

A STUDY OF HOTELIERS PERSPECTIVES OF SERVICE QUALITY IN SELECTED HERITAGE HOTELS OF SOUTHERN RAJASTHAN

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Abstract: - In today's era it is essential for each and every organization to adopt service quality management strategy for taking competitive advantage. This research study is attempt to measure service quality in the heritage hotels from the perspective of hoteliers. The service quality gap model is applied to identify the gap between Hotelier's expectation (what they are expect to provide) and perception (what they are actually providing.) Data is collected from 22 hoteliers from 22 heritage hotels by using well-structured questionnaire which is based on five service quality factors. The data were analyzed with statistical tool and the main finding of research shows that there is no gap between hotelier's expectation and perception.

Keywords: - Service quality, Expectation, Perception, Heritage Hotel, Hoteliers

Introduction

The service sector is emerging as most prominent sector in Indian economy with an around 57% contribution to the GDP and major source of national and state income. According to Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, (1996) Service Quality is most important element for taking competitive advantage. A business with high service quality will meet customer needs and able to achieve high competitive advantage (Sureshchander, 2002) Excellent service quality and customer satisfaction is challenging issues.(Hung et al.2003).Service quality is capability to deliver a service according to needs of customers.(Gronroos,1990)

The hospitality industry is fastest growing service industry because this industry providing a unique business environment. One of the major hospitality industry is hotel industry. Southern Rajasthan bears a great importance to hospitality industry of India as there are many world famous heritage hotels which are contributing to the Indian economy. Customer form service expectation from past experiences, word of mouth and advertisement. The expected service and performance sometimes may not be equal and gap is created. Various service quality models have been developed by many researchers for the quality assessment and these models are helpful for quality improvement.The present study attempts to investigate the level of service quality in the heritage hotel of Southern Rajasthan from the perspective of hotelier with the help of service quality gap model which is as follows:-

Service Quality Gap Model

Various service quality models have been developed by many researchers for the quality assessment. This study will adopt gap model for service quality for assessment of service quality in heritage hotels.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) formulated a gap model for service quality and highlighted five gaps which are showing in following diagram:-

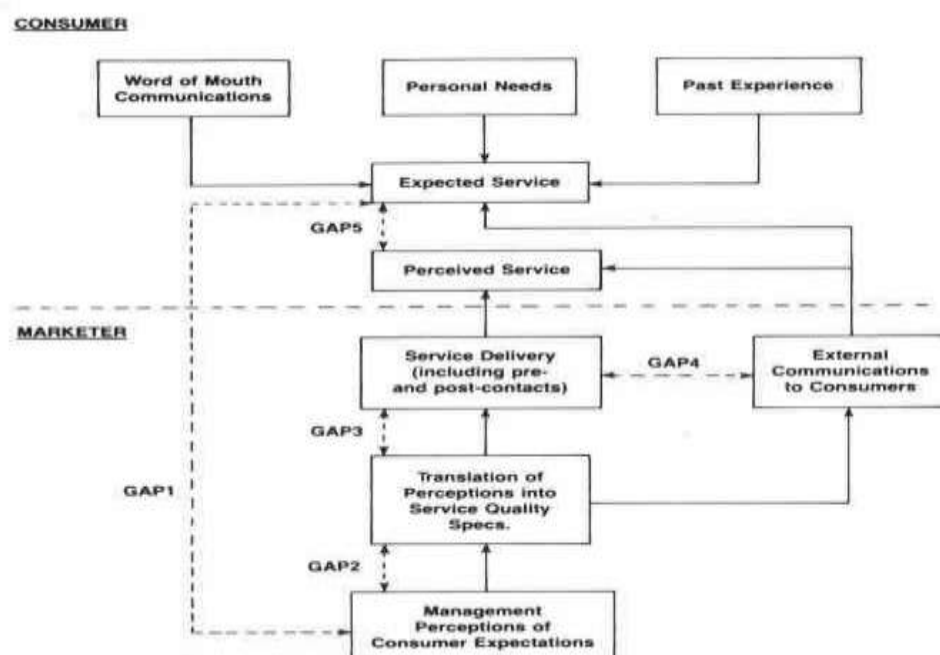


Figure 1 source: .parasuraman, valarie a., zeithaml and leonard l. berry, "a conceptual model of service quality and its implication for future research, "journal of marketing (fall 1985)

