

# The Quality of Service Standards and Related Factors in Tourist Hotels in Arusha, Tanzania

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The expansion of hotel industry in Tanzania has stimulated the growth of tourism industry in the country due to increase of availability and variety of accommodation, food, drinks and other services. Together with this expansion the hotel industry is facing challenges in meeting customers' satisfaction. Customers have complained that level of services standard does not equate to the amount of money that are charged. Thus, the purpose of the study was to establish the quality service standards and related factors in tourists' hotels in Arusha, Tanzania. The study design was a descriptive cross sectional survey. The sample size included 180 guests residing in tourist hotels in Arusha at the time of data collection, 240 service employees and 28 managers. Purposive, convenient and simple random sampling methods were used. The data collection instruments were structured questionnaires. Data were analysed by Statistics Packages for Social Science, (version 16) and explained in descriptive and inferential statistics. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to measure gaps between the managers' and guests' perception while independent t-test measured the role played by management practices in delivery of service quality. Regression analysis was used to predict factors that affect the service quality standards. Findings showed that nearly all hotel employees (95%) had an understanding on the service quality concept. The managers' and guests' perceptions were significantly different in hotel design and presentation ( $p = 0.03$ ) and location accessibility and visibility ( $p = 0.02$ ). Moreover the managers' and guests' perceptions were significantly different in the speedy check-in and checkout, staff courtesy and professionalism ( $p = 0.04$ ), reasonable room rates/value for money ( $p = 0.01$ ) in front office area. The manager' and guests' perceptions in restaurant and bar were also significantly different in quality, colour and presentation of food ( $p = 0.02$ ), reasonable restaurant and bar prices, creativity in service techniques and styles ( $p = 0.01$ ); billing and cashiering procedures ( $p = 0.02$ ), health and dietary ( $p = 0.01$ ) and; variety of dishes on menu ( $p = 0.00$ ). Furthermore guestroom and more attributes which were significant when managers' and guests' perceptions measured. These included room ambience, quietness and colour ( $p = 0.02$ ), comfortness of bedding and seating ( $p = 0.04$ ), quality of fixtures, sufficient fixtures ( $p = 0.03$ ) and room maintenance, staff courtesy and professionalism, voice and accent of staff ( $p = 0.01$ ). The study indicated that, nine management practices had influence on service quality and these were leadership styles ( $p = 0.04$ ) motivation, training and development, communication at all level ( $p = 0.01$ ) and rewarding style ( $p = 0.02$ ) while employment process, compensation and employees' welfare were significant at  $p = 0.00$ . From the findings two conclusions were made: First, managers' and guests' perceptions on service quality standards were significantly different; secondly, management practices significantly influence the service quality standards in tourists' hotel in Arusha. This study recommends that, effective implementation of management practices

is vital as it plays a key role in ensuring service quality and that the guests' requirement should be known before designing the service or product.