

Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction Related to the Tourist Hotel Industry in Sri Lanka

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Customer satisfaction has been defined by researchers based on the interaction and relationship between the customer's pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase evaluation of the products and services that they have consumed. The customer satisfaction is an important concept in tourism marketing and the satisfied tourists talk favorably about their experiences with other parties. Further, they revisit and strongly recommend those places and products for others. The aim of this paper is to identify the factors and forces that have caused the satisfaction and dissatisfaction among the tourists who stayed in Sri Lankan tourist hotels. The study has reviewed 6,092 tourists' comments related to 100 tourist hotels. The comments were analyzed qualitatively using the content analysis. Results revealed that the major portion of the tourists is satisfied with their stay in Sri Lankan hotels. The study summarized all the factors affecting the satisfaction among the tourists under the following headings, i.e., front office operations, hospitality, accommodations, quality of bath/wash rooms, food and beverages, recreation and entertainment, auxiliary services, safety and security, hotel staffs, hotel management, location, design and maintenance, price and payments, business support services, and responsible marketing. It is concluded that the adequacy of these factors has caused the satisfaction while inadequacy caused the dissatisfaction among the tourists. Managers need to take necessary actions to ensure the expected quality services by tourists during their stay in respective hotels.

Keywords: tourists' satisfaction, hotel industry, word of mouth (WOM) publicity, recommendation, repeat visit

Introduction

Customer satisfaction is the most important factor in tourism marketing. Satisfaction has been defined by researchers based on the interaction and relationship between the customer's pre-purchase expectations and the post-purchase evaluation of the products and services that they have consumed (Poon & Low, 2005; Vavra, 1997; Krippendorff, 1987; Cha, McCleary, & Uysal, 1995; Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1990; Handy, 1977). According to Hayes (1997), understanding of customer expectations and satisfaction is important for two reasons. First, the process helps to understand how the customers perceive and define the quality of products, services, and other offerings. Second, it facilitates the development of customer satisfaction questionnaires. As Berkman and Gilson (1986) highlighted, the customer satisfaction is important for all business establishments, since it influences the repeat visit/purchases, positive word of mouth (WOM) publicity, and recommendations.

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Hotels play a major role in the holiday satisfaction of the tourists, and it is also known as the second home of the tourists. Therefore, the tourists' perceptions on hotel facilities and services greatly affect their satisfaction. According to Wuest, Tas, and Emenheiser (1996), perception of hotel attributes is the degree to which tourists find various services and facilities that are significant in increasing their satisfaction during their hotel stays. On the other hand, the supply of high-quality products, services, and other offerings is of vital importance for the success of the hospitality and tourism industry (LeBlanc, 1992). Hotel industry is considered as a highly competitive business, since it offers homogenous products and services which are visible and easy to copy by the competitors. Therefore, the hoteliers should identify the best ways to differentiate their products from the competitors to get more advantages.

The researchers have identified the quality and customer satisfaction as the best differentiation strategy (Poon & Low, 2005; Pizam & Ellis, 1999). Therefore, the hoteliers should take necessary steps to identify the satisfaction levels of their customers. As Naumann (1995) highlighted, the customer satisfaction measurement (CSM) programs should be introduced. Also, it should incorporate with the corporate culture of the organization for their survival and success. The present business environment is more complex and dynamic, and it is necessary to spend more dollars to attract new customers. Therefore, the most important strategy is to retain and satisfy the existing customers. Pizam and Ellis (1999) argued that only the customer-oriented organizations can practice and achieve this objective. As Vavra (1997) emphasized, the business ventures should first identify the needs and wants of their target customer groups, then the organization should develop and deliver the better quality products and services to enhance the customer satisfaction. Further, he highlighted that the customer-oriented learning organizations seek continuous feedbacks about their customers' satisfaction and dissatisfaction instead of waiting for customer complaints to let them know about their failures and weaknesses.

The hoteliers should identify whether the tourists/clients are satisfied with their products and offerings and what factors have caused the tourists' satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The satisfied tourists will talk favorably about their travel experiences with their friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, etc.. Also, they plan to revisit and strongly recommend the hotel/destination to other parties. If the tourists are dissatisfied with the destination products and other offerings, they will talk more negatively about their holiday experiences rather than the positive experiences. The satisfied customers help to bring competitive advantages to the business; hence, the tourism and hospitality organizations must pay more attention to this issue. According to Pizam and Ellis (1999), customer satisfaction is the cheapest means of promotion.

