Quality Performance and Delivery of Services in the Four- And Five-Star Hotel Industry in Rwanda

Edson HABINEZA, Prof, Edwin Odhuno & Mr. Abuto Benson

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*[1]Edson HABINEZA, [2]Prof, Edwin Odhuno & [3]Mr. Abuto Benson**

[1]Master's Student, Mount Kenya University School of Hospitality Management, Kigali Rwanda

habinedson123@gmail.com/ habinedson123@mylife.mku.ac.ke

[2]Lecturer, Mount Kenya University School of Hospitality Management, Kigali Rwanda

eodhuno@mku.ac.ke

[3]Lecturer, Mount Kenya University School of Hospitality Management, Kigali Rwanda

babuto@mku.ac.ke

Abstract

The current attitude towards quality performance, which affects guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry, has important implications for business competitiveness and business development. Not only has the Africa continent been a priority because of its service delivery-based challenges, but population is also determined by culture believed basically in market demand where most of individual intention to purchase goods or services mostly depends on individual judgment related to quality performance (Osotimehin, Hassan & Abass, 2015). Rwanda is a small country, which is developing in different domains including economic, political, and social. Even if the development is increasing in an appreciated trend line, problems still exist in production, selling, and distribution service, more specifically in the hospitality industry. Some of these include poor quality of product or service due to limited capital, poor capabilities due to limited technical skills, and lack of both working experience and appropriate trainings of employees working in the hospitality industry. In addition, in Rwanda the hotel industry fails to be competitive due to poor planning and in some instance, they do not even have sufficient stock of raw materials of production to facilitate the delivery of quality service more efficiently. The product design and implementation are still needed in the Rwanda hotel industry to meet guest satisfaction. Therefore, the researcher intended to assess the performance of quality and delivery of service in the hotel industry in Rwanda. The specific objectives were to establish the relationship between guest expectations and delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda; to establish the relationship between guest satisfaction and responsiveness on delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda; to establish the relationship between product or service and delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda; to establish the relationship between government policies,

rules, or regulations, product or service design, and delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda; and to establish the relationship between quality performance and delivery of services in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda. This research used descriptive research design in nature and involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population in this research covers guests of Marriott, Serena, and Park Inn by Radisson hotels in Kigali, their management teams, and the hotels' service providers. In total they were 1410 from whom the sample of 312 were selected as representative. The determination of the sample was normally done by use of formula determined by Yamane (1967). Therefore, a simple random sampling technique was used to select representatives, and data were collected using questionnaires, interview guides, documents, and records. The analysis of data was done through statistical package for social science version 21. The study findings showed that average rating of quality-of-service delivery was 8.991 across a variety of areas including: expectations, satisfaction, responsiveness, and product or service delivery. An increase in unit of expectation led to a decrease in delivery of service by 0.066, a decrease in unit of satisfaction led to a decrease in delivery of service by 0.065, an increase in unit of responsiveness led to a decrease in delivery of service by 0.016 while an increase in unit of product or service led to an increase in delivery of service by 0.227. The recommendation of the study is that four-and five-star hotels should strive to maintain guests' satisfaction through promotions, price reduction and proper product awareness through all Rwandan markets. Strengthening branding, design of products or services, and establishing proper plans may bring about strong positive associations between the quality of performance and the delivery of service.

1.0 Background to the Study

Worldwide, quality has been perceived as a long-time appreciation for or the satisfaction of the outcome. The quality performance remains the degree and direction of discrepancy between guest service perception and expectations. The quality performance also applies to the perceived judgment resulting from the evolution process of quality (Gilbert, 2000).

The quality performance reflects guests' expectations, and this depends on how the service quality is delivered. This is indicated by what the guests get, and what they are willing to pay for, rather than what a supplier puts on the market. The quality performance varies from one individual to another and is generally considered as the desire and wants of guests. The guest expectation and satisfaction in the hotel industry is linked with quality performance and the way service is delivered (Turkey & Akbaba, 2005).