There are five types of gaps are found which can cause service failure:-

1. **Gap between customer expectation and management perception:** - It is a difference between customer's actual expectations and understanding of management about Service Expectations.
2. **Gap between management perception and service quality specification:** - Management understands customer's Expectations accurately but not set any service quality standard to measure performance.
3. **Gap between service quality specification and service delivery:** - Service not delivered according to quality standards.
4. **Gap between service delivery and external communication:** - It is a variation between what told in external communications and what actually delivered.
5. **Gap between expected service and experienced service:** - It is a variation between customer's expectations and perception about service.

Based on the model Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1998) have identified following five dimension of service quality which are as follows:-

Reliability: - Deliver promised service every time in the same way with accuracy.

Responsiveness: - Customer doesn't like to wait unnecessarily so it refers to quick service and willingness to help customers.

Assurance: - It represents ability of employees to convey trust and confidence to customers.

Empathy: - It is an ability to understand customer's feeling and need to serve with care and attention.

Tangibles: - Overall appearance of the surroundings, equipments, information materials, Personnel.

Review of Literature

Researcher analyzed service quality of hospitality industry of delhi by using SERVQUAL model. Researcher concluded that service quality should be reviewed periodically because customer's expectation changed time to time. Negative gap score is found between expectation and perception so improvement is needed in all area and they should focus on all quality related issues. **Kalotra, Sharma (2017)**

Ababneh (2016) performed study on employees' perspective of service quality in hotels. Researcher studied on four and five star hotel of Jordan with the help of SERVQUAL model. Researcher found that service quality of five star hotels is better than four star hotels and suggested that hotels should implement the concept of service quality improvement.

Tessera, Hussain, Ahmad (2016) studied on hotel industry of Ethiopia with the help of SERVQUAL model. Researcher identified the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and concluded that each and every customer has different expectation and perception about services and its affected by culture of particular country .so hotelier should design service according to culture of particular area.

Bapat, Soni, Khasgiwala (2015) performs a comparative study in Indore region to evaluate customer satisfaction and service quality of Indian Eigen value score and mean comparison method used for analysis. Study conducted on the basis of SERVQUAL scale. RB hotel and SJ hotel of Indore selected for the study and tangibility, responsiveness and empathy of SJ hotel is higher than RB hotel. Reliability, accessibility, assurance of RB hotel is higher than SJ hotel. This research is helpful to identify service quality gaps and for making necessary improvement to increase profit share.

Gunarathne (2014) performs research in Sri Lankan hotel industry to identify relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. In Sri Lanka tourism is one of the major industry and hotels are linked with this industry so service quality of hotels is very important to achieve customer satisfaction and success. SERVQUAL scale is used to measure service quality and found tangibility, reliability, empathy and responsiveness gives positive impact to customer satisfaction and assurance gives negative impact and proper training and development programme is very essential for employees for service quality improvement. Researchers concluded that SERVQUAL scale is not effective tool for measurement of service quality so other methods should apply for the service quality measurement.

Siddique, Akhter, Masum (2013) performs empirical assessment of service quality in five star hotels of Bangladesh. Study was based on SERVQUAL model. Assessment concluded that physical appearance of the hotels, food quality and security, behavior of the employees, individual customer service, and interior decoration are service quality factors. Understanding of customer's need and expectation is very essential for service quality improvement. Results shows that service quality of five star hotels of Bangladesh is fair so managers should design service according to customers expectation and periodic improvement is necessary.

Service quality; Perceived value and customer satisfaction is related with each other. Research was conducted in luxury hotels of Pakistan to identify relationship. Perceived value has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction and revisit intention. Service quality has positive relationship with revisit intention and satisfaction. Identification of relationship of all factors for quality and satisfaction is important for all hotels to taking competitive advantage. **Raza, Siddiqui, Awan, Bukhari (2012)**

Research Methodology

The descriptive and causal research design adopted for the study. Judgmental sampling method is used. Data is collected from 22 hoteliers from 22 heritage hotels of Udaipur, Rajsamand, Chittorgarh, Dungarpur and Pratapgarh District by using well-structured questionnaire which is based on five service quality factor Tangibility, Reliability, Assurance, Responsiveness and empathy. This questionnaire is designed to take response from hotelier about what they think what service quality factor is important for their hotel and if they are actually providing than Hoteliers have to give scores in both the column (column 1 for to what extent they think a particular factor is important for them and column 2 for to what extent they are able to provide them. . For the first column 1 means least important (minimum value) and 7 means extremely important (maximum value) and for the second column 1 means to a negligible extent and 7 means maximum extent.

