

## **Service Quality in Ghana's Tourism Industry: A Perspective from Tourists and Hotel Managers in the Volta Region**

Esther Theresa Appaw-Agbola\* and Stephen AfenyoDehlor\*\*

*This paper assesses the perceptions of service quality in hotel industry in the Volta Region, from the perspective of both international and local tourists and hotel managers. A questionnaire was used to survey a sample of 70 hotel managers and 200 international and local tourists who visited Ghana and stayed at hotels in the region. The methods of analysis include both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Under descriptive statistics, the mean rating assigned to each factor of variable was presented and analysed. SPSS software was used for all the analysis. Factor analysis was then used to run further analysis in order to be able to adequately define and explain numerous factors that affect the tourism industry. The results showed that, tourists' perceptions of service quality provided in the hotel industry in the Region were consistently lower than their expectations. Moreover, managers also overestimated the service delivery, compared to tourists' perceptions of actual service quality, in the hotel industry in the Region. Furthermore, from the results of gap analysis, it might be concluded that Delivery Gap and Internal Evaluation Gap were the main reasons contributing to the service quality shortfalls in the hotel industry in the Volta Region of Ghana.*

**Field of Research:** Management

### **1. Introduction**

Worldwide, tourism has emerged as one of the fastest growing industries, averaging about 4% per annum. In 1995, tourism receipts amounted to \$3.72 billion. While the major destinations are in the developed countries, a number of developing countries have become major points of destination. In Africa, such major destinations include Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mauritius and Ghana. For instance, tourism provides the impetus for the growth of Kenya's economy in the 1980s and 1990s. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) estimates that Africa will be one of the destinations for cultural and eco-tourism in the next decade WTO, 1999.

The number of international arrivals shows an evolution from a mere 25 million international arrivals in 1950 to 663 million in 1999 corresponding to an annual growth rate of 7%. In the same period, international tourism receipts, at current prices and excluding international transport costs, had an average annual growth rate of 12 %WTO, 2000. Ghana has identified tourism as a lead sector for socio-economic development. In 1997, 325,438 visitors arrived in Ghana, and this generated \$265.5

---

\*Esther Theresa Appaw-Agbola, Dean Faculty of Applied Sciences & Technology, Ho Polytechnic-Ghana.email:appawth@yahoo.com

\*\*Stephen AfenyoDehlor, Senior Assistant Registrar for Academic affairs, Ho Polytechnic.email:steve\_afenyo@yahoo.com\*\*

## Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

million Ghana Tourist Board,2006. Ghana possessed at least four of the ten top tourist attractions in the world. These are as follows:

Pristine beaches for the out-door tourism, virgin forest, game-parks and wetlands for the promotion of nature-based tourism, Unique tourism sites such as castles, forts, slaves routes etc, Cultural heritage in the form of traditional festivals, ethno-tourism and antique objects.

The Volta Region has been identified as a major tourist point in the country since the region possesses a range of tourist attractions such as game reserves, waterfalls, mountains, major festivals and a variety of historical sites among others. With the intensification of tourism in the region, since the end of the 1980s, a number of hospitality businesses emerged to offer services to meet the needs and demands of visitors and tourists. Hospitality services are associated with the commercial provision of catering & accommodation, entertainment, transport and leisure facilities consist of both tangible and intangible components. Designed and managed by the producer with the aim of satisfying the needs of the consumer, the hospitality sector is a major link in the tourism sector. Tourism as a multi-dimensional industry consists of sectors such as accommodation (hotel), transport, catering, entertainment, shops and attractions Qing, 1993. By its nature, tourism development survives and sustains itself through the quality of services it offers Tisdell *et al.* 1991.

One vital area in the service industry worldwide is competition from destinations providing similar services which, the hotel sector, accounts for about 30% of the total tourist expenditure Carina, 2000.

For instance, Dehlor, 2004 observed that, hoteliers in the Volta region were not able to meet the expectations of their clients. Since the image of any tourist destination hinges on the services rendered, it is important to assess service quality in the hotel industry in the Volta region, from the perspective of both the providers and the users.

The main purpose of the study was to assess the perceptions of service quality in the Volta Region's hotel industry, from the perspective of both international and local tourists, and hotel managers. Specific objectives of this study are to:

- 1.) Assess the current expectations and perceptions held by local and international tourists with respect to the quality of services provided by the hotel industry in the Volta Region.
- 2.) Assess the current expectations and perceptions held by hotel managers in the region with respect to quality of hotel service and products provided.
- 3.) Identify any gap between the perceptions of tourists and hotel managers, with respect to the quality of hotel service and products provided.

Based on the purpose and specific objectives, the following questions were raised.

- a) Do Ghanaian managers understand what tourists expect from service quality in the hotel industry in Ghana?

## Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

- b.) Do managers overestimate their organization's service delivery in meeting customer expectations of service quality in the region's hotel industry?
- c.) Does management believe they deliver as much as they believe customers expect?

The paper is divided into five sections; section two discusses the literature review. The third part discusses the research methodology. Section four result/ discussions. Section five discusses the recommendation and conclusion of the study.