Objective of the Study

The aim of this paper is mainly to find out the factors and forces that have caused the satisfaction and dissatisfaction among the tourists who stayed in Sri Lankan tourist hotels. In addition to that, it discusses the marketing implications with the suggestions for hoteliers to overcome the existing weaknesses and shortcomings.

Literature Review

World Tourism Organization (1985) defined customer satisfaction as a psychological concept that involves the feeling of well-being and pleasure that results from obtaining what one hopes for and expects from appealing products and services. First, motivation arouses the needs of the tourists. After that, they will search for the necessary products and services to satisfy their exact needs. Therefore, the individuals travel to a

particular destination to achieve the expected benefits. If the tourists are in a position to meet exact needs during their stay in a destination, they will be satisfied, and they will be dissatisfied if not. If they will meet more than the expectations during the holiday stay at the destination, the tourists will be delighted. Customer satisfaction is a very important and valuable concept in tourism marketing and it will help to create, develop, and maintain a favorable publicity and goodwill of a tourist destination or a resort. Satisfaction is a measure of how products and services supplied by a country/destination meet or surpass customer expectations. Further, it can be considered as a main and important performance indicator of business operations. In the competitive tourism business environment, the destinations and other business ventures try to attract more tourists for their businesses. Therefore, customer satisfaction is seen as a key differentiator and also has become a key element of business strategy.

Vavra (1997) stated that customer satisfaction is the key and important criterion for determining the quality delivered to the customers through consumption. Since tourism is a highly service-oriented industry, the service providers should take necessary actions to ensure the service standards and quality. Barsky and Labagh (1992) emphasized that the offerings of high-quality services to satisfy the customers are the most critical challenge of the businesses in the decade of the 1990s. In the service sector, especially in hospitality and tourism, this has become a major issue and a challenge; because the customers' attitudes, perceptions, personality, and the tolerance of ambiguity may differ from person to person. Therefore, the individuals perceive the same service in different ways. On the other hand, the standardization of the services is somewhat difficult than tangible offerings due to the inherent characteristics, i.e., intangibility, inseparability, variability, and perishability.

Alegre and Garau (2010) argued that the overall tourist's satisfaction and the intension to revisit a particular destination depend highly on the assessment of the different attributions of destinations. The numerous literatures have discussed tourist satisfaction related to the performance of the different destination attributes (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Danaher & Arweiler, 1996; Pizam & Ellis, 1999; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Aguilo, Alegre, & Sard, 2005; Kozak, 2003). Alegre and Garau (2010) further argued that most of the researchers have tried to measure the satisfaction on an ordinal scale and the approach was not enough due to two reasons. First, most of the times, the tourist satisfaction is evaluated using the pull factors which are related to the destination attributes and frequently include the favorable factors and exclude the negative attributes of the destinations. The neglected negative factors could be the main determinants of the tourists' overall satisfaction at the destination (Truong, 2005; Truong & Foster, 2006; Tribe & Snaith, 1998). Second, the tourists' satisfaction depends on the different dimensions of the products and services offered by the destination.

The WOM publicity has become a very powerful and effective communication tool in tourism marketing. The favorable publicity is getting through a third party, i.e., satisfied customers. The credibility and believability of WOM publicity is high, since it is beyond the control of the marketers. Also, it is more effective and zero cost. Therefore, the marketers should develop a mechanism to identify the satisfaction or dissatisfaction levels of their customers. If the managers can identify the dissatisfied customers immediately, they can take immediate actions to correct the weaknesses to improve the satisfaction.

When the marketers fall short to pay their attention to the customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, it may result in a customer's negative evaluation and may lead to unfavorable WOM publicity (Chon, Christianson, & Lee, 1995). Reichheld and Sasser (1990) discussed the importance of the WOM publicity and emphasized that the favorable WOM publicity helps to attract 60% of the customers to a business. Similarly, the negative WOM publicity will bring more negative results to a business.

Poon and Low (2005) did an empirical study to identify the satisfaction levels of the tourists about the facilities of the Malaysian hotels using two sample groups, i.e., Western and Asian travelers. The findings highlighted that the Asian tourists are satisfied with the following factors, i.e., price levels, food and beverages, hospitality of the host, recreational and entertainment facilities, accommodation facilities, location, transportation, security and safety, and payments respectively. On the other hand, Western travelers are satisfied with the following hotel attributes, i.e., security and safety, hospitality of the host, food and beverages, accommodation facilities, recreational and entertainment facilities, supplementary services, appearance, location, transportation, and payment respectively.