In Rwanda, the most important thing to point out is that quality service directly affects economic growth, and it is a hidden complement that works wonders in hospitality and other affiliate industries. Quality at the source, Inspection, Statistical Quality Control (SQC), Quality Circle, and Total Quality Management are the major components of quality of service in the hospitality industry in Rwanda hotels (GoR, 2018).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Globally, meeting guest needs and expectations is a continuous struggle due to changes in guests' perceptions towards quality of goods or service. Even if the quality of the product or

service is still improving in the hospitality industry, it is still being affected by changes in technology, competition and inflation, as well as, change in demography (Tsiotsou, 2006).

Rwanda is a small country, which is developing in different domains including economic, political, and social. Even if the development is increasing in an appreciated trend line, problems still exist in production, selling and distribution services, and more specifically in the hospitality industry. Some of these include poor quality of product or service due to limited capital, poor capabilities due to limited technical skills, and inappropriate working experience of employees working in the hospitality industry (GoR, 2012).

The Rwanda hotel industry operates uncompetitively due to poor planning, and in some instances, they do not even have sufficient stock of raw materials to facilitate the production more efficiently. The product design and implementation are still needed in the Rwanda hotel industry to meet guest satisfaction. At Marriott hotel, there still exists a gap between quality performance and delivery of service due to inappropriate planning, limited skills of service providers, employee turnover, and changes in technology and insufficient capital to meet customer requirements. Those were the reasons why the researcher intended to assess the role of quality performance and delivery of services in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda.

1.2 Research Objectives

i. To establish the relationship between guest expectations and delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda

ii. To establish the relationship between guest satisfaction and responsiveness on delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda

iii. To establish the relationship between product or service and delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda.

iv. To establish the relationship between government policies, rules, or regulations; product or service design; and delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda.

v. To establish the relationship between quality performance and delivery of services in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

H_{01}. There was no significant relationship between expectations contribution and the delivery of service

H_{02}. There was no significant relationship between guest satisfaction and responsiveness on delivery of service

H_{03}. There was no significant relationship between product or service contribution and the delivery of service

H_{04}. There was no significant relationship between government policies, rules, or regulations; product or service design; and delivery of service.

H$_{05}$. There was no significant relationship between quality performance and delivery of services

2.1 Theoretical Framework

SERVQUAL model

SERVQUAL has been widely acknowledged and applied in various service settings for a variety of industries in the past decade. Examples include the health care setting, dental school patient clinics, business school placement centers, tire stores, acute care hospitals, large retail chains, banking, pest control, dry cleaning, and fast-food hotel restaurants.

The SERVQUAL model has been devised to identify the gap in perception between what the company believes it is delivering to customers and the perception in the mind of the customer. Business leaders often forget that they already know everything about a company. They know the ins and outs of what they *can* offer to the customer.

The SERVQUAL model was developed in the 1980s but has been continually researched by marketers to improve its efficacy for businesses. Today, we have a much more digital economy, but this doesn't change the effectiveness of the SERVQUAL model. Customer perceptions are as relevant today as they were in the past. In fact, they could be even more relevant today because of how connected the world is.

This model has been put forward by Parasuraman, Zeithaml. and Berry (1991), in the United States and this model proposes five dimensions of perceived quality: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. This model is suitable for segmenting a firm's guests in several perceived quality groups, tracking a departmental performance in a firm, and comparing performance with that of competitors. The implication of this model is that measuring service quality helps an organization know its position in the marketplace and provides strategic advantage to enhance its competitiveness. The benefits of the SERVQUAL model to the current study is that it is the most used and famous model as it is based on the difference between perception and expectation of quality of service. The use of this model is measures the gap between expectation and perception, psychometrically which cannot obtain superior assessment of service quality.

The SERVQUAL model is mostly used compared to others like the Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS), Hierarchical and Multidimensional model. The SERVQUAL model is based on the literature of customer satisfaction and product quality. Service quality measurement enables managers to recognize quality problems and enhance the efficiency and quality of services to exceed expectations and reach customer satisfaction.

Service quality measurement is difficult, because it is perishable (Bateson, 1995). The outputs cannot be stored, exhibited, or perfectly imitated. They can only be perceived by the customers. Thus, the service quality measurement depends on the customer perceptions. Cultural motives play a great role in understanding that the environment may vary and these variations may have negative impact on the validity of SERVQUAL. Because this test is totally related with the perceptions, and different cognitive structures that produce different perceptions, it has the potential to cause some misunderstandings. That is why cultural differences may also be a constraint on the success of SERVQUAL.