### 2. Literature Review

Service quality is a focused evaluation that reflects the customer's perception of specific dimensions of service: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles whilst satisfaction, is influenced by perceptions of service quality, product quality, and price as well as situational factors and personal factors Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003 and expectations of customer towards the service Nel 1993.

Service quality affects customer satisfaction by providing performance (real benefits) Fick *et al* 1995. The creation of customer satisfaction can provide several benefits, including the relationship between companies and consumers, providing a good basis for the purchase and re-creation of customer loyalty, and form a recommendation by word of mouth that can benefit the company Brown, 1989. Coyle and Dale 1993 examined the evaluation of service quality in the hospitality industry from both the customer and the providers' viewpoint. Their study identified a number of gaps existing between the perceptions of customers and those of providers. For example, managers believed that competence of staff was a key factor in the service transaction, but this view was not supported by customers. Customers also ranked the "tangibles" of service, such as decoration, facilities and cleanliness, to be less important than managers expected LeBlanc, 1992. They further suggested that, one of the principal causes of the gaps between the perceptions of customers and providers was the assumption amongst providers that they know best. In a majority of cases, although senior managers were charged with the principal responsibility of knowing and understanding customers' expectations, traditionally they had the least contact with customers and were not able to assess customer needs accurately Lewis, 1987. Not surprisingly, there are strong linkages between service quality dimensions (e.g. courteous service providers) and overall customer satisfaction Anderson and Sullivan, 1993. However, there has been considerable debate as to the basic dimensions of service quality (Brown *et al.*, 1993, Cronin and Taylor, 1992, the measurement of these dimensions Brown *et al.*, Parasuraman *et al.*, Smith, 1995; Teas, 1993, and the components of customer satisfaction Hausknecht, 1990; Yi, 1990. Surprisingly, little empirical research has examined the importance of service quality dimensions in determining customer satisfaction Fisk *et al.*, 1993. A review of this literature suggests the following: The contention that service quality consists of five basic dimensions Parasuraman *et al.*, is very questionable. Instead, the number and composition of the service quality dimensions are probably dependent on the service setting Brown *et al.* Empirical evidence and theoretical arguments suggest that there may be two overriding dimensions to service quality; the core or outcome aspects (contractual) of the service, and the relational or process aspects customer-employee relationship) of the service

## Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

Gronroos, *et al.* 1994. The contention that service quality should be conceptualized and measured as a gap between expectations and performance is very questionable. The evidence suggests that service quality should be based on performance measures alone Brown *et al.* Items used to measure service quality should reflect the specific service setting under investigation Carman, 1990. To elaborate on the two major dimensions of service quality, Parasuraman *et al.* 1991 summarized the nature of the core (outcome) and relational (process) constructs: While reliability is largely concerned with the service outcome, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance and empathy are more concerned with the service process. Whereas customers judge the accuracy and dependability (i.e. reliability) of the delivered service, they judge the other dimensions as the service is being delivered. While the number of underlying dimensions has been shown to vary with the service setting, it appears reasonable to suggest that the service core and relational dimensions will emerge in nearly all cases as they form the basis for the service.

### 2.1 A Service Quality Model

Much of the current research on service quality has been carried out within the framework of the service quality model developed from the extensive research of Parasuraman *et al.* 1985, 1988, and 1991. The service quality model was derived from the magnitude and direction of five “gaps” as below”:

1. Understanding: the difference between consumer expectations and management perceptions of consumer expectations.
2. Service standards: the difference between management perceptions of consumer expectations and service quality specifications.
3. Service performance: the difference between service quality specifications and the service actually delivered.
4. Communications: the difference between service delivery and what is communicated about the service to consumers.
5. Service quality: the difference between customer expectations of service quality and customer perceptions of the organization’s performance.

The first four gaps (Gap 1, Gap 2, Gap 3 and Gap 4) affect the way in which service is delivered, and the existence of these four gaps leads to extent of Gap 5. In addition, gap 5 is a function of gap 1, gap 2, gap 3, and gap 4; that is,  $Gap\ 5 = f(gap1, gap2, gap3, gap4)$ . In other words, the extent of Gap 5 depends on the size and direction of the first four gaps. However, Gap 2, Gap 3 and Gap 4 are not relevant to the research scope of the present study. The principal focus of the present research is Gap 5, Gap 1

### 2.2 Two Additional Gaps in Service Quality Model

Apart from the original five gaps proposed by Parasuraman *et al.*, there are two additional gaps that have been identified by Lewis, 1987. These gaps were labeled as Gap 6 and Gap 7 as below:

## **Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor**

Gap 6: the difference between consumer perceptions of service delivery and what management believes they deliver.

