

Assessing the Quality of Hospitality Services: A Study on Hotels in Chittagong

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Biography of the Author

The author Md. Mahi Uddin, the son of Mr. Mostafizur Rahman and Mrs. Hasina Begum, was born on 3rd April, 1978. I completed my BBA and MBA major in Management from University of Chittagong. Since September, 2006 to 25th April 2011, I served as lecturer at IIUC and from 26th April 2011 to till to date I have been serving as assistant Professor.

Abstract

Service quality is considered as an important aspect to the success of hospitality industry, the importance of evaluating service quality provided to guests becomes apparent. Assessing service quality provides with the necessary information needed to manage service delivery operations appropriately. Considering the importance, the study aims to evaluate the service quality of two five star hotels in Chittagong using random sampling. The study applied SERVQUAL model consisting of five dimensions namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Based on a questionnaire survey of 68 customers (guests), frequency analysis, gap analysis between perceptions and expectations, reliability tests of items were conducted. The results of the reveal that the overall service quality of sample hotels is rated as -0.24. The perception of service delivery was less than expectations of guests in all the dimensions of SERVQUAL. The sample hotels have not fulfilled the expectations of their guests. The findings of the study imply that the management of selected hotels should understand the guests' expectation and standardize their relevant services with expectation, set proper standards and support them with necessary resources to minimize the gaps between perception and expectation.

Keywords: quality, hospitality services, customers.

1.0 Introduction

Service quality is critical to the success of any service oriented organization. Since there is a high level of customer interaction with various aspects of the organization in the delivery and consumption of services (Kandampully, 2000). Customers assess the quality of service by comparing their perception of service delivery and services they receive. Hence, service quality plays a crucial role in adding value to the overall service experience (Lau et al, 2005). Service quality is highly significant to attract and retain customers, to increase the market share and profitability, to reduce costs (Klidas et al, 2007; Sureshchanda et al, 2001). Moreover, service quality also influences purchase intentions of customers (Sandoff, M, (2005), and is used by some organizations to strategically position themselves in the competition to gain sustainable competitive advantage (Nadiri and Hussain, 2005).

During the past decades, the tourism industry has become one of the most important players of economies worldwide. This important industry has many infrastructures and service institutions in its category among which the most important infrastructure is the hotel industry. In this connection, maintaining and measuring customer satisfaction of service delivery is one of the most important aspects of improvement of quality of service organization. According to Juwaheer and Ross (2003), from commercial perspective hospitality is a special kind of relationship between service providers and customers where the service provider understands the needs and demands of the customer and gives pleasure to the customers. Without delivering quality services the hospitality industry. Similar aspects of service quality were reported by Wuest (2001), in tourism, hospitality, and leisure businesses which raised guest satisfaction; enhanced service provider's image; ensuring customer security; generating traffic linking to profits, saving costs, and higher market share; and establishing a competitive edge, and customer demand.

The service industries like banking industry, transport industry, education industry, health care industry, hotel industry are playing a significant role in the economic development of a country like Bangladesh. As like as other industries, emerging hotel industry in Bangladesh is also contributing significantly. Now, the hospitality industry in Bangladesh is dominated by a vibrant private sector. This industry has become enriched in general. The hotel industry is investing increasingly to improve operational efficiency and productivity, reduce cost, and increase guests' satisfaction in order to enhance service quality (Ispas, 2011; Kouthouris & Alexandris, 2005; Kim et al., 2013). Nature of service encounters and service delivery structure have been changed

drastically, so it is necessary to focus on understanding customers. Due to the drastically changed nature of service encounters and the structure of service delivery, scholarly attention has been focused on understanding customers' perception on the quality of service delivery by the hotels in Bangladesh. The characteristics of services vary from industry to industry. The service characteristics are heterogeneous, inseparable, and intangible (Frochot & Hughes, 2000). So, measuring service quality for hotel industry is an easy task. There is still a lack of research in terms of the assessment of service quality in hotel industry, especially in the domain of developing countries, notably in Bangladesh. The practical implication of this article is that it helps to identify which dimension(s) should be taken into consideration by service providers when developing a service quality assessment for hospitality industry. Particularly, the results will assist the service providers of hotel industry to find out any gaps between a provider and guests and to identify the problems related to specific dimension of services.

