expectation and perception of customers. The relationship and impact of service quality and customer satisfaction were also discussed in this chapter.

The seventh chapter presents summary of findings, suggestions, policy implications and direction for future research. Based on the analysis and interpretation, the researcher provides various suggestions to the Decision Makers for the improvement of service quality programme in star hotels in Tamil Nadu.

2.1 INTRODUCTION:

As service industries became a major component of most developed countries and competition intensified with increasing government deregulation, service providers sought to differentiate themselves with superior quality. Therefore, Service marketers have experienced for the past few years that competition can be well managed by differentiating through quality. There are exceptions where quality has traditionally been an internal affair, e.g., healthcare. Importance of service lies in customer service management. Customer service is viewed as a part of marketing mix in services marketing. In recent years thrust on efficient customer service has increased manifold in the service sector because of increased competition from private players, e.g., in the fast food sector, there is a stiff competition. With the entry of Mc Donald the world’s best quick service restaurant, Pizza Hut, Sub Way, etc., customer expectation from Indian
counterparts has increased. It has the customer service department and website to provide customer convenience, which most fast foods in India do not have. Service quality by its very nature is an elusive, indistinct and abstract concept. Customers do not easily articulate their requirements; also there are difficulties in delimiting and measuring the concept.

To the customer, the service means Customer Satisfaction, Customer Delight, Service Delivery, Customer Relationship, etc. Therefore interest in managing the services through customer service is considerably high. It requires setting customer service objectives in terms of relative importance of customer service elements. In other words, while considering levels of performance in setting customer service objectives, service companies need to take into account the importance of service quality variables such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.

The term ‘Quality’ is defined jointly by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the American Society of Quality (ASQ) as “the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy given needs”.

Quality in service is very important especially for the growth and development of service sector business enterprises (Powell, 1995). It works as an antecedent of

customer satisfaction (Ruyter and Bloemer 1995). In the past, quality was measured only for the tangible products because of less dominance of service sector in the economy. Due to the increasing importance of service sector in the economy, the measurement of service quality became important. Hotel is essentially a high contact service industry and there is a close interaction between service provider and the customers.

Service marketing is different from goods marketing because of the inherent difference in services as compared to goods. The service is intangible, heterogeneous, production and consumption takes place simultaneously and it is perishable. These results show the challenges based by the service business and have given rise to the need for new concepts and approaches for marketing and managing service businesses.

Quality

Many researchers have struggled with the issue of how to measure service quality. In manufacturing, quality is defined by the degree of compliance between stated goals and achieved targets. It is therefore easy to measure and confirm to a standard. In services it becomes difficult to comprehend the concept of quality and measure it. This is due to the mother of all characteristics for services, the intangibility factor and it makes measurement and assessment of service quality extremely challenging. Quality in service

has two window viewpoints. There are two perspectives of quality measurement: internal and external. According to internal perspective, it is defined as zero defects, doing it right the first time, or conformance to requirements. The external perspective understands this aspect it in terms of customer perception, customer expectation, customer satisfaction, customer attitude and customer delight.

An ISO standard is one of the measurement tools of service quality, where quality is defined as the totality of features and characteristics of a product, process or service. Crossby (1979), a renowned researcher in service quality defined it as the ‘conformance to requirements’.

The guru of quality movement Juran (1992) defined quality as ‘fitness for use’ while Lewis (2001) viewed quality as a process promising to result in products or services. Parasuraman et al., (1994) explained quality as a gap between what customers feel should be offered and what is provided.

2.2 DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY

In services marketing literature, service quality has been reported as a second order construct, being composed of several first–order variables. Various authors have provided different conceptualizations over the time.

Lehtinen and Lehtinen’s (1982)\(^47\) observed in the research that quality has three components – interactive, physical and corporate quality.

Gronroos (1982)\(^48\) stated that quality can be understood by understanding the three core service performance component structures, such as technical, functional and reputational quality.

