



# Measuring Service Quality With Reference To Tourism Industry Of Uttar Pradesh

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## Abstract

The present work aims to find out dimensions of service quality and to develop a scale for measuring Service Quality with reference to Tourism Industry of Uttar Pradesh. The study is based on primary data using a sample of 200 tourists (out of which 138 responses were fit to be used) who have visited Ayodhya, Prayagraj, Structured questionnaire was made to study various touring objectives. The result identified eight factors of service quality *i.e.*, Money Value, tourism experience, Hospitality, Timely And Accurate Information, Facilities, Security, Affordable Price, Health & Hygiene) in the Tourism Industry of Uttar Pradesh. The paper has been concluded by summarizing the work and providing directions for future research.

**Keywords:** Tourism industry, dimension, Health and Hygiene, Affordable Price, tourists

## 1.1 Introduction

In the tourism sector, quality refers to providing goods and services to customers consistently and in accordance with predetermined standards. Since providing high-quality service is a prerequisite for success in the rapidly expanding, fiercely competitive global hospitality industry, it is one of the biggest difficulties facing hospitality managers. In the travel and hospitality sector, there are several instruments for evaluating and enhancing the quality of services provided, in addition to systems for recognizing excellence. However, as a result, there is no state-specific scale to evaluate the level of service in the Indian or international tourism industry.

Researchers and practitioners alike continue to be interested in service quality and customer happiness, whether in the tourism or any other industry Because of its links to costs (Kellogg et al., 1997), financial performance, customer satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), customer retention and price elasticity (Bolton & Myers, 2003), these relationships have been linked to the research interest in service quality. Because it is thought to be a leading predictor of future earnings (Anderson & Fornell, 2000) and customer loyalty (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Bearden & Teel, 1983), customer happiness has been gaining importance. Customer pleasure ensures future revenues by boosting loyalty (Bolton, 1998) decreases pricing elasticity's (Anderson, 1996), lowers the cost of subsequent transactions (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990), and lessens the

chance that customers would leave if quality fails (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). Positive word-of-mouth from happy clients reduces the expense of bringing in new business and improves the company's reputation overall, whereas negative word-of-mouth from unhappy clients inevitably has the reverse impact (Anderson, 1998). Economic assets with high returns and low risks are satisfied customers. By boosting future cash flow growth and lowering its volatility, customer happiness also increases shareholder value (Gruca & Rego, 2005). One fundamental idea that has been examined in the literature on customer satisfaction and service quality is that although they are conceptually different, they are closely related phenomena (Parasuraman et al., 1994).

**1.1.1 Dimensions of Service Quality:** Since its introduction by Parasuraman et al. (1988), SERVQUAL has gained widespread acceptance worldwide. It had 22 items at first, but Parasuraman et al. (1994) simplified it to 5 items that measured tangibility, empathy, responsiveness, assurance, and reliability. In published research analyzing service quality in a range of settings, such as real estate agents private practice physicians, and accounting firms it has formed the foundation for measuring techniques. Researchers, however, were criticizing SERVQUAL because the items were not exhaustive, making it impossible to generalize the results (Babakus & Boller, 1992; Carman, 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992, 1994). As evidenced by the works of Babakus and Mangold 1992; Cronin & Taylor 1992, 1994; Teas 1992, 1994; Babakus and Boller 1992, Brown et al. 1993; Carman 1990, Finn and Lamb 1991; and others, it has raised concerns about the necessity of measuring expectations, the interpretation and operationalization of expectations, and the validity and reliability of SERVQUAL's difference score formulation. The empirical versus diagnostic value of expectations in service quality measurements, the relative benefits and drawbacks of SERVQUAL (i.e., difference score) versus direct (i.e., non-difference score) formulations of the perception – expectation gap, and the dimensionality of the instrument's item are just a few of the unresolved issues that have emerged from this debate. SERVQUAL's use of measurement with varying scores, which led to varying numbers of factor dimensions, inappropriate managerial techniques, and conceptual issues, was the main source of concern. When the expectation measure is eliminated, Carman (1990) and Cronin and Taylor (1992) contend that the performance measure is the only one that increases variance. Based on this outcome, Although the importance of the service process has been highlighted, nothing has been said about the outcomes that clients obtain from using the service.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW ON DIMENSIONS TO MEASURE SERVICE QUALITY IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

