

**ASSESSMENT OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN LARGE HOTELS IN
DAR ES SALAAM REGION, TANZANIA**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER IN TOURISM
PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
SERVICES
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**

2023

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation titled; **“Assessment of Customer Satisfaction in Large Hotels in Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania”** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master in Tourism Planning and Management of the Open University of Tanzania.

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Date

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Signature

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Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family, most precisely, to my treasured son, Theodore M. Zablon and all who participated in one way or another for their patience and support conferred on me throughout the period of this study. May the Almighty Lord bless you all abundantly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend special appreciation to Prof. Emmanuel Patroba Mhache for his supervisory role and constructive comments from the proposal development until the completion of this research. His ideas truly paved a smooth path for this academic research. Aligned with that, I appreciate the support rendered to me by hotel managers and supervisors during data collection. I also thank hotel employees and hotel guests for the time they spared in filling out the questionnaires.

Am further thankful to Dr. Robert Msigwa who stood as a link to a number of hotels where data was collected and for his advice in writing this report. His support eased my data collection exercise. However, the efforts of Suzan Mulimila are so much apprehended here as for data analysis could not be completed successfully without her. My family, co-workers, numerous individuals, institutions, and organizations all contributed to, encouraged, and supported me in the completion of this dissertation. As a result, I'd like to offer my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to everyone who helped me during my studies and the completion of this dissertation.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess customer satisfaction in large hotels based in Dar es Salaam Region in Tanzania. This study addressed three specific objectives; to evaluate customers' expectations and perception of service in large hotels in Dar es Salaam Region, to determine challenges facing large hotels in meeting customer satisfaction in Dar es Salaam Region, and to identify which service quality improvements is required to increase the level of customer satisfaction in large hotels in Dar es Salaam Region. In this study both primary and secondary data were collected. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews and documentary literature review. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistics Package for Social Science version 22.0. The data obtained were presented in tables and graphs. Qualitative information was analyzed using content analysis where results were presented in narratives. Based on the findings, the study established that most of the large hotels in Dar es Salaam provide satisfying services to customers. Although most dimensions of service quality had good ratings, it's evident that some customers did not have good experience with service providers' competencies. Findings indicate that a number of strategies were adopted by large hotels to address shortfalls exhibited by employees in order to provide a high level of services required to meet the perception and expectations of customers. Out of many other recommendations, the MNRT should consider the establishment of a Hotels, Restaurant, and Accommodation Council or Board to regulate, monitor and license personnel and service standards in hotels.

Keywords: *Customer, Expectation, Satisfaction, Perception, Service quality.*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A/C	Air Conditioner
ATTA	Advancing Tourism to Africa
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HAT	Hotels Association of Tanzania
HRO	Human Resource Officer
MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions
MNRT	Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
TCT	Tourism Confederation of Tanzania
TV	Television
USD	United States Dollar
WTO	World Tourism Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The hospitality industry is now recognized as a vital sector of the economy. Tourism industry contributes a major share to the GDP. According to International Visitors' Exit Survey Report of 2017 by the National Bureau of Statistics of Tanzania (NBS), tourism earnings were USD 2,250.3 million compared to 2016 that was USD 2,131.57 million with 1.2 million arrivals. However, there are many reasons as to why hospitality industry is growing and has become a vital sector of the economy. The hospitality industry is increasing its importance in the economy of Tanzania. The hotel industry comprises a major part of the tourism sector. The hospitality sector alone is a multi-million dollars and expanding business. People can work in a variety of areas of interest in the hotel sector, which is a subset of tourism. This chapter is designed to cover the introduction, background information, problem description, study objectives, research questions, importance of the study, and dissertation arrangement.

1.2 Background to the Problem

Tanzania is one among the African countries whose main economy among other sectors, depends on Tourism. The United Republic of Tanzania (URT, 2002) confirms that among the leading sectors that bring foreign currency in the country, tourism is one of them. This industry is not a stand-alone industry like agriculture; it is either a collection or grouping of other several industries that need to come

together and function as one system. Among other sectors, accommodation cannot be left aside while discussing the tourism industry.

The hotel industry now uses customer happiness as a key performance indicator. The hotel sector is experiencing fast growth and change in terms of customer expectations and needs. The tourist sector has developed into a reliable source of income and economic expansion (Jana & Chandra, 2016). Customers are the final users of any producer's goods or services, making customer satisfaction crucial for both growing profit margins and retaining existing clients. If you give your consumers what they want, they'll be more inclined to return and recommend you to their friends. In the hotel sector, customer happiness has been established as a crucial performance measure. Customer impression of the value received in a transaction or connection determines customer happiness.

The hotel industry has been one of the most competitive industries especially in the 21st century. For this reason, improving customer satisfaction is one of the key aspects of enhancing effectiveness in the industry as well as ensuring business continuity (Mubiri, 2016). Accommodation is one of the major players in the hospitality industry in Tanzania. In the event that customers are satisfied with products or brands, they are most likely to become reliable customers and keep scattering good word of the hotel. In that manner, in the event that they are disappointed, they will probably switch off brands and talk bad of the brand to different customers about the hotel. The brand of the hotel is an essential factor that

emphatically or contrarily influences advertising exercises and the image is the main thing that creates a good impression of the hotel (Pearce & Robinson, 2011).

To achieve guest's satisfaction, service quality is needed and it would be identified by associating the customer's perceptions and expectations. Oliver (1997) discusses the idea that service quality in its own sense can be elaborated as a final outcome from customer's distinction between their service expectations and their perceptions from a company's delivered services. In other words, whenever the expectations be lower than the perceptions, the service can be graded as excellent, but if the expectations and perceptions are paralleled, the service can be appointed good and fair, and at the end whether the expectations are not covered appropriately the service would be regarded as poor and not satisfactory. Gibson (2005) stressed that satisfied guests extend their positive words of mouth more.

Nurminen (2007) discovered that cost is not the main reason that causes dissatisfaction of customers. Essentially, customer dissatisfaction is mostly caused by posing low quality products and services to customers. Customer satisfaction assumes convincing part of a hotel business. Consumer loyalty is a good measure of the quality of services offered to customers. Hotels can create approaches to expand the quality of their services and products by measuring the level of their customers' reliability. In most cases, customer satisfaction lays out a mark that can be used to improve services. It gives the hotel management a reason to understand the needs of their customers and keep on offering quality services. The main strain facing most

industries is the ability to continue satisfying their customers while at the same time making enormous profits (Mathews, 2008).

It is worth noting that satisfaction is relative to different customers. As showed by many researchers, some customers may not appreciate some services as much as others would. Consequently, cultural differences may swift hotel managers to customize their services to fit the cultural practices of a specific customer. For example, a customer visiting Golden Tulip Hotel (Tanzania), from a foreign country may have different preferences as compared to customers from Tanzania. Therefore, the hotel should have adaptive employees who can learn the preferences of different customers and meet their needs accordingly.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Hotels currently play a significant role in offering a variety of business-related amenities, including Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE). For purposes of entertainment, recreation, or for any other reason, tourism is conducted within hotels. The overall output of commodities and services that comprise a country's and a community's material well-being include hotels, which are crucial to economies. Hotels are a big source of income in foreign exchange and help to greatly improve the country's employment situation (Marealle, 2015).

Customer satisfaction is an important aspect of every prosperous business. In that esteem every business should endeavor to have a good rapport with its customers to improve loyalty and thus increase its profitability. In hotels, no exhaustive study has been conducted to evaluate the satisfaction of services offered to guests who visit

such places. Marealle (2015) tried to show that, customer service is essential in operating small hotels though that only cannot prove to satisfy a customer. Hotels are being established and a number of machineries and technologies have been fixed to assist in service delivery. Still, the services being offered to customers have not yet been known if they do satisfy the customers. Mubiri (2016) studied customer satisfaction in hotel services in Rwanda and explained customer satisfaction in only one selected hotel in Rwanda. Mbise (2012) and Baraka (2015) conducted service quality on tourist hotel in Arusha and discovered that customers were not satisfied by services offered due to poor standard of service delivery. It was further discovered that subpar service standards have impeded Tanzania's tourism industry's ability to thrive in the future. Despite of studies conducted on customer satisfaction on tourist hotels but no studies has been conducted on large hotels. Thus, the objective of this study is to find out how large hotels strive in satisfying their customers.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine effects of customer satisfaction in the selected large hotels in Dar es Salaam Region.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

- i) To evaluate customers' expectations and perception of service in large hotels in Dar es Salaam Region.
- ii) To ascertain the difficulties large hotels in the Dar es Salaam Region, face in achieving client satisfaction.

- iii) To identify which service quality improvements is required to increase the level of customer satisfaction in large hotels in Dar es Salaam Region.

1.5 Research Questions

- i) What are the service quality expectations and perception of customers in large hotels in Dar es Salaam Region?
- ii) What difficulties do large hotels face in meeting customer satisfaction in Dar es Salaam Region?
- iii) What services improvements have been adapted to increase the level of customer satisfaction in large hotels?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will assist in fulfilling the requirements for the completion of my master degree in Tourism Planning and Management. Either, it will also assist the Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources in devising policies regarding to Service Quality in the tourist hotels across the country. In addition, it will benefit hotel managers, employees and customers to learn and design service quality framework that ensures customers satisfaction. Furthermore, the findings will become useful for hotel colleges that are under NACTE and VETA in devising the curricular that will train the hotel employees that can deliver service quality and customer care skills. Lastly, the study may benefit other researchers who wish to undertake the related topic.

1.7 Organization of the Dissertation

Five chapters make up the organization of this dissertation. Introduction, problem context, problem definition, and study objectives are all presented in chapter one.

Additionally, it includes research questions, study importance, and study organization. A literature review is included in Chapter two. This chapter specifically provides an introduction, definitions of key topics, reviews of the theoretical and empirical literature, a conceptual framework, a research gap, and a chapter summary. Chapter three presents the study area and research methodology. Specifically, chapter three presents introduction, the study area, research design, and targeted population, sampling techniques and sampling frame and sample size. This chapter also presents data collection instruments, data analysis, interpretation and presentation, validity and reliability of the research instruments and ethical considerations. Chapter four presents introduction, descriptive findings and results, response rate, demographic profile of respondents, reliability and validity, service quality expectations and perceptions of customers, challenges facing large hotels in meeting customer satisfaction. This chapter lastly discusses service quality improvements required to increase the level of customer satisfaction. The last chapter in this dissertation is chapter five out of which the summary, conclusion and recommendations are portrayed in that chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter provides an overview of earlier research on large hotels' customer satisfaction. The definition of essential terminology, the theoretical literature review, and the empirical literature review are all thoroughly presented. The conceptual framework and research gap are also presented.

2.2 Definition of Concepts

2.2.1 A Hotel

According to Mackenzie and Chan (2009), a hotel is an enterprise owned by the proprietors that offers lodging to anyone who is able and willing to pay a fair price for the goods and services rendered. According to Pyre *et al.* (1989), a hotel is a for-profit establishment that offers lodging, meals, and entertainment to the general public. Simply said, a hotel is any place that the owner holds forth as providing lodging to anyone who shows up and appears to be able and willing to pay a reasonable amount for the services and amenities given as well as who is in a fit state to be received.

2.2.2 Hotel Customer

A customer is a person or company that receives, consumes or buys different products or services and has the decision to choose different goods and suppliers (Powers and Barrows 2006). The main goal of all commercial enterprises is to attract customers or clients and make them purchase what they have on sale and try to

encourage them to keep coming back (Oliver, 1997). A hotel customer is an individual who was a temporary visitor, had stayed overnight at the hotel and presented oneself able and willing to pay a reasonable sum for the services and facilities provided and in a fit state of mind to be received (Powers and Barrows 2006).

2.2.3 Customer Expectation

The degree to which a product or service meets a customer's need and desire is known as the customer expectation (Oliver, 1981). Expectations are crucial in the development of satisfaction. Due to the effect of confirmation or disconfirmation they have on satisfaction, the degree to which a product or service satisfies a customer's need and want may be important in generating sentiments of contentment. Because customers demand high quality goods and services, businesses work hard to deliver these goods and services. Companies care a lot about expectations because they want to understand what their clients' expectations are. Although the word "expectation" has many various meanings, in the literature on customer satisfaction, it is understood to refer to a consumer's prediction of what is likely to occur during an exchange or transaction. Oliver (1981) claimed that expectations are consumer-defined probabilities of both favorable and unfavorable events happening if the consumer takes several activities.

