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DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

“ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE QUALITY AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: THE CASE OF FIVE STAR HOTELS IN ETHIOPIA”

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partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of
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Organizational Excellence.

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Assessment of Service Quality and Employee Engagement: The Case of
five star hotels in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that, this study “Assessment of Service Quality and Employee Engagement: The case of five star hotels in Ethiopia” is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of materials used for the study have been duly acknowledged.

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ACRONYMS

WOM	word of mouth
eWOM	electronic word of mouth
SR	service recovery
IDI	In-Depth interview
SQ	service quality

ABSTRACT

The Hotel industry has been growing fast in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in the past years. This is attributed to the fast economic growth and associated matters relate to conference tourism, increased flow of tourism and globalization. There are growing concerns about quality of services provided by 5 star hotels. Hence, the main objective of this research is to explore quality of service provided by 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa and to assess the relationship between employee engagement and improvement in quality of service and employee satisfaction. The research design of this study is qualitative exploratory research design. All of the seven 5 star Hotels found in Addis Ababa were included in the study. As two of the hotels were not willing to participate in the study, primary data was collected from five of the hotels. To complement this, information from the tripadvisor website was utilized. Primary data was collected from in-depth interview conducted with 15 interviewees. The findings of this study revealed that the quality of service provided by most of the 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa is generally good. Inconsistent and low speed internet service and lack of adequate parking area are the two major problems of the 5 star hotels. In addition, low quality complimentary breakfast and limitations with regard to providing correct and comprehensive information are also problems. Employees generally participate in providing feedbacks that help to improve quality of service to their supervisors but decisions are mainly made by higher level managers. Positive relationship is observed between employee engagement and improvements in quality of service and satisfaction of employees is identified. Addressing the problem of internet connectivity, shortage of parking space, and quality of complementary breakfast need to be improved to enhance quality of services provided by 5 star hotels. Engaging employees at different levels is also necessary to enhance employees' satisfaction and service quality.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The world is in a time when a new economic paradigm characterized by speed, innovation, short cycle times, quality, and customer satisfaction is highlighting the importance of intangible assets particularly an engaged human capital. This rapidly changing business environment is increasingly forcing organizations to look for obtaining an engaged work force as unique source to build a sustainable competitive advantage and fulfill their vision. Thus, having an engaged human resource is deemed to be the most important source of giving excellent service which will result in competition to win in the market. (Siyum, 2015)

Satisfaction is an immediate response to consumption, while service quality is interpreted as the overall impression of a customer's judgment concerning service provision. Service quality is influenced by expected service and perceived service. If services are received as expected, the service quality is satisfactory, but if the services received exceed their expectations, customers will be delighted, and will perceive service quality as excellent and vice versa (Hussain, 2015, P 168)

Service excellence cannot be achieved in the short-term, nor can you ever truly say that we have 'achieved' excellence because it's a journey not a destination; the quest for excellence will mean that we are constantly pushing the bar to get even better at what we do. This journey clearly requires a great deal of commitment on our behalf, but also from those who work with and for us. That is probably the real challenge in seeking to strive for service excellence: how can you get all our employees to really care, to really want to go that extra mile, to really believe in what we are trying to achieve? (Ireland, 2013)

Service quality is an important determinant of success in attracting repeat business for a hotel. While the reasons for the initial visit to a hotel may be due to factors partly outside the control of

management, the ability to create a satisfactory experience for the guest will rest to a considerable degree within the hands of both management and hotel staff .(Saleh, 1991)

Competition among hotels to attract and retain customers is intense and customers may be less likely to return to a hotel if the property fails to meet its customers' expectations relative to service quality, regardless its price-point. Evidence suggests that service quality is related to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. (Heskett *et al.* (1997) have proposed that meeting customer expectations relative to service quality has a direct relationship with the profitability of a service firm. Because service quality drives customer satisfaction and satisfied customers are more likely to be retained as loyal customers of a firm, good service quality positively impacts profitability by increasing the customer-base of a firm, allowing a firm to charge premium prices for their service products, and because of increased employee retention and productivity – a concept referred to as the service-profit chain. (Rauch, 2015)