### **Based on SERVQUAL**

The SERVQUAL model is the main instrument for evaluating services, and according to Parasuraman et al., it can be used in a variety of service contexts. The quality of services offered in the tourism industry and related industries are assessed using this model by numerous tourism researchers Fick & Ritchie 1991;. For instance, Mackay (1987) tested SERVQUAL in Canadian municipal parks and identified the same five dimensions as the model proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985) extended SERVQUAL in a different study and discovered that service providers are unaware of the degree to which clients assess their experiences. encounters. In order to assess the level of service obtained from travel agencies, also used SERVQUAL. They discovered that SERVQUAL is still a valid and trustworthy model for assessing the level of service offered by travel agencies. The REQUAL model (REQUAL) was developed by as a conceptual framework for researching service quality in the recreation and leisure industries. Furthermore, according to SERVQUAL cannot be used to assess service quality in various sectors of the recreation services industry. They recommended creating a new scale specifically tailored for the tourism or other recreation services industry.

A multiple-item scale (E-S-QUAL) was created by based on theoretical underpinnings to assess the level of service provided by websites during the order placement process. The results showed that two scales—E-SQUAL, or the basic scale, and E-RecS-QUAL—were available to online clients. Web site interactivity and outcome quality were added to the scope of Collier and service quality research on e-service quality.

Knuston et al. (1991) developed the lodging-specific instrument known as LODGSERV, a 26-item index intended to gauge customer expectations for service quality. Because LODGSERV is lodging-specific, it cannot be generalized. O'Neill (2000) conducted research on the ways in which perceptions shift as visitors leave an attraction and later, once they've returned home. Using an adventure park context, the 22-item SERVQUAL questionnaire was modified for use with guests of a Western Australian theme park.

The quality of accommodations, tourist information, airport services, restaurants, local transportation, safety, hygiene, staff attitude, friendliness of the locals, staff language, tour operator service, tour guide service, climate, rest and relaxation, fun and exciting activities, nightlife, shopping, basic amenities near attractions, reaching/access, opportunities for sightseeing, beach cleanliness, natural attractions, cultural attractions, and historical attractions were all measured in a study conducted in Kerala, India by Edward (2006) using the attribute approach to study service quality in tourist destinations. Single items were used to gauge people's perceptions of these qualities.

### **Other than SERVQUAL**

Chaudhry (2000) conducted research to ascertain foreign tourists' pre- and post-trip perceptions of India as a travel destination. The study covered Delhi, Pune, and Chandigarh. Data was gathered on 20 attributes, including affordability, a wide range of high-quality art, the availability of tourist attractions, a rich cultural heritage, affordable shopping, hospitality to tourists, high-quality deluxe hotels, good transportation options, dependable train service, less exploited areas (close to nature), safety from small-time crimes, a nation of liars, unsafe domestic airlines, unsafe conditions, unclean drinking water, a lack of nightlife, poor quality of roads, annoyances caused by beggars, and unethical travel trade business practices.

Lee and Chan (2006) Taiwan's hot spring hotels have been assessed for service quality using the Kano two-dimensional quality model. According to the conventional one-dimensional quality model, customers are satisfied when a service provider meets their expectations regarding the sufficiency of the service. Kano's two-dimensional model acknowledges that sometimes a sufficient level of service quality may not have an impact on customer satisfaction and, on the other hand, may cause dissatisfaction. The environment equipment factor, the hot spring correlation factor, and the transportation convenience factor are the three dimensions that resulted from the reduction of fifteen travel satisfaction variables using factor analysis. Additionally, they examined 23 quality elements using Kano's model, grouping them into five categories: must-be, attractive, one-dimensional, indifferent, and reverse quality elements. They discovered that not a single one of the quality components fit the definition of attractive.

Contends in his research that by improving destination amenities, accessibility, and attractions, the caliber of tourism services positively affects the degree of visitor satisfaction. The study's conclusions indicated that a major factor influencing overall visitor satisfaction is service quality, which includes amenities, accessibility, and attractions at the destination. This study also supported the findings of Abu Ali and Howaidee (2012), who discovered that in Jerash, one of the most popular tourist destinations in Jordan, visitor satisfaction is significantly positively impacted by destination amenities, accessibility, and attraction.

Using the SERVQUAL model and multiple regression analysis, Ivyanno and Nila (2013) investigated the impact of service quality and tourist satisfaction on the future behavioural intentions of domestic local tourists to the Borobudur temple. The study discovered that visitor satisfaction is positively impacted by service quality. To put it another way, preserving service quality is crucial to maximizing visitor satisfaction.