2.2.4 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment that result from comparing a product's perceived performance or outcome with their

expectations (WTO, 1985). When a consumer/customer is satisfied with either the product or services, it is termed as satisfaction. By stating that satisfaction is defined as a person's sentiments of joy or disappointment as a result of contrasting a product's perceived performance or outcome with their expectations, Kotler & Keller (2009) improved the WTO definition. Customer satisfaction, according to Fornell (1992), is the consumer's reaction to the assessment of the apparent disparity between prior expectations and the actual performance of the good or service as viewed after use.

2.2.5 Customer Perception

Customer perception is an opinion about anything that has been observed and evaluated that differs from customer to customer since everyone has a unique set of beliefs about particular services and goods that are crucial in determining customer happiness (Reichheld, 1996). According to Goeldner & Ritchie (2009), the term "customer perception" refers to a consumer's perspective, awareness, or consciousness of a business or its products. Customers' opinions and expectations of the quality of the goods and services are what define customer perception.

2.2.6 Service Quality

Depending on the context the term is used in, service can be defined in a variety of ways. Services are any intangible acts or performances that one party provides to another and which do not lead to the ownership of something, according to Kotler & Keller (2009). Service can also be defined as an intangible offer by one party to another in exchange of money for gratification Taylor (1992). Quality is one of the factors that buyers search for in an offer, and service is one of them, according to

Solomon (2009). Lewis and Bloom (1985) defined service quality as a service that satisfies the needs and expectations of the client. Nomnga (2015) states that service quality is a complex, elusive, subjective and abstract concept that means different things to different people.

2.3 Theoretical Literature Review

Several researchers have studied customer satisfaction and provided theories about service quality and customers satisfaction in hospitality and tourism industry. The prominent applied models are SEVQUAL and the Grönroos service quality models. These are relevant to the field of study and will enable the researcher to achieve the objective of the study.

2.3.1 The SEVQUAL Model

Based on the idea that customers can assess a company's service quality by comparing their perception of that quality with their own expectations, Parasuraman created the SEVQUAL model in 1988 as a tool for discovering service quality shortfalls (Waitiki, 2014). The SERVQUAL model was first presented by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985, 1988) to gauge service quality. The Marketing Science Institute supported the development of the SERVQUAL scale in the context of marketing (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). In the original SERVQUAL instrument, reliability, tangibility, responsiveness, credibility, communication, competence, security, courtesy, understanding the customer, and access are the ten dimensions that define service quality. However, later Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) reduced the dimensions to five because some of them (credibility, communication, competence,

security, courtesy, understanding customers, and access) were overlapping. To mention, these five included reliability, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

These factors have particular service attributes connected to client expectations (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). The SERVQUAL has drawn a lot of criticism from some academics (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Brown *et al.*, 1993) who are against using the SERVQUAL to measure service quality due to the differences in industry characteristics, despite the fact that this model has been used as an instrument in numerous studies across industries.

Additionally, SERVQUAL has come under fire for emphasizing service delivery procedures over the precise results of the service interaction (Mangold & Babakus, 1991; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Richard & Allaway, 1993). Mangold and Babakus (1991) contend that SERVQUAL's emphasis on the functional facets of the service delivery process prevents reliable assessments of service quality. In support of this, Richard and Allaway (1991) discovered that functional metrics alone did not fully explain for the heterogeneity in choice behavior. However, Higgins *et al.* (1991) defended SERVQUAL by arguing that its dimensions of reliability, competence, and assurance contain measurements of technical quality (security).

In addition, other scholars have endorsed the SERVQUAL instrument's applicability to the tourism sector (Fick & Ritchie, 1991; Yuan *et al.*, 2005). The most widely used tool for gauging service quality is the SERVQUAL scale. Numerous service

sectors, including tourism and hospitality, have used the approach. This study will adopt SERVQUAL model to achieve its objectives, as it is more relevant to this industry. The five dimensions of SERVQUAL will form the questionnaires for evaluating customer's perception and expectations in the aspect of service quality provided by the large hotels in Dar es Salaam. The most rated dimension will provide clue for customer's satisfaction.

2.3.2 The Grönroos Service Quality Model

The service quality model was created by Gronroos (1984) to better understand how customers perceive and evaluate service quality as well as to determine how service quality can be influenced. The Gronroos model is predicated on the idea that a consumer's comparison of his or her expectations and perception will lead to an assessment of perceived service quality (the outcome of the evaluation process). In addition, this model investigates how closely three dimensions—technical quality, functional quality, and image—relate to the overall assessment and perception of service quality. What a client receives from the service provider and how a customer receives this service are both addressed by the image dimension. As a result, Gronroos' model attempts to research the needs and evaluations of customers in a service environment. The service provider will thus be able to influence, manage, and control the customer's evaluation in the preferred manner (Gronroos, 1989).

Gronroos (1997) asserts that managing the interaction processes becomes essential from the perspective of quality perception when multiple companies are able to offer a comparable technical quality. Managers need to be aware of the precise resources,

abilities, and procedures that go into producing technical quality. According to how they imagined it, technical quality is reliant on high-quality machinery, an effective information system, physically appealing facilities, and technically skilled support staff. Contrarily, functional quality is determined by the customer-focused culture in service businesses, the interpersonal abilities, and caring mindset of the service team.

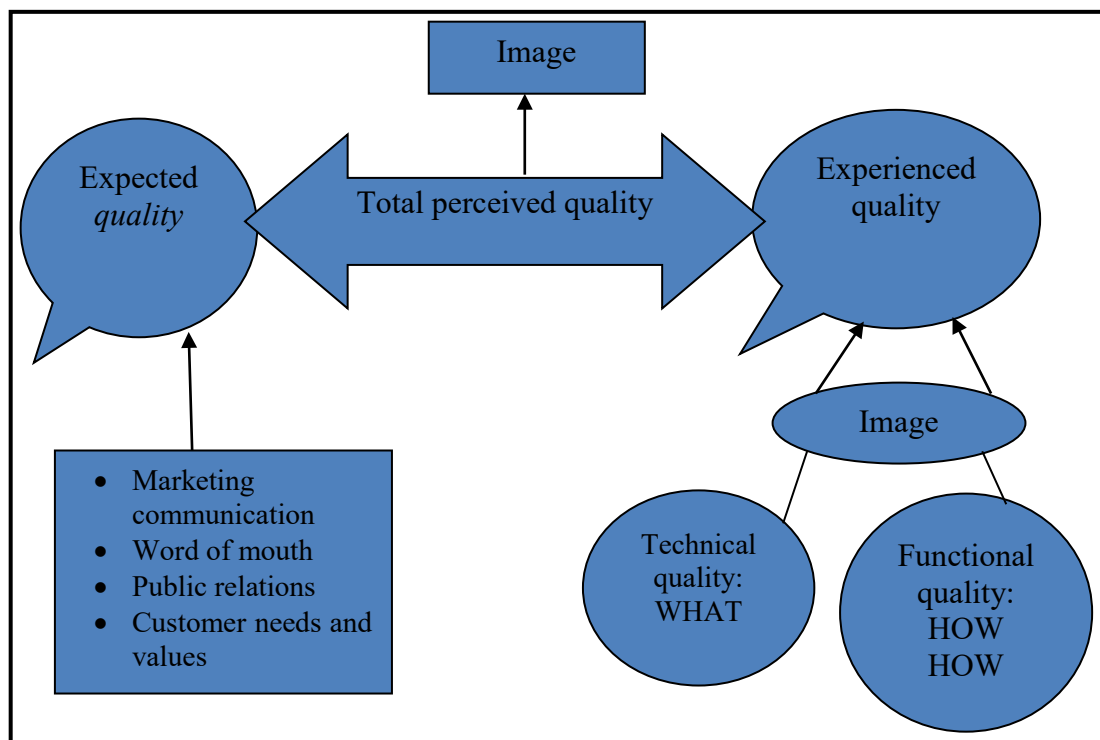


Figure 2.1: Grönroos service quality model

Source: Grönroos, 2001

According to Figure 2.1, price, consumer demands and values, company/local image, marketing communication, word-of-mouth, and reputation all affect expected quality. When used in this context, the term "image" refers to the guests' expectations for the hotel and its services. Advertising, direct mail, sales promotion, websites, internet communication, and sales campaigns are all examples of marketing communication. Unlike the image and word-of-mouth components, which the corporation indirectly

controls, these are directly within its control. The company's reputation is crucial to how customers judge the caliber of the services provided.

Therefore, it is crucial that image be well controlled. External influences on these elements may be possible, but they depend on the firm's historical performance as reinforced by, for example, advertising. Finally, the expectations of the clients are influenced by their needs as well as the values that influence their choice. As a result, the gap between expected and experienced quality, rather than just the degree of technical and functional quality dimensions, determines the amount of overall perceived quality.

Other scholars, such as Grönroos (1983), recognized the necessity for functional and technological characteristics as supplementary components of service expectations. Consumers were supposed to evaluate services based on both the technical (i.e., what is given) and the functional (i.e., how, why, who, and when) dimensions. This modal is important in this study, because it will supplement the missing technical part that could not be addressed in the SEVQUAL modal. It will also form the questionnaire that will evaluate the service quality technical aspect whether it could contribute to customers' satisfaction in the large hotels in Dar es Salaam or otherwise. Therefore, these models were relevant in assessing the customer's satisfaction in large hotels.

2.4 Empirical Literature Review

2.4.1 Customer Expectations and Perceptions of Service Quality in Large Hotels

Meeting the expectations of customers is critical to the growth and sustainability of businesses in today's competitive business environment. Customers' expectations are

crucial since they differ dramatically between expectations for products and services. In addition, client expectations differ depending on the type of service. The significance of what customers expect is shown by the fact that a product's quality reflects how it ranks in comparison to predetermined standards.

Consumers typically evaluate the quality of a product or service in accordance with internal standards, or more precisely, the expected level of service. As a result, expectations serve as personal benchmarks by which consumers rate the quality of services they receive (Ljubojevis, 2004). Customers' expectations in the context of tourism and hospitality refer to what visitors anticipate getting from the services offered by a hotel. Consumer expectations are influenced by pre-consumption views (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1990). According to Parasuraman *et al.* (1988), hotel service providers frequently are unsure of what tourists expect from their offering. This is especially true given that the services are intangible and that human interaction is always unpredictable.

Certain clients have higher expectations of service quality than do others, according to Clewer *et al.* (1992). According to Davidow & Uttal (1989), a variety of elements, such as prior experiences with other hotels, the psychological state of the traveler at the time of service delivery, the customer's background, and the hotel's reputation, shape the expectations of the customer. Additionally, Zeithaml *et al.* (1990) claimed that customers' expectations for customer service are based on a variety of factors, including their personal thoughts and beliefs about the services they hope to receive. Expectations may also be influenced by prior service encounters, information

gleaned from the internet, advertisements, and word of mouth. Expectations, on the other hand, might be viewed as a pre-consumption attitude prior to the initial purchase that may entail prior hotel service experience. Cadotte *et al.*'s (1987) major addition to understanding the types of standards employed is that expectation is crucial for customers to develop disconfirmation beliefs and satisfaction sentiments. However, the authors argue that it is not the only standard that consumers use.

Because of this, clients have a variety of informational sources (including word-of-mouth, media coverage, expert opinion, communication, and prior exposure to rival services), which raises their expectations for future service interactions with a particular organization (Boulding *et al.*, 1993). At a study by Nadji *et al.* (2017) done in a Senegalese hotel, it was found that Chinese tourists' expectations for service quality and impressions of the Senegalese hotel industry varied greatly. According to the investigation done, five factors primarily influence how the Chinese perceive the service delivery in various hotels in Senegal: staff cleanliness, customer service and care provided by the service staff, hotel atmosphere, cuisine quality, and facility kind and quality.

