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Impact of Hotel Service Quality on Tourist Satisfaction in Chhattisgarh: A Secondary Data Analysis Using the SERVQUAL Framework

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ABSTRACT

The quality of service in hotels is a key part of the tourist experience as accommodation is one of the most important points of direct contact between the visitor and a service provider. The present paper tries to study the relationship between hotel service quality and tourist satisfaction in Chhattisgarh with the help of secondary data. The research does not claim to have primary responses from hotel guests. Instead, it combines published research on SERVQUAL and hotel service quality, published evidence on tourist satisfaction in Chhattisgarh, and official tourism statistics and government information. The analysis is based on five dimensions of SERVQUAL, namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Secondary evidence suggests that satisfaction is related to the physical condition of accommodation, reliability of service, speed of response to guest needs, competence and courtesy of employees and personalized attention. Simultaneously, the literature shows that the relative importance of these dimensions may change according to hotel category, destination and visitor characteristics. Chhattisgarh saw 31.49 million domestic tourist visits in 2024, compared to 26.02 million in 2023. Foreign tourist visits increased to 3,485 in 2024, from 953 in 2023. The figures show a growing tourism market and underline the need for consistent accommodation services. The paper concludes that SERVQUAL should not be treated as a static checklist for hotels in Chhattisgarh. It should be adjusted to local conditions, such as cleanliness, accessibility, local food, cultural sensitivity, safety, and quality of service related to nature and heritage destinations.

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KEYWORDS: *Hotel service quality, tourist satisfaction, SERVQUAL, Chhattisgarh, hospitality, secondary data, tourism.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is very closely related to the quality of services available at a destination. Visitors may be attracted to a destination because of its scenery, culture, heritage or religious significance but the experience of the trip is also influenced by accommodation, food, staff behavior, cleanliness, safety and the ease with which services are obtained. Therefore, hotel service quality has been an important topic in hospitality research. For example, Akbaba (2006) showed that hotel managers need to understand the expectations of the guests and the dimensions through which guests judge service quality. This problem is especially relevant when considering tourism development and accommodation sector problems when considering the needs of different groups of tourists. Chhattisgarh is an appropriate place for this discussion. The state has a mix of natural, cultural, religious and wildlife attractions. Opportunities for forests, waterfalls, wildlife, spiritual sites and cultural attractions are mentioned by government sources. Recent state investment material also identifies tourism and hospitality infrastructure as an area for growth. The Ministry of Tourism said that the number of domestic tourists visiting Chhattisgarh in 2024 was 31.49 million, against 26.02 million in 2023. Foreign tourist

arrivals also increased from 953 in 2023 to 3,485 in 2024. While tourist arrivals alone do not measure satisfaction, the increase reflects a large and growing market where the quality of accommodation services is important. The paper is based on secondary data rather than a new guest survey. This is an important matter. The study was presented in the previous version of the paper as if the primary data had been collected and the proposed relationships were findings. In the revised version, the conclusions are restricted to what can reasonably be inferred from published studies and official records. Therefore, the objective is to review and interpret the available evidence for Chhattisgarh and to ascertain what the literature says about hotel service quality and tourist satisfaction in the state.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Foundational SERVQUAL Research

SERVQUAL is a 22-item measure of perceived service quality created by Parasuraman et al. (1988). The model, which combined five dimensions—tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and reliability—became one of the most popular methods for measuring service quality. It is helpful because it provides managers and researchers with a shared framework for talking about many facets of service delivery.

Nonetheless, SERVQUAL has been discussed in the literature. Performance-based assessments may be better than expectation-perception gap scores, according to Cronin and Taylor (1994). Ladhari (2009) noted several objections as well, but came to the conclusion that SERVQUAL was still helpful when used properly. The model should be viewed as a research framework rather than a general formula, according to these views.

2.2. Evidence from Hotel Research

In his study of service quality in a business hotel, Akbaba (2006) discovered that hotel visitors did not always understand service-quality dimensions in the same way as the general SERVQUAL framework. The study demonstrated the need for modification to a specific hotel segment and cultural location while also confirming the value of the five-dimensional approach.

The Lodging Quality Index was created by Getty and Getty (2003) as a lodging-specific metric in response to the claim that hotel services include features that would not be adequately captured by a general service-quality tool. This is pertinent to the current study since a hotel visitor assesses a variety of aspects, including room quality, staff interactions, physical amenities, and service procedures.

When domestic and foreign visitors to five-star hotels in Sri Lanka were compared, the two groups' perceptions of service quality differed. According to the survey, local and foreign visitors had different expectations and impressions, as well as different levels of satisfaction with assurance and empathy. This lends credence to the idea that guest characteristics might influence the assessment of service quality and that hotels should refrain from presuming that all guests place the same value on service traits.