2.0 Hotel Industry in Bangladesh

Since the independence of Bangladesh, Dhaka was dependent on Pan Pacific Sonargaon and Dhaka Sheraton (now Ruposhi Bangla). Now the Westin Dhaka, Radisson Blue Water Garden Hotel, Dhaka Regency Hotel & Resort and Hotel Sarina have enriched Dhaka's hospitality industry. Together they are offering about 1400 five star quality rooms. There are about seven other hotels including Hotel Orchard Plaza, Hotel Washington, Best Western La Vinci, Lake Shore Hotel & Apartments, Platinum Suites, Royal Park Residence, Ascott the Residence which are offering about 500 three to four star rooms. The hotel sector in Bangladesh has gradually evolved over time from an industry made up largely of small independent owners to one dominated by several major chains. Chittagong, the second largest city of the country, is mainly dependent on Hotel Agrabad and Hotel Peninsula. Out of which Hotel Agrabad provides five-star room facilities and Hotel Peninsula provides four-star quality hospitality services in Chittagong. The study focuses on the service quality of these two hotels. Another hotel Radisson Water Garden has very recently completed their construction but has not started commercially yet.

Right now we have government certified 7 five-star hotels (2 in Chittagong), 4 four-star hotels (1 in Chittagong) and 12 three-star hotels in the country. Besides these, Ocean Paradise Hotel and Resort in Cox's Bazar is keeping all facilities of a five star hotel. Some 11 more hotels with brand like Hilton, Hotel Sheraton, two Le Meridians (one in Airport Road and the other in Banani), two Westins (one more in Dhaka and one in Chittagong) Six Seasons, Platinum Suits 2, Heritage Hotel, ASCOT, Marriot Court Yard are the pipeline which is expected to start operation by 2016 offering 1700 rooms (Bangladesh Tourism Board, 2012).

So, there is a vibrant possibility is of hotel industry in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has got the world's longest sea beach- Cox's Bazar- and the largest mangrove forest- the Sundarbans. Hotel industry can play an important role here in Bangladesh. If the hotel industry can be branded, it will take a place after garment sector in the economy in earning foreign currency.

3.0 Literature Review

The SERVQUAL instrument has been applied to different industries with excellent validity and reliability (Bolton and Drew, 1991; Cronin et al., 1992), such as professional services (Freeman and Dart, 1993), health care (Lam, 1997), tourism (Tribe and Snaith, 1998), business school (Pariseau and McDaniel, 1997), and information systems (Kettinger and Lee, 1994). Service quality can be defined as the conformance to the requirements of customers in the delivery of a service (Juwaher, 2007). Service quality is an intangible and elusive construct, and customers' perception regarding service quality is generally measured in the absence of objective measures. SERVPERF was proposed as an alternative to SERVQUAL measurement instrument. SERVPERF includes the same 22 items that comprise the SERVQUAL scale; however, while SERVQUAL emphasizes on the gap between customers' expectation and perception, SERVPERF focuses on performance-only approach. SERVQUAL has been proven to have superior measurement power, whereas, SERVPERF shows more convergent and discriminate validity along with more variance (Curry, & Sinclair, 2002).

Garvin (1987) was one of the pioneer scholars who examined the quality concepts to cover both goods and services. According to Garvin (1987), perceived quality is the subjective perception of customers about quality through comparing with indirect measures of quality. Bhat (2012), mentioned that perceived service quality is the outcome of comparing the actual experience with the expectation of a customer before getting the service. Based on the notion of perceived service quality, Parasuraman et al. (1985) applied premises from other previous studies to establish a model of service quality gaps. It is difficult to evaluate quality of services rather than quality of goods because a perception of service quality is developed from a comparison of consumer expectation with actual service performance. Moreover, evaluation of service quality evaluation involved the assessment of both the process and outcome of service delivery. Therefore, service quality gap denotes the gap between customer's expectations (E) or what the service should provide and the customer's perception (P) of what the service actually provides (Shahin, 2006).