Gap 7: the difference between management's perception of consumer expectations and management's perception of its service delivery. These four gaps (Gap 5, Gap 1 by Parasuraman and Gap 6 and Gap 7 by Lewis) could provide better insights for hotel managers to evaluate and identify service quality problems. The four gaps are discussed below:

### **2.3 Gap 5: Customer Expectation and Perceptions of Service Quality**

The fifth gap is the difference between consumer expectation and their perception of service quality - measured by the difference between what customers expect gap 2, gap 3, and gap 4; that is,  $Gap\ 5 = f(gap1, gap2, gap3, gap4)$  and what customers perceive about the service. In addition, gap 5 is a function of gap 1. Measurement of the gap (Gap 5) between consumers' expectations and their perceptions of service quality delivery has become the principal focus of research recently. This analysis may provide management with important insights about how well actual service performance compared with the expectations of the consumers. Therefore, study of Gap 5 is an extremely useful tool for management in monitoring the service delivery in the region's hotel industry. This means that the service quality is closely related to management perception, marketing personnel management, communications with customers, service specifications and delivery. Thus it was important to test tourist perceptions (actual experience) to see whether service quality provided by the hotel industry in the region was meeting, exceeding or falling below tourist expectations.

### **2.4 Gap1: Management's Perceptions of Customer Expected Service**

The first gap refers to the difference between customers' expected service and management's perceptions of customers' expectations. This gap is pertinent to a critical question one (1): "Do Ghanaian managers understand what tourists expect from service quality in the hotel industry in Ghana?" Management perceptions about what customers expect from service quality should ideally be congruent with the expectations expressed by customers. Most senior management executives have the authority and responsibility for setting service priorities and for designing and developing service quality standards, so if they do not fully understand what customers expect they might trigger a chain of bad decisions, resulting in poorly perceived service quality.

A number of studies have shown that there were considerable differences in expectations of service quality between customers and management in the hotel industry. In addition, Nightingale, 1986 found very strong evidence that management perceptions of service quality frequently differ from the perceptions of customers, colleagues and staff. Lewis, 1987 measured the service quality gap in the hotel industry, comparing management perceptions of guest expectations and the actual expectations of the guests themselves, and found that, for the most part, management believed that guests' expectation was very high. Nel, 1993 had a similar result as Lewis, and found

## **Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor**

that management had a reasonably good understanding of customer expectations. This gap means that management may not correctly perceive customer expectations.

### **2.5. Gap 6: The Difference between Consumer Perception of Service Delivery and What Management Believes they Deliver**

Gap 6 addresses question number two (2), “Do managers overestimate their organization’s service delivery in meeting customer expectations of service quality in the region’s hotel industry?” As mentioned earlier, some studies (Lewis 1987; Coyle and Dale, 1993) found that managers in the hotel industry tended to be very self-assured and they believed they know best. Thus, they perceived their service delivery as being more successful than customers perceived it to be, in most cases.

### **2.6. Gap 7: The Difference between Management’s Perception of Consumer Expectations and Management’s Perception of its Service Delivery**

This gap discusses question number three (3) that is, “Does management believe they deliver as much as they believe customers expect?” Measuring management perceptions of service quality is just as important as measuring consumers’ perceptions, because management perceptions of service quality directly affect service quality standards (Qing, 1993). Measurement of the gap (Gap 7) between management perceptions of consumer expectations and management perceptions of an organization’s service quality delivery could help us to know whether or not management has confidence in meeting customers’ expectations. These four gaps (Gap 5, Gap 1, Gap 6 and Gap 7) could provide better insights for hotel managers to evaluate and identify service quality problems. By understanding the extent and direction of these four gaps, managers would be able to identify whether their service was exceeding, meeting or falling below customers’ expectations, and would gain clues about how to close any of the gaps.

## **3. Methodology and Research Design**

The data in this study was subjective as perceived by the participants in the study. Thus a combination of quantitative and qualitative method was employed to analyze the research problem. The identification of the various gap between managers perception and consumers perception and expectation was significant for analyzing the relationship between managers and consumers. This represented the descriptive content of the study. The exploratory part was finding out of the salient factors that describe the perception of stakeholders toward the hotel industry in the Volta Region. Researchers were personally involved in the interviews in order to clarify certain issues. The questionnaire was divided into two parts; the first parts were designed to measure the respondent expectations regarding service quality in the hotel industry in the Volta Region.

The research was carried out in 2009. Secondary literature was used extensively from articles, journals, text books.

# Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

## 3.1 Sample Frame and Size

The sample size studied was 200 international and local tourists and 70 hotel managers. Various established approaches are used in determining sample size such as using a census in case of small population, imitating a sample size of analogous studies, using published tables, and using formulas to calculate a sample size (Israel, 2003). For the present study, imitating a sample size of analogous studies method was used in the determination of sample size.

## 3.2 Data Analysis

The data obtained for the research has been thoroughly edited and non numeric variables in the data were all assigned codes so as to check omissions, ensure consistency, and also for good statistical analysis. The methods of analysis include both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Under descriptive statistics, the mean rating assigned to each factor of variable was presented and analysed. SPSS software was used for all the analysis. Factor analysis was then used to run further analysis in order to be able to adequately define and explain numerous factors that affect the tourism industry.

The data analysis was generally done by finding out of salient factors that describe the perception of stakeholders toward the hotel industry in the Volta Region of Ghana by conducting an exploratory factor analysis.