The results of the explorative study conducted by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985)\(^49\) reinforced the importance of process attributes in customers’ evaluation of service quality and revealed a set of ten evaluative dimensions.


Lewis and Nightingale (1987) stated that a consumer of a service seeks to satisfy a set of needs and wants, partly related to the essential service and partly to subsidiary attributes. For example, the main purpose might be a hotel stay and the subsidiary attributes may include accessibility, convenience, timing and flexibility and interaction with service providers and other customers. They would have expectations on how all these needs and wants will be met. When presented with actual offering of these multiple variables, they will form impressions, which immediately compared to expectations, and the level of satisfactions was determined by these perceived service quality.

David A. Garvin (1988) identified eight service quality dimensions, such as performance, features, reliability, conformance, durability, serviceability, aesthetics and perceived quality.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry’s (1988) conceptualized the service quality into five dimensions: Tangibles (T), Reliability (R), Responsiveness (R), Assurance (A),

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and Empathy (E), which eventually led to the development of SERVQUAL. The dimensions are:

**Tangibles:** Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel.

**Reliability:** Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately

**Responsiveness:** Willingness to help customers and prompt service.

**Assurance:** Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.

**Empathy:** Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.

Hedvall and Paltchik (1989) explained the two dimensions of service quality as—willingness and ability to serve, and physical and psychological access of service provider.

Cronin and Taylor (1992) have warned against the tendency to concentrate on more tangible aspects of service delivery, just because they are easier to measure and

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highlight the neglect of intangible aspects. They argue that, in order to successfully implement a market–led quality improvement initiative, an integrated approach focusing on quality of both tangible and intangible aspects of all market offering is required.

Oliver and Rust’s (1994)\(^{55}\) recommended that to measure the service quality, service has to be understood by separating the functional quality, technical quality and environment quality of service but Edvardsson (1996)\(^{56}\) had highlighted that the concept of service should be approached from the customer's point of view, since it was his/her perception of the outcome that constituted the service. Customers may have different values and different grounds for assessment and, most of the time; they may perceive the same service in different ways.

Getty and Getty (2003)\(^{57}\) stated that no matter how much effort is placed into producing quality service, it is the perception of customers that really matters. Customer satisfaction can be secured through high-quality products and services.


Sachdev and Verma (2004)\textsuperscript{58} observed that external perspectives became important in the light of increasing consumer awareness, changing consumer tastes, and growing consumer expectations.

G. Ronald Gilbert et al (2004)\textsuperscript{59} found that businesses will need to examine the suitability of their business approaches so they can continue to satisfy new customers with different cultural expectations pertaining to product and service quality. The study reveals two empirically derived, cross-cultural fast-food customer satisfaction dimensions namely known as Satisfaction with personal service (Sat Pers), and Satisfaction with the service setting (Sat Sett).

2.3. BENEFITS OF SERVICE QUALITY

Many researchers proved that service quality have significant relationship with profitability, return on investment (ROI), brand loyalty, positive word of mouth, purchase repetition, lower manufacturing costs, Improving productivity, market share and


customer retention (Buzell and Gale, 1987; Allio and Patten, 1991; Parasuraman et al., 1991; Crosby, 1979; Garvin, 1983; Anderson and Zeithaml, 1984; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990 and Rust and Zahorik, 1993)

Researchers also proved the relationship between service quality and the realization of organisational long term goals, lowering production cost, Less employee turnover and customer satisfaction (Delvin and Dong, 1996; Tucci and Talaga, 1997).


In hotel industry, the service quality have positive relationship with Customer satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Occupancy rate, Return patronage, Repeat purchase, Profitability, Revenue available per room, Financial returns, Market share, Long survival and Employee retention (Kivela et al, 1999; Sheryl, 1999; Inbakaran and Reece, 2000 and Yeung et al, 2002)


Gill et al (2004)\textsuperscript{74} analyzed the nature of, and relationship between, a quality service initiative and the concept of strategic human resource development. Hilton International is the case study used for this analysis. The principal finding was that the quality initiative is acting as a catalyst for a strategic approach to human resource development.