Objectives

The research is carried out with following objectives:-

1. To assess the level of service quality in heritage hotels from the perspective of hoteliers.
2. To see the impact of duration of operation of hotel on service quality of heritage hotels.
3. To see the impact of number of employees on the service quality of heritage hotels.

Data analysis and Interpretation

The primary data which was collected for fulfill research purpose has tabulated, processed and analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 19.0) . The interpretations are as follows:-

Distribution of respondents according to time of operation of hotel

Table 1 is showing distribution of respondents according to time of operation of hotel. In terms of hotels operating timing maximum number of hotels (N=9, Percentage=45) are operating for 21-30 years followed by (N=4, Percentage=20) hotels operating for 31-40 years. 15 % hotels are operating for 11-20 years. 10 % hotels N=2 are operating for 41-50 years. Only one hotel is relatively new and operating less than or up to 10 years and only one hotel is operating for more than 50 years. Two hotels didn't revealed their time of operation.

Table 1 distribution of respondents according to time of operation of hotel

Operating Since	N	%
Up to 10 yrs	1	5.00
11-20 yrs	3	15.00
21-30 yrs	9	45.00
31-40 yrs	4	20.00
41-50 yrs	2	10.00
Above 50 yrs	1	5.00
Total	20	100.00

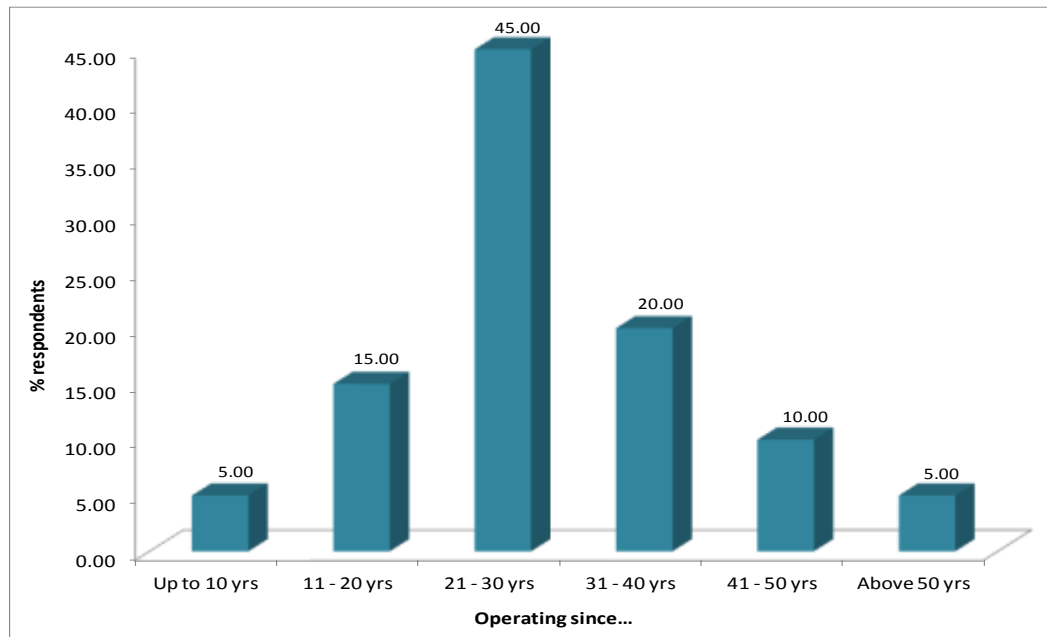


Chart 1 distribution of respondents according to time of operation of hotel

Distribution of respondents according to number of employees of hotel

Table 2 shows Number of employees working in the hotel maximum number of hotel (N= 12, 54.55 %) hotels have 30 or less than 30 employees and (N = 10 ,45.45 %) have more than 30 employees.

