

The impact of the service quality on guest satisfaction in boutique hotels with special reference to Matale district

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Abstract

Sri Lankan tourism and hospitality industry are rapidly developing after the end of the war in 2009. Sri Lanka reached highest tourist arrivals in 2017 which was about more than one point three million tourists. Because guests search more unique hotel experiences, nowadays boutique hotels have become the fastest- growing segment in the hotel industry in the world. But in Sri Lankan context there is no any development in boutique hotel sector in last six years amid the huge boost in the total tourism arrivals. Since hotel performance is affected to guest's satisfaction significantly and since early researches have proved that service quality has a high impact on the guest satisfaction, this study was conducted to investigate the impact of service quality on guests' satisfaction in boutique hotels with special reference to Matale district. 100 guests who visited eight boutique hotels located in Matale district during the period of 23rd December 2018 to 31st January 2019, were selected using convenient sampling technique as the sample of this study. The data were collected by using a structured questionnaire. The SERVQUAL model was used to measure the service quality. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to analyze the data with the support of SPSS 21.0 version. The results revealed that the responsiveness and empathy dimensions do not have any significant impact on guest satisfaction. Tangibles, assurance and reliability dimensions have a significant impact on guest satisfaction. Therefore, researcher recommended to enhance the tangibles by increasing the appearance of aspects including physical facilities, hotel employees and material associated with the service. The assurance to be increased by developing, confidence of employees, safety and security of transactions, politeness and courteous of employees and competence of employees to answer guest questions. It is also recommended to enhance reliability by developing timeliness of service, problem solving interest, efficiency of service, consistency of service and accuracy of records.

Keywords: *Boutique hotel, guest satisfaction, service quality, servqual model*