Employees' level of engagement directly affects the quality of service provided by the Organization. Therefore, highly engaged employees are beneficial to an organization. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. Employee engagement is vital to public administration. When workers are engaged, they positively commit to their organization, willingly make changes, trust their organization, and aspire to achieve improvements within the organization. They become more profitable, more customer focused, safer, and more likely to withstand temptations to leave the organization. The results of engagement include improved productivity, a reduction in turnover, and amplified customer focus. The world's top-performing organizations understand that employee engagement is a force that drives business outcomes. (Markwick, 2009)

Much research in the public and private sectors has demonstrated that workforce engagement is significantly correlated with several positive organizational outcomes including the following:

- Higher productivity
- Increased profitability
- Lower levels of sick leave use
- Fewer complaints of unfair treatment
- Less work time missed due to workplace injury or illness
- Lower levels of attrition
- Higher levels of customer satisfaction

There is a general belief that there is a connection between employee engagement and business results; a meta-analysis conducted by Harter et al (2002, p. 272) confirms this connection. They concluded that “...employee satisfaction and engagement are related to meaningful business outcomes at a magnitude that is important to many organizations”. However, engagement is an individual-level construct and if it does lead to business results, it must first impact individual-level outcomes. Therefore, there is reason to expect employee engagement is related to individuals’ attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. It is proposed that high levels of engagement lead to both positive outcomes for individuals, (e.g. quality of people’s work and their own experiences of doing that work), as well as positive organizational-level outcomes (e.g. the growth and productivity of organizations). (Zajkoska, 2012)

High organizational performance is greatly facilitated when employees at all levels, including managers, are engaged. Employees who are not engaged do not commit the attention and effort required to perform at their best. Two employees, one engaged and one disengaged, with similar competencies and experience will typically contribute to their organization at very different levels: the engaged employee will invest discretionary effort in the work to do the best job possible, while the disengaged employee will do the minimum (Marrelli, 2011).

Effective communication is an integral part of a well-constructed strategy for driving employee engagement. Human resource implications of the current business downturn entail acute communication risks and opportunities. From a risk perspective, poor or no communication about the effect of disappointing business results on employee benefits, retirement plans, training, or other components of Total Rewards can lead managers and employees to fill the communication vacuum with inaccurate and/or inconsistent information. (Zajkoska, 2012)

The aim of this study is to investigate quality of service provided by Ethiopian 5 star hotels and also to explore the level of employee engagement that managers use in decision making and idea generation which is expected to result in high customer satisfaction and loyalty.

1.2 Problem Statement/Research Gap

To achieve a set of organizational goals and objectives, companies conceptualize, design and implement various strategies.

A hotel that is able to compete successfully in its industry through the creation of a sustainable competitive advantage for its service offering, and positioning its service offering successfully in relation to its competitors throughout the life cycle of that offering, will eventually retain customers. In addition to properly manage demands that meet customer satisfaction, a hotel needs to administer its capacity or ability to supply the demand made by its customers. Human resource development is also another issue needed to be implemented on the process. Capacitating and delivering training to the staff is one concern but also retaining and engaging the trained staff is also another concern. Service organizations should train and retain the skilled staff as one of the strategies of bringing the organization to the top level in its industry and making better profit. If not the rate of turn over becomes higher and the employees automatically leave their hotel when they get promotion and salary increment in another hotel. Hotels should attract the trained/ skilled workers with better working conditions to avoid brain drain which is a problem observed in other sectors too. (Molla, 2015)

Employees who have a strong faith in the values and beliefs of an organization and readily accept its goals and objectives and are ready to exert extra effort for or on behalf of the organization are considered to have a very high level of organizational commitment. This suggests that those who are strongly affiliated to an organization with a higher level of commitment can be motivated to achieve organizational goals without looking for an opportunity for personal gain. (Dhar, 2015)

The philosophy behind service quality has gained importance in recent years and thus it has become the focus of many conceptual and empirical researches. The studies undertaken so far; however, have primarily much more focused on service quality and customer satisfaction. This study focuses on the in depth understanding of the relationship between service quality and employee engagement in the context of the developing countries in the case of 5 star hotels operating in Addis Ababa. (Hailekiros, 2013)

Addis Ababa is experiencing the opening on average of one hotel per month, according to the data from AHA (2014) the existing sector is marked by four fundamental problems that need a thorough fix: unmet demand, poor hospitality, unpractical building technicalities and an exaggerated price.