The concept of service quality was started after there had been an increasing importance in the quality of goods served. Parasuraman et al. (1985) developed the SERVQUAL model wherein service quality is defined as the difference between a customer's general expectation of a service and his or her perceptions of service performance. The SERVQUAL instrument is a broadly used model with practical effectiveness that can be applied comparatively with a view to benchmarking (Bryson & Curry, 2001). Beside the initial application of SERVQUAL in field of repair and maintenance, banking, telecommunication, securities brokerage, and credit cards, it has been used to measure service quality in the health care sector (Butt & De Run, 2010; Suki, Lian, & Suki, 2011), retail chains (Sum & Hui, 2009), physiotherapy (Curry & Sinclair, 2002), education service (Shekarchizadeh, Rasli, & Hon-Tat, 2011; Udo, Bagchi, & Kirs, 2011), the transport sector (Barabino, Deiana, & Tilocca, 2012), and among websites (Nemati, Gazor, MirAshrafi, & Ameleh, 2012). Originally, the conceptual model of Parasuraman et al. (1985), included 10 dimensions of service quality, which are reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, creditability, security, understanding/knowing the customer, and tangibles. Subsequently, Parasuraman et al. (1988) summarized 10 dimensions into five by means of factor analysis as; tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The explanation of five dimensions of service quality is given as:

- i. Tangibility: Elements which are physically visible; such as: aesthetics of physical facilities, tools, employees, and communication items.
- ii. Reliability: The ability to render the promised services consistently and correctly. This dimension refers to fulfilling promises related to delivery, pricing, and dealing with complaints.
- iii. Responsiveness: The eagerness of employees to provide customers with support in a time fashion. This dimension indicates positive attitudes of employees to deliver services and requires employees to give attention to requests, questions, and complaints of customers.
- iv. Assurance: The level of knowledge and duties and responsibilities of employees and their capability of demonstrating trust and confidence.
- v. Empathy: The attitudes of caring and customized attention given by employees of a service organization to its customers.

The purpose of developing SERVQUAL scale by Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988), was to form a generic model to measure service quality across a wide range of service categories. In a study of Ladhari (2009), on the critical assessment of studies and researches relating to quality and satisfaction over last 20 years, he concluded that original scale of SERVQUAL should not used in all perspective, as it is better to take it or even change it as it is better to adapt it or even transform it according relating to the industry-specific situation, in which the research is will be taken place. This indicates that one uniform instrument of service quality may not be applied for all services and perceived service quality is dependent upon the type of service offered (Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2007).

3.1 Service Quality in Hotel Industry

Due to the development of service quality measurement instrument, some scholars of hospitality industry have recommended that the role of service quality should be taken into consideration when investigating the issues of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and when going to attract new guests or secure repeat guests (Zhao & Di Benedetto, 2013). The researches in the field of hotel industry recognized that delivering superior-quality service is one of the vital aspects to be successful (Atilgan, Akinci, & Aksoy, 2003). Evaluation of service quality may find out the performance of a service provider in meeting the demands and requirements of guests according to their perceptions (Mohamed, 2007). Moreover, measurement of service quality can also help a hotel/motel/resort in determining and prioritizing the needs, wants, and expectations of guests. In addition, such an evaluation of service quality may facilitate a business to set up yardsticks in fulfilling the needs and demands of guests (Khan, 2003) and can have an effect on the intention of future (Tian-Cole & Crompton, 2003).

Service quality in the hospitality industry receives mounting interest (Hudson et al., 2004) and most of the studies use the SERVQUAL model to measure service quality. SERVQUAL has been applied to assess service quality in different sectors like hotel (Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2007), restaurant (Qin & Prybutok, 2008), and airline tourism (Pakdil & Aydin, 2007). Akan (1995), examined the dimensions of the SERVQUAL and measure the level of importance of the dimensions on the customers of four and five star hotels in Turkey. He found seven dimensions including courtesy and competence of the personnel, communication and transactions, tangibles, knowing and understanding the customer, accuracy and speed of service, solutions to problems, and accuracy of hotel reservations among which, courtesy and competence of hotel personnel were the most significant dimensions influencing the perception of quality.

Enz and Siguaw (2000) examined the best practices in service quality on the US hotel industry. Only a small number of hotels focused specifically on ensuring excellence in service, they did extremely well for one or more aspects of service; creating a service culture; building an empowered service-delivery system; facilitating a customer listening orientation; and developing responsive service guarantees. Mei et al. (1999) examined the

dimensions of service quality in hotel industry in Australia. They used the SERVQUAL approach as a foundation and developed a new scale called HOLSERV scale as a new instrument to measure service quality in the hotel industry. They concluded that service quality could be represented by three dimensions in the hotel industry as employees, tangibles, and reliability.