2.3. Evidence from India

While the relative importance of dimensions varies across settings, Indian hospitality research similarly indicates a positive relationship between service quality and guest satisfaction. A recent study of tourists staying in hotels in Goa used 600 tourist responses and reported that hotel service-quality dimensions positively influenced tourist satisfaction, with the model explaining a substantial proportion of the variation in satisfaction. Such evidence is useful for the present review, but it should not be treated as direct evidence about Chhattisgarh because Goa and Chhattisgarh differ in tourism products, hotel markets and visitor profiles.

A study of tourist satisfaction with the hotel industry in Nainital also examined hotel-related attributes, staff attributes and service-quality factors. Rather than applying a standard SERVQUAL structure without modification, the study selected variables considered relevant to the local hotel context. This supports the argument that destination-specific adaptation can make service-quality research more useful.

2.4. Evidence Specific to Chhattisgarh

An essential local reference point is provided by published research on visitor satisfaction in Chhattisgarh. Chakraborty and Sarkar (2018) used primary data to analyze visitor satisfaction at the state's main tourist locations and found that tourism activities needed to be improved and standardized. That survey is pertinent even though it wasn't a hotel SERVQUAL study since it shows that Chhattisgarh's overall tourism experience may use some work.

Additional evidence comes from Chhattisgarh's other service sectors. The Raipur Division's private sector banks were subjected to the SERVQUAL framework by Wadhwa and Gupta (2022). This shows that the five service-quality dimensions have already been investigated in a Chhattisgarh service scenario, but it is not a hotel study and hence cannot be used to claim hotel-specific findings. The most significant research gap is the lack of secondary evidence that is particular

to hotels at the state level.7. SERVQUAL Dimensions and Their Relevance to Hotels in Chhattisgarh :-

SERVQUAL dimension	Meaning in hotel service	Relevance to Chhattisgarh
Tangibles	Rooms, bathrooms, reception areas, furniture, equipment, cleanliness, staff appearance and the general physical condition of the property.	Government tourism information shows that Chhattisgarh includes destinations where accommodation ranges from hotels and guest houses to tourism facilities near nature-based attractions. In such settings, physical condition, cleanliness, basic amenities and accessibility can strongly influence the visitor's first and continuing impression.
Reliability	The ability of a hotel to deliver promised services accurately and consistently, including reservations, room readiness, food orders, billing and basic guest requests.	Reliability is especially important when visitors travel to destinations with fewer accommodation alternatives. A booking that is not honoured, an unavailable room facility or repeated service errors can affect the overall travel experience.
Responsiveness	The willingness and speed with which employees respond to requests, complaints and service needs.	Visitors to wildlife, heritage, religious and nature destinations may have different schedules and practical needs. Quick responses to transport information, food requirements, maintenance problems and local guidance can therefore improve the hotel experience.
Assurance	Employee knowledge, courtesy, competence and the ability to create trust and confidence.	Assurance is important where guests depend on hotel employees for information about local transport, attractions, safety, food and destination practices. Staff who can communicate clearly and professionally can reduce uncertainty for visitors.
Empathy	Personal attention, understanding of individual needs and the ability to treat guests as individuals rather than as routine transactions.	Chhattisgarh receives visitors for different reasons, including nature, culture, religion and business. Personalised service can help hotels respond to differences in age, purpose of visit, food preferences, mobility needs and cultural expectations.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the concept of hotel service quality and tourist satisfaction using the SERVQUAL framework.
- To review published evidence on the relationship between hotel service quality and tourist satisfaction.
- To examine available secondary tourism data relevant to Chhattisgarh.
- To assess the relevance of the five SERVQUAL dimensions to hotels operating in Chhattisgarh.
- To identify practical implications for improving hotel services in the state.
- To identify gaps in existing research and suggest areas for future study.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and analytical secondary-data research design. No primary questionnaire, interview or field survey was conducted for this paper. The analysis is based on published academic literature, official tourism statistics and government information relating to tourism and accommodation in Chhattisgarh.

4.2. Sources of Secondary Data

The main sources used were:

- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India: India Tourism Data Compendium 2025 and the national tourism data portal.
- Government of Chhattisgarh and district administration websites for information on tourism destinations, accommodation and tourism infrastructure.
- Peer-reviewed and scholarly literature on SERVQUAL, hotel service quality and tourist satisfaction.
- Published research specifically dealing with tourist satisfaction in Chhattisgarh and hotel service quality in India and other comparable destinations.

4.3. Method of Analysis

Thematic review of the material. The literature was classified into five SERVQUAL dimensions and the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. The tourism context of Chhattisgarh was described using official tourism statistics. Published empirical studies were taken as evidence from the settings from which they were conducted and not as original observations from Chhattisgarh. This approach enables the paper to identify common patterns, but also to be aware that findings from other destinations cannot be simply transposed to Chhattisgarh.