Today Addis Ababa is home to numerous UN offices, countless international companies and NGOs. The city is also a residence for a lot of diplomatic missions accredited to the government in Ethiopia, the UNECA, and, of course, the African Union (AU), which is headquartered in Addis Ababa. These offices are the reasons for the visit of some foreigners who usually come for meetings and different kinds of work related matters. These people will get the chance to judge the hotel industry in Addis Ababa. The city is also entry to hundreds of thousands of international inbound, outbound and transit tourists and passengers. (Kebede, 2014)

The term “employee engagement” means different things to different organizations. Some equate it with job satisfaction which unfortunately can reflect a transactional relationship that is only as good as the organization’s last round of perks or bonuses. Others measure engagement by gauging employees’ emotional commitment to their organization. Although commitment is an important ingredient, it is only a piece of the engagement equation. (Zajkowska 2012) P 104

One way for individuals to repay their organization is through their level of engagement. That is, employees will choose to engage themselves to varying degrees and in response to the resources they receive from their organization. Bringing oneself more fully into one's work roles and devoting greater amounts of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources is a very profound way for individuals to respond to an organization's actions. It is more difficult for employees to vary their levels of job performance given that performance is often evaluated and used as the basis for compensation and other administrative decisions. Thus, employees are more likely to exchange their engagement for resources and benefits provided by their organization. (Alan M. Saks 2006)

Five Star Hotels in Addis Ababa deliver all their efforts to provide the best possible and high quality services to their customers but very often they still fall short of meeting the customers' expectations because the customers have become more aware of their requirements and demand higher standards of services. So the young generation should also participate in the improvement of quality service and be aware of the relationship of employee engagement with providing the better service as it is the best growing sector of all. (Molla, 2015)

The motivation for studying employee engagement in Hotel Industry of Addis Ababa is to investigate its contribution to the service quality in the hotels. And assess the challenges that the hotels are facing in making effort to improve organizational performance through employee engagement so as to put some possible recommendation to overcome the problems.

1.3 Research Questions

This research is designed to answer the following questions among 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa:

1. How is the overall service quality?
2. How involved are frontline employees in improving service quality and customer satisfaction?
3. How does employee engagement help to improve service quality and employee satisfaction?
4. What is the level of effort being made towards improving quality of service?
5. What are the perceptions of customers about the quality of service?
6. What are the major bottlenecks to deliver quality service?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of this research is to explore quality of service provided by 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa and assess the correlation between employee engagement and improvement in quality of service and employee satisfaction.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

Specifically, the objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the status of service quality in 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa.
2. Assess how 5 star hotels involve their frontline employees in decision making and idea generation to improve quality of services.
3. Explore how employee engagement helps to improve service quality and customer satisfaction
4. To assess the level of effort made by managers try to improve the quality of service.
5. Assess the perceptions of customers on quality of services provided by 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa.
6. To identify the obstacles that the management of the hotels face.

1.5 Scope of the study

The overall scope of this study is to explore the quality of services provided by 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa. As Ethiopia's economy has been growing fast in the past years this has created opportunities for the hotel industry to grow as many people travel for investment, trade, conferences, and other reasons. On the other hand, as Addis Ababa hosts the African Union and other international organizations, many more people travel for different reasons. In the past few years the number of 5 start hotels has grown from just one to about seven. Although the number of Hotels has grown there are concerns about the quality of service provided by these hotels. Part of the reason for the sub-optimal quality services could be lack of sufficient involvement of frontline workers who have the direct interactions with customers in the quality improvement process. Hence, this study is expected to come-up with findings about the levels of quality of services including recommendations that will help to improve quality.

1.6 Limitation of the study

There were different bottlenecks that hamper the smooth flow of the research. This required the researcher to show extraordinary patience and commitment that put its own negative impact to accomplish the research as needed.

Some hotels didn't allow interviewing their customers as they said this will invade customer privacy. In addition, it was very difficult to get the support of managers and supervisors of the hotels to be interviewed and to allow their employees to be interviewed. To complement this challenge, feedbacks given by customers on the tripadvisor website was incorporated.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study will benefit hotel managers, employees and customers through providing clear information concerning the services rendered by Ethiopian 5 star hotels and the trend of employee involvement on idea generation and decision making for the success of these hotels. It will have a practical importance on consolidating the understanding and relationship of hotel service quality and employee engagement for managers and owners towards bringing a sustainable competitive

advantage and improved service giving strategy to the Five Star Hotel management in Addis Ababa.

