

THE IMPACT SERVICE QUALITY ON PROFITABILITY

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Abstract

The current investigated the impact of service quality dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy) on profitability of Jordanian hotels. The sample of this study comprised of general managers of Jordanian hotels. A total of 162 respondents were surveyed via a self-administered survey. Partial least squares structural equation modelling using Smart PLS 3.3.9 software was used to analyze the data. The finding of the study indicated that dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy) impacted profitability of Jordanian hotels. This study provides significant contributions to theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective. For contribution to practice, this study suggests that hotels can enhance their profitability by focusing on service quality dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy).

Keywords; Hotels, SERVQUAL, market share

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, hoteliers have focused on the importance of sustainability in the hospitality industry as it relates to hotel growth and operations, including the environmental, economic, and social effects. One of the most pressing issues confronting our society today is sustainability (Aragon-Correa et al., 2021). As well, the notion of hospitality denotes respect, warmth, and in a certain situation, it can denote protection. In addition, hospitality can result in cultural understanding and appreciation (Sharar & Yousef, 2018). In 2018, the population size of Jordan was reported to be 9.5 million, which is fairly small. The country which is neighbored by Saudi Arabia, Israel and Iraq, has a small amount of natural resources. The tourism and hotel industries are among the most important industries in Jordan, and during the past decade, they have contributed 10%–14% of gross domestic product (GDP). Additionally, this industry is the leading employer in the private sector and the second-highest earner of foreign currency (Muhtaseb & Daoud, 2017). As opposed to other countries in the region, Jordan relies on outside sources for fulfilling the majority of its energy requirements. Also, being small and having limited natural resources, as highlighted by Alshourah et al. (2018), Jordan is highly vulnerable to external distresses. Besides that, the Global Competitiveness Index placed the Jordan in 73rd place, mainly owing to the influx of refugees due to the issues within the region, and the decline in growth from an average of 5.4% in 2000–2012 to a remarkably low 1.9% in 2015 (Ghazal, 2018).

Market share, its interpretation is dictated by the individual who is performing the assessment of the organization. Additionally, the definition of this concept (performance) requires an understanding of the characteristics of the performance elements that exist within each accountability domain. Drohan, Lynch & Foley (2009) similarly stated the need for results quantification in reporting the performance level of an organization. In this regard, key performance indicators can be employed by an organization in making sure that it is reaching its goal of demonstrating the expected market share. Within the hotel sector, the successful implementation of marketing strategies is crucial in the improvement of performance, especially market share, as it improves the process and the industry as a whole (Magno et al., 2017).

Past studies on service quality are expansive, especially in regards to its measurement in diverse private and public sectors all over the world, and the sectors that have most commonly been covered are the airline, banking, hotel and restaurant sectors. In the current environment of global economic decline, profitability and service quality seem to be the most important factors for the retention, productivity and profitability of businesses in general. Consequently, the contribution of service quality seems to be the most crucial factor to consider in any investigation of the outcomes of business services as expected and perceived by the customer. In this regard, Allon and Babich (2020) stated that service quality is of the utmost importance for both the customers and the companies in the manufacturing, service and retail sectors.

In the Jordanian hospitality industry, service quality is among the key factors in the attainment of a sustainable competitive advantage and in gaining the confidence of customers in a market place that is very competitive. For this reason, service quality can impart a great opportunity to the hospitality industry not only in Jordan but worldwide to generate competitive differentiation among organizations, and in this industry, service quality is therefore deemed an important core concept and a critical success factor (Al-Ababneh, 2016). Service quality is measurable and a number of general scales are available for its measurement. In this regard, SERVQUAL, which is based on the service quality of tangible and intangible dimensions, is among the most popularly employed. According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), the use of SERVQUAL is convenient in the service and hospitality sector.