The Service Profit Chain Model

This model was developed by Clark (1997) and puts more emphasis on employees' performance as a critical role in service quality. The model puts more strength between the employees' satisfaction and guests' satisfaction. This framework clearly indicates linkage of employees' variables, guest variables, and organization performance.

The employees' variables consist of employees' perception on the internal service quality that the organization provides to its employees, employees' satisfaction, and employees' loyalty. Guest variables consist of guest perception of quality of service delivered by employees, guest satisfaction, and guest loyalty. The implication of this model to the current research is that it provides an in-depth understanding of how a high-quality service or product brings about delivery of service within a business organization.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

In this study, research comprised the assessment of quality performance and delivery of service. The independent variable was quality performance and was comprised of guests' expectations, guests' satisfaction and responsiveness, and product or service. The dependent variable was delivery of service in the hotel industry and was determined by employee trainings, customer service, as well as industry policies. Moreover, the moderating variable or intervening variables such as government policies, rules and regulations influenced quality performance and delivery of service in the hotel industry.

Independent Variables   **Dependent Variable**

Quality Performance

i. Guests' expectations

ii. Guests' satisfaction

iii. Guests' Responsiveness

iv. Product or service

Delivery of service in the hotel industry

i. Employee trainings

ii. Customer service industry policies

iii. Product or service design

Government policies, rules, and regulations

Intervening variables
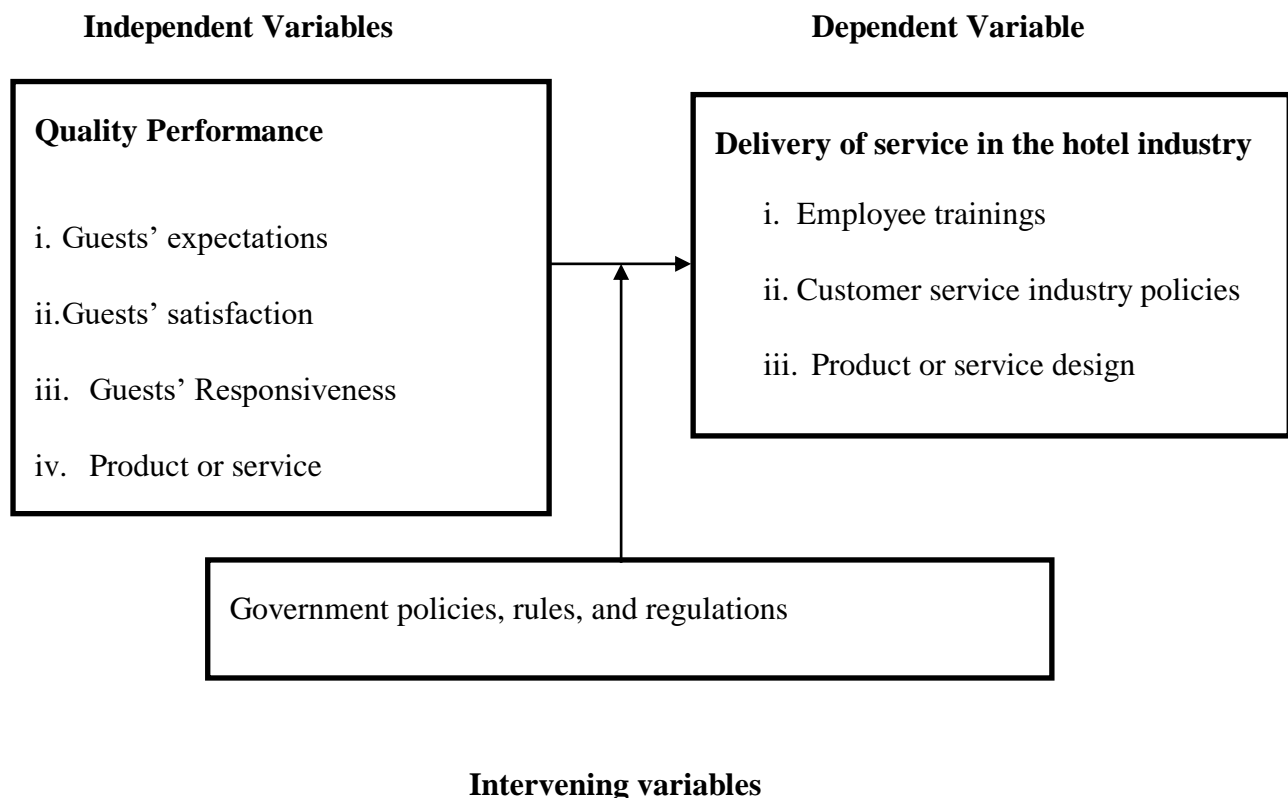
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Research 2021