Klara (2005)\textsuperscript{75} claims that wealth of customer-service studies have proved that the number of times a restaurant can experience service failures is two. The third service failure will see customers move to competitors. However, there is evidence to suggest that handling a customer’s problem effectively can actually make for a more loyal customer. The importance of service quality is reflected in research that has demonstrated the cost of acquiring a new customer is between five and thirty times higher than that of keeping an existing customer.

Yoo and Jeong Ah Park (2007)\textsuperscript{76} proposed a research to answer the question, “How firms can enhance their service quality to increase customer satisfaction and thus


financial performance?”. In answer to this question, four factors (i.e. employees, perceived service quality, customers, and financial performance) are critical to the success of service firms. This research provides empirical evidence that customer satisfaction mediates between perceived service quality and financial performance. This research may help service firms understand how the important elements (i.e. employees, customers, perceived service quality, and financial performance) interact to influence the overall performance.

2.4. INTRODUCTION TO SERVQUAL

Among the definitions of service quality that measure the external perspective, the one given by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985)\textsuperscript{77}, seems particularly useful. They define service quality as the degree and direction of discrepancy between consumer’s perceptions and expectations in terms of different, but relatively important dimensions of the service quality, which can affect their future behaviour. The idea that service quality is a function of the expectations – (minus) performance gap was reinforced by a broad based exploratory study that conducted by the above said researchers. Based on the


results, they defined service quality as the degree and direction of discrepancy between customer’s service perceptions and expectations.

In the review of literature, there are several authors who have also proposed service quality attributes that customers use as criteria in evaluating quality of service. It carries from the process of service delivery: Levels of Material, Facilities, and personnel or Technical quality, which involves what customers actually receives from the service (i.e., the outcome of the service) and Functional quality which involves the manner in which customers receive the service (i.e., the process of service delivery) or Physical Quality, involves physical aspects associated with the service such as equipment or building; Corporate quality, involves service firm’s image or reputation; and interactive quality, involving interactions between service personnel and customer, and etc.

But a common theme cutting across these various attributes is that customers evaluate service on the basis of not only its outcome but also the process associated with it. The results of the explorative study conducted by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) reinforced the importance of process attributes in customers’ evaluation of service quality and revealed a set of ten evaluative dimensions. Starting with the ten dimensions, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988)\textsuperscript{78} conducted empirical studies in several sectors to develop and refine SERVQUAL, a multiple-item instrument to quantify the service

expectation-perception gap along five generic dimensions as explained in the review of
literature.

SERVQUAL provides management and key players with feedback about the
organization’s ability to provide quality service. The results of a service quality audit
assist management to identify service strengths and weaknesses (Gaps). The benefit to
the organization is that specialist groups such as Marketing and Human Resources are
able to support the business plan’s focus on customers by continuously listening to the
customer - using a service quality information system - and making needed changes to
the above 5 key drivers that influence customers' perceptions of service quality.

2.5. SERVICE QUALITY PROCESS GAP ANALYSIS

Quality in services is conceptualized as a construct belonging to customer’s field
of perception. It tends to be a subjective assessment of what is provided. Customer’s
perception of service quality is shaped by a comparison between the expected service
and the experienced service. The net outcome is this comparison between expected and
perceived quality can take different attitude in the minds of customer. If the perceived
quality is good then the customer’s perceived service quality exceeds the expected level
of quality. On the contrary, if the perceived service remains lower than expected service
quality it would be considered as bad. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) 79

developed a model of service quality. This model conceptualized quality perceptions of
customers as a gap between expected service and perceived service. The discrepancy
between expected service and perceived service is caused by the presence of various
gaps in the service design process to service delivery.