Table 2 distribution of respondents according to number of employees of hotel

Number of Employees	N	%
Up to 30	12	54.55
More than 30	10	45.45
Total	22	100.00

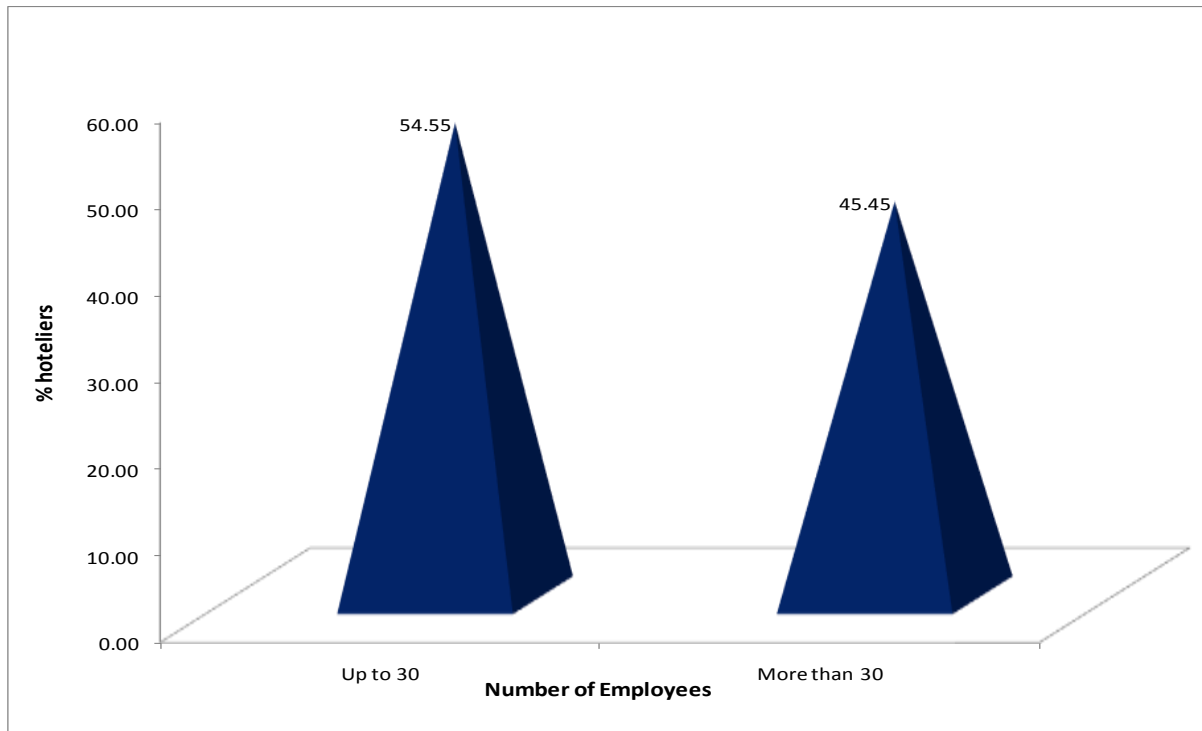


Chart 2 distribution of respondents according to number of employees of hotel

Factor Wise Analysis

Table 3 revealed the response regarding important service quality factors are the (expectation) and to what extent they are able to provide that particular factor (perception) were analyzed according to five service quality factors given by Parasuraman et al. (1988).

Table 3 expectation and perception score of five service quality factors

Factor	Expectation		Perception	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Tangibility	6.23	0.55	6.41	0.40
Assurance	6.64	0.43	6.64	0.37
Empathy	6.26	0.77	6.31	0.65
Reliability	6.66	0.48	6.69	0.45
Responsiveness	6.59	0.68	6.64	0.54