3.0 Research Methodology

In this study, the researcher used a descriptive research design with two mixed methods such as quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study target population is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Target Population

Category	Number
Guests of four- and five star ranked hotels	1203
Management team of four- and five star ranked hotels	79
Top four- and five-star hotels service providers	128
Total	**1410**

Source: Primary Data 2021

Table 2: Sample size

Category	Number	Proportion	Sample size
Guests of four- and five star ranked hotels	1203	0.853	266
Management team of four- and five star ranked hotels	79	0.056	18
Top four- and five-star hotels service providers	128	0.090	28
Total	**1410**		**312**

Source: Primary Data 2021

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n: sample

N: population

(e): sampling error =5%

This formula written by Yamane (1967) then if the population is 1410, the sample is determined as follow:

$$n = \frac{1410}{1 + 1410(0.05)^2} = \frac{1410}{1 + 3.402} = \frac{1410}{4.402} = 311.602 \cong 312$$

However, the sample proportion was determined for each stratum of population by taking the sample size of each category over the total target population. The information related to the sample size was as follow. $\frac{n}{N}$. For the clients of selected hotels, the sample size was $\frac{1203}{1410}=$ 0.853.for the management team of selected hotels, the sample proportion was $\frac{79}{1410}=$0.056 and for the guets service providers, the simple proportion was $\frac{128}{1410}=$0.090.

In this study, data were analyzed using SPSS version 21. This analysis was carried out attentively to minimize error and omissions which could affect the accomplishment of research objectives. To ensure more effective research, quantitative data analysis was done statistically and a reproduction of frequency table, bar charts, bar graph and percentage were established. Therefore, correlations analysis was established to show the relationship between the study variables.

The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed. Descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages were calculated to determine the respondents' demographic profile. Descriptive statistics of means and standard deviations were used, followed by gap analysis and a paired t-test to compare the means between the expectations scores and perceptions scores of the respondents. A gap analysis was carried out to find out whether any service quality gaps exist. The paired t-test was carried out to compare the means of expectations and perceptions. The differences between the values of these two means were computed and tested to find out whether the mean differences would be significant. The chi-square test was carried out to identify significant associations between variables and p-value determined. The strengths of the associations were determined using simple and multiple logistic regression models, mean and standard deviation. Inference was made using a 95% confidence interval and a p-value < 0.05. Qualitative data analysis was done thematically, by analyzing respondents' opinions on the concept of quality performance and delivery of service. The presentation of qualitative data was presented through cote.

5.0 Findings

Findings of this study are presented statistically and thematically in the form of demographic characteristics of respondents and the study objectives. The objectives of the study were to establish the relationship between guest expectations and delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda; to establish the relationship between guest satisfaction and responsiveness on delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda; to establish the relationship between product or service and delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda; to establish the relationship between government policies, rules, or regulations, product or service design, and delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda; and to establish the relationship between quality performance and delivery of services in the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda. In regards, mean and standard deviation were determined to assess the significance association of the study variables.

With the first objective of establishing the relationship between guest expectations and delivery of service. The research findings showed that the overall mean which is 9.162 from different variables of the stated objective with overall average mean is 1.527 and the standard deviation of 4.044 having overall average of 0.674. The study findings on relationship between guest satisfaction and responsiveness on delivery of service showed the overall mean of 6.25 having average of 1.252 and with standard deviation of 2.66 having the overall average of 0.532 this implies that guest satisfaction and responsiveness contribute to the delivery of service in the four-and five-star hotel.