Eraqi (2006) investigated the tourism services quality in Egypt and identified factors that affect the customer satisfaction. According to him, the customers' (tourists') satisfaction of quality depends upon a number of criterions, i.e., the general evaluation of tourism services, the extent to which tourists are satisfied with the hotel's services, customer value related to tourism services' prices, level of services at accommodations, internal transport quality, and the extent to which tourism services' prices are at suitable levels.

Motivation and satisfaction are closely interrelated like two sides of a coin. The tourists will determine their travel decisions based on expectations. Moutinho (1987) described satisfaction as a function of the relationships between pre-travel expectations and post-travel experiences. The tourists travel to different destinations to consume the goods and services in order to fulfill their holiday dreams. On the other hand, it can be considered as to get psychological reliefs for the motivators that aroused the travel needs and influenced the destination selection of the tourists.

Methodology

The study mainly depends on the tourists' comments about the Sri Lankan tourist hotels, which are available on the web page of TripAdvisor (www.tripadvisor.com/). The study reviewed 6,092 tourists' comments related to 100 tourist hotels which belonged to the categories of beach, city, and resort hotels using the content analysis. The comments were presented using percentages, graphs, and charts. All the reviewed hotels are approved by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) under the classified or unclassified hotel categories.

Findings of the Study

The proceeding section presents the findings of the study. The comments, which are related to tourists' satisfaction and dissatisfaction, are categorized under three groups, i.e., beach hotels, city hotels, and resort hotels, using a 5-point scale (excellent, very good, average, poor, and terrible).

Overall Analysis of the Hotels

The study has evaluated 6,092 tourists' comments related to 100 tourist hotels. The hotels belong to the categories of beach hotels (49%), city hotels (19%), and resort hotels (32%). The tourists evaluated the service quality of the hotels based on their perception and satisfaction as follows: excellent (44%), very good (31%), average (12%), poor (7%), and terrible (6%). It is highlighted that the majority of the tourists (74%) are satisfied and positively evaluated the Sri Lankan hotels and their offerings. Figure 1 demonstrates the tourists' comments about the hotels related to their perception and satisfaction.

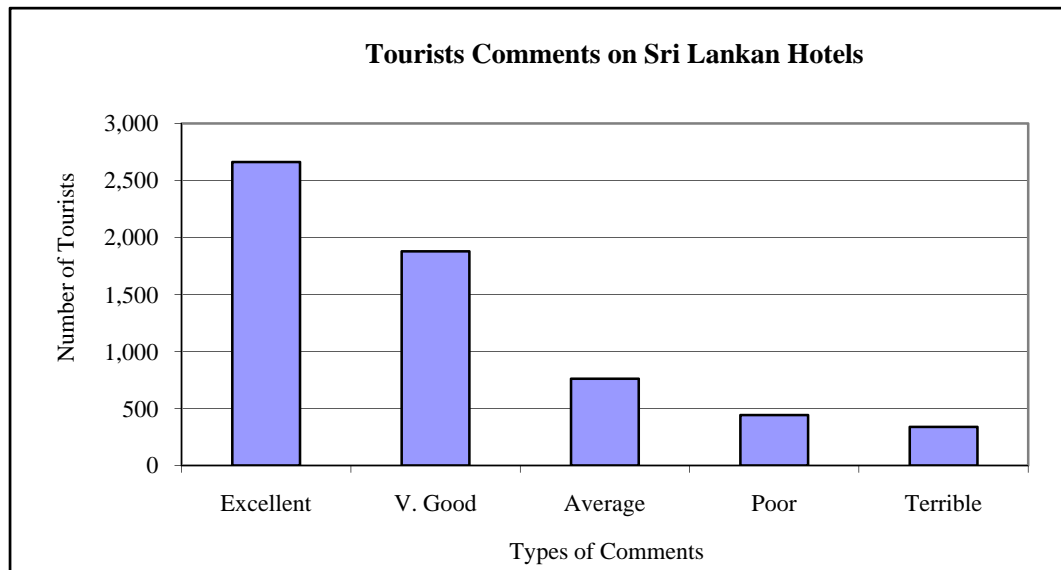


Figure 1. Tourists' comments on Sri Lankan hotels. Source: Tourists' Comments Review, 2013.