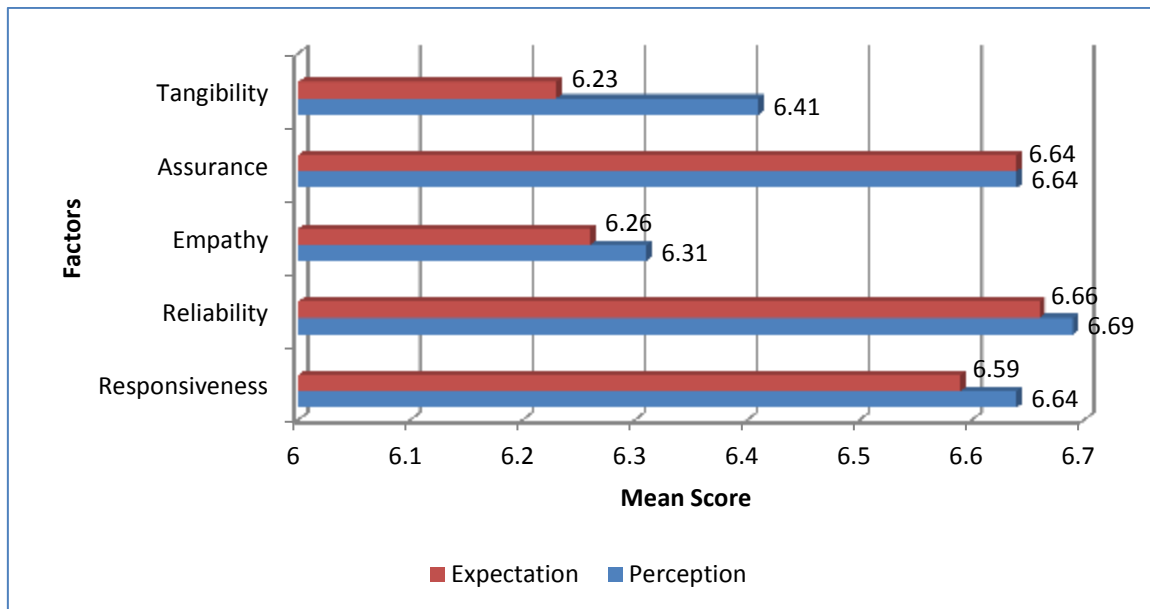


Chart 3 mean value and sd of service quality attributes

The mean score for expectation regarding tangibility is 6.23 and for perception are 6.41. So it can be concluded that appearance of physical facilities, equipments and personnel is up to the mark as they expect to provide to their customers.
 The mean score for expectation regarding assurance is 6.64 and for perception are 6.64. No gap is found so it can be concluded that employees of heritage hotels are able to convey trust to their as they expect to provide their customers.
 The mean score for expectation regarding empathy is 6.26 and for perception are 6.31. So it can be concluded that employees of heritage hotels are providing care and individual attention to their customers as they expect to provide their customers.
 The mean score for expectation regarding reliability is 6.66 and for perception are 6.69. So it can be concluded that employees of heritage hotels are not able to provide service accurately as they expect to provide their customers.
 The mean score for expectation regarding reliability is 6.59 and for perception are 6.64. So it can be concluded that employees of heritage hotels are able to provide prompt service and helpful for customers as they expect to provide their customers.

Gap Analysis

Further gap analysis was done by calculating gap score (perception score – expectation score) which is given in the table 4

Table 4 gap analysis

Factor	N	Mean	SD	T	df	Result
Tangibility	22	0.18	0.55	-1.54	21	NS
Assurance	22	-0.01	0.33	0.09	21	NS
Empathy	22	0.05	0.45	-0.55	21	NS
Reliability	22	0.03	0.38	-0.34	21	NS
Responsiveness	22	0.05	0.55	-0.38	21	NS
Overall	22	0.08	0.39	-0.93	21	NS