In all, 25 indicator variables were used to assess the service quality of the Hotel industry in the Volta Region. These are listed below;

- X<sub>1</sub>= Comfortable and welcome feeling
- X<sub>2</sub>= Neat appearance
- X<sub>3</sub>= Professionalism of staff
- X<sub>4</sub>= Hotel staff with multi-lingual skills
- X<sub>5</sub>= Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- X<sub>6</sub>= Special attention given by staff
- X<sub>7</sub>= Availability of staff to provide service
- X<sub>8</sub>= Staff performing services right the first time
- X<sub>9</sub>= Reservation system was easily accessible
- X<sub>10</sub>= Quick check-in and check-out
- X<sub>11</sub>= Cleanliness of room
- X<sub>12</sub>= Quietness of room
- X<sub>13</sub>= Security of room
- X<sub>14</sub>= Attractive decor, furnishing of room/lobby
- X<sub>15</sub>= Comfortable mattress and pillow
- X<sub>16</sub>= Reasonable room rate/value for money
- X<sub>17</sub>= Variety of services offered
- X<sub>18</sub>= Reliable message and wake-up service
- X<sub>19</sub>= The provision of accurate and reliable information
- X<sub>20</sub>= The guarantee of reliable service

## Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

X<sub>21</sub>= High quality food and wine list

X<sub>22</sub>= Fire safety facilities

V<sub>23</sub>= High level of hygiene practices

V<sub>24</sub>= Availability of room service

V<sub>25</sub>= Convenient Hotel location

The measurement of these variables was done by asking the respondents to rate the level of importance attached to these variables separately. The Likert scale used was;

1= Strongly Disagree

2= Disagree

3= Uncertain

4=Agree

5=Strongly Agree

### 3.3 Finding Salient Factors

The statistical tool for determining salient factors from a lot original indicators was used and factor analysis that seeks to describe a population. Factor analysis is a general name denoting a class of procedures primarily used for data reduction. In many research, there may be large number of variables, most of which are correlated and which must be reduced to a manageable level. Relationships among sets of many interrelated variables are examined and represented in terms of a few underlying factors. Factor analysis is thus used in the following circumstances, when there is the need to identify new underlying factors, which are smaller from a set of larger ones that are able to explain the correlation among the set of variables.

To identify a smaller set of salient variables to replace the original set of correlated ones in a further of subsequent multivariate analysis like, regression and discriminate analysis.

Conducting factor analysis requires that the analysis be done in two parts; a preliminary analysis, which involves establishing the appropriateness of the tool, and a further analysis, which goes ahead to describe or label the factors.

## 4. Results /Discussion

### Descriptive Statistics of Indicators

The table 1 below presents the gap mean difference of the various indicators and the variations that exist between them.



## Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

Indicators	Mean
$X_1$	3.73
$X_2$	3.64
$X_3$	3.41
$X_4$	3.03
$X_5$	3.59
$X_6$	3.38
$X_7$	3.45
$X_8$	3.35
$X_9$	3.53
$X_{10}$	3.57
$X_{11}$	3.76
$X_{12}$	3.83
$X_{13}$	3.62
$X_{14}$	3.51
$X_{15}$	3.51
$X_{16}$	3.47
$X_{17}$	3.41
$X_{18}$	3.57
$X_{19}$	3.65
$X_{20}$	3.77
$X_{21}$	3.66
$X_{22}$	3.76
$X_{23}$	3.75
$X_{24}$	3.80
$X_{25}$	3.81

Source: Field observation

The value ratings above shows that most of the respondents seem to have agreed to the various conditions prevailing in the hotels. Variables that received high rating were; Comfortable and welcome feeling, neat appearance of staff, friendliness and courtesy of staff, availability of staff to provide service, reservation system was easily assessable, quick check-in and check-out, cleanliness of room, quietness of room, security of room, attractive decor, furnishing of room\lobby, comfortable mattress and pillow, reasonable room rate/value for money, reliable message and wake-up service, the provision of accurate and reliable information, the guarantee of reliable service, high quality food and wine list, fire safety facilities, high level of hygiene practices, availability of room service and convenient hotel location. Other variables that do not received high ratings however, were; professionalism of staff, hotel staff with multi-lingual skills, special attention given by staff, staffs performing service right the first time and variety of service offered and reasonable room rate/value for money. The mean ratings have demonstrated very high and good perception people have for the hotel industry in the Volta Region of Ghana, this suggests strongly that one might need to have salient factors that best describe the industry in the Region.

## Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

**Table 2: Correlation Matrix**

	X <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	X <sub>3</sub>	X <sub>4</sub>	X <sub>5</sub>	X <sub>6</sub>	X <sub>7</sub>	X <sub>8</sub>	X <sub>9</sub>	X <sub>10</sub>	X <sub>11</sub>	X <sub>12</sub>	X <sub>13</sub>	X <sub>14</sub>	X <sub>15</sub>	X <sub>16</sub>	X <sub>17</sub>	X <sub>18</sub>	X <sub>19</sub>	X <sub>20</sub>	X <sub>21</sub>	X <sub>22</sub>	X <sub>23</sub>	X <sub>24</sub>	X <sub>25</sub>	
X <sub>1</sub>	1.0 0																									
X <sub>2</sub>	0.5 1	1.0 0																								
X <sub>3</sub>	0.2 6	0.3 3	1.0 0																							
X <sub>4</sub>	0.4 3	0.4 0	0.3 7	1.0 0																						
X <sub>5</sub>	0.4 5	0.3 6	0.3 6	0.34 0	1.0 0																					
X <sub>6</sub>	0.3 2	0.2 9	0.3 1	0.28 0	0.4 6	1.0 0																				
X <sub>7</sub>	0.4 0	0.4 0	0.3 3	0.42 0	0.4 8	0.3 0	1.0 0																			
X <sub>8</sub>	0.2 3	0.3 1	0.3 4	0.37 5	0.2 0	0.3 6	0.3 0	1.0 0																		
X <sub>9</sub>	0.3 0	0.2 5	0.3 2	0.39 6	0.3 0	0.3 4	0.4 8	0.3 0	1.0 0																	
X <sub>10</sub>	0.3 1	0.2 8	0.2 2	0.30 0	0.3 7	0.2 4	0.2 0	0.3 6	0.3 0	1.0 0																
X <sub>11</sub>	0.3 6	0.3 5	0.3 0	0.34 8	0.3 3	0.2 3	0.3 3	0.3 2	0.3 6	0.4 1	1.0 0															
X <sub>12</sub>	0.2 7	0.3 0	0.2 2	0.30 8	0.2 7	0.2 4	0.2 3	0.2 2	0.2 3	0.3 2	0.3 0	1.0 0														
X <sub>13</sub>	0.2 7	0.2 7	0.1 9	0.29 5	0.2 7	0.2 7	0.2 6	0.2 0	0.2 6	0.3 7	0.3 6	1.0 0														
X <sub>14</sub>	0.3 6	0.3 6	0.2 7	0.34 0	0.4 9	0.2 3	0.3 0	0.3 9	0.2 4	0.2 1	0.4 2	0.3 5	1.0 0													
X <sub>15</sub>	0.2 9	0.2 7	0.2 4	0.38 1	0.3 3	0.2 7	0.2 9	0.2 8	0.2 6	0.3 0	0.3 3	0.3 3	0.3 9	1.0 0												
X <sub>16</sub>	0.3 5	0.3 1	0.2 6	0.38 7	0.4 3	0.3 9	0.3 0	0.3 8	0.3 7	0.2 6	0.3 8	0.2 4	0.3 6	0.4 9	0.3 0	1.0 0										
X <sub>17</sub>	0.3 1	0.2 8	0.2 2	0.37 4	0.3 7	0.2 1	0.3 5	0.2 3	0.2 6	0.2 6	0.2 5	0.2 1	0.3 8	0.3 6	0.3 9	0.4 0	1.0 0									
X <sub>18</sub>	0.3 6	0.3 2	0.2 5	0.34 4	0.3 2	0.3 1	0.2 5	0.2 4	0.3 0	0.2 5	0.2 7	0.1 5	0.2 9	0.2 7	0.2 2	0.4 6	0.4 9	1.0 0								
X <sub>19</sub>	0.3 7	0.4 0	0.2 7	0.31 9	0.2 2	0.3 1	0.2 4	0.2 1	0.3 2	0.2 7	0.2 3	0.2 8	0.2 6	0.3 7	0.2 9	0.3 4	0.4 3	0.6 0	1.0 0							
X <sub>20</sub>	0.2 8	0.3 5	0.2 2	0.28 3	0.2 1	0.2 3	0.2 8	0.2 8	0.1 8	0.2 7	0.2 1	0.2 4	0.2 2	0.3 2	0.2 3	0.3 9	0.3 9	0.4 7	0.6 0	1.0 0						
X <sub>21</sub>	0.3 6	0.4 0	0.3 1	0.33 2	0.3 1	0.2 4	0.2 6	0.2 8	0.1 9	0.2 6	0.2 2	0.2 9	0.3 1	0.2 8	0.4 2	0.3 8	0.5 3	0.7 1	0.5 9	1.0 0						
X <sub>22</sub>	0.2 2	0.2 9	0.2 1	0.26 1	0.2 3	0.1 9	0.1 4	0.1 7	0.2 4	0.1 1	0.2 0	0.2 1	0.2 5	0.2 5	0.3 0	0.2 8	0.4 4	0.5 2	0.5 5	0.5 0	1.0 0					
X <sub>23</sub>	0.2 7	0.3 6	0.2 6	0.28 2	0.2 6	0.1 3	0.2 5	0.2 5	0.2 5	0.2 5	0.1 9	0.3 5	0.3 2	0.2 3	0.3 5	0.4 0	0.5 1	0.6 7	0.6 4	0.6 6	1.0 0					
X <sub>24</sub>	0.2 9	0.3 3	0.2 1	0.24 7	0.2 7	0.1 8	0.2 5	0.1 9	0.2 3	0.2 2	0.2 4	0.2 2	0.2 7	0.3 6	0.2 6	0.3 9	0.3 7	0.4 7	0.5 9	0.5 8	0.6 2	0.5 5	0.5 9	1.0 0		
X <sub>25</sub>	0.2 8	0.3 3	0.2 7	0.27 8	0.2 3	0.2 1	0.2 8	0.2 6	0.2 3	0.2 5	0.2 4	0.2 4	0.2 2	0.3 8	0.2 9	0.3 3	0.4 0	0.5 3	0.6 3	0.6 8	0.6 3	0.5 8	0.6 3	0.6 4	1.0 7	0

## Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

From the correlation table above it is observed that a high correlation exist between comfortable and welcome feeling and three other factors namely neat appearance of staff, staff with multilingual skills, friendliness & courtesy of staff.

There is also a high correlation between friendliness and courtesy of staff and special attention given by staff, attractive décor, furnishing of room/lobby and reasonable room rate/value for money. High correlation also exist between availability of staff to provide service and reservation system being easily accessible.

In addition, high correlations also exist between quick check-in, check-out, and cleanliness of room, attractive décor and furnishing of room/lobby. Moreover, a high correlation was also identified between attractive decor, furnishing of room/lobby and reasonable room rate/value for money. Furthermore, high correlations also exist between reasonable room rate/value for money and variety of services offered, reliable message and wake-up service. Very high correlations were identified between reliable wake-up service, provision of accurate and reliable information, the guarantee of reliable service, high level of hygiene practices, adequacy of fire service facilities, high quality food service which are highly inter-correlated to each other from the table above.

The high correlations among the indicator variables strongly suggest the appropriateness of factor analysis. The next step is to find out how good would the factoring be. Another advantage of the correlation analysis is that it confirms the existence of homogeneous groupings in the data.

### 4.1 Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test

These tests determine the appropriateness or otherwise of the factor analysis.

**Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.94
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5659.37
	df	300
	Sig.	0.00

The table suggests that the data would be marvelously good for factoring with a KMO value of 0.94, which test is highly significant with a significant value of 0.00.

### 4.2 Total Variance Output

Determining the number of factors that must be considered for extraction from the original 25 factors via the help of the Eigen values significantly greater than (1) one rule.

# Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

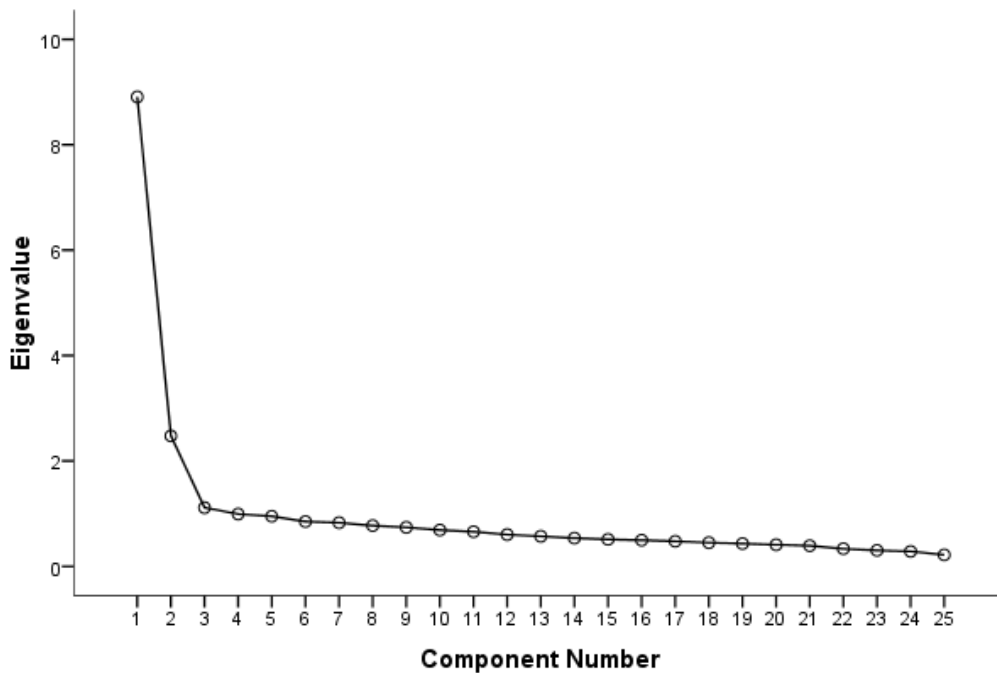
**Table 4: Total Variance Explained**

Component	eigen value	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.907	35.629	35.629
2	2.475	9.902	45.530
3	1.114	4.456	49.986
4	0.993	3.973	53.959
5	0.951	3.803	57.762

Source: Field Observation

- From the Table 4, it can be observed that, out of the original indicator variables, three (3) have their eigen values significantly greater than one (1). It is therefore evidence that three components are able to describe the total variation in the data regarding the service quality of hotels in the Volta Region of Ghana. This further means that to describe the service quality of the hotels, three main components would be vital. The next step of factor analysis would unravel these components.