In addition to examining whether visitors were happy with their time in Malaysia, Munir et al. (2013) also outlined the elements that influence visitor satisfaction. According to the findings, the mean score for overall tourist satisfaction was 3.74. Beautiful scenery, customs and culture, the friendliness of the locals, the quality of the food, and the hospitality of the service providers were some of the things that drew tourists to the country.

In his research on the quality of online tourism, found that the average scores for expectations across all categories were lower than the average scores for satisfaction levels. This suggested that clients had high standards and that online retailers needed to improve the caliber of their offerings. There is a good chance that more customers will accept online business transactions in the future, as evidenced by the fact that tourist customers were happier with e-commerce than they were without it.

In their study emphasized the service expectations by using a validated modified SERVQUAL scale in addition to the characteristics of hotel patrons, such as age, income, and visitation patterns. The results showed that hotel patrons' expectations are primarily driven by "competitiveness," which stands for accreditation and a standard of service quality.

In the Sri Lankan hotel industry, Gunarathne (2014) looked into the connection between customer satisfaction and service quality. Five dimensions of tourism service quality were identified by the study: tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy. These dimensions are used by tourists to assess the quality of services provided by Sri Lankan hotels. According to the study's findings, tangibility was the most significant predictor of tourism service quality evaluation, followed by empathy, dependability, and responsiveness. The study's conclusions imply that, of the five aspects of service quality, assurance and customer satisfaction are negatively correlated. These findings bolster the notion that, even though the SERVQUAL scale is a valuable concept, it also needs to be modified for the service environment.

In the market for health tourism, Markovic et al. (2014) investigated client satisfaction and service quality. It is evident that, understandably enough, patients have reasonable expectations when it comes to medical services. When it comes to how clean the hospital is overall and the equipment and gadgets are, the highest standards are set. The findings of the gap analysis between patient expectations and perceived service quality show that there is a SERVQUAL gap in every dimension. However, the variables pertaining to additional services showed the biggest discrepancy between expectations and perceived quality. These are the services the hospital offers in the health tourism industry, including sports and leisure, social and entertainment events, and meeting patient needs in line with industry trends. The biggest disparity is visible despite the patients' lower expectations for those services, which is the consequence of a relatively low satisfaction score.

Customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality in hotels in Kenya's western tourism circuit were investigated by Kariru et al. (2014). The study clearly shows that there is a discrepancy between what guests expect and perceive to be the standard of service provided by hotels in Kenya's Western Kenya tourism circuit. The results showed that in eighteen variables, the actual service fell short of expectations. The four dimensions of "responsiveness and empathy," "assurance," "tangibles," and "reliability" were found to have the biggest effects on guests and to be the best measures of the service quality of outstanding hotels. The four dimensions

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Naples was the subject of a study on visitor satisfaction by Corte et al. (2015). This study looked into how certain destination characteristics affected the creation of customer satisfaction. Numerous scientific studies have found that visitor satisfaction can affect various behaviors, including word-of-mouth or word-of-mouse processes and customer retention. Naples has a very contradictory reputation: on the one hand, it is linked to great cuisine, tradition, and scenic and artistic beauty; on the other hand, it is seen as a filthy city with a criminal and disorganized population. This study shows that visitor satisfaction is dependent on a complicated process in which each actor plays a crucial role that must be coordinated with all the others.

### **3.1 Research Gap and Objective of the Study**

The goal of the current study is to thoroughly identify the components of service quality in the tourism sector in Uttar Pradesh, India. With the exception of two significant studies (Chaudhary, 2000; Edward, 2006), no other study has examined India as a travel destination in such a thorough manner. No study has been done specifically for Uttar Pradesh as of yet. It is anticipated that destination managers and tour operators will find great value in the study's findings.

The primary objective of the study is:

- Investigate and evaluate how service quality affects customer satisfaction in Uttar Pradesh's tourism sector.
- Examine and assess the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality in the tourism industry in Uttar Pradesh.

### **METHODOLOGY**

A thorough literature review and exploratory research involving in-depth interviews with 138 respondents who had visited Ayodhya and Prayagraj produced dimensions of service quality and items to represent these dimensions. Using a structured questionnaire, different touring goals were investigated. A 5-dimension Likert scale was used to rate the responses, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree. Published reports, research papers from reputable journals, and web search methods were employed to gather secondary data.

### **Hypothesis**

The present study aims to measure the hypothesis: Service Quality in the Tourism Industry is a multi-dimensional construct.