The service quality model was derived from the magnitude and direction of five
``gaps" which are:

1. Understanding: the difference between consumer expectations and management
   perceptions of consumer expectations.

2. Service standards: the difference between management perceptions of consumer
   expectations and service quality specifications.

3. Service performances: the difference between service quality specifications and the
   service actually delivered.

4. Communications: the difference between service delivery and what is communicated
   about the service to consumers.

5. Service quality: the difference between customer expectations of service quality and
   customer perceptions of the organization's performance.
Nelson Tsang and Hailin Qu (2000) observed that there are other two gaps which are not the part of the Gap Model proposed by Parasuraman et al. During their research on China Hotel Industry, they observed that number of studies have shown that there were considerable differences in expectations of service quality between customers and management in the hotel industry.

A study by Nightingale (1986) found very strong evidence that management perceptions of service quality frequently differ from the perceptions of customers, colleagues and staff. Lewis (1987) measured the service quality gap in the hotel industry, comparing management perceptions of guest expectations and the actual expectations of the guests themselves, and found that, for the most part, management believed that guests expected more than they in fact did.

Two additional gaps in service quality model

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Apart from the original five gaps proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985), there are two additional gaps that have been identified and that were not included in the original service quality model (Lewis, 1987).

**Gap 6:** The difference is between consumer perceptions of service delivery and management perception of service delivery: This gap is pertinent to the simple question, `Do managers overestimate their organization's service delivery in meeting customer expectations of service quality in Tamil Nadu hotel industry?` Lewis found that managers in the hotel industry tended to be very self-assured and they believed they knew best. Thus, they perceived their service delivery as being more than customers perceived it to be, in most cases.

**Gap 7:** The difference between manager's perception of customers' expectations and manager's perception of its service delivery: This gap measures the internal situation: `Does management believe they deliver as much as they believe customers expect?` Measuring management perceptions of service quality is just as important as measuring consumers' perceptions, because management perceptions of service quality directly affects service quality standards.

Measurement of the gap (Gap 7) between management perceptions of consumer expectations and management perceptions of an organization's service quality delivery
could help us to know whether or not management has confidence in meeting customers' expectations. (Figure 2.1 Service quality model)

The first four gaps (Gap 1, Gap 2, Gap 3 and Gap 4) affect the way in which service is delivered, and the existence of these four gaps leads to the extent of Gap 5. In other words, the extent of Gap 5 depends on the size and direction of the first four gaps. However, Gap 2, Gap 3 and Gap 4 are not relevant to the research scope of the present study. The principal focus of the present research is Gap 5, Gap 1 and the two additional gaps (Gap 6 and Gap 7) which are identified in the model.

This extended service quality gap model was adopted by various researchers to study service quality gaps in the hotel industry (Shahin et al., 2006; Luk and Layton, 2006).

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The researcher of this thesis measured the service quality of hotels and using the extended SERVQUAL gap model.

The present study employs two questionnaires to measure the Hoteliers perception of customer expectation and its gap, customer expectation and perception of service by hoteliers and its gap. An Industry specific scale and five-dimension structure of service quality described by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry’s in their SERVQUAL model had been used.

Rohini and Mahadevappa (2006) propose the following advantages of using SERVQUAL:

- It is accepted as a standard for assessing different dimensions of service quality.
- It has been shown to be valid for a number of service situations. It has been known to be reliable.
- The instrument is parsimonious in that it has a limited number of items. This means that customers and employers can fill it out quickly.

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• It has a standardized analysis procedure to aid interpretation and results

A number of studies applied or modified the SERVQUAL instrument to measure service quality in the hospitality industry. Several specific instruments were developed based on the SERVQUAL approach. Lee and Hing (1995)\textsuperscript{87} supported the SERVQUAL application in measuring service quality because it was relatively simple and inexpensive; provided benefits to entrepreneurs for developing better tailored marketing; and was comparable in tracking the service quality of different firms in the same business sector.