It recommends some basic and valuable inputs in the existing and practical experiences of these hotels. It can serve as an important data for the newly opening Five Star Hotels to obtain improved competitive advantages and will help them enter easily into the market.

It also provides possible recommendations to the hotels on how to take action to enhance its employee's engagement. And help the hotel management identify areas that need attention to meet and exceed customer expectations. It would also help managers on how to improve the quality of service which results in getting more loyal customers.

It can be used as an input for development of policies in the tourism sector. Moreover, it will serve as a stepping stone for those who are interested to conduct advanced research works in the same field.

1.8 Key Terms/Definitions of this Study

Hotel: A hotel refers to the commercial establishment of providing lodging and meals and other guest services in general to customers. In Ethiopia to be called a hotel an establishment must have a minimum of 10 bedrooms, at least each of which must have clean private bathroom facilities. (Molla 2015)

Service Quality; an author defines service as “any intangible act or performance that one party offers to another that does not result in the ownership of anything” (Kotler& Keller, 2009: 789)

Employee Engagement: “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.” (Zajkowska 2012)

Reliability: - The ability to perform the service dependably, consistently and accurately.

Responsiveness: - The willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. **Assurance:** - The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.

Tangibles: - The physical evidence of service including physical facilities, appearance of personnel, tools, and equipment used to provide the service.

Empathy: - Caring, individualized attention to its customers.

1.9 Organization of the study

This study is organized in to five chapters. Accordingly, the first chapter commences with the introduction part; the second chapter discusses the related literature of the study; the third chapter focus on research methodology and the fourth chapter discusses data presentation and analysis and finally chapter five stipulates conclusion based on analysis and possible recommendation by the researcher based on investigation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Quality

Quality is a dynamic state associated with product, services, people, processes, and environments that meet Customer needs and expectations and help produce superior value. Total quality is an approach to doing business that attempts to maximize an organization's competitiveness through the continual improvement of the quality of its products, services, people, processes, and environments. (David Goetsch, 2010)

2.2 Service Quality

Parasuraman et al. (1985) described service quality as the ability of the organization to meet or exceed customer expectations. Customer expectations that may be defined as the “desires and wants of consumers”, i.e., what they feel a service provider should offer rather than would offer. Definitions of service quality, therefore, focus on meeting the customers' needs and requirements and how well the service delivered matches the customers' expectations of it. Moreover, Parasuraman et al. (1988) offer the most widely reported set of service quality dimensions. They suggest that the criteria used by consumers that are important in molding their expectations and perceptions of delivered service performance known as SERVQUAL: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988)

Services are taking on an increasing importance both domestically and internationally. In today's changing global environment, many businesses are facing intensifying completion, and in order to achieve competitive advantage and efficiency, businesses have to seek profitable ways to differentiate themselves. One strategy that has been related to success is the delivery of high service quality, especially during times of intensive competition in the domestic and international markets concurs that service has increasingly played a critical role in a hotel's operations. This concept has been the subject of many conceptual and empirical studies, and it is generally accepted that quality has positive implications for an organization's performance and competitive position. (Nida, 2018)

2.3 Relationship Quality

Relationship quality is widely recognized as both a key to developing loyal customers and an important predictor of a customer's post purchase behavior (Morgan & Hunt 1994). Whereas service quality is an overall evaluation of firm's performance, relationship quality is a strategic orientation that focuses on improving customer relationship.

2.4 Measuring service quality

The basic characteristics of service, namely variability, inseparability and perishability have caused some difficulties for academics and practitioners with regards to measuring service quality. In particular, decisively determining the criteria which will be used for the service quality evaluation process is not very easy because of the complicated structures. In spite of those difficulties, true quality cannot be developed unless it is measured, thus emphasizing the importance of service quality measurement. Only service providers who know how consumers evaluate the service will also know how to lead these evaluations in the desired direction. In addition, basing user experiences related to a service and distinguishing service differentiation criteria on this ground is another important reason to realize the measurement process. However, service marketers understand the need to define the perceptions of service quality correctly when using it for a competitive advantage (Malhotra et al., 2005).