2.4.2 Challenges Facing Large Hotels in Meeting Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction in a large hotel plays a critical role in contribution to the success of the business whereby different hotel organizations use various strategies to ensure customer satisfaction practices are maintained. Previous studies have indicated that large hotels face numerous challenges in meeting higher level of customer's satisfactions. The most prominent obstacles revealed in the previous

studies was the nature and characteristics of service products which are intangibility and simultaneously produced and consumed during which customers become part of the process (Dilpazir and Amin, 2015). On other hand, Chan and Mackenzie (2013) outlined that hospitality industry has the following characteristics:

Mix of products and services is the first characteristic. Production and consumption in the hotel sector are intertwined; as a result, clients consume a variety of goods and services. Furthermore, the hospitality industry experiences both concrete and intangible characteristics. In order to attain service excellence in the hospitality sector, two-way communication is a crucial component that necessitates the involvement and participation of both clients and service staff in the service delivery process. Service personnel learn about customer wants and expectations through encounters with consumers in order to take prompt action to satisfy customers.

Building relationships is the third quality. The survival of the hospitality sector depends greatly on repeat business. Building long-term relationships with customers can help businesses produce consistent revenue regardless of the cyclical nature of the economy and, in addition, help brands build positive word-of-mouth through loyal customers. The fourth attribute is cultural diversity. Anyone working in the hospitality industry, whether as a consumer or an employee, will encounter cultural diversity as they engage with others.

Employees in the hospitality industry frequently deal with clients from various geographical locations as well as coworkers from various racial or cultural

backgrounds. There may be some disputes and misunderstandings as a result of their divergent religious perspectives and morals. In order to provide consumers with high quality service based on national cultures and harmony among staff members, it is essential to comprehend various cultures. The fifth attribute is labor intensive; because the hotel sector is service-oriented, it needs a lot of effort to give clients a memorable experience. Through qualities of the client's perceived service quality, customer satisfaction acts as a mediator of reputation.

Customers in the hotel industry differ significantly due to cultural background, perception and expectations thus pose challenge in customers' satisfaction (Senge & Olivia, 1993). Customers have various levels of satisfaction with identical or uniform hotel services because they have different attitudes and perceptions of the services' performance, according to Hall *et al.* (2003). The variations in satisfaction levels could be brought about by variations in gender, age, place of origin, frequency of travel, expectations for service delivery, and visitor contentment with hotel services.

Senge & Olivia, (1993) and Mbuthia *et al.* (2013) indicated that service industries such as hotels encounter challenges in customer satisfaction due to intangibility nature of products/services offered to customers. Unlike other products that customers are able to sample before making purchase decision, hotel services can only be assessed when customers make comparison between their perception and expectation against the actual service provided. According to Langhorn (2004), the nature of the hotel industry requires that the service provider be "part of the product itself." As a result, for guests to be satisfied, they must not only feel that they have

received a good value for their money, but also that the service providers value and respect them.

Also, this was supported by the study conducted by (Khan & Fasih, 2014) who argued that if employees of organizations display trustworthy behavior, the satisfaction level of customers can be enhanced significantly and it may also encourage repurchase or retention of customers. The nature and quality of communication during this initial encounter, according to Callan (1992), further establishes and confirms customer expectations about the hospitality product. This is because the service encounter is primarily a social encounter, and the hotel industry frequently deals with intangibles and uncontrollable elements. The study indicated the importance of language proficiency to staff that render hotel services to customers due to intangibility nature; they should communicate hotel services effectively. Consequently, Martin and Davies (2006) attributed that the language barrier to the category of service quality provision was a prominent obstacle to customer satisfaction in the hotel business.

2.4.3 Service Quality Improvements in Large Hotels

Today, one of the most effective strategies for maintaining a competitive advantage for corporate success and survival is to continually increase customer satisfaction in major hotels. Excellent customer service, according to Parasuraman *et al.* (1987: 32), "is a profit strategy since it results in more new customers, more business from existing customers, fewer lost customers, more insulation from price rivalry, and fewer blunders requiring the re-performance of services." Maximizing customer

happiness will maximize profitability and market share, according to Mentzer *et al.* (1995: 45–46). Mmutle (2017) indicated service quality improvements in hotels can be achieved through development of service delivery standards and management should ensure the standards are adhered to, at all times, and never to be compromised, therefore ensuring customers' satisfaction and expectations are met.

While Slatten (2009) claimed that training is a managerial activity connected to the improvement of service quality, Mbise (2012) asserts that staff continual training is a crucial tool in achieving service quality in a company. Training increases staff empowerment, which is important for service recovery and performance (Babakus *et al.*, 2003). Training helps employees comprehend the firm's service vision and removes any ambiguities they may have in providing the service, especially if they are new to the organization. Customer reviews or feedback are statements made by customers that assess their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the goods or services they have purchased or with their overall interactions with the business. Monitoring and managing client feedback is crucial to a company's ability to fully understand how its customers feel about its goods, services, and brand.

Top-performing businesses anticipate and comprehend the value of customer input, whether it is pleasant or negative, requested or unrequested, and then they concentrate on continually listening to their clients to raise their performance. Companies cannot determine whether or not their customers share their values without receiving input from them. The emergence of web-based platforms dedicated to online traveler evaluations that offer independent platforms for customer feedback

poses the greatest challenge to conventional hotel rating organizations given the Internet's explosive growth and the rise of social media (Zarrella 2010).

Presbury (2009) study on Sydney hotels, found that service quality improvement was strongly linked with managers/supervisors who have direct and lead hotel employees. Managers have direct influence on the roles that employees undertake, designing of service delivery system and greatly influencing organization culture. Similarly, Mbise (2012) indicated that the managers influence practices in ensuring that organizations deliver quality service expected by the guests. Management practices are important in promoting service excellence. This should be achieved through communicating with employees to emphasize the norms and values related to service quality and excellence.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The aim of this section is to summarize the idea about past literatures and to bring out their contributions on this study. According to Smyth (2004), a conceptual framework is a systematic collection of general ideas and theories that aids a researcher in correctly defining the issue at hand, framing their research questions, and locating pertinent material. It aids in the researcher's efforts to define the goals and study topics. As a result, the conceptual framework described how the variables in this study relate to one another. The researcher assumed that hotel customers have expectation and perception on service quality which might be resulted from marketing efforts of organization. When service quality exceeds their expectation and perception will be resulting to customer satisfaction. Thus, the SERVQUAL

dimensions which are independent variables had an effect on the dependent variable which is customer's satisfaction. The SERVQUAL dimensions are explained as; tangibility which stresses on physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel. The second dimension being responsiveness aims at the willingness of the service provider to help customers and provide prompt service. Reliability is the third dimension showing the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately while communication skills, the last dimension stretches on the ability of staff/employee to keep customers informed, listening skills and language proficiency.

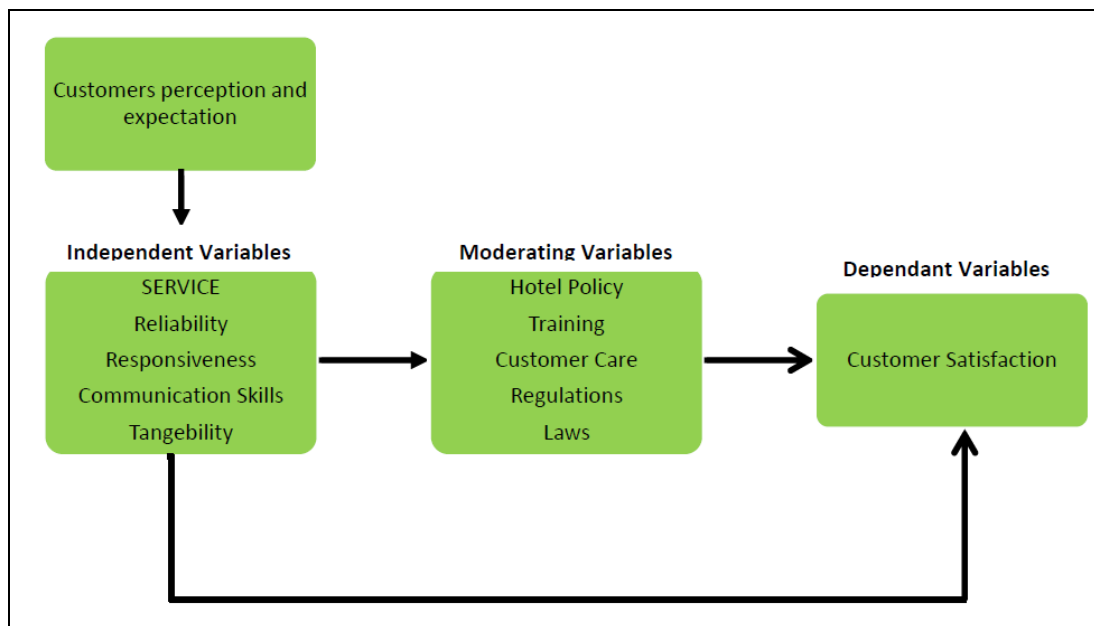


Figure 2.2: Service quality leading to customer satisfaction

Source: Modified SERVQUAL model, 1998

Figure 2.2 shows the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables. Independent variables are variable that cause effect to other variables while dependent variables are the variables that are affected by independent variable. Reflecting to this study, the independent variables are service dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, tangibility, and communication skills) has direct effect to dependent

variable which is customer satisfaction. If service is reliable, it leads to customer satisfaction. If it's not reliable, then the service is of no quality which leads to customer dissatisfaction.

2.6 Research Gap

Many studies concerning customers' satisfaction in the hotel sectors have been conducted worldwide. Mbise (2014) conducted a study about quality of service standards and related factors in tourist hotels in Arusha and discovered the presence of a gap between customer's expectations and quality of service offered in the aspect of hotel products, staff low courtesy, location accessibility and quality of services offered in restaurant, bar and guest rooms did not meet guest expectations.

In their study of service quality in Chinese hotels, Tsang and Qu (2000) discovered that the "physical amenities," "staff skills and performance," and "price and value" categories had the most apparent discrepancies between visitors' expectations and perceptions. On the other hand, Min and Min (1997) did a similar study on Korean luxury hotels and discovered that among the characteristics that were prioritized, especially when establishing opinions of service quality, were both the cleanliness of a guest room and the civility of hotel workers. Juwaheer and Ross (2003) discovered that a general assessment of service quality in Mauritian hotels was largely influenced by firstly "assurance factors" like guests' security and safety and the hotel staff's effective handling of complaints and problems, and secondly "reliability factors" like hotels completing tasks they promised to guests and resolving issues they encountered. Eshetie *et al.* (2016) conducted a study on service quality and

customer satisfaction in hospitality industry in Ethiopia and the results indicated that the attributes of responsiveness, tangibility and reliability had lower significance in customer satisfaction. However, issues concerning customer' satisfaction on large hotels in Dar es Salaam Region remain undocumented. Thus, this study was conducted so that it documents the satisfaction of customers who visited large hotels in Dar es Salaam.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter begins by defining the core concepts that hold the research such as hotel, a customer, customer satisfaction, customer expectations and service quality. The SEVQUAL and Grönroos service quality model were elaborated to further explain the concepts between the core concepts. The conceptual framework is also depicted in the chapter and lastly, the chapter finalizes with the research gap and chapter summary.

THE STUDY AREA AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The subject area and research techniques used to carry out this study are the main topics of this chapter. The study area, research design, target population, and sample processes are all thoroughly explained in this chapter. The chapter also covers research ethics, data collection techniques, data processing, presentation, and interpretation, as well as the reliability and validity of the research tools.

Map of Dar es Salaam City showing the formation of unplanned settlements in 2001. The map is divided into various administrative wards, each color-coded according to its settlement status. A legend in the bottom left corner defines the color coding: Planned Served (pink), Planned Served/unplanned unserved (light green), Planned Unserved (orange), Unplanned CIUP/Planned Other/inner-city (purple), River (blue line), Roads (black line), Peri urban areas (yellow), Peri urban areas/unplanned inner-city (light orange), Peri urban areas/unplanned under CIUP (light blue), and Peri urban areas/unplanned under other programmes (light pink). The map includes a north arrow and a scale bar (1:250,000) in the top right corner. The source is cited as 'Source: Formation of Unplanned Settlement in Dar es Salaam City SDP - 2001'. The Indian Ocean is visible to the east of the city.