2.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hotel industry plays an important role in tourism and the service sector in the economy. The industry faces many problems like infrastructure bottlenecks and hectic competition. The hotel, which understands the customer’s expectations and delivers the right service to the needed customers at a reasonable price, can succeed in the hotel industry. For that purpose, the hoteliers should understand the services offered and the service gap in the organization. There are many research works related to services marketing and hotel industry. But, only a minimal number of research studies are related to service quality in the hospitality industry in the Indian context. Even the research attention towards hospitality industry has been growing.

Freedman (1994)\textsuperscript{88} advocates the importance of service quality in determining customer satisfaction stating that the satisfaction with the service depends largely on how it is delivered. Freedman argues that the hospitality industry competes on the quality of service provided by their employees.

Min and Min (1997)\textsuperscript{89} reported that to maintain competitiveness, the hotel management often needs to develop reliable service quality standards. One of the best ways of developing such standards is to compare the hotel’s performance by Benchmarking. There were established practical guidelines for competitive benchmarking to the Korean Luxury Hotels.

Sheryl (1999)\textsuperscript{90} reports that hotels with at least one quality defect in the interior, the guest room, and the guest bath had a revenue per available room per day (RevPAR) of approximately $2.80 less than hotels that did not have defects in each of the areas. This implies that to be successful, a hotel must concentrate on maintaining high quality standards in areas that have the greatest impact on financial return.


Ami Wong et al (1999)\textsuperscript{91} interpreted the SERVQUAL and developed the industry specific HOLSERV to measure the service quality of hotels in Australia. Key findings of the study are that service quality is represented by three dimensions in the hospitality industry, relating to employees behaviour and appearance, tangibles and reliability, and the best predictor of overall service quality is the dimensions referred to as “employees”. The major implication for the managers is that an improvement in the behaviour and appearance of the employees is most likely to enhance consumer perceptions of service quality.

Thanika Devi and Ross (2003)\textsuperscript{92} assessed the customer’s expectations and perceptions of service provided by hotels of Mauritius. The hotel manager’s perception of tourist expectation and the tourist actual expectations were evaluated. The result showed that customer’s perception of service quality in the hotel industry for Mauritius fell short of their expectations, with the ‘Empathy’ dimension having the largest gap.


\textsuperscript{92} Thanika Devi Juwaheer, and Darren Lee Ross (2003)\textsuperscript{80}, “A Study of Hotel Guest Perception in Mauritius”, \textit{International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management}, ISSN:0959-6119, Volume:15, Issue:2, :105-115
Halil Nadiri and Kashif Hussain (2005)\(^{93}\) during their research on service quality of hotels in Northern Cyprus, found that tangibles and intangibles exert a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, and European customers visiting North Cyprus are demanding improved service quality.

Mey and Akbar (2006)\(^{94}\) compared the service quality perception of Malaysian, Asian and Non-Asian hotel guests, and found that hotel guests perception of service quality provided by the hotel industry was lower than their expectation. The lowest expectations and perception were given by the Malaysian guest.

Ricard et al (2010)\(^{95}\) found that greater customer focuses, listening to customers, using their complaints and suggestions and survey results for client loyalty, using information from the competition are vital for developing appropriate management tools essential for hospitality business.


Ivana Blešić et al (2011)\footnote{Ivana Blešić, Anđelija Ivkov-Džigurski, Aleksandra Dragin, Ljubica Ivanović and Milana Pantelić (2011), “Application of Gap Model in the Researches of Hotel Services Quality”, Turizam, Volume 15, Issue 1: 40-52} identified that Gap model of service quality represents the right way of identifying inconsistency between perception a hotel company has and perception customers have when the quality of service process is concerned and opined that the model can help management identify reasons of poor service quality in its company and take suitable measures for the improvement of the same. They recommended that solving customer complains, designing of standards and specifications of services based on customers’ demands, determining standards and specifications of services with suitable resources (people, technology), introducing adequate systems of the control and awarding of the employees and giving realistic promises to buyers through suitable channels of external communication are some of the strategies to fill the service quality gap.