! = (P-E) ; # Level of Significance = 5 %

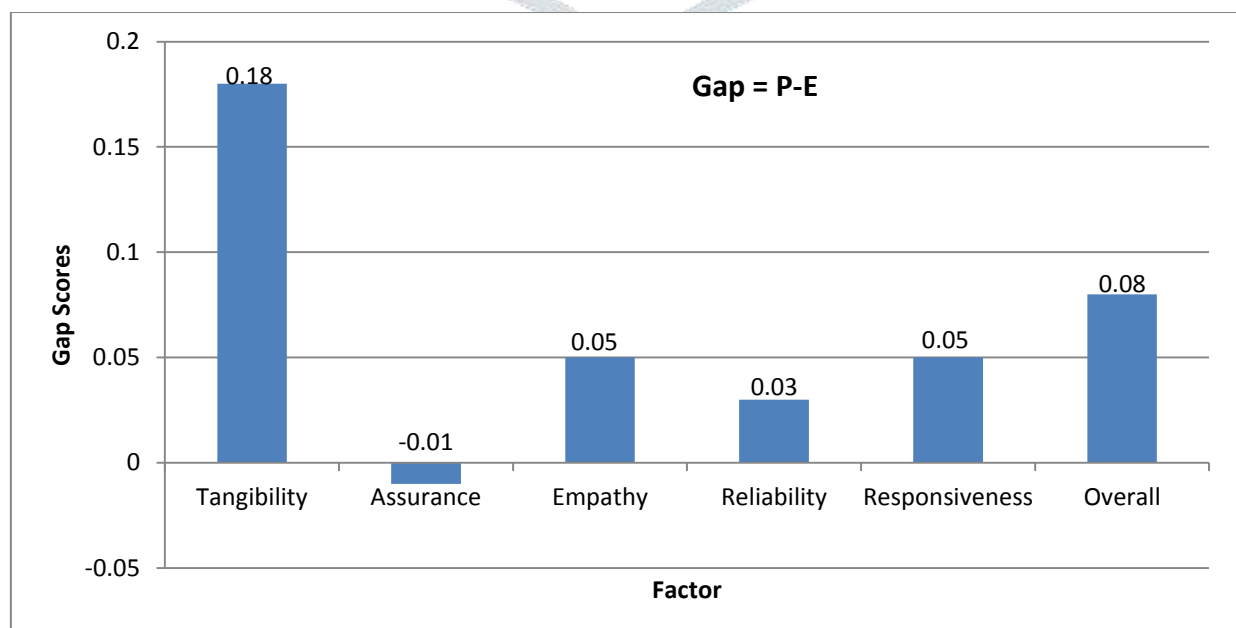


Chart 4 gap analysis

H₀₁:- There is no significant difference in the expectation and perception (gap score) of customers with regards to five service quality factors at heritage hotels

The analyzed result given in the table 4 shows that

Regarding Tangibility the gap score was 0.18 which was not significant. ($t = -1.54, p > 0.05$) at 5% level of significance there is no gap in the what hotelier expect to provide and what they are actually provided.

Regarding Assurance the gap score was -0.01 which was not significant. ($t = 0.09, p > 0.05$) at 5% level of significance there is no gap in the what hotelier expect to provide and what they are actually provided.

Regarding Empathy the gap score was 0.05 which was not significant. ($t = -0.55, p > 0.05$) at 5% level of significance there is no gap in the what hotelier expect to provide and what they are actually provided.

Regarding Reliability the gap score was 0.03 which was not significant. ($t = -0.34, p > 0.05$) at 5% level of significance there is no gap in the what hotelier expect to provide and what they are actually provided.

Regarding Responsiveness the gap score was 0.05 which was not significant. ($t = -0.38, p > 0.05$) at 5% level of significance there is no gap in the what hotelier expect to provide and what they are actually provided.

Gap analysis table shows results of test applied for different factors of service quality. In this test it was tested that whether gap is significantly high or not. Test results shows that regarding any of the factor gap between expectation and perception was 0.08 which was not significant ($t = -0.93, p > 0.05$)

Hence the above test result shows that non-significant difference in the perception score and expectation score was found for all the service quality factors and at overall level non-significant difference in the perception score and expectation score was found than our null hypothesis **H₀₁:- There is no significant difference in the expectation and perception (gap score) of customers with regards to five service quality factors at heritage hotels** is accepted.

Table number 5 representing relationship between time of operation of heritage hotel and gap Scores .

H₀₂:- There is no significant difference in the gap score of hotels which are operating for less than 30 years and those which are operating from more than 30 years.