Source: Socio-economic survey city of Dar es Salaam, 2007

This study was conducted in Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania (Figure 3.1). Dar es Salaam Region is located between 6° 48' South latitude and 39° 17' East longitude. Dar es Salaam was chosen for this study because it is the major business and a modern metropolitan in Tanzania. The city has major tourists' hotels and other recreational spots for tourists along the coast of the Indian Ocean. Therefore, hospitality establishments in Dar es Salaam were naturally expected to reflect international standards in order to cater for the needs of the town's tourist arrivals.

3.3 Research Design

The blueprint and framework for an inquiry that the researcher envisions in order to find answers to the research questions is known as the research design (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). An arrangement of parameters for data collecting and analysis that seeks to balance relevance with the study purpose is referred to as a research design (Orodho, 2003). The research design used in the study was descriptive. According to Kothari, studies that focus on characterizing the traits of a certain person or group of people use a descriptive study approach (2014). Because it is concerned with predictions, narrations of facts and qualities pertaining to certain people, groups, or events, this design was chosen for this study.

3.4 Target Population

All items in any field of inquiry constituent are referred to as the population (Kothari, 2004). Saunders *et al.* (2009) argued that a study population is the aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected. In achieving the objectives of this study, the sample was taken from population of local and international tourist

lodging in large hotels in Dar es Salaam, the hotel managers and staff who are directly involved in service provision. The target population that was used in this study was 1220 being aggregation of tourist hotel arrivals obtained from National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in one-month duration 2020 and hotel staff.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

Choosing a manageable sample size to study in order to respond to the research questions is referred to as the sampling technique (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). It is the process of choosing a large number of people for a research in a way that ensures the chosen people accurately reflect the larger population from which they were chosen (Ogula, 2005). Sample, also known as a sampling frame (Scott and Morrison, 2007), is the process of choosing a portion of a larger population of people or things with the goal of accurately representing that population (Gall *et al.* 2007; Neuman, 2011). Purposive sampling and random sampling were both used in this study to fulfill the goal of this study.

3.5.1 Purposive Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling, according to Gibson and Brown (2009), is the process of choosing research subjects based on their applicability to the study. The objective is to choose potential research subjects who are knowledgeable about customer satisfaction at prominent hotels in Dar es Salaam. This method was utilized to pick cases that would help the study accomplish its goal.

The researcher chose people who have experience or knowledge of an interest phenomenon. The researcher purposively selected large hotel among other hotels as

they receive more diverse customers who were able to evaluate service standard due to their exposure to similar establishments in other part of world. Subsequently hotel managers were selected as they directly interact with customers more often thus able to provide vital information for achieving objectives of the study.

3.5.2 Random Sampling Technique

The adoption of a random sampling technique simplifies and expedites the research process (Orotho, 2003). This technique is useful and relevant to hotel working environment where working shifts are applicable. Hotel business has three working shifts, notably morning to afternoon, afternoon to evening and night. Provision of services and level of customer's interactions differs from one shift to another. For instance, during afternoon to evening and night shifts, these are less busy compared to the other shift thus, staffs were able to concentrate well in filling the questionnaires. Every staff who participated in filling the questionnaire was randomly selected from the list of employees that was given out by the employer as according to the sections/departments. Also, the researcher was able to randomly select hotel guests in the guest registration book and obtain relevant information required.

3.6 Sampling Frame and Sample Size

The number of objects drawn from the population to form a sample is referred to as the sample size (Kothari, 2009). According to Gay and Diehl (1992), the sample size for descriptive and case study research should be 10% of the population. However, if the study's population is tiny, 20% might be needed. Therefore, as the target

population of this study which is 1220, 10% of the population is 122 respondents which stand as the sample size. That sample as shown in Table 3.1 represents 92 local and international tourists, 10 hotel managers and 20 are hotel staff.

Table 3.1: Sample distribution

S/n	Category of respondents	Target population	Calculations (Ratio x Sample)	Sample distribution
1	Local and International tourists	920	0.754×122	92
2	Hotel managers	100	0.081×122	10
4	Hotel staff	200	0.163×122	20
	Total	1220		122

Source: Field survey, 2020

3.7 Sources of Data

3.7.1 Secondary Data

Kothari (2009) defines secondary data as information that is present in a document or work of literature. Documents like books, papers, journals, unpublished writings, and the internet were used to gather secondary data. Secondary data for this study was gathered through document analysis, published prior research articles, peer-reviewed studies, and library research. Secondary data was purposely collected so as it supports primary data.

3.7.2 Primary Data

Kothari (2009) claims that primary data are facts that have been gathered for the first time and are hence unique in nature. In this study, the researcher used questionnaires and key informant interviews to gather primary data. The data that was obtained here was collected so that it assesses customer satisfaction.

3.8 Data Collection Methods

A systematic, narrowly focused, and organized collecting of data is referred to as data collection (Ghauri, 2002). In order to get the information needed for this study, questionnaires, interviews, and a review of the scholarly literature were used to gather data.

3.8.1 Questionnaires

According to Rule and John (2011), a questionnaire is a printed set of survey questions that participants can complete independently (self-administered) or in the researcher's presence. Questionnaires were used to collect information from local and international tourists. The researcher administered questionnaires to local and international hotel customers and employees. The questionnaire for hotel guest will be constructed by using SERVQUAL Model where four dimensions, (responsiveness, reliability, communication skills and tangibility) will reveal the gap between expectation and perception of service quality provided on large hotel thus with reflecting to specific objective one, the customer's expectation and perception on service quality on large hotel will be evaluated. Other respondents targeted were the hotel staff who are directly involved on service provision in the hotel organizations. The questionnaires aligned with Grönroos service quality model so as to reflect with the technical parts who are service providers.

3.8.2 Interviews

The oral-verbal stimuli are presented during an interview, and respondents respond orally and verbally (Kothari, 2004). According to Magigi (2015), an interview is a

discourse between two or more people during which the interviewer poses questions in an effort to elicit information. To accomplish the goal of the study, the researcher employed both organized and unstructured interview techniques. The targeted respondents are the managers who are responsible for setting service standards and monitor service provision and to ensure that staff provides service according to set standards; The interview structured questionnaires were constructed by using Grönroos service quality model because it assisted the researcher to evaluate the technical part of which it comprised hotel managers who are responsible with hotel operations and sets the service standards. By so doing it provided answers for both specific objectives two and three which reflects the technical side of the hotel operations.

3.9 Documentary Literature Review

In addition to the core sources of data—interviews, questionnaires, and observation—literature was employed to enhance this knowledge. In order to have a complete understanding of the past, present, and future trends of the customer's happiness on large hotels, the researcher used documentary sources of data. These data were gathered from a variety of sources, including academic journals, theses, books, documents, and reports from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. A literature review was also done on earlier research of a similar nature that had been done in various regions of Africa and elsewhere in the world. Thus, this will enable the researcher to concur with findings of other researchers who did the similar study.

3.10 Data Analysis, Interpretation and Presentation

Analyzing data entails organization, structure, and meaning extraction. In order to find answers to the study questions, data analysis, according to Rwegoshora (2006), entails separating the data into its component pieces. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 was used to import quantitative data from the structured questionnaires for analysis. The analysis of descriptive statistics, such as mean, frequencies, and percentages, is made possible by this. Tables and figures were used to show and summarize the results. The qualitative information obtained through interviews was analyzed. Findings from the quantitative data were triangulated using the qualitative data. Narratives were used to present qualitative data.

3.11 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

Validity, according to Mark Saunder et al. (2009), is the question of whether the conclusions are actually about what they claim to be. Triangulation techniques were employed for efficient data collecting and sampling in order to guarantee the validity of the data. Information gathered through observation, surveys, focus groups, interviews, and other methods was cross-checked using the triangulation method. Triangulation provided evidence of validity and provided a fresh perspective on the subject of the research. To verify the data gathered in the field, the researcher purchased the copyrights to published publications that related to the data they had gathered.

Reliability, according to Saunders (2007), relates to the degree to which data

gathering methods provide consistent findings or outcomes. To put it another way, consistency in the observations or conclusions drawn by other researchers, or when there is openness about how sense was made of the raw data, provides reliability. In order to ensure reliability, the researcher avoided bias while selecting respondents and ensured that the data gathering procedure was appropriate for the topic at hand.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

In order to obtain authorization to gather data in the study region, the researcher received a research clearance and introduction letter from the Open University of Tanzania before the primary survey began. Additionally, respondents were given a clear explanation of the study's objectives and assurances that the data they submitted would be kept private and used exclusively for research. A clearance letter from the institution was served to all replies to dispel any lingering questions. Respondent's participation on the research was voluntarily.

3.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the research topic and methods. The study was conducted in the region of Dar es Salaam. A cross-sectional research design was used in the study to identify the relationship between the several study variables. A deliberate method was used to choose the study's sample. The 122-person sample consisted of 92 hotel visitors, 10 hotel managers, and 20 hotel staff members. Data from both secondary and primary sources, both qualitative and quantitative, were gathered for this study. The data was gathered using a variety of research tools, including surveys,

interviews, and a study of academic literature. There was also a chapter summary, data analysis, study instrument validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the empirical data collected from 122 respondents and calculated by SPSS program. The overall findings are presented through various statistical tools such as frequency tables and descriptive statistical. This study presents the results based on three study objectives separately namely, to evaluate customers' expectations and perception of service in large hotels in Dar es Salaam Region, to determine challenges facing large hotels in meeting customer satisfaction in Dar es Salaam Region, and to identify which service quality improvements are required to increase the level of customer satisfaction in large hotels in Dar es Salaam Region.

4.2 Demographics Profile of the Respondents

The study looked at the respondents' demographics since they have an impact on people's behavior, demands, desires, judgments, comprehension, aptitude, feelings, and even opinions and attitudes in numerous areas (Brooks, 2007; Scott, 2019). Gender, marital status, age, nationality, and degree of education of the respondents were the five factors that were looked at. Results are presented in Table 4.1. A sample of 92 customers was interviewed. Respondents have been in their current positions for a period between June and August. Participants also indicated their hotels had been in existence from anything between 1 to 10 years.

4.2.1 Age of the Respondents

The age distribution of the sampled customers revealed that the majority were aged between 36-59 years. Table 4.1 indicates that 29% of respondents were between 36 to 45 years while 38% were aged between 46 - 59 years.

Table 4.1: Age of the respondents

Age of the respondents	Frequencies	Percentages
18-25	19	19.0
26-35	4	4.0
36-45	29	29.0
46-59	38	38.0
60+	10	10.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.2.2 Gender of the Respondents

This is an important aspect as it provides the way through which males and females perceive and experience services provided by sampled hotels. Respondents were asked to indicate their gender. The findings in Table 4.2 provide gender representation of the respondents. Out of 100 respondents' males were 62% while females were 38%. The study had more males than females because in African traditions males are treated as bread earners in the families.

Table 4.2: Gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequencies	Percentages
Male	62	62.0
Female	38	38.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.2.3 Education level of the Respondents

Education in different levels plays a role in impacting of respondents' perception of service as the tourism sector involves interactions with many nationals with different cultural backgrounds. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of education. The results indicate that 1% of the respondents had secondary education; 13% had attained college education interims of certificate and diploma; while 59% had bachelor's degree and nearly 30% had postgraduate education. These findings indicate that customers who responded to questionnaires had a good level of education for subjective assessment of service provided by the hotels in question.

Table 4.3: Education level of the respondents

Level of education	Frequencies	Percentages
Secondary level	1	1.0
Certificate	4	4.0
Diploma	9	9.0
Bachelor	59	59.0
Masters	25	25.0
Doctorate of Philosophy	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.2.4 Occupation of the respondents

The data in Table 4.4 indicates that 22% of respondents were employed while 45% were self-employed while 29% of customers were pensioners who had just retired. From the data in the table, one can say that majority 74% who are either retired or self-employed had spare time which is critical in assessing quality of service provided.