### **Research Design**

To identify the factors incorporated in the questionnaire, exploratory research design was used where the primary objective was to gain insights and comprehension of the issues related to service quality in the Tourism industry.

### **Study Population and Sampling Frame**

Those who, for various reasons, traveled to any of the following Uttar Pradesh cities during the course of the previous year (June 2020–June 2022) make up the population under investigation:

## Religious Sites / Circuit

Ayodhya

Prayagraj

The aforementioned Uttar Pradesh sample cities were visited in person in order to identify the sampling entities, and every attempt was made to include as many hotels and guest houses as possible in the immediate area surrounding city railway stations. To obtain the required data, a convenience sample of respondents was selected from the hotels and guesthouses that were visited.

138 of the 200 responses in the sample were deemed suitable for use. The budget, time, resource availability, ease of data collection, and review of prior research on a related topic were all taken into consideration when determining the sample size. Convenience sampling is the method used to choose the sample units.

### *Statistical Tool of Analysis*

To find the underlying factors and organize the constructs into manageable factors, factor analysis was used. Through the analysis of correlations between variables, a set of techniques known as factor analysis reduces the number of variables to fewer factors (common underlying dimensions of the variables) that more economically explain a large portion of the original data. By examining the linear relationship between a number of variables of interest ( $Y_1, Y_2, \dots, Y_l$ ) and a smaller number of unobservable factors ( $F_1, F_2, \dots, F_k$ ), factor analysis reduces the number of variables under investigation and thereby the complexity of the data. The method is divided into two phases.

The most widely used technique in Stage 1 of the Factor Extraction process is Principal Component Analysis. The process of calculating an Eigen value determines how many factors are extracted. Retained are factors with an Eigen value of one or higher.

Rotation of Principal Components is the name of Stage 2. The first stage includes the original unrotated factor matrix. In the second stage, the factors are interpreted and given names by determining which factors are related to which variables. The loading of each variable on each of the extracted factors is provided by the rotated factor matrix (as well as the unrotated factor matrix). Loadings accept values in the range of 0 to 1. High loadings are defined as values that are close to 1, and low loadings are defined as values that are close to 0. Finding variables with high loadings on one factor but low loadings on other factors is the goal here. Consequently, a factor is defined as a linear combination of the variables that have a high loading on it.

Factor analysis is based on the assumption that there is correlation between at least some of the original variables. Formal tests such as the Bartlett's Sphericity test and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure are performed on the original data before applying the method.

Testing whether there are small partial correlations between variables is done using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy. The KMO value, or sampling adequacy, must be higher than 0.5 in order to move forward with a satisfactory factor analysis. Large values for the KMO measure suggest that the variables should be factored.

The factor model is inappropriate if the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, as determined by Bartlett's test of sphericity. The Bartlett's test evaluates the null hypothesis that the variables in the population correlation matrix are uncorrelated and provides an indication of the strength of the relationship between the variables. The null hypothesis is rejected at the observed significance level of .000, leading to the conclusion that there is a strong correlation between the variables. Consequently, it makes sense to move forward with factor analysis

for the given data. To reduce the amount of data, exploratory factor analysis was used to create a unique scale for evaluating service quality in the tourism sector.

## Analysis and Findings

The study aims to provide a detailed explanation of what, in the eyes of the consumers, qualifies as high-quality service in Uttar Pradesh's tourism sector.

## Results

Through analyses of internal consistency and the Cronbach alpha coefficient, the reliability of the quality of life scale and its component sub-scales was estimated. At 0.899, the scale reliability is quite good. Coefficient alpha must be more than 0.7 in order for a measure to be considered valid. As a result, the scale's reliability is found to be above acceptable bounds and quite good. The sub-scales' reliability co-efficients, which indicate moderate-to-high reliability, range from 0.532 to 0.853. Kaiser Normalization was used in conjunction with Varimax Rotation and the Principle Components extraction method. Factors with Eigen values greater than one were kept after the rotation converged after fifteen iterations. Moreover, the communalities obtained from the factor analysis were examined to evaluate whether the data were suitable for factor analysis all of these were rather large (more than 0.5, ranging from 0.565 to 0.885), indicating that the data set is suitable. Only those variables that had a loading of at least 0.50 on a single factor were taken into consideration when interpreting the factors and creating the final version. For sample sizes of 100, factor loadings of 0.55 or higher are considered "practically significant". The scale's final version, consisting of 41 items, was completed. Ten factors with Eigen values greater than 1, ranging from 1.088 to 7.097, were identified by the screening test; this indicates the significance of each factor and its relative explanatory power. Of the total variance, 68.082 percent was explained by these ten factors. These are put into practice as:

**First factor - Money Value**, comprises five elements: the value of the tour package, the value of the lodging, the value of the local transportation option (air or train), the value of the goods in stores, and the value of the tour package.