But, from the earlier studies it was found that SERVQUAL instrument does not cover all aspects of hospitality services that are important to guests (Akbaba, 2006; Briggs et al., 2007; Gilbert & Wong, 2009; Fick and Ritchie, 1991) examined the SERVQUAL in four service sectors of airline, hotel, restaurant, and skiing, and found that the scale does not appear to be totally suitable for all of the above mentioned service sectors and the number of dimensions in the Parasuraman et al. (1988) version of the SERVQUAL instrument seems too limited.

3.2 Gap Analysis

SERVQUAL defines customer's evaluation of quality as a function of the gap between expected service and perceived service. Gap analysis defines service quality in terms of the difference between what the service should provide and the customer's perception of what the service actually provides. Parasuraman et al., (1988), identified the five gaps that can result in unsuccessful service delivery and how it affects the industry from the client perspective, which are; gap between customer expectation and management perception, gap between management's perception and service quality specifications, gap between service delivery and service specifications, service delivery and external communications, and gap between perceived service and delivered service.

4.0 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is evaluating the quality of services delivered by five star hotels in Chittagong, Bangladesh. In order to attain the main objective, following specific objectives have been identified:

- i. To analyze the service quality of the selected hotels in Chittagong.
- ii. To identify the differences between customers' perception and customers' expectation regarding service delivery in five dimensions of service quality.
- iii. To give some recommendations so as to improve service quality for the sample hotels.

5.0 Methodology of the Study

For the five dimensions of service quality as; tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, the items of questionnaire were adopted from Akama and Kieti (2003). After rephrasing of several questions, the final questionnaire consisting of 22 items was prepared. The SERVQUAL items were determined on 5-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). This study was conducted at Chittagong, Bangladesh, the commercial capital city of Bangladesh. The main reason for choosing Chittagong as the area of study was that it is the main port city of Bangladesh where many guests national and international have to come and stay in Chittagong, as well as it naturally beautiful city where many tourist come to visit different tourist area.

The information was obtained from guests of two five-star hotels in Chittagong through distributing questionnaires by a team of five field researchers. The five field researchers were briefly trained on how to approach the respondents and on the procedures for carrying out face-to-face surveys. Of the guests who were staying at least one night at the selected hotels in Chittagong during the time the survey was conducted, the questionnaires were successfully distributed to 78 respondents, and all respondents returned the questionnaires. Out of 76 questionnaires, 11 questionnaires were discarded as they were not completed. However, 65 questionnaires were used in data analysis. Thus, the usable response rate was 89.47%. Cronbach's alpha (an index of reliability) was also performed on each dimension. The results of reliability test are shown Table 4, table 5, table 6, table 7 and table 8. The result reveals that for all the 22 items of 5 dimensions, Cronbach's alpha is above 0.6 and support the internal consistency of the items forming each dimension (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Frequency, percentage, average and standard deviation were used to analyze the data and discuss the results. Service quality gaps were computed using the SERVQUAL principle to measure mean scores of the visitors' expectations as well as perceptions—SERVQUAL principle is based on the notion of service quality including performance as well as expectations. The overall service quality of hospitality services was estimated when mean SERVQUAL mean scores on all dimensions of service quality were computed one by one.

6.0 Analysis of Data

6.1 Analysis of Gender by Frequency

Table 1: Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid male	56	82.35	82.35	82.35
Valid female	12	17.65	17.65	100.0
Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows that total number of sample size collected was 68 out of which 56 (82.35%) were male respondents and only 12 (17.65%) were female respondents. So, the majority of the respondents were male guests.