Table 4.4: Occupation of the respondents

Occupation of the respondents	Frequencies	Percentages
Student	1	1.0
Employed	22	22.0
Self employed	45	45.0
Retired	29	29.0
Others	3	3.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.2.5 Nationality of the respondents

Data indicates that majority of customers were nationals, representing 65% of respondents with foreigner constituting 35% of all respondents. The number of visitors who are foreigners is that low compared to national visitors due to pandemic disease, Covid 19. Movement to various places was restricted as a means of fighting the disease. So very few people managed to travel from their home countries. The data portraying this information is presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Nationality of the respondents

Nationality	Frequencies	Percentages
Citizen	65	65.0
Foreigner	35	35.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.2.6 Hotel Selection and Purpose of Visit

The distribution shows that purpose of visit for the majority of respondents, 53% was for pleasure. This indicates that most of the visitors had time to analyse and observe most of service dimensions as noted by Markovic (2015). Very few customers, in fact only 4% had the intention of Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) where as

10% traveled for conference reason. This explains that one would have travelled to attend meetings, incentives, conventions and/or exhibitions. Despite the fact that the majority had traveled seeking for pleasure, 17% of the customers had moved into selected hotels for the sake of business. The remaining percentage, which is 16% had traveled for some other reasons as not limited to; holidays, cultural visit, studies and religious purpose. Table 4.6 summarizes the presented data below:

Table 4.6: Purpose of visit

Purpose of visit	Frequencies	Percentages
Pleasure	53	53.0
Business	17	17.0
Visiting Relatives	4	4.0
Conference	10	10.0
Others	16	16.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research Findings, 2021

Likewise, a significant number of customers, 54% had learnt about the hotel on internet-based platforms. This elaborates that most of the customers had received the right information regarding the selected hotel that has been posted up via the internet by the organization itself. So saying, customers expected to see the fulfillment of what has been advertised on such platforms. Either, 32% of the total number of visitors selected the hotel based on what previous customers shared about the past experience of the hotel that was rendered to them upon visiting that place. This implies that most customers made informed decision when they chose the hotel to visit/stay which means that they knew what to expect. Only 14% chose the hotel to stay through travel agents. The data regarding hotel selection criterion has been presented below in table 4.7

Table 4.7: Hotel selection

Hotel selection	Frequencies	Percentages
Internet	54	54.0
Travel Agency	14	14.0
Word of mouth	32	32.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.3 Service Quality Expectations and Perception of Customers

This section analyses customers' perceptions based on five dimensions of service quality; tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy. The majority of questions were oriented towards assessing tangibility and intangibility aspects of service.

4.3.1 Tangibility

One of the SERVQUAL model's dimensions is tangible. It can be characterized as the tangible proof in the service sector (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). The physical surroundings, personnel attire, physical representations of services, and physical infrastructure all contribute to this. According to Wakefield and Blodgett (1999), the physical surroundings have a big impact on how buyers perceive a brand.

4.3.1.1 Front Desk and Appearance of Staff

Findings indicate that 63% of respondents found the front desk was visually appealing, 18% respondents affirmed that employees had clean, neat uniforms, 11% remained neutral, 4% disagreed and another 4% strongly disagreed. This implies that the first impression of majority of large hotels in Dar e salaam met most customers' expectations.

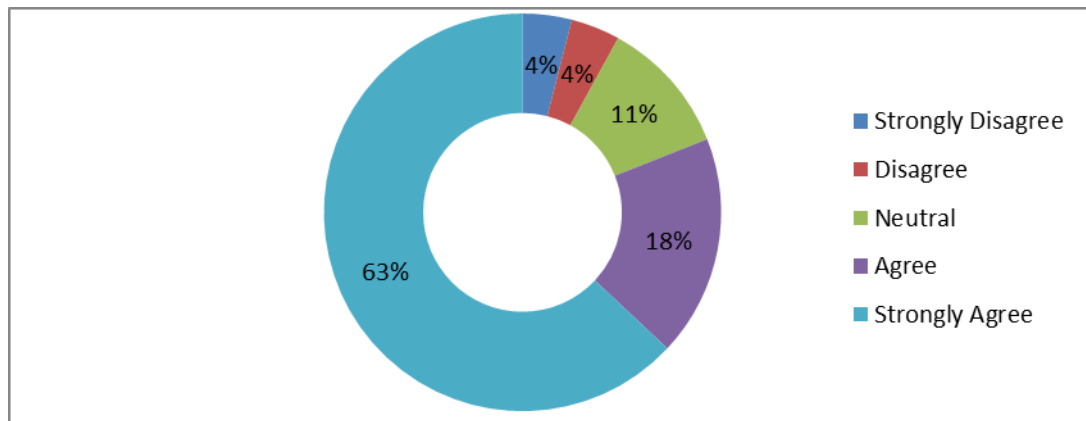


Figure 4.1: Front desk and appearance of staff

Source: Research Findings, 2021

4.3.1.2 Restaurant's Atmosphere

Findings in figure 4.2 indicate that 63% of the respondents, which is the majority of respondents agreed that the atmosphere of the restaurant was pleasing. Either, 23% of the respondents strongly agreed to have found restaurant's atmosphere to be inviting, curio shops being pleasant and attractive. Products were clearly arranged in a proper manner making easy visibility to customers. This indicates that restaurants and curio shops delivered a fair amount of satisfaction to customers.

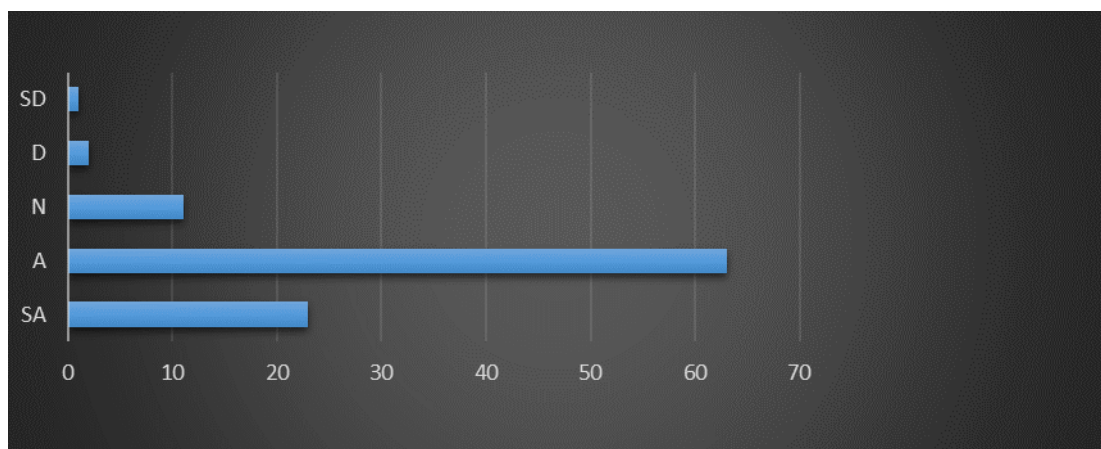


Figure 4.2: Restaurant's atmosphere and curio shop

Source: Research Findings, 2021

4.3.1.3 Hotel Surrounding

Majority of the respondents found the outdoor surroundings of the sampled hotels were visually attractive. A total of 3% of respondents disagreed that the outdoor surrounding was not visually attractive yet 8% of the respondents agreed that the surroundings were clean and pleasing, 2% strongly disagreed and 6% remained neutral. The majority, which is 81%, strongly agreed that the hotel environment was beautiful and very attractive. The environment was bright and well lighted at all times. Figure 4.3 below clearly explains the data presented above.

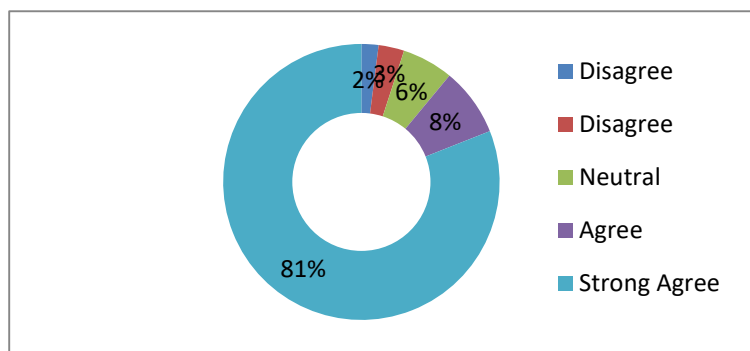


Figure 4.3: Outdoor surrounding

Source: Research findings, 2021

Likewise, large hotels in Dar es Salaam were found to have clean and a welcoming well maintained interior atmosphere that was well polished with good décor. The lobbies were found to be very big, decent and capable of carrying a reasonable number of guests at per while waiting to be attended to. This has been observed by over 60% of respondents who visited these hotels. Additionally, 18% of respondents strongly agreed to have found hotel interior and exterior environment pleasant, 18%

remained neutral, 1% disagreed while the majority which is 63% agreed. This information has been well tabulated in Table 4.10 below;

Table 4.8: Hotel interior and exterior

Particular	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	1	1.0
Neutral	18	18.0
Agree	63	63.0
Strongly Agree	18	18.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research Findings, 2021

4.3.2 Reliability

According to Word Net, reliability represented the trait of being dependable or reliable. Employees that are reliable can deliver services precisely, regularly, and dependably (Parasuraman *et al*, 1988). This factor considered the competence of the service staff of the chosen hotels to deliver the promised service consistently and accurately.

4.3.2.1 Reservations

It was evident that a large number of respondents did not have problems with reservation. Most of the hotels accurately managed to handle customer reservations efficiently. 82% of the respondents showed to be satisfied with how their reservations were handled, while 14% strongly agreed to that. Either, 1% did not agree and 3% of the respondents had neutral response. Table 4.11 clearly explains this information.

Table 4.9: Effective reservation

Particular	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	1	1.0
Neutral	3	3.0
Agree	82	82.0
Strongly Agree	14	14.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research Findings, 2021

4.3.2.2 Guest Rooms

Data also reveals that most customers had a good experience about guest room. Most rooms were ready and in acceptable conditions as promised. Table 4.12 indicates that over 80% of the respondents were pleased with the state of guest rooms as 63% of the respondents agreed and 18% strongly agreed. Either, 1% of the respondents did not agree with the standards of the rooms while 18% were neutral.

Table 4.10: Quality of guestrooms

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	1	1.0
Neutral	18	18.0
Agree	63	63.0
Strongly Agree	18	18.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.4 Amenities

It was observed that majority of the respondents 51% and 36% respectively agreed or strongly agreed that hotel amenities, appliances and auxiliary facilities such as TV, Radio, A/C, lights and other mechanical equipment worked properly as depicted in Figure 4.4. Either, 3% of the respondents strongly disagreed to functionality of the amenities, 4% disagreed and 6% were neutral.

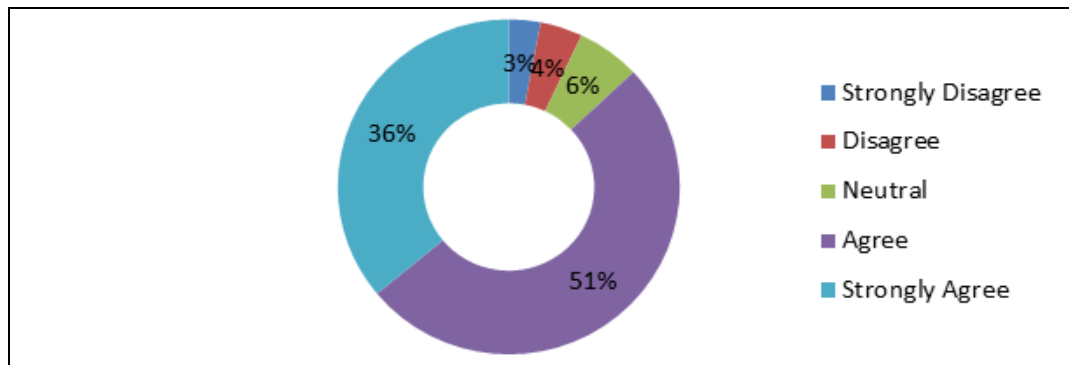


Figure 4.4: Quality amenities

Source: Research Findings, 2021

4.4.1 Value for money

About 18% strongly agreed while 63% agreed to have got what they paid for, a slight percentage (1%) expressed dissatisfaction to these criteria, while 18% were neutral whether they were pleased with what they paid for or not.