Table 5 operation time and gap score

Operating Since	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Result
Below 30 years	12	-0.04	0.38	1.72	18	NS
30 or more years	8	0.26	0.40			

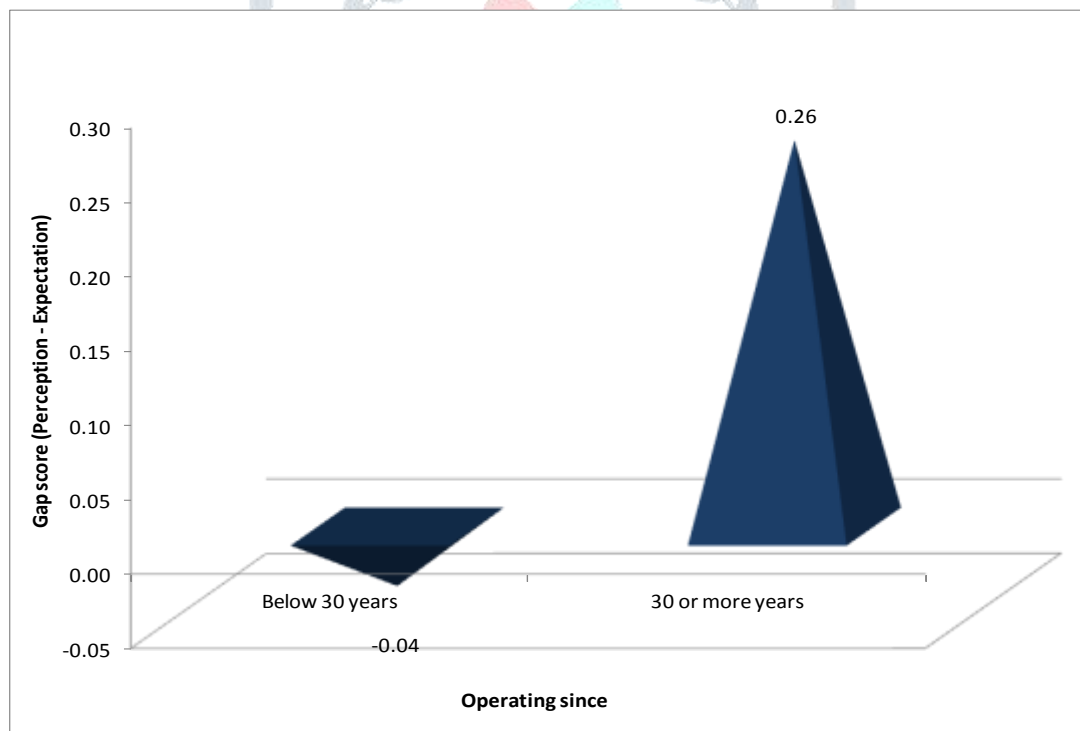


chart 5 gap (p-e)

Gap test results shows that there was no significant difference in the gap score of hotels operating since below 30 years and 30 or more years. ($t = 1.72, p > 0.05$).

The gap score was positive (0.26) for those hotels which was operating since 30 or more years but it was negative (-0.04) for hotels which was operating since below 30 years but the difference in the gap score of both category is not significant difference. So **H₀₂:- There is no significant difference in the gap score of hotels which are operating for less than 30 years and those which are operating from more than 30 years** is accepted

Table 6 is showing relationship between number of employees in heritage hotels and gap scores.

H₀₃:- There is no significant differences in the gap score of hotels have up to 30 and more than 30 employees.

Table 6 No. of Employees and Gap Score

Number of Employees	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Result
Up to 30	12	-0.12	0.37	3.02	20	**
Above 30	10	0.31	0.28			