Beach Hotels

When considering the tourists' evaluation about the beach hotels, the majority (78%) of the tourists (3,552) are satisfied and the evaluation is as follows: excellent (49%), very good (29%), average (11%), poor (6%), and terrible (5%). Figure 2 demonstrates the tourists' comments about beach hotels.

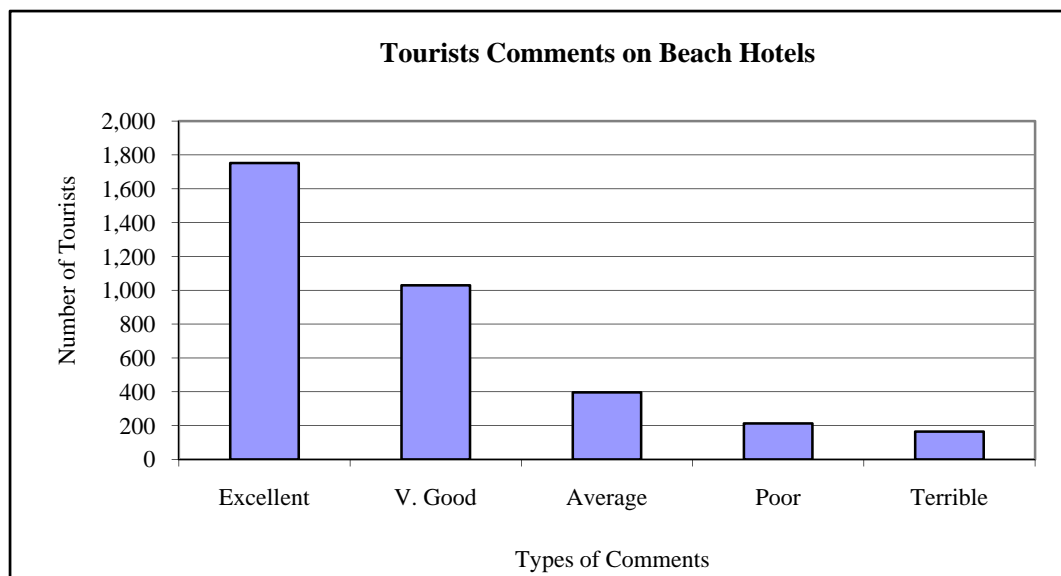


Figure 2. Tourists' comments on Sri Lankan beach hotels. Source: Tourists' Comments Review, 2013.

City Hotels

When considering the tourists' evaluation about the city hotels, the majority (66%) of the tourists (1,071) are satisfied. However, it is somewhat less when compared with other two hotel categories, i.e., beach and resort hotels, and the evaluation is as follows: excellent (30%), very good (36%), average (16%), poor (10%), and terrible (8%). Figure 3 demonstrates the tourists' comments about city hotels based on their perception and satisfaction.

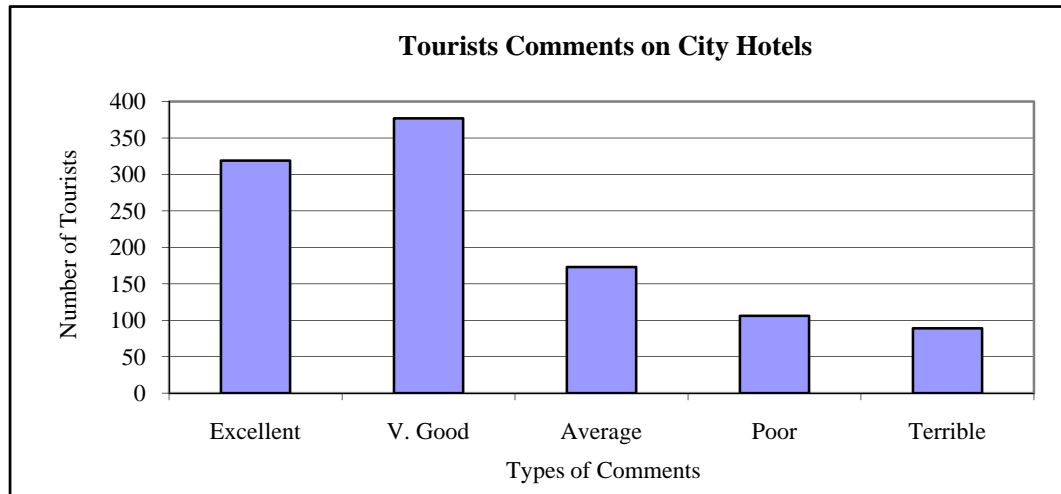


Figure 3. Tourists' comments on Sri Lankan city hotels. Source: Tourists' Comments Review, 2013.