The hotel sector is facing a considerable amount of challenges particularly in regards to profitability and customer perception (Magno, Cassia & Bruni, 2017; Hammouri et al., 2021). Al-Azzam (2016) stated that, since 2012, Jordanian hotels have been facing fluctuating and low rates of occupancy. Furthermore, according to MOTA (2016), the number of booked rooms dropped from 4.9 million in 2012 to 3.3 million in 2013, and despite some fluctuation, this decline has continued. This means that within the period between 2012 and 2016, hotels in Jordan experienced roughly a 25% drop in booked rooms. Among the causes for the decline in the occupancy rate in Jordanian hotels was the dissatisfaction felt by hotel customers, which led to poor customer retention and market share, profitability etc., for hotels and this consequently caused a decline in the profitability of the hotels (Al-Laymoun, 2016; Al-Adamat, 2015; Hammouri, et al., 2021; Al-Gasawneh et al., 2022). Also, Talabi (2015) and Al-Adamat (2015) and Hawamleh et al. (2020) stressed that hotels in Jordan need to improve their business

capability and performance, and they also indicated that the profitability measure of Jordanian hotels needs to improve.

Pratminingsih et al. (2018) revealed the importance of employing business strategies and implementing effective quality strategies to enhance, for example, the reputation of the organization and the quality of service so as to improve market share. As well Al-Azzam (2016) stated that the hotel sector especially seems to be lacking in terms of transparency and quality of service. In this regard, Nair (2016) highlighted the need to improve and sustain service quality through the adoption of long-term relationship strategies and through placing more focus on the technical quality or the aspects of the service. Clearly, from the above discussion, there is a gap in the literature that justifies carrying out the current study. Therefore, the current study aims to investigate the impact of service quality on profitability Jordanian hotels.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Service quality

In the perception of service quality, products can be classed as tangible or intangible. In regards to intangibility, this encompasses the tasks that satisfy the needs of customers or business users. Hence an intangible service can be perceived to be the indefinable actions or advantages furnished to a customer by an organization, for instance, airline trips or financial advice, which are exchanged for money or other items of comparable value (Parowicz, 2019; Hammouri et al., 2022; Ra'd Almestarihi et al., 2021). A Service could also be a fairly intangible activity or series of activities. Parasuraman et al. (1985) and Ingari (2018) indicated that, usually, a service is executed during the interactions between customers and service employees and/or involves physical resources or goods and/or systems furnished by the service provider, Thus the current study uses SERVQUAL to measure service quality in Jordanian hotels. In the current study, SERVQUAL has comprised of five dimensions, namely, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Each dimension is described in more detail below

Tangibles

As highlighted by Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Al-Ababneh (2016), the tangible dimension is associated with types of equipment, physical amenities, personnel, and written materials, all of which are capable of imparting a sense of delight to a customer. They can also help an organization to improve its performance

Reliability

Reliability is arguably the most crucial dimension. Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Al-Ababneh (2016) stated that this dimension has linkages to the prompt handling of service problems, the timely execution of services and the preservation of truthful records of each activity. In essence, this dimension is related to the correct fulfilment of an order (e.g., correct quotation, record and billing) and the preservation of a service promise.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness encompasses employees' readiness and willingness to provide a service, and such readiness and willingness can lead to the service surpassing the customer's expectation (Parasuraman et al. 1988; Al-Ababneh 2016).

Assurance

As highlighted by Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Al-Ababneh (2016), assurance encompasses the courtesy and knowledge of employees as well as their capacity to instil trust and confidence. In the organizations, assurance is represented by interior cosiness, polite and pleasant, managers and staff, ease of access to account information, and offering of financial advice, as well as an experienced and expert management team

Empathy

Empathy entails the individual attention and care that an organization gives to its customers (Parasuraman et al. 1988; Al-Ababneh 2016). Further, Parasuraman et al. (1988) provided some examples of empathy towards customers, including giving specific attention to customers and expedient opening hours. The provision of empathy can improve firm performance.

Profitability

For any profit-making organization, earning profit is the main goal, and as indicated by Tahernejad (2013) and Yee et al (2008) and the gaining of profit ensures the organization's existence and survival in competitive markets, which can consequently lead to the organization's expansion which is expressed as the amount of profits gained as compared to the amount achieved by rivals. For an organization, the current value of profits is linked to market value and is regarded as the key objective and the best efficiency measure in a today competitive business environment. Current competitiveness can be adequately measured by using returns on (assets, investment, sales) in the form of profits acquired by shareholders in return for their investments in the organization (Dereje, 2017; Roh, 2005). Al-Bakri (2014) and Yee (2008) stated that profitability is described at maximization of the customer base, through to increase the service level and relationship with the customer, that lead to increase and maximize a return on sales and return on assets, hence increased the overall profitability. Based on the previous literature and research gap the current research hypothesized the next hypothesis

H10: Service quality has a positive impact on profitability

H11: Service quality has a positive impact on profitability.