2.5 Developing Service Improvement Strategy in the organization

A firm can improve the quality of its services by developing the service improvement strategy in the organization which requires several steps and measures to trigger improvements in the internal environment. Some steps are explained for managers through which company can improve the service quality. (Qadeer, 2013)

The following are some of the steps from Leonard, Parasuraman & Zeithmal (1994)

2.5.1 Listening

Generally, quality is defined by the customers and it should be improved according to customer specifications not the company. Listening, understanding and spending wisely on customer's expectations and perceptions can bring improvements in the services of the company as the way customers required and expect. The most common mistake in service improvement that companies

do is to spend money in a way that does not improve the services at all. Research shows that company's strengths and weaknesses from service perspective are better explained by those who have experienced it. In order to improve the service, companies should install an ongoing research system that provides timely and relevant data. Also there is a need to develop service quality information system in the company. The service quality information system basically provides the following information.

- Identify Dissatisfied Customers & frequent service failure causes
- Collect customer feedback on continuous basis
- Create customer forums to get ideas of further improvements
- Improve internal service quality by focusing on employee issues and concerns
- Improve customer services by measuring individual employee behavior to use in trainings, performance evaluations and rewards
- Analyze the company's service performance compared with competitors to identify strengths and weaknesses.

2.5.2 Reliable Service

Research reveals that among these five dimensions Reliability is the most important one to judge the quality of the service. When firms are failed to deliver the promise and make frequent mistakes in service delivery, customer loses its confidence on the firm's ability to provide timely and accurate service at the first end.

2.5.3 Service Design

Reliability in service delivery as expected by the customers depends on how the various elements in the service system work well together. These elements include people who perform the service, equipment that required performing the particular service and the physical environment in which service is actually performed or delivered. Flaws in any part of this service system affect the quality level. Usually people who are delivering the services are blamed for poor quality however the real problem lies in the service system design. Service mapping is considered a way to improve the quality of services. Service mapping is the pattern of performances that makes a service system design.

2.5.4 Service Recovery

When a customer face a service problem, either service firms makes things better with the customer or make it worse sometimes. Three things happen when a customer experience any problem, they remain dissatisfied and do not voice their complaints, they complain and become satisfied or become dissatisfied if company does not response well.

Generally customers are reluctant to complain and company should take following steps in such situations,

- Encourage customers to voice their complaints and make it easy for them by providing free numbers or comment cards.
- Problem resolution system needs to be developed very effectively in the service firms.
- Response quickly to customer complaints because quick response makes a customer feel that company is concerned about his/her interests.

2.5.5 Surprise Customers

Customers evaluate the service dimension during the delivery process and it is very difficult to go beyond customer's expectations by providing the reliable services only. Therefore managers must consider the "WOW" factor in their service offerings. To go beyond expectations and delight the customer demands, firms should offer some surprising elements in their service offerings like grace, courtesy, uncommon swiftness, understanding and commitment.

2.5.6 Fair Play

The customer expectation lies under the concept of fairness. As customers expect from the service providers to treat them fairly, fulfil the promises made and be trustworthy. Mainly customer's expect companies to provide quick services(responsiveness), to offer comfortable service facilities and communication channels (Tangibles), to fulfil the commitments (Reliability) to offer personal attention and polite dealing (Empathy) and should provide considerable and competent services(Assurance). Also should provide the guarantee demonstrate fairness towards service offerings. It gives the customer a right to evoke the service and charge the compensation if he becomes dissatisfied.

