

Abstract

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY and PILGRIM SATISFACTION: An Application of SERVQUAL on the Two Holy Mosques

This study seeks to draw upon and relate to Service Quality research in a new area of Service Marketing literature. In specific terms, the current research is undertaken to strengthen understanding of the Service Quality construct through the application of a specific instrument, SERVQUAL, to a Selected Religious Tourism sector Service Quality provided at the Two Holy Mosques. Assessing Perceived Service Quality and better understanding how the various SERVQUAL dimensions relate to Pilgrim Satisfaction may be used to review the characteristics of services provided as experienced by pilgrims, and thereby, identify the strengths and weaknesses pertaining to dimensions of Service Quality. This would enable Hajj authorities to efficiently allocate resources and provide ultimately better services to pilgrims. A research like this is essential in assessing and improving service delivery and design, as it would provide valuable insights and creative ideas for quality management, which would enable Hajj authorities to monitor and maintain the quality of services provided at the Two Holy Mosques. The SERVQUAL instrument is a multiple-item scale designed to measure consumers' Perceived Service Quality within a wide range of service categories. It has received considerable recognition in the general Service Marketing literature, as a result of the pioneering work of its authors. However, extension of the scale to services provided at the Two Holy Mosques, and refinement of the instrument based on this application has been lacking. Accordingly, the present research is undertaken to examine both the application of the scale, and its managerial implications for the Two Holy Mosques. The service attributes within each Service Quality dimension of the SERVQUAL instrument showed evidence of strong internal consistency. Meanwhile, results of the regression analysis indicated that Perceived Service Quality (Service Quality as measured by the multi-item SERVQUAL scale) and each of its five Service Quality dimensions (Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, & Empathy) have a positive and strong effect on Pilgrim Satisfaction, and explain a great deal of the variation in it, which is also confirmed by the relatively significant effect of Overall Service Quality (Service Quality as measured by a single-item scale) on Pilgrim Satisfaction. The study findings regarding Pilgrims' Perceived Service Quality of the Two Holy Mosques, as well as, those pertaining to Pilgrims' Satisfaction are used by the researcher in comparing between Service Quality dimensions, as well as, between service attributes. The findings are also used by the researcher in identifying service attributes that are effectively provided, as well as, service attributes that need improvement and prioritization. Moreover, concerns regarding the applicability of the SERVQUAL scale and its limitations are discussed. And, finally, other areas requiring attention within the Service Quality domain are suggested.