4.4. Limitations of the Secondary-Data Approach

The present degree of hotel visitor satisfaction in Chhattisgarh cannot be accurately estimated from secondary sources. Direct comparisons between published research are also limited by variations in hotel type, destination, questionnaire design, sample size, and study year. Therefore, rather than being a statistical test of a causal hypothesis unique to Chhattisgarh, the results in this work should be interpreted as a synthesis of the available data.

5. Conceptual Background

5.1. Service Quality

Service quality is generally understood as a customer's evaluation of how well a service is delivered in relation to what the customer expects or considers important. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry developed the SERVQUAL instrument to measure perceived service quality through a set of service attributes. The later 1988 version contained 22 items grouped into five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

These dimensions are evident in routine service interactions in a hotel. Rooms, reception areas, equipment, cleanliness, and personnel appearance are examples of tangibles. Reliability pertains to the accuracy and consistency of the hotel's offered services. The willingness and speed with which staff members assist visitors is referred to as responsiveness. Employee expertise, civility, and the trust they foster are all included in assurance. Empathy is paying attention to each visitor individually and comprehending their requirements.

5.2. SERVQUAL in Hospitality

Despite its widespread use in service and hospitality research, SERVQUAL has been criticized. After analyzing 20 years of SERVQUAL research, Ladhari (2009) noted theoretical and empirical critiques but came to the conclusion that the model was still helpful. Akbaba (2006) discovered that while the fundamental dimensions might be used in a hotel environment, the significance and meaning of each dimension could vary depending on the service context. This is crucial for Chhattisgarh since hotel customers staying close to animals, religious sites, or natural areas could have different interests than those staying in a business hub like Raipur.

5.3. Service Quality and Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction and service quality are linked but distinct ideas. While customer satisfaction is a more comprehensive reaction to the consumer experience, service quality concentrates on the customer's assessment of service performance. The relationship between the two has been studied numerous times, and hotel studies typically show a positive relationship. At the same time, the context in which the service is used and the characteristics included in the measurement may influence how strong the link is.

The question of whether performance perceptions alone or expectations minus perceptions, as in the conventional SERVQUAL approach, should be used to quantify service quality is a significant methodological dispute. In their SERVPERF work, Cronin and Taylor (1994) argued in favor of performance-based measurement. Because SERVQUAL offers a clear framework for analyzing the five characteristics, it is retained as the conceptual framework in this study. However, this does not imply that SERVQUAL is the sole reliable method of assessing hotel quality.

6. Tourism Context of Chhattisgarh

The tourist industry in Chhattisgarh is diverse. Natural attractions, woods, animal regions, waterfalls, religious places, and cultural destinations are all listed throughout the state by government sources. Infrastructure and hospitality projects related to tourism are also mentioned as potential investment areas in recent state data. Commercial hotels, guest homes, and government accommodations in various tourist locations are listed on district-level government portals, suggesting that lodging services are a component of the tourism support system.

6.1. Tourist Visits

Year	Domestic tourist visits (million)	Foreign tourist visits	Source
2022	23.64	238	Ministry of Tourism / India Tourism Data
2023	26.02	953	Ministry of Tourism / India Tourism Data
2024	31.49	3,485	Ministry of Tourism / India Tourism Data

The figures show a clear increase in recorded domestic visits between 2022 and 2024. Domestic visits rose from 23.64 million in 2022 to 31.49 million in 2024. Foreign visits were much smaller in absolute terms but increased from 238 to 3,485 over the same period. The figures should be interpreted as tourist visits rather than unique individuals. They also do not tell us whether visitors were satisfied with hotels. Their value for this paper is that they establish the scale and direction of tourism activity and therefore the importance of service capacity.

The growth also creates a practical quality-management issue. When visitor numbers rise, hotels have to maintain cleanliness, room readiness, food service, response time and staff attention while handling greater demand. If capacity and service standards do not grow together, service failures can become more visible. This is one reason why service-quality measurement is useful for destinations such as Chhattisgarh.

7. Findings from the Secondary Data

The secondary evidence does not justify claiming that one SERVQUAL dimension is definitively the strongest predictor of satisfaction in Chhattisgarh. Different hotel studies have produced different rankings, and the importance of dimensions can change with hotel type and guest group. The evidence instead supports five broader findings.

- Service quality and satisfaction are closely connected in hospitality research. Guests judge not only the physical hotel but also the consistency and manner of service delivery.
- The five SERVQUAL dimensions provide a useful structure for analysing hotel services, but they should be adapted to the local hotel and destination context.
- Tangibles remain important because cleanliness, room condition, facilities and staff appearance are immediately visible to guests.
- Reliability, responsiveness and assurance are particularly relevant to service encounters because they influence whether guests can depend on the hotel and its employees.
- Empathy becomes more important when guests have different needs or expect personalised service. This is relevant to a state receiving visitors for business, culture, religion, wildlife and nature-based tourism.
- Chhattisgarh's rising domestic tourist visits increase the practical importance of maintaining service standards as demand grows.
- The available Chhattisgarh literature is stronger on general tourist satisfaction and tourism development than on hotel-specific service-quality measurement. This is a clear area for further research.