Resort Hotels

When considering the tourists' evaluation about the resort hotels based on their perception and satisfaction, the majority (73%) of the tourists (1,469) are satisfied and the evaluation of resort hotels is as follows: excellent (40%), very good (32%), average (13%), poor (9%), and terrible (6%). Figure 4 demonstrates the tourists' comments about resort hotels related to their satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

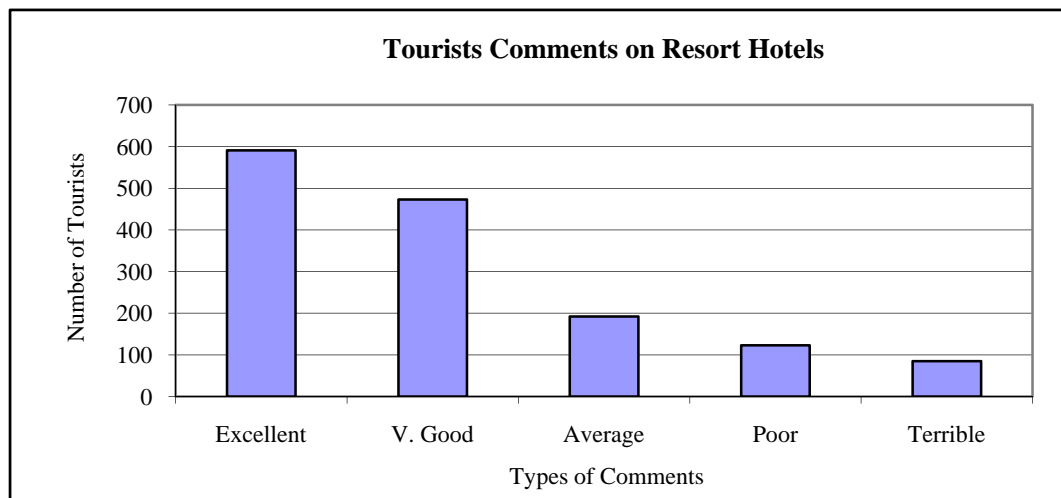


Figure 4. Tourists' comments on Sri Lankan resort hotels. Source: Tourists' Comments Review, 2013.

Factors Affecting Tourists' Satisfaction at Sri Lankan Hotels

The findings highlighted that the majority of the tourists (more than 70%) are satisfied (excellent and very good) with the products and services offered by the Sri Lankan tourist hotels. After reviewing all the comments, the study categorized the factors that have affected the satisfaction and dissatisfaction among the tourists under the following headings, i.e., front office operations, hospitality, accommodation, bath rooms, food and beverages, recreation and entertainment, auxiliary services, safety and security, hotel staffs, hotel management, location, design and maintenance, price and payments, business support services, and responsible marketing. Table 1 presents the detailed variables of the factors affecting the satisfaction.

Table 1

Determinants of Guest Satisfaction in Tourist Hotels

No.	Factor	Item
F1	Front office operations	Efficient and accurate chick-in and check-out
		Equality of treating
		Friendly and smiling faces of staff
		Responsiveness/attention to details
		Language proficiency
		Ability to disseminate the needed information
		Service standard
		Proper directions
F2	Hospitality	Pleasant and surprise welcome
		Friendliness
		Pleasant appearance
		Prompt and courteous
		Customer care services
F3	Accommodation	First impression
		Standard facilities and well furnished
		Lighting system
		Quietness
		Freshness
		Proper maintenance
		TV, music, and reading facilities
		Cleanliness
		Fresh bed linen
		Room cleaning/service
F4	Bath room	Free from insects (mosquitoes, cockroaches, flies, etc.)
		Spacious
		Standard facilities
		Hot water
		Proper lighting
		Spacious
		Quality and standard fittings
F5	Food and beverages	Ability to use hair dryer, electric razor, etc.
		Proper maintenance
		Quality and fresh food
		Hygienic condition
		Variety of food
		Variety of beverages
		Tasty food
		Ability to use native foods
		Quick service
		Service quality