Ivana Blešić et al (2011)\footnote{Ivana Blešić, Slobodan Čerović and Vanja Dragićević (2011), “Improving the service quality as a socially responsible activity of hotel companies”, Economic Interferences, Vol. XIII, No. 29, February: 273-286.} found that improvements in product and service quality and creation of specific values for consumers must be treated as priority in business strategy and policy of every hotel. Hotels that choose to apply concept of quality, as the
key factor of success, will gain growing number of satisfied users and will be able to position themselves on the market successfully and make bigger profit.

2.4. SERVICE QUALITY RESEARCH IN INDIA

In India, service quality research in hospitality has not taken as a serious concern. Only a limited research is found in service quality of hotels and restaurants. The reason for lack of research may be due to the awareness and willingness of hotels towards service quality. Most of the hoteliers believe that existing Customer Commands Card is enough for understanding the service quality. But the invasion of International chain of hotels in the Indian hospitality market certainly will accelerate the need of service quality research in the future.

Dayal (1981)\textsuperscript{98} holds the opinion that hotels in India should keep a constant watch on emerging trends and should continuously keep updating their facilities, so that they conform to international standards. They should take every care to make tourists feel comfortable and should meticulously avoid giving them cause for any complaints. Value for money is everybody’s expectation and there should be no compromise on standard of facilities and services but the same time should there be no overcharging, taking undue advantage of a situation.

Angur et al (1999)⁹⁹ had proved that Indian consumers are increasingly demanding better quality with greater choice because of the increasing awareness, intensive competition from local and international brands,

Anju and Bhatia (2001)¹⁰⁰ have found out that the quality of services like accommodation, food and beverage and room service are not satisfactory. The Punjab Tourism Development Corporation is providing services to the higher state of society and not to the lower tier of the society. Lack of technical personnel has also been one of the greatest bottlenecks in the industry.

Naveen Das (2004)¹⁰¹ has mentioned that the delivery of service quality to customer depends upon proper diagnose of customer satisfaction and behaviour of the employees in the service industry. Monitoring current customer satisfaction by conducting customer survey should be an integral part of the firm’s activities. Based on the peculiarities of the service being offered, quality service performance standards need to be established. For providing exceptional customer service, companies must do two

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things for their employees – train them adequately, and treat them well as internal customers.

Sachdev and Verma’s (2004)\textsuperscript{102} research on service quality dimensions with reference to various types of services is a recent comparative study in services research. They find that service quality in hospitality is comparatively lower than other services in India.

Banerji and al (2005)\textsuperscript{103} studied the service quality of Indian service firms. The sample of this study represents a variety of industries including Banking, Hotels, Information Technology, Healthcare, Trading, Entertainment, Courier, Transportation and Construction services. This study sheds lights on quality management methods that seem to be effective in emerging economies.

Bindu et al (2008)\textsuperscript{104} found in their study that hospitality, food, logistics, security, and value for money have significant impact on satisfaction, while amenities, core-

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tourism experience, hygiene, fairness of price, information centers, culture, distractions, personal information, and pubs do not have a significant impact. The implication of the research is that a destination with good logistics and assurance for security, value for money, impressive hospitality and food, can satisfy a customer. The distinction of service quality dimensions with and without the impact on CS could enable a manager to manage these two sets of factors separately. Mohsin and Lockyer (2010)\textsuperscript{105} assessed the service quality perception of customers of luxury hotels, in New Delhi, India. They found that for responses relating to front office, room service and in-house cafe/restaurant, the significance score is statistically significant to and higher than the performance rating. Overall the results indicate significant difference between expectations of the guests and actual experiences.

2.5 IMPORTANT HOTEL SPECIFIC SERVICE ATTRIBUTES

Many researchers emphasised that, it is essential to understand the customer perception on various hotel specific service attributes along with service quality dimensions. In the hospitality industry, several studies have examined hotel attributes that customers may find important when evaluating the service performance of a hotel.