2.5.7 Servant Leadership

Delivering high service quality demands an excellent leadership often known as “Servant Leadership”. These leaders believe in people capacity to view their own roles as standard of excellence and a direction to achieve their goals by providing necessary equipment, tools and proper freedom to achieve their tasks. These Leaders believe in investing people by listening to their concerns, providing those trainings, coaching, and teach them how to inspire and compete in order to boost company’s productivity and quality standards

Times are changing and so are our views on leadership behavior. In view of the current demand for more ethical, people-centered management, leadership inspired by the ideas from servant leadership theory may very well be what organizations need now. Concern about the society we live in has increasingly become a matter of company policy. It may be that paying attention to all stakeholders is the key to long-term profits. At present, innovation and employee well-being are given high priority and so leadership that is rooted in ethical and caring behavior becomes of great importance. In the relatively new field of positive organizational behavior, leadership recently has been suggested as a key factor for engaged employees and flourishing organizations. (Dierendonck, 2011)

2.6 The critical role of employees in service delivery

The interactive nature of service delivery places service employees in a very critical role in the delivery of quality services. Studies even assert that employees are the “service”, “the organization” and “the marketers”. Given the metaphor of services as “performances” or “drama”, in which an employee acts, emotions and attitudes affect the quality of the service and the employees’ critical role cannot be over emphasized. Previous studies on service encounters also show that events which delight customers most and which are associated with high perceived quality are related to the extra behavioral efforts of service personnel. This is understandable because the extant literature on service quality indicates that most of the criteria by which customers evaluate the perceived quality of services, such as empathy, reliability, courtesy, assurance and even tangibility, are all associated with employee favorable behaviors and attitudes. These favorable behaviors which enhance a harmonious and quality internal service climate, as

well as customers' perceptions of service quality, have been described variously as service orientation customer orientation prosaically behaviors and performance quality. The importance of such behaviors to process quality and interactive quality has also been noted. (Gupta, 2016)

2.7 Employee Engagement

Engagement has become one of the most significant concepts in the management field in recent years (Crawford et al. 2014) yet, to date, there has been no systematic review that brings together and synthesizes the evidence-base relating to engagement. This is concerning in light of the fact that, within the practitioner community, engagement has caught the interest of policymakers and employers keen to find new ways of leveraging high levels of performance. It is largely consensual that the degree of autonomy workers have in their job and the extent to which they participate in relevant work-related decisions are key dimensions of job quality.

An engaged worker must positively commit to the organization. The employee must be willing to make changes, which require that he or she cares enough to change. The engaged worker possesses trust in his or her organization, especially that one's input and energy will not backfire. An engaged worker also is certain that his or her effort actually leads to positive results in the organization, which refers to as the possession of self-efficacy (Rank, Carston, Unger & Spector 2007). Finally, the worker aspires to achieve improvements within the organization, which also requires that he or she conceptualize the positive effects that can be achieved (Frese 2008).

2.8 How does an organization engage its employees?

Just as researchers study engagement from many perspectives, employee engagement is also influenced by numerous factors. Employee experiences are shaped by the organization with its mission, structure, policies, and ways of doing business, as well as the people who staff the organization. As Mayo determined, the work supervisor is very influential in shaping the worker's experience. Supervisor feedback helps employees understand the "effort-performance-reward" relationship and clarification of expectations (Gaudine & Saks 2001; Wright 2004).

Effective communication, trust, and a shared normative framework are important within an organization to foster employee engagement. Organization wide engagement is encouraged by “pushing power, information, knowledge and rewards to lower levels of the organization”. In a study which surveyed 186 supervisor subordinate relationships within one of America’s largest financial institutions, researchers found that workers were more engaged when they exhibited personal initiative, when 7 their jobs had adequate task complexity, and when supervisors led through participatory leadership (Rank, Carsten, Unger & Spector 2007).

Clear organizational expectations and goals are integral to successfully engaging employees and attaining desired results. For example, a study systematically coded, workplace focused, book-length ethnographies found clear indication that “The highest levels of cooperation, commitment, and citizenship depend both on organizational coherence and on supportive employment practices”. On a foundational level, organizations should establish a set of core values. This will enable employees to choose the values along with the organization at the initiation of their relationship. From these goals, administrators can develop strategic plans for the organization and managers can work with their staff in developing plans to achieve these goals. This process helps to align the organization and engage employees in taking ownership of the work (Selden, Ingraham & Jacobson 2001).

Clear goals will also support all parties to reference the core values when needed for appropriate problem solving. Job goals that are challenging, but perceived by the employee as attainable and worthwhile will have a motivating effect for employees. By providing a clear mission and expectations, an organization can offer more freedom to employees to do the work with individual style. This will further engage employees and yield better results for the organization (Brewer & Selden 2000).

