



A Case Study On The Role Of Front Office Operations On Customer Satisfaction In The Hotel

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ABSTRACT

The hotel and tourism industry is striving to develop and augment the guest experience. The hotel front desk is an imperative part of the front office operations because it creates the guest's first impression. In this era of competition, the hotels have adopted new and innovative practices to improve their level of performance and at the same time delight the guest. It became essential for the hotel to offer the excellent services and to do something innovative for their guest to keep them satisfied and fulfill their request. The guests had more options to choose from and it was important to retain the guest and give them life experiences so that they became loyal guests. The guest's feedback and suggestions helped the hotel to change a few of its practices and implement innovative and effective in the industry.

This Research paper has stated guest satisfaction is a differentiator and vital success factor for the hotel. Research has shown that front office management and guest satisfaction have a relationship and that hotel performance is impacted because of the attitude and motivational levels of the employees.

Keywords – Hotel Industry, Front office, Guest Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry is striving to progress itself and increase the guest experience. The hotel front desk is an essential part of the front office operations because it gives the guest's first impression. In today's era of competition, the hospitality industry has adopted new practices to improve their level of performance and at the same time delight the guest. It became necessary for the hotel to give the best services and to do something new for their guest to keep them happy. The guests had more options to choose from and it was important to retain the guest and give them life experiences so that they became loyal customers. The guest's frank opinions helped the hotel to change a few of its practices and implement new, cost-effective and innovative ones in the industry. Research has stated guest satisfaction is a differentiator and a critical success factor for the hotel. Research has shown that front office management and guest satisfaction have a relationship and that hotel performance is impacted because of the attitude and motivational levels of the employees (Crompton et al, 1999).

As per Gerson (1993, p.5), guest satisfaction is the guest's insight that their desires have been met or outperformed. Therefore, it is given the above questions that the research intends to get its basics.

The front office has traditionally been thought of as a check-in and check-out point by the guest. Secondly, it is seen as a source of infinite information and thirdly, as a problem-solving centre. Working as a front-line manager, situations developed which created a definite 'gap' between management's expectations when defining the role of the front office personnel and how the front office employees perceived these expectations as they were related to their guest service responsibilities. Among some of the aspects of evaluation that need to be explored and understood for successful services and marketing are the following: what type of expectation standards do customers hold about front-office services? What role do these factors play in providing good customer satisfaction? How is a hotel's profitability impacted by the front desk? As Reisig & Chandek (2001) discussed those different customers have different expectations, based on their knowledge of a product or service.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To study the role of front office operations in increasing guest satisfaction in hotels.
2. To analyze guest perceptions regarding front office services such as check-in, ongoing services, and checkout
3. To analyze the impact of staff approach, professionalism, and receptiveness on guest satisfaction.
4. To identify gaps in front office operations that affect overall hotel experience.
5. To suggest improvements in front office practices for better guest satisfaction.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Customer satisfaction is widely accepted as a key determinant of service quality and business success in the hospitality industry. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) developed the SERVQUAL model, which identifies reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness as major dimensions influencing service quality. Front office operations strongly influence all these dimensions.

Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) stated that guest satisfaction significantly influences customer loyalty, especially in service industries where personal interaction plays a critical role. The front desk is the first and last contact point, making it central to memory formation of the hotel experience.

According to Jones and Sasser (1995), satisfied customers are more likely to return and recommend the service to others, which directly impacts hotel revenue and brand reputation. In hotels, front office employees are responsible for reservation handling, guest registration, information services, and complaint resolution, all of which influence satisfaction levels.

Bowen and Schneider (2014) emphasized that employee behavior and empowerment are essential in service encounters. Front office employees who are trained and motivated are more likely to resolve guest issues efficiently, creating positive emotional responses.

Studies by Lockwood and Medlik (2001) found that delays during check-in and ineffective communication were among the top reasons for guest dissatisfaction. Therefore, operational efficiency at the front desk is critical for service success.

The literature clearly suggest that front office operations are directly related to guest satisfaction, and hotel performance, justifying the need for focused research in this area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study follows a **descriptive research design**, as it aims to describe guest view and analyze the role of front office operations in guest satisfaction.