6.2 Analysis of Age by Frequency

Table 2: Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 16-25 years	2	2.9	2.9	2.9
Valid 26-35 years	17	25.0	25.0	27.9
Valid 36-45 years	31	45.7	45.7	73.6
Valid 46-55 years	16	23.5	23.5	97.1
Valid 56 years and above	2	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total	68	100.0		

Table 2 represents the analysis of age of the respondents. From table 2 it is seen that 45.7% (n=31) respondents were in the age group of 36-45 years, 25.0% (n=17) respondents were between the age of 25 years and 29 years, and 23.5% (n=16) respondents were in the age group of 25-29 years. Only 2.9 % (n=2) of the respondents were in age group of both 16-25 years, and 56 years and above. So, out of 68 sample size most of the guests (97.1%) of sample hotels under study are between age of 26 years and 55 years.

6.3 Analysis of Marital Status

Table 3: Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid single	13	19.11	19.11	19.11
Valid married	55	80.89	80.89	100.0
Total	68	100.0		

Table 3 demonstrates frequency of respondents regarding their marital status. It is noticed from table 3 that 80.89% (n=55) of the respondents were married and only 19.11% (n=13) of the respondent were single. So, most of the respondents of sample under study were married.

Table 4: Educational Qualifications

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Below Secondary	2	2.94	2.94	2.94
Valid Secondary	6	8.82	8.82	11.76
Valid HSC/Diploma	8	11.76	11.76	23.52
Valid Bachelors Degree	17	25.00	25.00	48.52
Valid Master Degree	32	47.07	47.07	95.59
Valid PhD	3	4.41	4.41	100.00
Total	68	100.0		

The result of educational qualification of the respondents who were selected as a sample for the study is shown in the table 4. It is noted from table 4 that 47.07% (n=32) of respondents were qualified with Master Degree and 25.0 % (n=17) respondents have got Bachelors Degree as educational qualification, 11.76% (n=8) and 8.82% (n=6) of the respondents have had educational qualifications with HSC/Diploma and Secondary Degree respectively. Only, 4.41 % (n=3) and 2.94% (n=2) were qualified with PhD and below the secondary education. Hence, most of the respondents were qualified with university/bachelor degree (47.07%), Master Degree (25.0%).

6.4 Analysis of Service Quality Dimensions

In this section, the mean scores of different items have been calculated based on the opinions given by the respondents of their perceptions and expectations towards the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model. The

differences between expectation and perceptions of guest have been calculated to find out whether are there any differences between expectation and perceptions.

6.5 Analysis of Tangibility

Table 4: Tangibility

Items	Alpha	Std. Deviation	Mean		SQ Gap (P-E)
			Perception	Expectation	
Physical facilities and equipment are visually arranged and in good condition	0.82	1.08002	3.79	4.08	-0.29
Information centre provides relevant and accurate information	0.79	.90479	3.85	4.23	-0.38
Adequate transport facilities are available	0.76	.84731	4.08	4.13	-0.05
There is easy access of physical facilities.	0.74	.87983	3.97	4.05	-0.08
Hotel staffs are disciplined and neat and clean.	0.71	.78932	4.17	4.32	-0.15
Overall Mean and Service Quality Gap			3.97	4.16	-0.19

There are five items included in the tangibility dimension of SERVQUAL model. The results regarding five items of tangibility have been shown in the table 4. It is seen from table 4 that in case of mean scores of perception, the item namely “hotel staffs are disciplined and neat and clean” has got the highest mean score (4.17), whereas, the item of “physical facilities and equipment are visually arranged and in good condition” has the lowest mean score (3.79). The overall mean score of all the items is 3.97 which is very near to 4.0 that indicates “agree” level. So, it can be said that overall perception of the customers is about to the “agree” level or which is above the neutral level. In terms of mean scores of items regarding expectation of guests, it perceived from the table that all the mean scores are above the agree level and overall mean score is equivalent to 4.16. It is also noticed that the expectations of guest were higher than that of the services actually provided by the sample hotels. The customers expected the most services from the staff to maintain neat and cleanliness of the hotels and information desk to provide them with relevant and accurate information. As regards the service quality gaps calculated in the table 4, it is observed that the highest gap (-0.38) is related to providing relevant and accurate information and the lowest gap (-0.05) is about available transport facilities. All the items have got negative differences which indicate that the sample hotels need to focus on the improvement of services related to tangibility in order to fulfill the expectations of guests with special emphasis on providing relevant and authentic information.