While looking at whether there is relationship between product or service and delivery of service at four- and five-star hotel, the study findings showed the overall mean of 8.425 having an average of 1.685 and the standard deviation of 3.25 having an average of 0.650.

When looking at the relationship between government policies, rules, or regulations; product or service design; and delivery of service, the study findings showed the overall mean of objective variables of the mean 6.044 having an average of 1.511. Therefore, the standard deviation is 2.648 having the overall average of 0.662. The information pertaining the relationship between quality performance and delivery of services showed the overall mean of 6.344 with a mean average of 1.586 and the standard deviation of 2.580 having an average of 0.645.

5.1 Conclusion

To maintain quality performance in four-and five-star hotels in hotel industry in Rwanda, through research findings, having strong strategies to improve guest expectation, guest satisfaction, guest responsiveness and improvement in product or service could be an added advantage to achieve effective delivery of services. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation of quality within four-and five-star hotels in Kigali, from one point to another, is also important because it showed how the hotels were not doing well at the market working environment in Rwanda, and in the whole Africa region.

The revenues that products or service brought into the hotel industry were evaluated through the quality performance models. The evaluation helped the hotel to determine which quality or service was needed in the market. The proper actions were then taken on that quality product to perform well. The design, branding of product, and innovations of products or service, introduce a product or service to the guests and to the marketplaces. When a product or service is well introduced to the guests, this leads to increased level of service delivery.

6.0 Recommendations

The first research objective was to establish the relationship between guest expectations and delivery of service. The research findings showed that in three selected hotels, the relationship between guest expectation and delivery of service as indicated by an overall mean of 9.162 from different variables of this objective with an overall average mean of 1.527 and the standard deviation of 4.044 having an overall average of 0.674. Based on these findings, it is highly recommended to the management of the three selected hotels in Kigali city to operate throughout achieving guest expectations. Hence this will present a significant impact on delivery of service.

The second objective of this study was to establish the relationship between guest satisfaction and responsiveness on delivery of service. The research findings showed that guest satisfaction and responsiveness contributes to delivery of service as the overall mean is 6.25 having an average of 1.252 and a standard deviation of 2.66 which implies that guest satisfaction and responsiveness contribute to the delivery of service in the four-and five-star hotel. Based on research findings, the researcher recommends the management of the selected hotel to undertake quality of production which is respondent to guest satisfaction and responsiveness.

The third objective of the study was to establish the relationship between product or service and delivery of service at four- and five-star hotels. The study findings showed that the overall average is .685 and standard deviation is 0.650, based on the overall results research highly recommends that the selected hotel, develops the abilities to increase production and

capture the market using instruments that enhance the production process. This will lead to effective products or services which will then reflect the delivery of service.

The fourth objective was to establish the relationship between government policies, rules, or regulations; product or service design; and delivery of service. The study findings showed that there is positive correlation between government policies, rules, and regulations on delivery of service. Government policies (r=.708, p=0.017), government rules (r=.842, p=0.009) while government regulations (r=.679, p=0.033). The researcher intends to provide recommendations on this theory objective encouraging the management of five-star hotels to undertake core strategic policies throughout analyzing their strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats in working environment. This will help them to analyze the market demand.

With reference to the fifth objective which was the relationship between quality performance and delivery of services, the study findings from respondents revealed that the relationship is at the overall average mean of 1.586 with standard deviation of 0.645, the researcher provides recommendations to the management of four- and five-star hotels related to strategic implementation of quality in the most effective manner to influence the delivery of service in the hotel industry in Rwanda. According to the findings, the following recommendations will be important to the four- and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda. They should strive to maintain guests' satisfaction through promotions, price reduction, and proper product awareness through all Rwandan markets.

It's recommended that the four-and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda strengthens branding, design of product or service, and establish proper plans, because there is a strong positive association between the quality performance and the delivery of service. Thus managers should strive to promote the brand awareness along with brand loyalty to achieve effective delivery of service in the four- and five-star hotel industry.

From the finding it is recommended that the four-and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda should put more efforts on employee training in quality and excellent service delivery, guests' expectations, satisfaction, and responsiveness. If guests are treated more effectively, this will increase the number of demands for products or service which implies more return within the four-and five-star hotel industry in Rwanda.

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