behavioural intention through the core and special service quality and overall satisfaction. This findings confirms the findings of Caruana et al., (2000); and Ching and Dung (2007).

## II CONCLUSIONS

The empirical results of this study provide tenable evidence that the proposed structural equation model designed to consider the linkage between value added service quality and behavioural intention though the core, special service quality and overall satisfaction is acceptable. The major findings of the study reveal that there is no direct significant linkage between value added service quality and behavioural intention which replicates the findings of Dick and Basu (1994); and Flavian et al., (2001). At the same time, the significant positive of effect the construct is seen on the subsequent constructs developed in all stages of the path resembles the findings of Iwasaki and Havitz, (1998); Turner and Reisinger (2001).

The major findings of this study have significant managerial implications for policy makers. First of all the path analysis reveals that there is no significant effect of value added, core and special service quality on the behavioural intention but there is a significant impact of valued added science quality on core service quality, core service quality on overall satisfaction and overall satisfaction on behavioural intention. It indicates that the policy makers should understand the logic linkage between the constructs developed in the present study. It is not enough to concentrate only on value added service quality but also the core and special service quality. All these qualities should be focused on the guests satisfaction i.e., customer orientation. It is the only possibility to generate favourable behavioural intention among the guests.

The findings of the study reveal the flow of the critical path in between valued added service quality and behaviour intention. These are: value added service quality  $\rightarrow$  Core service quality  $\rightarrow$  special service quality  $\rightarrow$  overall satisfaction  $\rightarrow$  behavioral intention. This critical path produces the better result than any other paths. The policy maker are advised to implement their developmental strategies on the basis of the critical path confirmed by the empirical study.

### Directions for Future Research

The findings reported in the present study offer several suggestions for future research. First, research is needed to identity. Apart from this, the other dimensions like technology and information system quality in hotel industry may be added to examine the service

quality in hotel industry may be added to examine the service quality in hotel industry. Secondly, the future study may focus on the usefulness of segmenting customers on the basis of their profile. It will be worth while exploring. A future research aimed at the level of perception and expectation on service quality in hotel industry on the basis of customers' demographics which will be valuable from a service providers view point. Thirdly, a discriminant analysis may be conducted on various types of customers regarding their attitude towards hotel industry in future research work. Researcher could cover more service categories and with large data base in future. The problems in maintaining the service quality in hotel industry alone may be focused in near future as a separate research work. Finally, the scope of the study may be extended to various tourists centers in India.

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