6.6 Analysis of Reliability

Table 5: Reliability

Items	Alpha	Std. Deviation	Mean		SQ Gap (P-E)
			Perception	Expectation	
The staff provides prompt services.	0.86	.90479	3.19	4.32	-1.13
The staff provides on-time services.	0.83	.84731	3.90	4.00	-0.10
The staff provides accurate information.	0.78	.87983	4.01	4.04	-0.03
There are available facilities of the room.	0.73	.78932	3.90	4.05	-0.15
Overall Mean and Service Quality Gap			3.75	4.10	-0.35

Table 5 shows the analysis of service quality related to the reliability dimension that includes 4 items. It is noticed from table 5 that the highest difference between the provided service and expected service in case of providing prompt services by the staff (-1.13), whereas the least difference is in case of providing accurate information by the staff (-0.03), that indicates there is very nominal difference between perception and expectation of services which may be due to keeping employees update with latest and accurate information about different issues of the hotel. There might be different causes of not providing prompt services as the employees either could not understand the importance of delivering prompt services or relevant training were not given to the employees. The overall service quality of reliability dimension is equivalent to -0.35 that indicates that reliability dimension has not met the expectation of guests.

6.7 Analysis of Responsiveness

Table 6: Responsiveness

Items	Alpha	Std. Deviation	Mean		SQ Gap (P-E)
			Perception	Expectation	
The staffs are willing to assist guests.	0.84	1.05443	4.00	4.18	-0.18
The staff responds to tourists' question(s) and request(s).	0.81	.88507	4.06	4.20	-0.14
The staff provides details regarding services and products offered	0.75	1.04768	3.96	4.13	-0.17
The staffs greet and welcome the guests.	0.68	.70218	3.85	4.04	-0.19
Overall Mean and Service Quality Gap			3.97	4.14	-0.17

The results regarding the analysis of difference between the provided services and expectation of guests in terms of responsiveness are displayed in table 6. It is observed from the table 6 that the overall average of responsiveness regarding their perceptions of provided service is 3.97 with an average of 4.14 in view of expectation. According to the SERVQUAL model, service quality of responsiveness is equivalent to -0.17. It shows that the guests' perception in this dimension is lower than that of guests' expectation and service delivery has not fulfill their expectation in terms of responsiveness.

6.8 Analysis of Assurance

Table 7: Assurance

Items	Alpha	Std. Deviation	Mean		SQ Gap (P-E)
			Perception	Expectation	
Guests feel safe and secure to stay in the hotel.	0.79	1.01388	3.57	3.87	-0.30
The staffs consistently provide courteous services.	0.74	.70072	3.75	4.07	-0.32
The staff has the knowledge necessary to answer questions and queries.	0.70	.97794	3.76	3.89	-0.13
The establishment provides adequate safety facilities	0.63	.84561	3.73	3.76	-0.03
Overall Mean and Service Quality Gap of Assurance			3.70	3.89	-0.19

It is seen from table 7 that the overall average of perception of assurance dimension is 3.70 and the average of expectation is 3.89. The average of expectation is higher than that of perception. So, the service quality of assurance is rated at -0.19. Due to why there is a difference between perception of service delivery and expectation of services in view of assurance and the expectations of guests regarding assurance have not been fulfilled.

6.9 Analysis of Empathy

Table 8: Empathy

Items	Alpha	Std. Deviation	Mean		SQ Gap (P-E)
			Perception	Expectation	
The staff provides personal attention to the guests.	0.91	.71846	3.97	4.15	-0.18
The staff understands the specific needs of guests.	0.82	.74751	3.89	4.16	-0.27
The facilities and equipments are conveniently located.	0.74	.89934	3.88	4.17	-0.29
There are available comfortable facilities	0.71	.95727	3.88	4.42	-0.54
There is adequate supply of water.	0.67	.84340	4.05	4.34	-0.29
Overall Mean and Service Quality Gap of Empathy			3.93	4.25	-0.32

In terms of fifth dimension namely empathy of SERVQUAL model, the overall average of perception is 3.93 and the average of expectation is 4.25 which is higher than the average of perception. Since the average of expectation is higher than the average of perception, so there is a difference between expectation of guests and perceptions of provided services by the hotels. The service quality of empathy is rated as -0.32. Hence, the delivery of services was not up to the mark of expectation in view of empathy.