(Table 1 continued)

No.	Factor	Item
F6	Recreation and entertainment	Availability of different activities
		Well-maintained swimming pool
		Well-equipped gymnasium
		Entertainments and night clubs
		Child entertainment
		Indoor and outdoor recreational activities
F7	Auxiliary services	Shopping facilities
		Ayurvedic treatments
		Spa
		Trustworthy wake-up calls
		Efficient baggage handling
		Child care facilities
F8	Security and safety	Safety lockers
		Feelings of secure
		Responsible security personnel
		Safety measures and arrangements
		Safety doors and locks
		Free from beach boys and touts
F9	Hotel staff	Friendliness
		Honesty and integrity
		Competence
		Happy and smiling faces
		Obedience for requests
		Language and communication skills
		Interpersonal skills
		Positive attitudes
		Accuracy
F10	Hotel management	Friendliness
		Honesty and integrity
		Responsiveness
		Language skills
		Problem-solving approach and style
		Interpersonal skills
		Positive attitudes and perceptions
		Proper management
		Internal marketing
F11	Location	Convenience and easy access
		Scenery beauty and view
		Easy access for other services and facilities (e.g., beach, attractions, shopping, etc.)
		Relaxing atmosphere
		Hotel concept
		Calm and quietness
		Wildlife
		Climatic condition

(Table 1 continued)

No.	Factor	Item
F12	Design and maintenance	Architectural design
		Appearance
		Interior decoration and arrangements
		Garden maintenance
		Cleanliness and freshness
		Lighting arrangements
F13	Pricing and payments	Value for money
		Reasonable prices
		Pricing policies and practices
		Convenience and efficient payment methods
		Behavior of the cashier
		Ability to use credit cards
F14	Business support services	Currency exchange
		Conference and meeting facilities
		IT facilities
		IDD and fax
F15	Responsible marketing	Speed and consistency of the internet
		Provision of the promised services and facilities
		Ability to enjoy the promised price
		Special attention for needed people (disabled, babies, patients, etc.)
		Proper and understanding link with T/A, T/O
		Respect to the laws and ethics

Discussion and Marketing Implications

The study has identified the factors affecting the tourists' satisfaction and dissatisfaction at the hotels and categorized them under 15 headings. The availability and adequacy of these factors promote the tourists' satisfaction. The lack or shortages of these factors have caused tourists' dissatisfaction. It has become a difficult task to ensure 100% perfect customer-oriented services, since the hotel industry highly depends on human interactions. On the other hand, the service quality and the standards measured by the tourists are based on their attitudes, perceptions, expectations, and past experiences. Therefore, the level of satisfaction may differ from tourist to tourist. However, the hoteliers should take necessary actions to ensure the service quality and standards at an acceptable level. The proceeding part discusses the important marketing implications for hoteliers and other interesting parties.

Hospitality is the most important factor affecting greatly the satisfaction and dissatisfaction among the tourists (Poon & Low, 2005). The tourists' first impression about the hotel is more important and it will affect the entire evaluation about the facilities and offerings of the hotel and their satisfaction. Therefore, the managers should arrange better welcome programs which will be surprised to the tourists. Another important task is to ensure the quick, friendly, and efficient check-in and check-out procedures which are expected by the tourists. The comments highlighted that a considerable number of tourists have developed negative perceptions and dissatisfaction about the poor check-in and check-out procedures and behaviors of the front office staff.

Usually, the reception and front office staffs of a hotel have to work long hours continually. As a result, the employees are physically and mentally tired and frustrated and it is natural to have human errors. The tourists do not like to tolerate such errors and mistakes, since their objective is the maximization of utility or satisfaction. The hotel management should pay attention to this scenario and employ the staff for short hours or allow them to relax for a while within the long working hours. It is also suggested to employ the supportive staffs during the busy and peak hours. Even the managers can come out of their rooms and support the staffs during the peak hours, which will increase the satisfaction of the employees as well as the guests.

