

Research on Impact of Guest Behavior on Hotel Service Quality

Yongting Wang

School of Tourism Management, Qiongzhou University, Sanya, 572022, China

Keywords: Guest Behavior. Hotel Service Quality. Impact

Abstract. This paper elaborates the characteristics and constitution of hotel service quality, pointing out that the characteristics of hotel's serving products determine that the guest behavior inevitably impact hotel serving products. However, in hotel service quality management practice and service quality management researches, people prefer to find problems from management and service in enterprises but neglect the impact of guest behavior on hotel service quality. In order to know the main factors that impact hotel service product quality more comprehensively, this paper analyzes guest behavior's impact on hotel service quality and puts forward corresponding countermeasure and suggestion which aim to avoid or reduce guest behavior's impact on hotel service quality.

Introduction

Because of the characteristics of hotel service products, guests inevitably participate in the whole productive process of service products directly. Guests are both the customers of hotel service products and participators of the producing activity of hotel service product. Their behavior will inevitably impact hotel service product quality. However, in hotel service quality management practice, people merely investigate the management problem of service quality from hotel enterprises, pay more attention to the impact of service staffs' operation quality and managers' monitoring effects on hotel service quality, and neglects the impact of guest behavior on hotel service quality. It causes the fact that impact of guest behavior isn't paid enough attention in hotel management practice. The omission of a main influence factor of hotel service quality has caused a blind angle in service quality management, which restrains the improvement of hotel service quality to a great extent. This paper analyzes the characteristics of hotel service and service quality constitution, and studies guest behavior's impact on hotel service quality in order to have more profound understanding of guest behavior's impact on hotel service quality.

Contents of hotel service quality

Contents of hotel service quality include quality of tangible products and intangible products. The specific contents are as follows:

Quality of tangible products

The quality of hotel's tangible products includes equipment quality, physical product quality like drinks, customer supplies, commodities, service products, etc and service environment built by ornament and staffs' appearance.

Quality of intangible products

The quality of intangible products includes the quality of service attitude, service skill, service efficiency, etiquette, professional ethics and service mode.

Each constitution element of hotel service quality runs throughout the whole process of hotel service. Service quality is the comprehensive representation of the quality of all elements and their combination effects. In modern hotel management, guests' evaluation of hotel service product quality mostly depends on the intangible service quality offered by hotels. Improvement of the quality of tangible equipment and ornament can be realized by investment in a short time, while factors like management level and staffs' comprehensive quality that constrain the improvement of intangible service quality can't be realized in way of investment in a short time. Therefore, among all

constitution elements of service quality, the quality of tangible products is the basis of hotel service product quality and the quality of intangible products is the key of hotel service quality.

Characteristics of hotel service quality

The essential characteristic of hotel service is to take people as service object and to provide face to face service. Hotel service also has its unique characteristics except for the basic characteristics of service class products. These characteristics are as follows:

Comprehensiveness of service quality constitution

According to the constitution of hotel service, hotel service quality consists of plenty of concrete tangible equipment and intangible service including the combination of various factors like equipment in hotel service places, ornament effects, favorable consumption environment and atmosphere, and intangible service of service stations and service support stations. These constitution contents form hotels' comprehensive service products through effective combination. They form an integration with interrelation, interdependency and mutual conditions. However, guests usually evaluate hotel service products according to the service quality of each item of service rather than whole service. Therefore, any existing problems of service items or service links in hotels' service products with comprehensive characteristics will cause undesirable impact on guests. Consequently, they will make negative evaluation on quality of whole comprehensive products.

Instantaneity of service quality

The characteristic that production and consumption are synchronous in hotel management determines the instantaneity of hotel service product quality. Productive process of service products is accompanied by guests' consumption process. The representation of service quality every time will disappear with the ending of guests' immediate consumption, and service effects have already left impression and impact on guests. Such characteristic sets higher requirement for hotel service quality management.

Dependence on quality of service providers

Hotel service product is a series of labour service that hotel service providers have offered for guests through tangible equipment. Therefore, hotel service product quality should cover not only favourable equipment but also high-level service and management which can't be separated with high-quality and high-capacity staffs. The comprehensive quality and ability of service providers determine the level of service and guests' evaluation of hotel service product quality.

Guests' participation in service production

Considering the characteristic that production and consumption are synchronous in hotel management, guests as customers of hotels inevitably participate in whole productive process of hotel service products when consuming hotel service products. Their behaviors in consumption process also invisibly become components of hotel service products. Therefore, hotel service product quality is inevitably influenced by guest behavior, which increases the difficulty of controlling hotel service product quality.

Impact analysis of guest behavior on hotel service quality

Although guest behavior's impact on hotel service quality is not as direct as employees and frequency of negative events is not high, it can't be denied that reduction of hotel service quality caused by guest behavior impacts guests' evaluation of hotel products' overall quality to a great extent. Therefore, guest behavior's impact on hotel service quality can't be ignored. In actual hotel management, only those, who have enough understanding and attention of guest behavior's impact on hotel service quality, are able to take decisive measures to guide and control when facing such kind of guest behaviors. Then the negative impact on hotel service quality can be avoided or reduced. Guest behavior with negative impact on hotel service quality has diversified expression forms which can be concluded as follows:

Guests' unconscious behavior misleads service staffs

Guests' requirement for service and whether they are satisfied with service accepted or not are usually embodied by their behavior and facial expression. Service staffs always judge guests' service requirements on basis of their behavior and facial expression, and offer corresponding service in accordance with judging results. They strive to make service convenient and guests satisfied. However, guests' behaviors are not all conscious and reflecting their inner requirements. For example, drunken guests may frequently ask waiters to serve drinks and dishes, but then blame the waiters for serving too much when they sober up. So guests' unconscious behavior may mislead service staffs to make wrong judgment and offer improper service. Such kind of improper service behavior may cause guests' unpleasant even dissatisfaction and become an important factor of guests' evaluation of service quality.