8. Discussion

The evidence suggests that hotel service quality should be viewed as part of the destination experience rather than as an isolated hotel-management issue. A visitor may spend only a limited amount of time inside a hotel, but accommodation affects rest, food, safety, information, convenience and the ability to enjoy the destination. For Chhattisgarh, this relationship is relevant because the tourism product is spread across different types of destinations rather than being concentrated in one single tourism market.

The secondary evidence also points to the importance of context. Akbaba's hotel study and the development of lodging-specific measures show that a generic service-quality model may not capture every feature of accommodation. For Chhattisgarh, a locally adapted framework could retain the five SERVQUAL dimensions while adding items related to local food, access to attractions, transport information, cultural sensitivity, environmental practices, safety and the availability of services in less-developed tourism areas.

The increase in tourist visits makes this issue more practical. Hotels may experience pressure on housekeeping, front office, food production and service operations during peak periods. The challenge is not simply to provide more rooms but to maintain consistency in the service provided. A hotel that expands capacity without strengthening staff training, supervision and service recovery may not obtain the expected improvement in guest satisfaction.

9. Managerial Implications

- **Improve basic physical standards:** Hotels should maintain rooms, bathrooms, public areas, signage, equipment and cleanliness consistently. These are the elements guests can judge immediately.

- **Strengthen reliability:** Reservation handling, room allocation, billing, food orders and promised facilities should be monitored so that basic service failures are reduced.
- **Train employees for responsiveness:** Staff should be trained to respond to guest requests quickly and to take ownership of routine complaints instead of repeatedly transferring guests between departments.
- **Build assurance through local knowledge:** Front-office and guest-contact employees should be able to provide accurate information about local attractions, transport, opening times, safety and available services.
- **Use personalised service:** Hotels should record reasonable guest preferences and respond to differences in purpose of visit, dietary needs, age and mobility requirements.
- **Develop service recovery:** When a service failure occurs, the response should include acknowledgement, a practical solution and follow-up. Service recovery is especially important because guests remember how problems were handled.
- **Adapt service to destination type:** Hotels near wildlife and nature destinations may need stronger information and transport support, while hotels in urban areas may need greater attention to business services, connectivity and time-sensitive requests.
- **Measure satisfaction regularly:** Hotels can use short post-stay surveys and review analysis to identify recurring problems. A modified SERVQUAL questionnaire can be used as a diagnostic tool rather than as a rigid scorecard.

10. Research Gap and Future Research

The main gap identified in the secondary literature is the limited availability of hotel-specific, Chhattisgarh-wide evidence linking the five SERVQUAL dimensions with tourist satisfaction. Existing local work provides useful information about tourist satisfaction and tourism development, but there is insufficient evidence to compare hotel categories, destinations and visitor groups using a common instrument.

- Compare budget, mid-scale and premium hotels in Raipur, Bilaspur, Jagdalpur, Ambikapur and other tourism centres.
- Examine domestic and foreign visitors separately where sample sizes permit.
- Test whether the SERVQUAL dimensions predict satisfaction differently across nature-based, cultural, religious and business tourism.
- Compare SERVQUAL gap scores with performance-only measures such as SERVPERF.
- Examine online hotel reviews as a secondary source of evidence for recurring service problems.
- Study the role of cleanliness, food quality, safety, digital services and local cultural experience alongside the traditional SERVQUAL dimensions.

11. Conclusion

This paper reviewed secondary evidence on hotel service quality and tourist satisfaction with particular reference to Chhattisgarh. The review supports the continued usefulness of the SERVQUAL framework, while also showing why it should be adapted to the setting in which it is used. Tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy represent five practical areas through which hotel guests experience service quality.

The tourism statistics indicate that Chhattisgarh has a substantial domestic tourism market and that tourist visits increased between 2022 and 2024. This growth creates opportunities for hotels but also increases the importance of maintaining consistent service. Published research from India and other destinations generally supports a positive relationship between service quality and satisfaction, although the relative importance of individual dimensions varies. Local Chhattisgarh studies also indicate a need to strengthen and standardise tourism services.

The most appropriate conclusion from the available secondary evidence is therefore not that one SERVQUAL dimension is automatically the most important in Chhattisgarh. Instead, hotels should identify the service problems that matter most to their particular guests and destination. A locally adapted SERVQUAL approach, supported by regular guest feedback and service monitoring, can provide a practical basis for improving accommodation quality and strengthening the overall tourist experience in the state.

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