H12: Service quality has a positive impact on profitability

H13: Service quality has a positive impact on profitability

H5: Service quality has a positive impact on profitability

3. METHODOLOGY

In Jordan, hotels are divided into five categories (Jordanian ministry of tourism and Antiquities, 2016): one-star, two-star, and three-star, four-star and five-star. The categories are determined by a formula that includes factors such as facilities and average daily rate (ADR). This categorization is backed by substantial differences in the ADR and the number of employees in each room. According to the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2016), 236 hotels were rated as one- to five-star at the time of the study. Moreover, because general managers are deemed to know about service quality dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy), and profitability within their firm, as evidenced by their capability of answering almost all the questions posed on these issues. Hence, the current study followed the key-informant methodology by selecting hotel managers as informants. Once we determined the population 236 hotels which is represented by general managers as a sample. This study, followed G-power software statics method to determine the sample size, where determined the 92 samples as a minimal sample size after applying the following rules: F-statistical test, error probability to be 0.05 (It means a power level of $1-\beta = 0.95$), power standard to be 0.80, and the effect size moderate, and then a number of predictors were 5 in this study (Alotaibi & Roussinov, 2016). However, in order to ensure that the minimum number of the responses would be obtained and taking into consideration that the survey method has a weak response rate, also the minimum number of the respondents to analyse have to be more than 100 questionnaires (Hair, 2010), with added 120 questionnaires to the minimum sample size 92, a total of 212 questionnaires were distributed to get more accurate result, where in this study a 5% margin of error has been taken into consideration, in regard of the sampling technique the current study, stratified sampling applied to the hotel categories, the next phase involved the selection of the hotels (respondents) by different categories. For each category, a simple random sampling technique was used to select the hotel respondents. Two software programs were used in the data analysis: SPSS version 18 and PLS-SEM version 3.2.8. First, descriptive statistics were used to determine the response rate and the demographic profile of the respondents, and response bias, The PLS-SEM software was used to obtain inferential statistics in order to test for outliers and to assess the measurement model and the structural model, the reasons for using PLS to analyze the study framework are: PLS-SEM has been reported to account for measurement errors and can yield better estimates of mediating effects, it is also more beneficial to use PLS when faced with complex models, PLS handles non-normal data well.

4. RESULT

Accurately, 212 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 172 were returned from the hotels that adopt customer relationship management performance, which represents a response rate of 81%. However, 10 questionnaires were invalid because they were incomplete, giving a final total of 162 valid questionnaires.

4.1 Assessment of the Measurement Model

4.1.1 CFA for the Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis was also used to assess the overall measurement model. The assessed measurement model consisted of the latent constructs and their specified indicators in the previous individual CFA models. The initial measurement model is illustrated in Figure 2.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha and Convergent Validity Results for the Model

Construct/ First Order	Item	factor loading	CR	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Tangibility (TNG)	TNG1	0.839	0.904	0.702	0.858
	TNG2	0.870			
	TNG3	0.847			
	TNG4	0.792			
Reliability (RLB)	RLB1	0.853	0.909	0.714	0.866
	RLB2	0.860			
	RLB3	0.867			
	RLB4	0.797			
Responsiveness (RSP)	RSP1	0.839	0.901	0.695	0.854
	RSP2	0.856			
	RSP3	0.840			
	RSP4	0.798			
Assurance (ASU)	ASU1	0.806	0.872	0.630	0.803
	ASU2	0.825			
	ASU3	0.813			
	ASU4	0.727			
Empathy (EMP)	EMP1	0.835	0.923	0.750	0.889
	EMP2	0.884			
	EMP3	0.890			
	EMP4	0.855			
Profitability(MKS)	PROF 1	0.862	0.925	0.711	0.898
	PROF 2	0.873			
	PROF 3	0.857			
	PROF 4	0.856			
	PROF 5	0.764			

From Table 1 it can be seen that the initially standardized factor loadings of the model items ranged from 0.727 to 0.890 and hence they were all greater than the suggested threshold value of 0.7 (Hair & Risher, 2019). The table also shows that the AVE values ranged from 0.630 to 0.750 and they were, therefore, all higher than the recommended threshold value of 0.5 (Hair & Risher, 2019). In addition, the CR values were also more than the recommended threshold value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010) as they ranged from 0.872 to 0.925.