It is highlighted that the quality of rooms and bath rooms has a significant effect on guests' satisfaction. The tourists consider the hotel accommodation as their second home and expect everything to be perfect. The expected things are spacious rooms, proper lighting, comfortable bed, fresh and proper changing of bed linen, pillow covers, towels, and free from insects like mosquitoes, cockroaches, flies, etc.. A considerable number of tourists are dissatisfied with the poor-quality bath rooms of the hotel rooms. The tourists expect the bath rooms to have standard and quality fittings, proper maintenance, hot water without interruption, proper lighting, mirrors, hair dryers, and other necessary facilities and to be spacious. The hoteliers have to pay much attention to this issue and should take corrective actions to improve the quality and standards.

The internal marketing is more important than external marketing as far as the hospitality industry is concerned. Internal marketing is the process that motivates and empowers employees at all management levels to consistently deliver a satisfying customer experience (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 1999). A considerable number of tourists are dissatisfied due to the irresponsible and lethargic behaviors of the employees. The hotel management should take necessary actions and programs to maintain a highly motivated and empowered work force for customer care services. The motivated employees work accurately and happily. Therefore, the in-house guests will be able to consume high-quality and standard services with higher satisfaction levels.

The external factors that are beyond the control of the hoteliers also affect the in-house guests' satisfaction. The affected factors are: bad weather, beach boys, bad smell in the sea, sewage come to the beach with the high tidal waves, etc.. Especially, the beach hotels affect badly those factors and caused dissatisfaction among the tourists. The hoteliers can intervene in managing these situations through two ways, i.e., situational approach and plan in advance.

The tourists are dissatisfied due to the mismatch between the hotel concepts and their requirements. For example, some tourists do not like the eco-friendly practices and operations of hotels, such as less or dim lightings, nature friendly arrangements, room designs, operations, and practices. Instead of that, they want to consume luxury services and facilities to get more fun and enjoyment. Therefore, the hoteliers should promote their concepts to the right market in the right way. The promotional materials should communicate the real picture about the hotels, such as nature, concept, the special practices, etc.. The hard core eco-friendly travelers select the hotels based on information like eco-labels and eco-certificates appeared in the promotional materials. When tourists reached the hotels, they will realize that the hoteliers do not practice the pure concepts and there are contradictions. Therefore, the hoteliers should practice the genuine concepts and communicate the real information to the target customer groups to get real experiences with greater satisfaction.

Wedding and honeymoon are considered as a growing and profitable niche market of tourism and hospitality and also considered as the most important travel motive. Therefore, people like to spend these days in most memorable and enthusiastic ways. People will plan these events in advance and travel to the

destinations as tourists to spend the most important days of the life. On the other hand, the hoteliers promote their hotels as ideal places for honeymooners. Based on such information, the tourists will select the hotels with great hopes and trusts. The comments are highlighted that a significant number of honeymooners are dissatisfied with the hotels' offerings and services. Therefore, it is necessary to arrange special programs and activities to satisfy or delight them in order to have memorable experiences. The higher satisfaction drives the tourists towards loyalty. The loyal tourists become repeat visitors and later they like to visit this place with their children or to celebrate their wedding anniversaries. The hoteliers can develop wedding and honeymoons as a profitable niche market through the practice of better marketing and management strategies.

The study has identified that there is a mismatch between the actual performance of the hotels and the expectations of the tourists. The hoteliers receive the majority of tourists/guests through the intermediaries, i.e., tour operators and travel agents. Travel agents prepare the tour packages matching the tourists' requirements with the tourist products of the destination and sell at a single price. In this scenario, the travel agents promise to give standard and luxury facilities and also charge higher prices. However, the travel agents bargain with the hoteliers and get a low price with minimum facilities. When the tourists reached the hotel, they are dissatisfied with the available services and facilities. Such behaviors directly affect the entire tourism industry and cause the native WOM publicity. Therefore, the relevant parties should be honest to the tourists and should provide the value-for-money services.

The price discrimination practice was used by the tourist hotels as a means of marketing strategy. Here, the hoteliers charge different prices from the different customer groups. But the tourists negatively commented about such practices and that has caused the dissatisfaction among the tourists. Price discrimination should be practiced as a marketing strategy, but it should not be visible for other customer groups. If the tourists feel that they are subjected to the discrimination, they will be dissatisfied, because all in-house guests consume the same facilities but pay different prices. However, the hoteliers should practice price discrimination for the supplementary services that can be visible. But, the hoteliers should not discriminate the price based on color, country, nationality, etc..