**Scree Plot**



The diagram above supports or confirms the importance of the first component in explaining tourism and hotel management in the Volta region as a whole. From the diagram above it can be seen that the elbow of the screen plot rests on the third

## Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

component implying that the number of factors that must be considered for extraction must not exceed three (3).

### 4.3. Component Matrix Output

The component matrix having 3 components tries to label the components using a cut off part of 0.50 assume for use in interpreting the factors.

**Table 5: Component Matrix**

	Component		
	1	2	3
$X_1$	.590	.238	-.133
$X_2$	.606	.144	-.147
$X_3$	.490	.224	-.337
$X_4$	.595	.290	-.112
$X_5$	.584	.339	-.173
$X_6$	.472	.358	-.214
$X_7$	.555	.356	-.321
$X_8$	.497	.273	-.127
$X_9$	.550	.266	-.233
$X_{10}$	.469	.319	.292
$X_{11}$	.549	.321	.241
$X_{12}$	.455	.259	.349
$X_{13}$	.507	.173	.460
$X_{14}$	.601	.193	.230
$X_{15}$	.524	.221	.317
$X_{16}$	.658	.139	.075
$X_{17}$	.617	.006	.128
$X_{18}$	.663	-.248	-.163
$X_{19}$	.745	-.413	-.072
$X_{20}$	.678	-.441	-.025
$X_{21}$	.726	-.407	-.066
$X_{22}$	.582	-.415	.000
$X_{23}$	.690	-.454	.061
$X_{24}$	.670	-.425	.081
$X_{25}$	.705	-.437	.011

Source: Field Observation

Table 5 shows clearly the three components and also gives clues to interpreting the underlying factor that seek to explain the tourism and hotel industry in the region. Using a cut off point of 0.5 and above it can be realized that the first factor loads on 8 indicator variables which are;

## Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

$F_1$  = {reliable message and wake-up service, the provision of accurate and reliable information, the guarantee of reliable service, high quality food and wine list, high level of hygiene practices, availability of room service and convenient hotel location. This suggests that the first factor is describing the reliability of various services offered in the hotels in the region.

The second factor distinctively loads on nine indicators i.e.

$F_2$  = {comfortable and welcome feeling, neat appearance of staff, professionalism of staff, hotel staff with multilingual skills, friendliness and courtesy of staff, special attention given by staff to provide service, staff performing services right at first time, reservation system was easily accessible.

It could be remembered that the ratings assigned to these indicators were thus not very high and not very low too. This implies an uncertainty of respondents about the variables under this component.

Finally, the third factor highly loads six (6) indicators i.e.  $F_3$  quick check-in and check-out, cleanliness of room, quietness of room, security of room, attractive decor of room\lobby. Thus the third factor is about the accommodation in general. One may argue that, there is a gap between the perceptions of tourists and hotel managers, with respect to the quality of hotel service and products provided.

To confirm whether the analysis support or rejects the hypotheses one would argue that, the debate related to adoption of SERVQUAL or SERVPERF in service quality studies is not yet resolved. SERVPERF has better explanatory power in overall service quality measurement. On the other hand, SERVQUAL has better diagnostic power because of the P-E score measurement. Thus, selection of the service quality model was based on the nature of the problem facing the tourism industry in the Volta Region hotels and thus the instruments will be determined by the intention of the researchers, service providers or decision-makers (Jain & Gupta, 2004).

## 5. Recommendation for Future Studies

Based on the result and the findings, to address the need for quality improvement in the hotel industry in the Volta region there is the need to conduct a comparative analysis among the SERVQUAL and SERVPERF in other regions using the same target group to validate the appropriateness of the instruments. Most importantly, debates related to the adoption of (SERVQUAL) or the perception-only method (SERVPERF) in the service quality studies have not been resolved because of the shortcomings of the service quality model.

### 5.1 Conclusion

From a practical aspect, the study attempted neither to test existing theory nor develop new research instruments. The study simply tried to present findings of assessing the

## Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

expectations and perceptions of service quality for international and local tourists and managers showed the gap (Gap 5, Gap 1, Gap 6 and Gap 7) that could arise from inconsistent expectations and perceptions of service quality between tourists and management and elaborate on how the gaps between tourists and management could be bridged. The results of Gap 5 analysis showed that tourists' perceptions were consistently lower than their expectations and the variables that had not enjoyed high ratings are; professionalism of staff, hotel staff with multi-lingual skills, special attention given by staff, staffs performing service right the first time and variety of service offered and reasonable room rate/value for money. These negative gaps indicated that, the delivered service level was falling below tourists' expectations of service quality in the hotel industry in the region. The gaps related to professionalism of staff, value for money among others shows that, service quality improvement is needed in the hotel industry in the region. Gap 5 analyses is really critical because it may prove to be an extremely useful tool for management to identify the service problems or service fail points in the hotel industry in the region and thus meet the expectations of tourists. Moreover, the mean ratings for other variables have demonstrated very high and good perception people have for the hotel industry in the Volta Region of Ghana; this suggests that one might need to have salient factors that best describe the industry in the Region. However, in order to narrow Gap 5, the hotel industry in the region should also understand and study the other gaps (Gap 1, Gap 6, and Gap 7) which contribute to the extent of Gap 5. The assessment of Gap 1, enable us to understand the salient factors found to be responsible for describing the hotel industry in the Volta Region of Ghana which relates with the reliability of various services offered in the hotels in the region. It was indentified that, managers understand customers' expectations. One may conclude that, gap1 is not a major problem in contributing to Gap5 (Service quality gap). Gap 6 enables us to indentify whether management overestimates its service delivery in meeting tourist's expectations of service quality in the hotel industry in the region. The uncertainty the respondents have about the variables listed under gap 6 shows that management is somewhat unaware about their failure in delivering what tourist expect. One may conclude that gap 6 is one of the factors contributing to gap 5. Thus managers must take steps to improve upon their service and hence narrow gap 5. Gap 7 helps to evaluate the internal situation that is, if managers believed they were doing a good job in meeting tourist's expectations. The conclusion drawn was though managers in the hotel industry understand quite well what tourist expect, they are unable to put resources and systems in place to meet tourist expectation. Therefore, identifying these gaps can provide management with a clear direction on how to address service quality shortfalls in the hotel industry in the Volta Region of Ghana.

## References

- Brown, S & Swartz, T 1989, 'A gap analysis of professional service quality', *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 53, no.8, pp.2-8.
- Brown, C, Varley, P, & Pal, J, 2009, 'University course selection and services marketing', *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, vol. 27, no.3, pp.310-325.

## Appaw-Agbola & AfenyoDehlor

- Carina, A 2000, 'Operational Management and Practice-Hotels in Ghana's Central Region', *Proceedings of the second annual meeting of Social Science Researchers*, Cape-Coast, pp.10-14.
- Cronin, J & Taylor, S, 1992, 'Measuring service quality: a re-examination and extension', *Journal of Marketing*, vol.56,no.3, pp.55-68.
- Cronin, J& Taylor, S, 1994, 'SERVPERF versus SERVQUAL: Reconciling performance-based and perceptions-minus-expectations measurement of service quality', *Journal of Marketing*, vol.58,no.1,pp.125-131.
- Carman, J M1990, 'Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality: An Assessment of the SERVQUAL Dimensions', *Journal of Retailing*, vol.66,no.1,pp. 33-55
- Dehlor, S A, 2004, 'Need Assessment of the Hotel Industry in the Volta Region,paper presented to the social sciences researcher,Ghana,20-24 July.
- Fick, GR,& Ritchie,JRB 1991, 'Measuring service quality in the travel and tourism industry', *Journal of Travel Research*, vol.30, no. 2, pp.2-9.
- Ghana Tourist Board, Leisure and Tourism-Ghana Profile.viewed 20 May 2009, <<http://.uktrdeinvest.gov.uk/text/recreation/ghna2/profile/characteristics.shtml>>.
- Israel,G2003, 'Determining sample size',viewed 20 May 2009 <<http://www.edis.ifas.ufl.edu>>.
- Jain, SK. & Gupta, G, 2004, 'Measuring Service Quality: SERVQUAL vs. SERVPERF Scales', *The Journal for Decision Makers*, vol.29, no.2, pp.25-37.
- LeBlanc, G 1992, 'Factors affecting customer evaluation of service quality in travel agencies: an investigation of customer perceptions', *Journal of Travel Research*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp.10-16.
- Lewis, RC 1987, 'The measurement gaps in the quality of hotel services', *International Journal Of Hospitality Management*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp.14-18.
- Nel, D 1993, 'Service quality in a retail environment: closing the gaps', *Journal of General Management*, vol. 3, no.4,pp.45-67.
- Nightingale,M 1986, 'Defining quality for a quality assurance program', *Hospitality Management* vol.2,no.12, pp.37-53.
- Parasurama, A, Zeithaml, VA, &Berry, LL 1988, 'A conceptual model of service quality and its implication for future research', *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 49, no.8, pp.41-50.
- Parasurama, A, Zenithal, VA,& Berry, LL 1988, 'SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality', *Journal of Retailing*, vol. 64, no.1, pp.28-40.
- Parasurama,A, Zeithaml, VA,& Berry,LL1991,'Understanding customer expectation of service', *Slogan Management Review*, vol. 32 no. 3, pp.39-48.
- Parasurama, A, Zeithaml, VA & Berry, LL 1990, *Delivering Quality Service Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations*, The Free Press, New York.
- Qing,LLJ 1993, 'Assessment of the hotel rating system in China', *Tourism Management*, vol.14,no.6,pp.40-52.
- Tisdell, CW 1991 'Foreign tourism as an element in PR China's economic development strategy', *Tourism Management*,vol.12,no.1,pp.55-67.
- Zeithaml, VA, Berry, LL,& Parasuraman, A, 1993, 'The nature and determinants of customer expectations of service'. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*,vol.21,no.1pp.1-12.