Literature review suggests that cleanliness, security and safety, value for money, hygiene, décor in lobby (Young Namkung and SooCheong, 2008 and Ana Salazar and Jorge Costa, 2010\(^{106}\)\(^{107}\), parking facilities, physical facilities, taste and quality of food factors (Atkinson 1988\(^{108}\); Knutson 1988\(^{109}\); Gundersen et al. 1996\(^{110}\)), affordable pricing, food service, room amenities, room service, room attraction and décor and hotel


surrounding and environmental (Choi and Chu 2001\textsuperscript{111}; Pedraja and Yagüe, 2001\textsuperscript{112}; Thanika Devi and Ross, 2003\textsuperscript{113}; Markovic, 2004\textsuperscript{114}; Halil Nadiri and Kashif Hussain, 2005\textsuperscript{115}; Asad Mohsin, 2007\textsuperscript{116}; and Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010\textsuperscript{117}) are attributes that hotel customers perceive as being important.


In the present research 20 attributes very relevant to hotel industry have been selected. The hotel specific service attributes are visually appealing hotel’s exterior design, adequate parking facilities, quick check-in and checkout process, attractive décor & furnishings of lobby and room, room cleanliness, room facilities such as television, telephone and other amenities, comfortable and hygienic toilet, variety of bathroom and toilet amenities such as shampoo, soap, etc, availability of fast internet connection in room and other areas, serving the food at right temperature, variety of drinks and wine availability, the high degree/level of hygiene of food, availability of multi cuisine food choice, business centre services, availability of health club and sauna, security in terms of life and valuables, receiving immediate help during emergency, reasonable fares for using health club, reasonable room rate/value for money and reasonable restaurant/bar prices.

RESEARCH GAP

The researcher of this study found that there is a research gap in the service quality of Star hotels in Tamil Nadu. From the Review of Literature of this thesis, many service quality researchers focused the service quality of banks of all kinds, retailing, Fast foods services and some extent of educational service.

quality. But very few researchers focused on the service quality of hotels and other hospitality related areas in Tamil Nadu. This fact motivated the researcher to carry out the research on Service quality in Star hotel in Tamil Nadu.

**PROPOSED RESEARCH MODEL**

This study aims to assess the perception and expectation of customers in hotel specific service attributes and service quality along with the profiles of both hoteliers and customers. This research also attempts to test the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The proposed research model is as follows:

![Proposed Research Model](image)
3.1 INTRODUCTION

The word hotel is derived from the French Hôtel (coming from hôte meaning host), which referred to a French version of a townhouse or any other building seeing frequent visitors, rather than a place offering accommodation.

A hotel is an establishment that provides paid lodging on a short-term basis. The provision of basic accommodation, in times past, consisting only of a room with a bed, a cupboard, a small table and a washstand has largely been replaced by rooms with modern facilities, including en-suite bathrooms and air conditioning or climate control. Additional common features found in hotel rooms are a telephone, an alarm clock, a television, and Internet connectivity; snack foods and drinks may be supplied in a mini-bar, with facilities for making hot drinks. Larger hotels may provide a number of additional guest facilities such as a restaurant, swimming pool or childcare, and have conference and social function services. Some hotels offer meals as part of a room and board arrangement. Hotel Industry in India has witnessed tremendous boom in recent years.

Hotel Industry is inextricably linked to the tourism industry and the growth in the Indian tourism industry has fuelled the growth of Indian Hotel industry. The thriving economy and increased business opportunities in India have acted as a boon for Indian hotel industry. The Arrival of low cost airlines and the associated price wars have given domestic tourists a host of options. The 'Incredible India' destination campaign and the recently launched 'Atithi Devo Bhavah' (ADB) campaign have also helped in the growth of domestic and international tourism and consequently the hotel industry. Hotel Industry