Table 4.11: Value for money

Particular	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	1	1.0
Neutral	18	18.0
Agree	63	63.0
Strongly Agree	18	18.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.4.2 Responsiveness and Empathy

Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers, provide prompt and well service to the clients, problem resolution when encountered by the customers and complaint handling (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). This goes far ahead to mean that for a hotel to provide quality service, every hotel employee is supposed to be responsible in accordance to the working position and at all times ready to help customers

whenever need be. Parasuraman *et al*, 1988, defines empathy as the ability to identify with or understand the perspective, experiences, or motivations of another individual and to comprehend and share another individual's emotional state. From that definition, empathy simply refers to the ability of understanding the thoughts, feelings or emotions of someone else. Table 4.14 indicates that regarding responsiveness and empathy respondents had mixed reaction. It was noted that a number of customers were mostly not satisfied with the performance of service of the staff. It was observed that more than 70% of respondent's requests were not responded promptly, while over 72% strongly disagreed to have been provided with informative literature about the hotel. It is also noted that staff were not responsive sufficiently when asked questions and towards problem solving as expressed by over 56% of all respondents. Despite poor scores in this category, over 30% of respondents strongly agreed to having been treated with respect by employees, as did the 45% who agreed to this criterion.

Table 4.12: Employees responsiveness and empathy

Particular	SD	D	N	A	SA
Employees responded promptly to my requests	70	15	-	9	6
Informative literature about the hotel was provided	72	10	7	11	-
Employees treated me with respect	-	7	18	45	30
Employees were willing to answer my questions	2	56	1	32	9
Employees responded quickly to solve my problem	19	45	7	16	13
Room service was promptly	5	36	-	43	16

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.4.3 Communication

This study defines communication as a two-way exchange of opinions, news and information by writing, speech or gestures including body language and facial

reactions. With this then, attention to details, clarity and accuracy of communication was another dimension of service that this study assessed. Table 4.15 indicates that, customers were not satisfied by communication attributes of some of the employees of the sampled hotels. It was found that about 44% of the respondents disagreed while 25% strongly disagreed to the attention that was offered to them during the service interaction. This implies that while the hotel staff were communicating to hotel customers, they kept on doing other activities on desk (divided attention). Despite the fact that 9% of the respondents strongly agreed to the criterion that reservationist tried to find out their needs, 38% disagreed to this. Some of the respondents were not good English speakers as they owed their home language for communication of which such languages were not familiar to hotel staff. Similarly, some hotel employees proved failure to foresee the needs of customers which could be seen from body language and facial expression. Only 23% agreed that their needs were anticipated while 34% disagreed.

Table 4.13: Communication criteria of staff

Particular	SD	D	N	A	SA
I received undivided attention at the front desk	25	44	10	13	9
Reservationist tried to find out my particulars needs	26	38	10	17	9
Employees anticipated my needs	19	34	8	23	16

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.5 Challenges Facing Large Hotels in Meeting Customer Satisfaction

During the interviews, hotel managers were asked to state the challenges which hinder large hotels from meeting customers' satisfactions. It was noted that, most reasons stated by respondents were generally based on language barrier, flawless

performance in service quality, inadequacy of guest focused technological needs and qualification & experience. To be more specific, all the sampled hotels came up with all the above challenges. In summary, table 4.16 stipulates challenges that hinder customer satisfaction.

Table 4.14: Challenges facing large hotels

Challenges	Frequencies	Percentages
Qualification and experience	43	33.0
Language barrier	35	35.0
Inadequacy of guest focused technological needs	12	12.0
Flawless performance in service quality	10	10.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.5.1 Qualification and experience

Most managers stated that qualification of employees was among the challenges towards delivering quality service. This study relates qualification to academic achievement gained in response to professionalism while experience relates to time worked out in performing a particular task. Findings indicate that most of the hotel employees' qualification and experience is too low as compared to the demand. Figure 4.5 indicated that, 45% of hotel workers from sampled hotels had attained certificate, 40% had diploma while 10% had bachelor's degree and 5% possessed other level of education. All the certificates and diplomas attained were related to hotel and tourism management while the bachelor's degree and other levels of education comprised of academic discipline related to tourism management, accounting, engineering, human resource and planning.

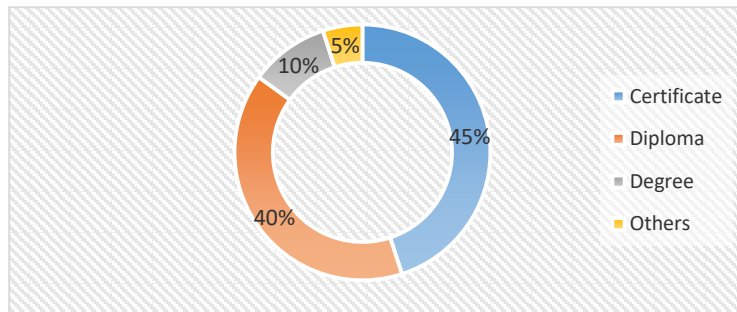


Figure 4.5: Staff qualification

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.5.2 Language Barriers

The study findings revealed that language was also among the barrier hindering large hotels to meet and/or exceed customer expectations. It was noted that some of the customers served by these large hotels came from different parts of the world and vary in the languages they use as a medium of communication, while most of employees at these hotels are not multi-linguals (most are fluent in Kiswahili language and moderate English language). This situation created communication barriers that limited the free flow of information between the hotel service provider and respective customers which accelerated to dissatisfaction. One of the respondents was noted explaining;

“.....language is indeed a problem that’s affecting our employees from offering an excellent service as required by our clients. The hotel industry is highly multi-cultural coming across so many people globally who speak different languages. So for a customer to feel satisfied with your service, how you shared ideas is of concern. Our people cannot do this better as they only speak Swahili more than any other language.....” (Key informant interview with a manager of one of the sampled hotels, June, 2021)

4.5.3 Inadequacy of Guest Focused Technological Needs

Furthermore, the study findings revealed lack of guest focused technology in large hotels in Dar es Salaam as a barrier to meet and/or exceed customer expectation. The study noted that large hotels in Dar es salaam are facing trouble to incorporate technology that improves operations and enhances guests' experience. Most listed large hotels in Dar es Salaam have failed to offer technological amenities that are directly focusing on guests. It was found that among sampled hotels, some failed to apply effective free wireless services (Wi-Fi) to its customers efficiently, ability of room facilities like effective air conditioner, television station varieties, lighting being compatible to customer needs and many more. Also, digital guest focused technology in assisting clients to easily check in and out at any time even without meeting the front office staff. Some customers complained about the mode of payment whereby many hotels required them to use cash in terms of hard paper instead of electronic mode of payments. Swap machines or swapping points were highly demanded at every point of sale station for these hotels but the service was not effective. In interview, one of the respondents stated that;

“.....there are times we had the highest frequency of customers' complaints.....they (complaints) were related to poor or low technology used to serve them,

“.....There occasions customers complained of the mode of payments used, absence or low performance of our free Wi-Fi, inside room facilities, methods applied for check in and out, and even our security technical issues (Interview with one of the sampled hotels, June, 2021).

4.5.4 Flawless Performance in Service Quality

Results found that flawless performance in service quality was also among the challenge faced by large hotels in Dar es Salaam. A flawless performance in terms of service quality includes not only adhering to the high standards that have been set,

but also making sure that the performance is good and pleasant from the perspective of the customer. The cost of providing bad quality service includes expenditures related to repeating the service, making up for poor service, and unfavorable word of mouth that ultimately results in a loss of clients. This is similar to the cost of creating low quality items. While responding to the questionnaire, some respondents stated that;

“.....there are times we got irritated as these service providers failed to meet standards in relations to what we pay for... for instance, room standards, cleanliness, food varieties, inside room beverage choices and even security are not complying with our expectations by recalling the money we pay. We at times thought they overcharge, but sometimes we receive multiple billing, (Interview with one of the sampled hotels, June, 2021).

4.6 Service Quality Improvements Required To Increase the Level of Customer Satisfaction

This objective was aimed on identifying which service quality improvements is required to meet and/or exceed customer expectation in large hotels in Dar es Salaam. In order of improvement of dimensions of service delivery in large hotel services (as per Figure 4.1 below) with respect to the responses from the respondents, the results correspond to weighted aggregate of *Very important* (weight = high improvements need) to *important* (weight = moderate improvements need). Therefore, from this perspective, distributive justice (92%) came first followed by tangibles (80%), responsiveness (75%), technical quality (72%), assurance (70%), reliability (68%) and empathy (65%).

The above is an indication that, customers' levels of satisfaction with the dimensions is parallel to the degree of importance quality of the dimensions to them. This

implies that foremost improvement must be taken on the service quality dimensions of the service offered because can enable to satisfy the potential proportion of customers that could be lost as customers are the backbone of any hotel.

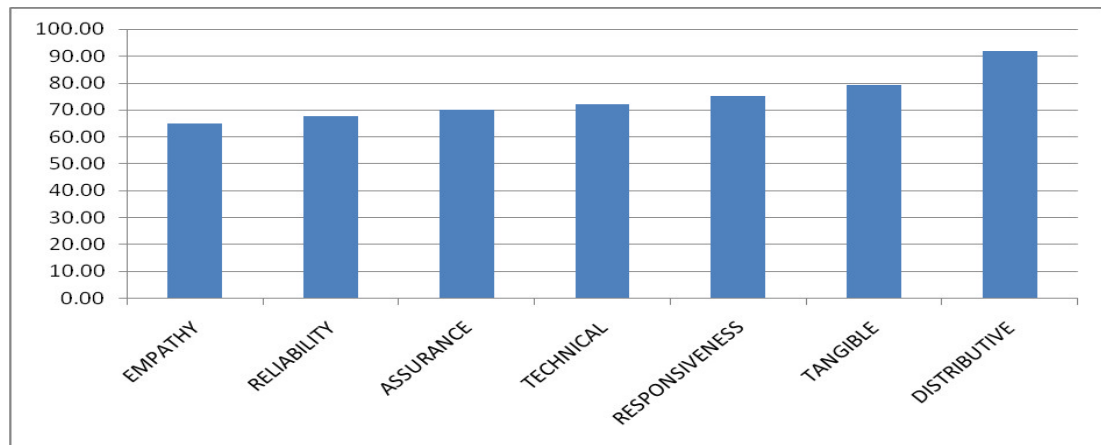


Figure 4.6: The service quality dimensions' importance improvements aggregate ranking

Source: Research findings, 2021

4.7 Discussion of the Findings

This section discusses and explains the statistical findings that have been presented in the result section. Also, discusses and explains the outcome of the three specific objectives separately in the light of the theory that has been presented in the theoretical framework.

4.7.1 Descriptive Statistic and Frequency Table

First of all, according to descriptive statics, all variables have perceived average value over five on a seven-point Likert scale. This implies that the levels of quality and its dimensions in large hotels based on the Dar es Salaam listed hotels' perception are large. Also, customer satisfaction has average value over five on a

seven-point Likert scale. However, considering the results in the descriptive table, the percentage of customer satisfaction is above 50 percent. This means that participants who rated five points to satisfaction where agreed to be satisfied with the service quality offered by listed large hotels in Dar es Salaam. This is consistent with the theory in second chapter that states always customer perceive the quality of the service in the two dimensions, what they get and how they get it. Technical quality was suggested to be a necessary but infrequently sufficient condition for good perceived quality. The findings also support the idea that the functional quality component of a service must be provided at a satisfactory level. More often than not, once the perceived technical quality of the service is satisfactory, the customer can see it, and from there, the functional quality features define the level of perceived quality of the service in the customer's opinion (Kotler and Keller, 2006).

4.7.2 Service quality expectations and perception of customers

The study was aimed to examine the service quality expectation and perception of quality, whereby five key dimensions (Tangible, Assurance, reliability, Responsiveness, and Empathy) were extracted from theoretical and empirical literature to be studied. The results revealed that service quality of large hotels positively affects the satisfaction of their clients in Dar es Salaam. Besides other sub-constructs which examine the impact of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction were found to be valid and positively related to customer satisfaction.