4.1.2 Discriminate Validity

Table 2: HTMT Results

	PROF	TNG	RLB	RSP	ASU	EMP
PROF						
TNG	0.735					
RLB	0.080	0.201				
RSP	0.670	0.370	0.734			
ASU	0.706	0.499	0.411	0.338		
EMP	0.680	0.712	0.798	0.467	0.345	

From Table 2 it is clear that all the HTMT values of the latent constructs in the overall model variables ranged from 0.338 to 0.798 and were thus below the threshold value of 0.90. This result proved that each latent construct measurement was totally discriminatory (Henseler et al., 2015).

4.2 Assessment of the Structural Model

4.2.1 Direct Effects of the Variables

In the current study, the PLS technique and bootstrapping were used to estimate the structural model with 1000 replications in order to investigate the study hypotheses. This involved five sets of tests to evaluate the R², F², Q², GoF, VIF, and p-value of the inner model (Hair & Risher, 2019).

Table 3: direct effect bootstrapping result

Path	St, β	St. D	R ²	Q ²	T-value	P-value
TNG > PROF	0.423	0.142	0.409	0.333	2.978	0.000
REL > PROF	0.232	0.072			3.222	0.000
RES > PROF	0.654	0.133			4.917	0.000
ASU > PROF	0.511	0.193			2.674	0.001
EMP > PROF	0.487	0.165			2.896	0.003

As displayed in Tables 3, the direct effects of the service quality dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy) on market share as the exogenous variables significantly from zero at the 0.05 significance level (one-tailed). With existing the 0.000 for p-value < 0.05. As the results of the hypotheses were as follows: in the first relationship that stated the impact of TNG on PROF the (T-value = 4.969, St,B = 0.343, p-value = 0.000) as well the second relationship between REL and PROF (T-value =2.297, St,B = 0.128, p-value = 0.002), in third relationship was between RES and PROF the result was (T-value = 2.032, St,B = - 0.095, p-value=0.043), As for the fourth relationship between ASU and MKS the (T-value = 3.11, St,B = 0.189, p-value = 0.002), in addition the fifth relationship between EMP and PROF the (T-value = 4.829 , St,B = 0.388, p-value = 0.000), from all of above result the study implied that all the hypothesis in direct relationship (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5) supported, Also Table 1 also shows that the R² values for PROF was 0.409, suggesting that approximately

40.9 % of the variance in MKS was explained by its five predictors (TNG, REL, RES, ASU, EMP). In addition, the overall results showed that the R^2 values met the 0.19 threshold value suggested by Chin (1998). Moreover, the Q^2 values for MKS were 0.333. These values are above 0, suggesting that the model has predictive relevance (Chin, 2010).

5. CONCLUSION

For that purpose, this study extended the literature through investigating the relationship between service quality dimensions (Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, Profitability) in Jordanian hotels, which has to date received little interest in the literature. The study used PLS-SEM 3.3.9 path coefficients to test the research hypotheses and found that service quality dimensions (Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, Profitability), where this implies that the national, regional and global level, services have progressively become a crucial part of many organizations. In fact, services are a powerful tool for revenue streams. For this reason, service providers usually depend on there being a high level of relationship with customers for their success. This level of relationship has also been linked to customer loyalty and satisfaction. The quality of service influences the performance of a firm particularly through an increase in sales and profit, better customer relations, and improved performance and larger Profitability, as well as a stronger corporate image and greater customer satisfaction, as well. In the context of hospitals, the current result indicated that repurchase intentions acted as the connector between customer satisfaction and service quality. This indicates the significance of delivering a higher quality of service to patients/customers in order to survive and be successful in today's dynamic and cutthroat business environment. Also, service quality is regarded as a crucial precondition in the construction, maintenance, improvement and fulfilment of a firm relationship with its prized customers. Service quality is therefore associated with the degree to which service surpasses a customer's previous expectation. For this reason, service quality is crucial for business success. Organizations today have realized the importance of perceived service/product quality and, in fact, in any high-technology-driven business domain, this factor is now the most vital factor for competitiveness.

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