Study Area and Sample

The study was conducted in selected three-star and four-star hotels in Chh. Sambhajinagar. A sample of 100 hotel guests was selected using convenience sampling technique based on availability and willingness to participate.

Data Collection Methods

1. Primary Data

Primary data was collected using a **structured questionnaire** consisting of closed-ended questions based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The questionnaire covered areas such as:

- Check-in and check-out efficiency
- Staff courtesy and behavior
- Accuracy of information
- Handling of complaints
- Overall satisfaction

2. Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected from:

- Journals
- Books on hotel management
- Research articles
- Hotel industry reports and websites

Tools for Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using:

- Percentage analysis
- Mean score ranking
- Simple graphical interpretation

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Guest Opinion on Check-in Efficiency

Response	Percentage
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Strongly Agree	40%
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Agree	35%
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Neutral	15%
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Disagree	7%
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Strongly Disagree	3%
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Interpretation:

75% of guests were satisfied with the registration process, indicating that operational efficiency positively contributes to guest satisfaction.

Table 2: Staff Courtesy and Professional Behavior

Response	Percentage
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Strongly Agree	45%
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Agree	38%
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Neutral	10%
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Disagree	5%
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Strongly Disagree	2%
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Interpretation:

83% of guests admired the behavior of front office staff, confirming that polite communication and professionalism are major satisfaction drivers.

Table 3: Handling of Guest Complaints

Response	Percentage
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Very Satisfied	32%
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Satisfied	34%
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Neutral	18%
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Dissatisfied	10%
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Very Dissatisfied	6%
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Interpretation:

Only 66% were satisfied with complaint handling, showing scope for improvement in problem solving skills of staff.

Table 4: Accuracy of Information Provided

Response	Percentage
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Strongly Agree	36%
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Agree	39%
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Neutral	14%
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Disagree	8%
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Strongly Disagree	3%
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Interpretation:

75% satisfaction indicates that information services are generally dependable but still require consistency and training support.

Table 5: Overall Satisfaction with Front Office Services

Level of Satisfaction	Percentage
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Highly Satisfied	42%
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Satisfied	37%
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Neutral	12%
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Dissatisfied	6%
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Highly Dissatisfied	3%
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Interpretation:

79% overall satisfaction reflects a strong positive relationship between front office operations and guest satisfaction.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Front office services play a vital role in shaping the first impression of the hotel.
2. Staff behavior and communication significantly influence guest satisfaction.
3. Efficient check-in and check-out procedures improve guest perception of service quality.
4. Complaint handling is comparatively weaker and requires better staff strengthening
5. Guest's value personalized attention and quick response from front office staff.
6. Satisfaction with front office services increases the likelihood of repeat business.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**1. Regular Training Programs:**

Hotels should conduct regular staff training in communication skills, service etiquette, and problem solving skills

2. Use of Technology:

Digital check-in systems and automated billing can reduce waiting time and increase guest experience.

3. Employee Empowerment:

Front office staff should be authorized to solve small complaints immediately without management approval.

4. Guest Feedback System:

Immediate feedback collection at the time of checkout can help identify service gaps quickly.

5. Motivation and Incentives:

Reward systems should be introduced to motivate service excellence among front office employees.

6. Staffing Levels:

Sufficient staffing during peak hours will avoid service delays and guest dissatisfaction.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is limited to selected hotels in Chh. Sambhajinagar and may not represent all hotel categories.
2. Convenience sampling may not fully reflect the views of all guests.
3. Time constraints restricted the sample size to 100 respondents.
4. Guest responses may be influenced by personal expectations.

CONCLUSION

The study clearly establishes that front office operations are a essential determinant of guest satisfaction in hotels. Since the front desk serves as the primary interaction point between guests and the hotel, its efficiency, professionalism, and responsiveness significantly influence guest perception and loyalty. While most guests expressed satisfaction with basic services such as reservation, registration efficiency and staff courtesy, gaps were observed in complaint handling and personalized services.

In the competitive hospitality environment, hotels must treat front office operations not simply as administrative task but as strategic tools for service differentiation.

Investing in staff training, technological upgrades, and service culture can really improve guest satisfaction and repeat business. As a result, effective front office is not only essential for operational success but also for long-term guest relationship building and hotel profitability.

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