Some tourists highlighted that they have been subjected to the service discrimination at the hotels. It should not be practiced in hotels by the employees and managements knowing or without knowing. The tourists commented that the hotel staff and management are more hospitable over the western tourists or white colors while giving less attention and priority to Asian tourists or black colors. Hoteliers should treat equally the entire in-house guests and other customers. But, they should pay special attention to the needed people, for example, disabled, parents with kids, patients, pregnant mothers, etc..

The customers negatively commented about the entertainment and night life facilities offered by the Sri Lankan tourist hotels. The majority of the tourists come to Sri Lanka for pleasure. The hoteliers should introduce a variety of entertainment activities for their in-house guests. The tourists expect each and every activity of the hotel to match with their purposes, expectations, and desires, even lighting system, music, and the behaviors and attitudes of the staff and management.

The tourists who specially come from western countries highly fear and hate insects like mosquitoes, cockroaches, rats, flies, etc.. They negatively commented that the insects are everywhere in some rooms and bath rooms, etc.. It may be difficult to eliminate such problems like mosquitoes due to the influence of the external factors. However, the hoteliers should use alternative strategies to free the hotels from these insects.

The tourists negatively commented about the internet services at hotels concerning the slow speed, frequent interruption, high prices, unavailability of services, etc.. The internet has become not only a basic communication tool and but also a part of our daily life. Most of the tourists are familiar with the internet to communicate with the outer world. In addition, the internet has become the most important part of the business travelers. Therefore, the hoteliers should take necessary actions to provide high speed and consistent internet services at a reasonable price.

The reviewed comments of the tourists proved that the negligence and mismanagement practices of the hoteliers greatly affected the dissatisfaction among them. When problems occurred, the tourists have reported to the management through proper channels. But most of the hotel management has failed to take the proper corrective actions to overcome such problems and difficulties faced by the tourists. The hoteliers should pay better attention to the tourists' comments and demands to overcome the inconveniences faced by them.

The hotel management and the staff should develop positive attitudes, perceptions, and proper understandings about the behavior of the tourists. As far as the hospitality industry is concerned, the customers are the kings and the staffs are the servants. Hence, the hotel staff and management should play the role of servants and should obey not only the requests and orders and but also other acceptable behaviors of the tourists. Also, the tourists come to Sri Lanka with various dreams, hoping to materialize and realize them. Therefore, the service quality and standards should be at an upper level and special care and attention need to be paid to the tourists. In addition, there should be a mechanism to evaluate customer satisfaction before leaving the hotel.

Conclusions

The study has investigated the factors that affected the customer satisfaction related to tourists' hotel industry in Sri Lanka. The identified factors related to the tourists' satisfaction are: front office operations, hospitality, accommodations, bath rooms, food and beverages, recreation and entertainment, auxiliary services, safety and security, hotel staffs, hotel management, location, design and maintenance, price and payments, business support services, and responsible marketing. The availability and adequacy of these factors have caused the satisfaction among the tourists, while the non-availability and inadequacy have caused the dissatisfaction among the tourists.

The findings of this paper present more important insight knowledge and implications for hoteliers to open their eyes and identify the current situations. The managers need to take immediate actions to re-correct if there is any deviation of their practices. Customer satisfaction is more important for the success of business organizations. Therefore, the managers should pay attention to each and every aspect of the hotels. Perhaps, the hoteliers do not even imagine that a small error may cause the dissatisfaction about the entire operations of the hotel. The satisfied customers make repeat visit and talk favorably about their satisfaction, and it will spread positive WOM publicity about the hotel. The satisfaction of the tourists leads to the loyalty about the hotel.

The behavior of the hotel staff and their services can make the customer satisfied or dissatisfied. The hoteliers should take the necessary actions to improve the efficiency and attitudes of the employees in order to display positive behaviors and provide quality services. Therefore, the hoteliers should first practice the internal marketing to maintain highly motivated and satisfied employees to provide services to satisfy the external customers.

Since the hotel services are intangible, the marketers should take actions to increase the tangibility of the products through the promotional materials in order to build the credibility and believability among the potential customers. Also, the marketers should consider the ethical responsibility when promoting their products. Most of the promotional materials of the hoteliers mislead the tourists, when the tourists visit the hotel, the promised products and services are not available. Therefore, it creates the frustration and dissatisfaction among the tourists. The success of the hotel business depends on the ability of the hoteliers to identify the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the customers.

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