An organization can shape employee characteristics (Posner & Schmidt 1996; Wright 2001) and as such, the organization should be thoughtful in ensuring this socialization happens purposefully and productively. Communicating organizational expectations during the time of hire, as well as orientation and socialization that reinforce the organization norms and expectations can encourage this socialization. Such measures will also help prevent employee disappointment resulting from

inaccurate expectations of their employer and job (Paul, Niehoff & Turnley 2000). Engaged employees are valuable to an organization, but it is important that the process in which an organization develops that engagement is done purposefully to ensure workers' enthusiasm is directed productively.

It is important to foster employee engagement by focusing on goal alignment, clearly communicating boundaries, emphasizing information sharing, and encouraging accountability. Service exchanges between worker and citizen require the worker to sense the right tone and medium for expressing a point and/or feeling and then to determine whether, when, and how to act on that analysis. To ignore this combination of analysis, affect, judgment, and communication, is to ignore the “social lube” that enables rapport, elicits desired responses, and ensures that interpersonal transactions are constructive. Excellence in people management cannot ignore affect. It has real human consequences and matters if people are to perform at their best. Emotional labor is an important component of many roles in the hospitality sector. Often times, front line employees must manage how they experience, control, and display their emotions. This is an essential skill in order to develop trust with their clients in order to be successful in their jobs (Newman, Guy & Mastracci 2009).

2.9 Factors driving Employee engagement

While there are factors related to the individual that determine the extent to which employees become engaged, there are also organizational related factors that drive engagement. Levels of engagement can be increased when there is a relationship between employee and manager. In other words, supportive workplace relationships are important drivers of engagement. Studies found that supportive management promotes psychological safety, in that when employees feel that the organization cares about their well-being they are likely to fulfill their obligations by becoming more engaged. The organization can create an environment through policies, procedures, and structures to encourage employee engagement. Through the policies and procedures, employees will have a clear sense of the organization's vision, mission, and values. Organizational policies and programs are likely to motivate employees to reciprocate higher levels of engagement. As such, organizations policies and practices should address employees' needs and concerns and demonstrate caring and supportive cultural environment (Saks 2015).

Through organizational policies, training and development plans can be promoted, employee achievements recognized, and flexible work arrangements implemented. According to Khan (1992), jobs that allow employees the opportunity to bring more of themselves into their work will help to keep them engaged. In addition to meaningful work, employees vary in their levels of engagement as a function of their perceptions of the rewards and recognition they receive from their role on the job. While a lack of reward and recognition can lead to burnout, adequate and appropriate benefits is important for engagement. It is vital for managers to understand the significance of social exchange for employee engagement. Although research on work engagement has shown to be positively related to job resources and outcomes such as satisfaction, organizational commitment, citizenship behavior, low turnover, and performance, little is known about the influence of organizational service orientation and customer service training on employee engagement. In HR Special Survey (2008) which was administered across a wide region of countries, it was stated that employees in higher positions in the organization show higher levels of engagement. However, in the tourism and hospitality industry frontline staffs occupying entry level positions play a major role in the success of the organization, highlighting the need for full engagement at work. For that reason, it is important to know the levels of engagement of frontline employees in relation to these organizational strategic practices. (Ram, 2011)

2.10 Characteristics of Engaged Employees

According to IES, 2003 an engaged employee has the following characteristics: ·

- Engaged employees have emotional attachment with their job as well as the organization.
- They have trust in the employers of the organization.
- Engaged employees are more committed towards their work as well as the organization.
- Create healthy working environment and respect other employees of the organization. ·
Cooperate with their colleagues to perform effectively.
- Engaged employees perform beyond the expectation of the employers.
- Perform their work in view of goals and objectives of the organization.
- Engaged employees make necessary change as per requirement and keep update with the knowledge in their field.

2.11 Results of Engaged employees

The results of engagement include improved productivity, a reduction in turn-over, and better customer focus. Organizations need engaged employees that are willing go beyond expectations in order to meet market pressures and run as efficiently as possible. When organizations and employees interests are aligned, employees “can be counted on to act more frequently in ways that are consistent with corporate objectives” which affects both productivity and client focus. Employee engagement and morale have been shown to have a direct relationship to customer satisfaction, particularly in the exchange of services. As engaged employees affect an organization’s bottom line (Macy & Schneider 2008) by reducing operational losses (absenteeism, turn-over, etc,) and increase profitability with more satisfied customers, they simultaneously improve the organization. In addition, engaged employees make better decisions and are more adept at problem-solving, which also leads to greater organizational efficiency (Paul, Niehoff & Turnley 2000).