The result of service quality expectation and perception of quality for the listed large hotels in Dar es salaam, confirm the theory that higher levels of quality of products

or/and services leads to higher level of customer satisfaction (Johnson, 1998) because the customer provides higher percentage of satisfaction and higher percentage of agreement that service provider or sector provided quality service; thus completing the confirmation to the fact that there is a direct relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality.

In line to service quality dimension, the findings indicate a distinctive meaning for service quality dimensions in the listed large hotels which were linked to the SERVEQUAL model confirming the theory that customer satisfaction is a result of service quality dimension that reflects customer's perception of assurance, empathy, responsiveness, reliability, and tangibles Johnson (1998).

Tangibility was one of the service dimensions applied on the listed large hotels for this study. Tangible was found a valid variable for both selected hotel and had a significant relationship with customer satisfaction. Recalling back a definition of tangibles which referred to physical facilities, equipment and staff appearance (Wensveen, 2015); the attributes that were substituted for tangibles were "front desk and appearance of staff, restaurant atmosphere, hotel surroundings, and hotel interior and exterior." It was found that hotel surrounding was highly preferred by many customers and became the highest percentage given as a reason for satisfaction followed by restaurant atmosphere, front desk and appearance of staff, and hotel interior and exterior.

Responsiveness was another attribute valid to the selected large hotel in this study. The study results revealed that responsiveness had a significant relationship with

customer satisfaction for hotel services. Based on the definition of responsiveness which means the willingness to help customers and provide prompt services (Wensveen, 2015); This goes far ahead to mean that for a hotel to provide quality service, every hotel employee is supposed to be responsible in accordance to the working position and at all times ready to aid customers whenever need be. The result indicates that the designed customer supportive programs, communication programs, and customer care tactics were valued and consistently enabled customer to meet their expectation. This could mean that customers see it as an essential attribute to make them use hotel services. Also, informative literature about the hotel had seen as an important reason for satisfaction according to the customers; moreover, politeness, friendliness, respect and attitudes of employee was found to be the basic key to meet and exceed customer expectation.

Reliability was an attribute also studied in the selected hotels in this study. Results show that reliability had a significant relationship with service quality and customer satisfaction on the selected large hotels. Reliability refers to the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately (Wensveen, 2015). In another way, reliability also means that the services are correctly performed and defined as the consistency of the services performance. Besides, reliability aims at making the organization fulfill their promises, trustworthiness towards the service quality. Four attributes substituted for reliability in this study (reservation, quality of guest room, amenities, and value for money) explain reliability be significantly related to service quality and customer satisfaction for selected large hotels in Dar es Salaam. This means that reliability is a valid and compulsory attribute in hotel services which

selected large hotels in Dar es Salaam must effectively consider to make customers use and get satisfied with their services offered.

Assurance was another service quality dimension applied to both selected hotels in this study and it was found to be a valid attribute for large hotels in Dar es salaam and had a significant relationship with customer satisfaction. Recalling back the definition of assurance that entails knowledge and courtesy of employee and their ability to inspire trust and confidence (Wensveen, 2015); the attributes substituted for assurance were “competent and skillful staff to deal with customer issues” as well as “safety performance”; all this explains that customer treated this attribute as a compulsory and necessary to use large hotel service.

Empathy was also among the attributes that was applied to the selected large hotels in this study. As a valid attribute, empathy had found to be significantly related to customer satisfaction. Going back to the definition of empathy which means caring individual attention, the firm provides to its customers (Wensveen, 2015); then the shared attribute substituted to empathy which were “sincere and responsive attitude to customers”, sincerity and patient in solving customer’s problem” “spontaneous care and concern for customer’s needs” and employee confidence to customers made more customers to be satisfied. The findings also revealed that most of the customers did not have negative feeling about the staff.

In relation to some past studies, this study also made use of the advice given by Ahmed (2018) that all service dimensions (Empathy, Assurance, Responsiveness,

Reliability, and Tangibles) contribute higher on customer satisfaction hence it is very important to apply them in evaluating service quality and customer satisfaction of any services offered. Other studies revealed that reliability is important to service quality, empathy was found significantly related to both customer satisfaction and service quality (Amoah *et al.* 2009). Furthermore, this study confirms the implication of SERVQUAL model as stated by Wilson *et al.* (2006) whereby some reasons for satisfaction which complies with the determinants of customer satisfaction were pointed out by this study. Among the reasons is service quality, perceived value based on price, other customer services related programs and personal situations.

Kotler and Armstrong (2011) pointed out that an essential part of assessing satisfaction includes identifying dissatisfaction. Always dissatisfied customers often hold the information a business need to succeed. This is inevitable because understanding when and why dissatisfaction occurs helps the service provider implement changes to gain and retain future customer and employee. The dangers of customer dissatisfaction are to drive customer away and it is a key factor in customer switching behavior, increase in complaints, bad reputation and image of the company, increased cost in handling customers, bad feeling about the company, and reduce profitability.

4.7.3 Challenges Facing Large Hotels in Meeting Customer Satisfaction

Language barrier was found to be a major challenge faced by large hotels to meet and/or exceed customer expectation. The oxford dictionary defines language as the arrangement of words we use to share ideas and get what we want. This includes

meaning of words as some words are synonymous, how to make new words, how to put words together, what to say and how to say at different times. With this then, it was found that the attention to articulation, voice, fluency clarity and accuracy of language was another challenge that this study found out. Results indicate that customers were not satisfied by communication attributes of some of the employees of the sampled hotels. As discussed above, the education profile of the majority of the hotel employees are certificate holders. A number of customers used English as their most widely language for communication. Unfortunately, most of the service providers were not good at that language, as an alternative, they were better in Swahili, their national language.

Chan and Mackenzie (2013) claimed that two-way communication is a crucial component that necessitates the involvement and participation of both clients and service personnel in the service delivery process in order to achieve service excellence in the hotel business. Service personnel learn about customer wants and expectations through encounters with consumers in order to take prompt action to satisfy customers.

Furthermore, the study findings revealed lack of guest focused technology in large hotels in Dar es Salaam as a barrier to meet and/or exceed customer expectation. Oliver (1981) noted that hospitality companies are facing trouble to incorporate technology that improves operations and enhances guests' experience. Most listed large hotels in Dar es Salaam have failed to offer technology amenities that are directly focusing on guests. It was found that among many hotels failed to apply

effective free wireless services (Wi-Fi) to its customers, ability of room facilities like air conditioner, television, and lighting being compatible to customer needs. These guests focused technology can go further in assisting clients to easily check in and out at any time even without meeting the front office staff. Some customers complained about the mode of payment whereby many hotels required them to use cash in terms of hard paper instead of electronic mode of payments. Swap machines or swapping points were highly demanded at every point of sale station for these hotels but the service was not effective. Lattimore et al (2009) pointed out that the increase of guest focused technology facilitates on the decrease number of guests waiting at the hotel lobby and at the reception desk as much of the services will have been done electronically by the customers themselves.

Large hotels in Dar es salam were found to struggle with flawless performance in terms of service quality. Achieving flawless performance in terms of service quality means assuring exceptional performance that is satisfactory from the perspective of the customer, in addition to adhering to tight standardization. The cost of providing low quality service includes expenditures related to repeating the service, making up for poor service, losing clients, and bad word of mouth, similar to the cost of manufacturing poor quality items (Bitner *et al.*, 1994 as cited in Lee and Tantakasem, 2008).

However, study results show that lack of skilled man power (trained staff) in large hotels stands as one among the challenges that hinder customer satisfaction. This study has revealed that majority of the working staff in the selected hotels had

attained a certificate education and very few had diploma in hotel management and related hospitality disciplines. Wang *et al.* (2009) state that failure of recruiting skilled and experienced personnel within hospitality firms leads to customer dissatisfaction. This brings attention that for customer satisfaction, the service that has to be rendered to a customer should be given from someone who has appropriate skills in repute of the service. Most managers within sampled hotels stated that qualification of employees was truly a challenge towards delivering quality service as one of the respondents said;

“.....the management is honestly facing challenges out of which the most common ones are related to service delivery. The knowledge which has been equipped to some of the employees is truly shallow compared to nature of the service type that is intended to be offered to the visitor.” (Key informant interview with a manager of one of the sampled hotels, June, 2021)

According to Hall, Swai & Kinnaird (2003), customers have different levels of satisfaction with similar or uniform hotel services as they have different attitudes and perceived performance from the services. Due to this difference of levels of satisfaction, someone needs to be well groomed in the associated industry so as to deliver the intended service.

4.7.4 Service Quality Improvements Required To Increase the Level of Customer Satisfaction

Even while satisfaction indicators differ depending on the kinds of goods, services, and industries in which a certain business or organization works, empirical research have supported their influence on general satisfaction (Szymanski & Henard 2001). This is particularly true in the hospitality industry, where many sizable hotels are

concentrating on issues related to service quality improvement in order to promote high levels of client satisfaction.

First, the study results revealed that large hotels must recognize and apply customer's satisfaction measurement system to identify and understand customer needs and wants, while providing important insights and directions for quality improvements needed to be improved. This result complied with the theory that perceived service quality is a component of customer satisfaction (Kotler and Armstrong, 2003) and the definition of customer satisfaction which entails the ability of an organization to meet or exceed customers' expectations. It is a measure of how products and services offered by a company meet or surpass customer expectation; because service quality has a highest percentage as reason for satisfaction at large hotels.

Secondly, it was noted that the improvement must seriously be taken to service quality based on all service quality dimension (tangibility, assurance, responsiveness, reliability, and empathy). These concrete attributes for hotel service quality must still be translated into internal design requirement and parts characteristics, process operations, and production or service requirement. This confirm the idea of Johnson (1998) that Quality function deployment (QFD) and its house quality as an important decision logic transcends the priority setting process in both satisfaction modeling, and QFD resources must be deployed to improve those attributes, characteristics, or internal process that are important to improve customer satisfaction and on which a product or service's performance is poor.

Hotels in Dar es salaam need some investment in tangible feature. The study reveals that old and worn out equipment constitute a boring environment. On other hand, providing modern variety and choices of guest room entertainment facilities are inevitable. Therefore, creating an enjoyable time for customers is vital, instead of creating a bored environment which make dissatisfied. It is suggested to use multiple tools and programs to accommodate and entertain customers including all forms of amenities.

However, the empathy dimension is concerned with convenient times and conditions for renewing expired policies (hotel room check-in and/or out), practical business hours, a solid loyalty program, providing individualized customer attention, comprehending particular customer needs, and expressing regret for any inconvenience caused to customers or clients. It serves as a warning to the management to consider strategies to significantly raise consumer satisfaction in this dimension.

Additionally, efforts should be focused on the following dimensions in order of importance (from the most important to the least important): Accessibility to information in a tangible form; appealing workspaces, furnishings, and other materials; appealing personnel appearance. When providing services, being responsive means being able to provide consumers with an exact time frame, responding quickly to their wants and concerns, being willing to assist customers in an emergency, and having accessible staff who can interact effectively with clients.

The study's findings also point to the need for improvements in the "assurance aspects," which include being sincere and patient while resolving customers' complaints or difficulties, inspiring trust in clients, and using the necessary expertise and experience to respond to clients' inquiries.

Additionally, reliability attributes that deal with prompt service delivery; sincerity (keeping to commitments); dependability and consistency in resolving customers' complaints; and the capacity to provide services correctly the first time and with error-free recordings.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

This is the last chapter. It provides a summary of the results. Additionally, it offers the study's conclusion, suggestions, and areas for further investigation.

5.2 Summary

There is no question that the hotel industry helps a nation develop. In order to give the nation's citizens and/or visitors the finest service possible, these huge hotels have a crucial role to perform. Because of this, examining the idea of customer satisfaction with service delivery in the hotel industry is worthwhile. Although relatively new in Tanzania, this idea is incredibly important. This study's initial primary goal was to gauge customer satisfaction in significant hotels in Dar es Salaam. It was not feasible to complete this work while considering the entire nation's huge hotels for obvious logistical and budgetary reasons. It has been decided to limit the investigation to the large hotels in Dar es Salaam as a result.