Misunderstanding caused by guests' service requirement information

For reasons of various language expression habits and cultural differences, misunderstanding caused by guests' service requirement information happens occasionally. Such kind of information makes service providers unable to correctly grasp guests' true service requirements. For example, in most countries and regions all over the world, nodding head means "Yes" and shaking head means "No". On the contrary, nodding head "No" and shaking head means "Yes" in Bulgaria. If service staffs ask Bulgarian guests if they need certain kind of service, the differences of cultural habit may cause service misunderstanding and guests' dissatisfaction. One can imagine how the effects of service will be without understanding of guests' actual demands. Service that can't meet guests' requirements will definitely give rise to guests' unpleasant and even dissatisfaction, which to a great extent influenced their evaluation of hotel service quality.

Service staffs' mental stress caused by guests' excessive requirements of service

Service requirements have certain differences because of various guest individualities. Some guests' service requirements even reach excessive degree. For example, guests with special propensity always raise requirements higher than that of hotel service normal, which sometimes can't even be understood and accepted by normal people. Once service is not as good as expected, they will show extreme dissatisfaction. The excessive service requirements undoubtedly cause heavy mental stress on service staffs especially on condition that service staffs have rather limited information of service targets. Heavy mental stress caused by guests' excessive requirements of service disturbs service staffs' habitual thinking to a great extent and increases the possibility of service misoperation. However, guests' dissatisfaction caused by service misoperation will further increase service staffs' mental stress. Finally the possibility of service misoperation will be even higher.

Countermeasures and suggestions for guest behavior that impacts hotel service quality

Aiming at several kinds of main guest behaviors that impact hotel service quality, we can take the following measures to avoid or reduce its impact on hotel service quality.

Strengthening training education and improving staffs' ability and quality

Nowadays when guests' service requirements become diversified and personalized, the change of guests' requirement sets higher demands for hotel service staffs' quality and ability. Guests' requirements are extremely diversified and complicated because of different individualities, and some guests' service requirements are even excessive. Such kind of guests will to a great extent result in heavy mental stress on service staffs. If service staffs aren't equipped with adept service skills, rich service experience and good psychological quality, they will feel extremely nervous and are very likely to cause service fault when offering service for these guests. Therefore, it is essential to improve staffs' psychological quality and business ability. As the saying goes, the skilled are bold. As for staff training, every staff must grasp necessary service skills and constantly improve their ability of dealing with all kinds of special service requirements in ways of teaching or exchanging service experience. Finally, their service ability and self-confidence can be reinforced.

Building excellent enterprise culture and strengthening staffs' sense of responsibility and service

Enterprise culture is one of the critical factors of enterprise success. Excellent enterprise culture is able to enhance enterprise's cohesive force, strengthen staffs' sense of belonging and master, stimulate staffs' working enthusiasm, and make staffs work positively. As for hotel enterprises, favorable enterprise culture will strengthen staffs' sense of master, sense of responsibility and service awareness. Only staffs with relatively strong service awareness can offer service for guests consciously, initiatively, and attentively. Only staffs with strong sense of responsibility can proceed from the whole situation and insist patient and careful service all along when facing guests' excessive and unreasonable service requirements. They are unlikely to show emotion out of control, result in guests' dissatisfaction, further intensify the conflicts and impact hotels' fame when they are faced with guests' excessive service requirements and uncivilized behaviors.

Making use of modern information technology and strengthening guests' archives management

Using modern information technology to conduct guests' archives management has following realistic effects:

Firstly, it is favorable to grasp guests' individualized requirements more comprehensively. Secondly, it is beneficial to realize sharing information resource of guests' service requirements, and improve reaction speed and pertinence of offering service. Thirdly, it is good for hotels to accumulate more personalized service cases. In addition, it provides rich materials for following staff retraining, makes training with better feasibility and pertinence, strengths training effect and improve staffs' service ability and level.

Conclusion

Hotel service quality management is an everlasting topic of hotel management and also one of the hardest problems of hotel managers. There are numerous factors that will impact hotel service quality. If someone wants to manage hotel service quality effectively, he should fully understand the characteristics of hotel service product quality, systematically analyze each link of hotel service product production, and grasp critical factors of hotel service quality as much as possible. Only in this way can the work of service quality management have explicit orientation, can measures have better pertinence, and can targeted management be realized without blind angle. In addition, hotels' service quality management can finally achieve expected effects and realize overall improvement of hotel service quality level.

Acknowledgments

This study is subsidized by key support discipline tourism management project of Qiongzhou University in Hainan Province (Project number:[2010]80)

References

- [1] Ma Yong: Introduction to Hotel Management, Tsinghua University Press, 2009(2)
- [2] Zhang Limin, Wang Suzhen: Introduction to Hotel Management, Peking University Press, 2010 (2)