6.10 Overall Service Quality

Table 10: SERVQUAL Mean Scores of All Dimensions

Items	Mean		SQ Gap (P-E)
	Perception(P)	Expectation(E)	
Tangibility	3.97	4.16	-0.19
Reliability	3.75	4.10	-0.35
Responsiveness	3.97	4.14	-0.17
Assurance	3.70	3.89	-0.19
Empathy	3.93	4.25	-0.32
Overall Service Quality Gap	3.86	4.11	-0.24

Table 10 shows the outcome of service quality gaps used in the SERVQUAL standards to measure mean scores of the guests' expectations as well as perceptions. SERVQUAL standard is based on the notion of service quality including performance as well as expectations. The overall service quality of hospitality services was measured by calculating the mean scores of SERVQUAL on all dimensions of service quality. According to results, service quality selected hotels, to some extent, is below the expectations of guests (-0.24). Service quality on all the dimensions namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, as shown in the table 10, are -0.19, -0.35, -0.17, -0.19, and -0.32 respectively. A small SERVQUAL score (-0.24) noticeably shows that hospitability services of the sample hotels drop to some extent below the expectations of guests. Specifically, management must give priority to reliability and empathy where, where the SERVQUAL gaps are relatively higher to enhance the overall quality of services.

Management of perceived service quality implies that the service providers of hotel industry must emphasize mainly on to create a consistency between the expected services and the perceived service to meet the expectations guests. To reduce the gap between the expectations and perceptions of services, the people engaged in the management of services should do their best to keep and fulfill their promises. Hence, service providers of hotel industry should try to provide the guests with such a high level of quality services that it is beyond the perceived expectations of guests. In this case, the guests would be satisfied and surprised by the quality of the perceived service that may create sensation about services of hotels among them.

7.0 Conclusion

The study aims to evaluate the service quality of five star hotels in Chittagong, Bangladesh. To attain this objective, a questionnaire survey, consisting of 22 items, was used to collect data from the selected hotels. The sample consists of 68 customers who were staying at the hotels. The data were analyzed through computing means, standard deviations, gaps between perceptions and expectations of customers. The SERVQUAL instrument developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985) has been used in this study. There are five dimensions of service quality namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The results of the study indicate that the service quality is negative for all the dimensions i.e. Tangibility (-0.19), reliability (-0.35), responsiveness (-0.17), assurance (-0.19), and empathy (-0.32). There is difference between perceptions of service delivery and expectations of guests regarding the service quality of hotels. In others words, the expectations of customers have not been fulfilled in all the dimensions of service quality.

So, the managers should understand the guests' expectation and standardize relevant services with their expectation. The hotel management should set the proper standards and support them with necessary resources and facilities and to minimize gaps in cooperation with the staffs to establish an organizational culture so that all would comply with the service quality rules and standards. The quality and quantity of services in different seasons should also be evaluated to identify the present deficiencies on the basis of quests expectation and perceptions, enabling them to remove deficiencies and to improve the quality. Since the quality is changeable, so it may take different shapes according to different needs of customers. The role of staff is important in providing better services and it is recommended to make the efforts to elect, evaluate, employ and train the best employee. Employee satisfaction should also be considered and their interest towards work needs to be improved.

Customers (guests) want the service providers to deliver their expected services with respect and honor.

This expectation tends to be higher in the hospitality industry where the customers are likely to be more educated than the customers of other industry (Fennell & Smale, 1992; Loker- Murphy, 1996). So the service providers of hotels in Chittagong, Bangladesh, can use the SERVQUAL instrument to measure service quality and improve it. Though there are certain limitations of the present study. First of all, the study was conducted only on two hotels in Chaittagong. Future researches should go to examine the service quality hospitality industry taking sample from other cities of Bangladesh to determine whether the results would be representative and same. In addition, this study centered only on the service quality perspective of hotels. No effort has been given to analyze the role of employees in hotels, with respect to the success of quality service programs (Sharpley & Forster, 2003). Earlier studies have shown that enhancement of service quality depends on

some factors like employee job satisfaction (Snipes, Oswald, LaTour, & Armenakis, 2005). Future studies should focus and examine the relationship between service quality dimensions and service quality performance in terms of guests' satisfaction, loyalty, and intention to resume the service.

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