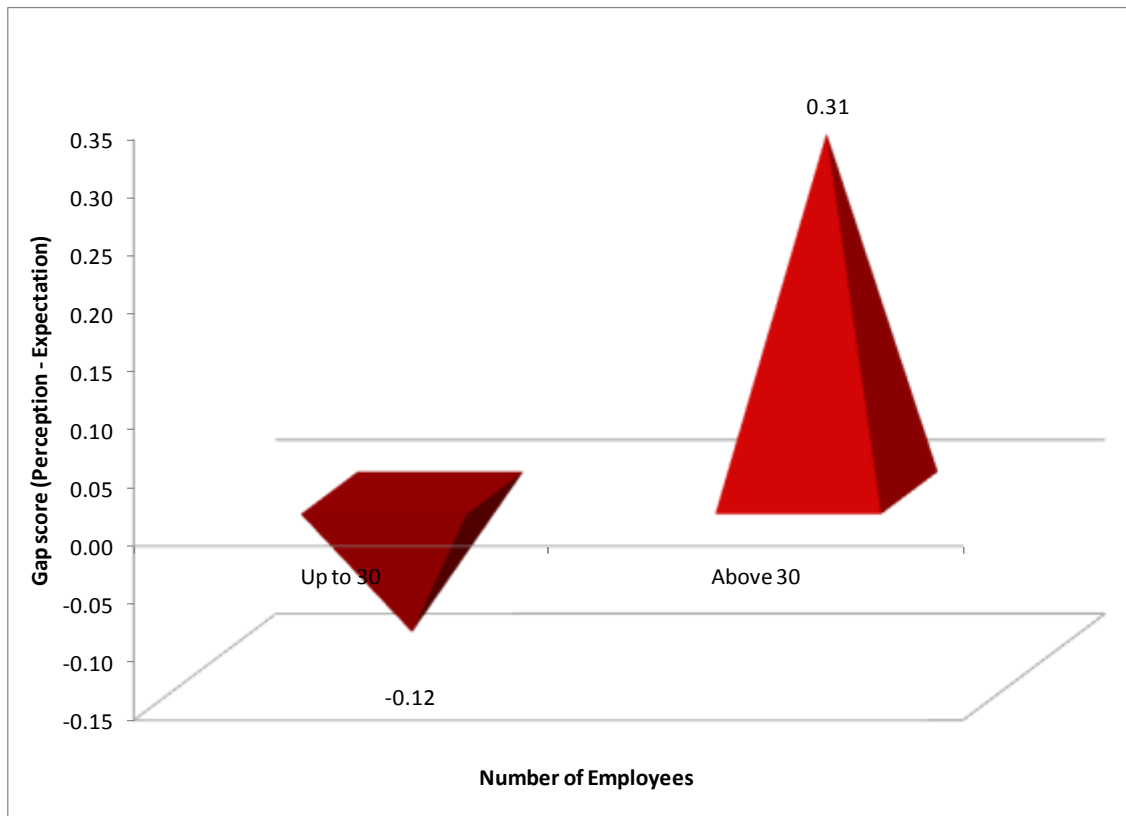


Chart 6 gap (p-e)

Gap test results given in the table 6 shows that there was highly significant difference in the gap score of less than 30 employees and more than 30 employees. ($t= 3.02$, $p < 0.01$).

The gap score was positive (0.31) for those hotels who has more than 30 employees but it was negative (-0.12) for hotels which has less than or 30 employees. So it can be concluded that heritage hotels having more number of employees (> 30) are providing better service that what expected (gap score = 0.31) whereas those hotel which have 30 or less employees are providing less as compared to what is expected (gap score = -0.12). So H_{03} . **There is no significant differences in the gap score of hotels have up to 30 and more than 30 employees** are rejected

Suggestions

The result of the study shows that hoteliers are satisfied with service of the hotel but customer expectations are more so considering the importance of service quality some suggestions are made which are as follows:-

- From the analysis of various service quality factors of heritage hotel of southern Rajasthan it is observed that reliability feature of hotels is not effective so it is recommended that the hotels must focus on accuracy of service
- They should take prompt action for the need of customer and resolve their problem.
- Service quality should be long term goal of managers of hotels.
- There is highly significant difference is found in the gap score with no. of employees so hotels must increase number of employees to provide better service to their customers.
- Various service quality programmes should be implemented.

Conclusion

The result obtained after analysis reveals that heritage hotels are providing services up to the mark as they expect it to provide to its customers. Appearance of physical facilities, equipments and personnel is up to the mark .Employees of heritage hotels are able to convey trust, providing care and individual attention, providing prompt service and helpful for customers as they expect to provide their customers. Employees of heritage hotels are not able to provide service accurately as they expect to provide their customers and not able to solve problem of customer so regarding reliability dimension improvement is needed because it can lead dissatisfaction to the customers.

From the analysis of relationship between time of operation of heritage hotel, perception, expectation and gap Scores. it is concluded that those heritage hotels which are operating since 30 or more years is expected to provide better service as compared to those which are operating below 30 years but the difference in the gap score of both category is not significant difference.

From the analysis of relationship between number of employees in heritage hotel, perception, expectation and gap Scores. It is concluded that hotels having comparatively greater number of employees can provide better service as compared to those which are having less number of employees. There was highly significant difference in the gap score of less than 30 employees and more than 30 employees.

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