**Second factor -Tourism Experience** included nine sub components: natural beauty, landmarks, cultural heritage, sightseeing, closeness to nature, opportunity for excitement, seclusion, and tranquil atmosphere.

**Third factor- Hospitality** is made up of six components: the manners of the immigration officers at the airport, the hospitality of the staff at the guest house, the staff's responsiveness and reliability, their attitude toward female tourists, and their concern for the safety of female tourists.

**Fourth factor- Availability of timely and accurate information** is made up of five sub components: personal guidance in the tourist bus and at tourist destinations; accessibility of tourist information centers at airports and train stations; accessibility of tourist information centers at places of lodging; and ease of communication in a language that is comfortable for both visitors and locals.

**Fifth factor- Facilities** includes six things: access to medical assistance, availability of pubs and parlors, money exchange and ATM facilities, internet and telecom connectivity at the lodging, and money exchange services.

**Sixth factor- Security** consists of three components: safety during domestic travel (e.g., by plane, train, bus, taxi, or auto rickshaw), security at tourist destinations and places of stay, and security at these locations.

**Seventh factor- Affordable price** comprises four components: cost equity at the lodging location, cost equity at tourist attractions, cost equity for goods in stores, and fairness of local transportation fares.

**Eighth factor-Health and hygiene** comprises four components: the state of cleanliness and hygiene at airports and train stations, the state of cleanliness and hygiene at the lodging, the state of cleanliness and hygiene of restaurants outside the lodging, and the disruption caused by hawkers and beggars.

## CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study's factor structure highlights the idea of the tourism value chain and the reality that travelers frequently base their assessments of the caliber and happiness of their vacation experiences on every element of a complicated tourism system (Weiermair, 2000). A tour's quality is not only determined by its core tourism experiences and hospitality, but also by elements like security, logistics, and hygiene. Findings from an empirical analysis will reveal which dimensions have the strongest relationships with visitor satisfaction. The most important things to keep an eye on when managing tourism-related activities at a destination are these factors. Destination developers will also find this information useful. Decision makers should keep these factors in mind when creating strategic plans for the development of new destinations. Eight dimensions made up the developed framework describe a tour's quality. For every one of these dimensions, the proper measurement variables have also been determined. There are various uses for the developed framework.

The perception of tourists regarding their expectations about each of these items at a destination and the performance of each of these items at a destination can first be measured using an instrument with these dimensions and items; the performance gap of any given destination can then be measured. Likewise, the significance that a visitor places on each of these items during their visit to a particular location can be quantified, as can the visitor's assessment of how well each item performs at that location. Using this data, two useful tools for developing strategies are Importance Performance Analysis (Martilla & James, 1977) and Action Grid plotting (Martilla & James, 1977). The service provider's perception of the expectations of tourists, the importance that tourists attach to a destination, and how tourists view the performance of a destination can all be measured using a similar instrument. The service provider could be tour operators, hoteliers, destination managers, or officials in the Department of Tourism of any country. These results will indicate any discrepancies in the perceptions of service providers when compared to the analytical inputs on customers' own perceptions. The study has elucidated in detail what, in the eyes of the consumers, constitutes high-quality service in Uttar Pradesh's tourism sector. A ten-dimension scale or instruments for measuring service quality in Uttar Pradesh's tourism industry is developed through extensive data analysis of first-hand information. This scale precisely defines what service quality in this sector entails.



## SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Through a thorough review of the literature and primary data collection from respondents who have traveled to locations such as Ayodhya and Prayagraj for a variety of purposes, a scale has been developed in this study to measure service quality in the tourism industry. The same scale can be used in studies carried out in other states to assess the level of service in the tourism sector. Only the viewpoint of the customers has been covered in this study. To create a new scale to assess service quality from the perspective of the service providers, a study akin to this one could be conducted.

The current investigation can be expanded to examine the visitors' perception-expectation discrepancy according to the scale's developed dimension. Moreover, the dimensions with the greatest and lowest gap scores could be determined using the gap analysis. Kellogg, D.L., Youngdahl, W.E., & Bowen, D.E. (1997). On the relationship between customer participation and satisfaction: Two frameworks. *International Journal of Service Industry Management* 8 (3), 206–219.

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