Sadly, in a subsequent phase, the researcher was similarly forced to limit the attention to only the large hotels that were featured. Despite these limitations, the researcher believes that this study should not be interpreted as a simple customer satisfaction survey for big hotels. The researcher intended for it to serve as a starting point for the evaluation and study of customer satisfaction with service delivery in Tanzania's hotel industry as a whole.

This study enabled providing greater insight into consumer satisfaction with service delivery based on a sample of guests at the mentioned large hotels in Dar es Salaam. The study assessed customer satisfaction in relation to several service delivery aspects. Finally, the study found strategies to enhance the large hotel industry's service delivery both within the organization under consideration and across the entire nation. The prior chapter's investigation produced a number of significant discoveries that were summarized.

Customer satisfaction with service delivery as per listed large hotels in Dar es salaam can be qualified globally as acceptable. However, large hotels still have to work on customer retention as a fraction of the sample size was pessimistic representing potential proportion of customers to be lost. Based on Service quality expectations and perception of customers as postulated by the SERVQUAL model, the study established that most of the customers were satisfied by services offered by large hotels in Dar es salaam. Out of five dimensions of Service quality, results revealed that customers were satisfied by the tangibles as had pleased with what they encountered during their visit. Evidently Restaurant Atmosphere, Interior and Exterior Surrounding, Front Desk and Appearance of Staff; and Guest Rooms & Amenities had good rating by customers. It's also evident that the level of service provided by sampled hotels relatively matches the value for money.

Second, the majority of customers are satisfied with the empathy dimension, which has to do with convenient times and conditions for renewing expired policies (hotel room check-in and/or out), practical business hours, a strong loyalty program,

providing individualized customer attention, comprehending particular customer needs, and expressing regret for any inconvenience caused to clients/customers. Although the other dimensions do not appear to be satisfactory, this should serve as a warning to management to consider ways to significantly raise consumer satisfaction in those aspects.

This implies that all service dimensions are inevitable for these hotels to deliver a high level of service quality to meet and exceed customer expectation. Recalling back on the challenges facing large hotels in meeting customer satisfaction, the results revealed that although most dimensions of service quality had good rating, it's evident that some customers did not have good experience with service providers' competences. From the literature review and study findings, all indications point out to qualification and experience of some employees. Arguably, with lesser work experience, staff had least knowledge of their jobs, work procedures and the overall interpersonal interactions during service, including providing clear and accurate information as concluded by Eshetie *et al.* (2016).

Finally, the study revealed that similar strategies were adapted by large hotels to address shortfalls exhibited by employees in order to provide high level of services required to meet perception and expectations of customers visiting large hotels in Dar es salaam. The measures include on Job Training to elevate employees' skills & competences, Staff Appraisal to boost employees' performance, institutionalizing work Policy and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's), Provision of tips and other

Incentive, soliciting Guests Comments to rate service by employees, and cross cultural & Soft Skills training.

5.3 Conclusion

Dar as Salaam is major and famous tourist hub in Tanzania. It boasts of many natural and cultural attractions within and around and thus receives many domestic and international tourists every year. The competitive advantage of the hotels in Dar es Salaam stands out from physical structures, Interior and exterior design, Amenities and comfortable atmosphere. This study noted that in order to provide quality services to meet and/or exceed customer needs, large hotel's management should invest on major factors including training and empowering qualified staff, identify customer needs and design appropriate service programs to meet and exceed customer needs and/or wants, and improve service standards such as the quality of the rooms of sampled hotels. One can note that the last two attributes impeded provision of total quality services. Some employees' competency did not match the level expected by the guest. Employees found to have lacked attributes related to empathy and responsiveness. This could be the result of curriculum used in hotel schools which did not capitalize on soft skills. On top of in-house efforts by individual hotels joint training approaches such as apprenticeship and internship might as well help in addressing the skills gap.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Recommendations to Hotel Operators

Since consumers are the lifeblood of any business, management should start by

working to improve the quality of its services in order to retain as many of those customers as possible. Management needs to increase value for the money and deliver outcomes based on client demands. When a consumer feels that the products or services are worth the amount they paid for them, they have received value for their money. As each person is unique and must be treated as such to maximize value for money, the service industry. Value for money will grow when services are provided in accordance with consumers' demands and requirements. Therefore, management must teach staff about individualized/personalized attention. If there is already a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system in place, it can be improved, or if not, one may be implemented. Software for customer relationship management can be useful here.

Second, management have to try to match the degree of customer satisfaction with respect to the various service delivery dimensions to the significance of each dimension. In this situation, management should focus on raising customer satisfaction in the previously mentioned order of importance to the customers. For instance, by implementing the "three hundred and sixty degree of the customer" concept with tangibles, management can improve information availability. Here, information is made accessible to all organizational functional units and sessions. The consumer or potential customer can have the necessary information at any point of contact with the company. Customers won't have to be told to attend particular sessions in this scenario to get the information they need. The design and furnishings of hotels should also be improved for aesthetic appeal. Additionally, management needs to focus on providing services on time. This can be achieved by improving the

capacity to accurately predict and communicate to clients when services can be provided.

The management must raise the technological standard. This can be achieved through improving the work's accuracy, efficacy, and consistency; technological know-how and skills for resolving client/customer problems; and the clarity of the papers delivered to clients. Additionally, customer recovery and complaint handling should be improved. This can be achieved through enhancing employee sincerity and patience in addressing customers' issues, fostering customers' confidence, and using the necessary expertise and experience to respond to customers' inquiries.

Management should also enhance reliability. This can be accomplished by maintaining your word, guaranteeing accurate records, and having the ability to serve new clients correctly the first time. Large hotels would also need to embrace the ideal combination of rules used in developed nations, train and adequately equip their staff or link offices, and consider moving to a more accessible area.

Since the findings of the study reveal skills gap as the reason for the challenges facing large hotels in Dar es Salaam deterring customer's satisfaction and overall experience, the study recommends the skills training regulators to introduce work-based training approaches such as apprenticeship and mandatory internship as accredited full-time training modality. This way, skills training will be a joint-effort between colleges and employers on ensuring that skills required to work in the hotel industry are well addressed.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Further Researchers

The breadth and content of the topic of customer satisfaction are fairly vast. Customer satisfaction in large hotels in Dar es Salaam was the main subject of this study. However, as previously stated, the focus of this study was limited to Dar es Salaam's listed large hotels. As a result, while the study's findings are not necessarily indicative of the entire industry, they can nonetheless be viewed as a first step in giving Tanzania's hotel industry some starting points for replies and a rough estimate of how satisfied customers are with the sector. As a result, additional research should be done while considering other hotel types and locations outside of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The ability to compare any trends in customer satisfaction with service delivery in various contexts would be made possible by this. To quantify customer satisfaction with big hotel services in Tanzania, this study employed the SERVEQUAL paradigm. It is advised that additional research be carried out using the same methodology in many other industries. On the other hand, new studies on different hotel types can be carried out and inspired by the technique used in this study as well as the service dimensions considered.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOTEL GUESTS

PART I

Please tick () in the boxes applicable to you.

1. Please indicate your gender

Male	
Female	

2. Please indicate your age group

18-25	
26-35	
36-45	
46-59	
60+	

3. What is your highest education level

Primary Level	
Secondary Level	
Certificate	
Diploma	
Degree	
MA	
PhD	

4. What is your Occupation status

Student	
Employed	
Self employed	
Retired	
Others	

5. Nationality:

Citizen	
Foreigner	
Pleasure	
Business	
Visiting Relatives	
Conference	
Others	

[illegible]

PART III

8. Would you recommend the hotel to a friend?

YES	
NO	

If NO/YES, explain your answer?

Did you experience any problem during your stay

YES	
NO	

If YES, which problems

Overall satisfactions

Please tick (☐) on the overall satisfaction level of the Hotel.

Strongly not satisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYEES

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

Please put a Tick on the appropriate box (✓)

Please indicate your age group

18-25	
26-35	
36-45	
46-59	

Please indicate your gender

Female	
Male	

What is your level of education?

Primary Level	
Secondary Level	
Certificate	
Diploma	
Degree	
MA	
PhD	

Nationality

Citizen	
Foreigner	

How long have you worked in the hotel industry?

Less than one year	
1-3years	
4-6 years	
7 -10 years	
Above 10 years	

Which hotel department are you currently working for, job title and which section do you work

Department	Job title	Section:

SECTION B: SPECIFIC INFORMATION**Questions related to objectives of the study**

(Please tick as appropriate)

Do you understand the concept of service quality and customer satisfaction?

Yes	
No	

Does your organization provide service quality training?

Yes	
No	

How often is the service quality training conducted in your organization

Less than quarterly	
Twice a year	
On yearly base	

How is your hotel organization committed to service quality provision? Please explain briefly.

Do customers get involved in evaluation of hotel services?

Yes	
No	

Have you ever had complaining customers about hotel services?

Yes	
No	
Sometimes	

Do you think equipment and physical facilities provided by the hotel organization contribute on service quality delivered?

Yes	
No	

What problems/challenges are you facing in providing of quality service to customers?

Please give your own general view on ways to improve the level of service in your hotel.

APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HOTEL MANAGERS

I would like to know your position in this hotel.

How long have you been holding this position in this hotel?

From your own opinion what does service quality and customers satisfactions mean?

How do you ensure that employees provide quality services to customer?

How does the management ensure that the level of services offered satisfy your customers?

To what extent are the employees empowered in providing quality customer service?

What criteria do you use to measure and manage standard of services offered in the hotel?

What are challenges facing your hotel in delivering quality services and customer satisfaction to the guests?

How do you overcome the challenges mentioned in 8 above?

Give any suggestions(s) for improving the quality of service in large hotels.

APPENDIX IV: RESEARCH CLEARANCE LETTERS

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

P.O. Box 23409
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
<http://www.openuniversity.ac.tz>



Tel: 255-22-2668992/2668445
ext.2101
Fax: 255-22-2668759
E-mail: dpgs@out.ac.tz

Our Ref: PG201800217

27th January 2021

Managing Director,

Hyatt Kilimanjaro Hotel,

P.O.Box 9574,

DAR ES SALAAM.

RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE

The Open University of Tanzania was established by an Act of Parliament No. 17 of 1992, which became operational on the 1st March 1993 by public notice No.55 in the official Gazette. The Act was however replaced by the Open University of Tanzania Charter of 2005, which became operational on 1st January 2007. In line with the Charter, the Open University of Tanzania mission is to generate and apply knowledge through research.

To facilitate and to simplify research process therefore, the act empowers the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania to issue research clearance, on behalf of the Government of Tanzania and Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, to both its staff and students who are doing research in Tanzania. With this brief background, the purpose of this letter is to introduce to you **Mr. MAKENE, Zablon Reg No: PG201800217** pursuing **Master in Tourism Planning and Management (MTPM)**. We here by grant this clearance to conduct a research titled **"Assessment of Customer Satisfaction in Large Hotels in Dar es salaam Region, Tanzania"**. He will collect his data at your area from 1st February 2021 to 1st April 2021.

In case you need any further information, kindly do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of the Open University of Tanzania, P.O.Box 23409, Dar es Salaam. Tel: 022-2-2668820. We lastly thank you in advance for your assumed cooperation and facilitation of this research academic activity.

Yours,

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

Prof. Magreth Bushesha
DIRECTOR OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

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Tel: 255-22-2668992/2668445
ext.2101
Fax: 255-22-2668759
E-mail: dpgs@out.ac.tz

Our Ref: PG201800217

27th January 2021

Managing Director,

Best Western Coral Beach Hotel,

P.O.Box 2585,

DAR ES SALAAM.

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E-mail: dpgs@out.ac.tz

Our Ref: PG201800217

27th January 2021

Managing Director,

Johari Rotana Hotel,

T/+255659070800 ,F/+255659070899

DAR ES SALAAM.

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Fax: 255-22-2668759
E-mail: dpgs@out.ac.tz

Our Ref: PG201800217

27th January 2021

Managing Director,

Ledger Plaza Bahari Beach,

P.O.Box 60746,

DAR ES SALAAM.

RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE

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Our Ref: PG201800217

27th January 2021

Managing Director,

Ramada Resort,

P.O.Box 20509,

DAR ES SALAAM.

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