As the organization improves, workers’ perception of their organization also improves, thereby causing their engagement with the company to increase. There are external factors that can affect the level of satisfaction for customers and workers. An individual’s characteristics such as, race, religion, gender, national origin, ability, health, education level, sexual orientation, and age can influence satisfaction. Other studies have found in the workplace, women are typically more satisfied than men, more tenured workers are more satisfied than their juniors, and whites are more satisfied than non-white individuals. Additionally, research has also suggested that workplaces with higher staffing levels and more highly educated workers result in higher levels of engagement. (Southard, 2010)

2.12 History of Hotel Industry in Ethiopia

History has proved that, the development of hotel industry is connected with travelling. Similarly, the development of hotels in Ethiopia is also associated with the increasing number of travelers both indigenous and foreigners. Developments in Ethiopia’s foreign relations, particularly during the reign of Menelik II had, relatively speaking, an impressive impact in the country, by implanting the seeds of modernization through the importation of European technology and institutions among

which “hotel” is one subject. Therefore its appearance is Communication Responsiveness Customer Satisfaction Tangibles Reliability Confidence 36 related with the opening of the society in to the western world. Development of modern hotels in Ethiopia traces back to the 19th century. Itegue Taitu hotel, which was built in 1898 (E.C.) at the center of the city (piazza), is the first hotel in Ethiopia. This hotel is currently half burned due to unspecified reasons and lacks original works of the past. Taitu Betul (1851-1918), an Ethiopian empress and the wife of emperor Menelik II, establish this hotel to provide guests a place to rest and dine. From this time up to the Derg regime, the country had owned for about 50 hotels at a national level and out of these only 19 hotels was to be star rated hotels, according to the report of Tourism Commission in 1994. Currently, with the emergence of new and modern hotels in the country, the number has grown considerably and there were 500 star rated hotels in Ethiopia. And out of these 116 hotels are found in Addis Ababa, 78 are star rated hotels in Addis Ababa out of these 7 of them are luxury or 5 star hotels. According to Ministry of culture and tourism (2010), out of these 5 star rated hotels, the international chain hotels are four in number. These are Marriot, Sheraton Addis, and Radisson Blue and Golden Tulip. (G/egziabher, 2015)

2.13 Service Quality in Hotel Industry

For hotel industry, service quality is an important consideration, so companies striving to attain maximum customer satisfaction by providing quality services. According to Min, H. and H. Min, 1996 service quality is the life blood for hotel industry and service quality is further linked with customer satisfaction, customer satisfaction is related with customer loyalty. Service quality is considered an evaluation between service prospect and what actually has been received. The survival of hotels in the current competitive environment where most hotels have quite similar luxurious physical facilities much depends on delivery of service quality aiming to result in customer delight. Pallet et al. (2003) suggests that quality has to be envisioned, initiated, planned, delivered, monitored and sustained. They propose that quality problems and key staff issues in hotels often can be solved with a common “People and Quality” strategy which involves placing customer needs in the heart of the whole process; seeking suggestions form staff; developing corporate quality and people philosophy; training and empowering staff; benchmarking and reviewing (Saleem & Raja, 2014)

2.13.1 Customer Satisfaction: Customer satisfaction is the internal feelings of every individual which may be satisfaction or dissatisfaction resulting from the assessment of services provided to an individual in context to customer's anticipation by an organization service provides are continuously trying to improve the service just to satisfy their customer because higher customer satisfaction leads towards customer loyalty. The most important concept of customer satisfaction is accepted all around the world is the expectancy disconfirmation theory. This theory was presented that satisfaction stage is the resultant of distinction between anticipated and supposed performance. Satisfaction will be encouraging when the actual level of services or products is better than the anticipated (positive disconfirmation), whereas (negative disconfirmation) when the product or services level is lower than expected. (Saleem, Raja 2014)

2.13.2 Customer Loyalty: “customer who repurchases from the same service provider whenever possible and who continues to recommend or maintains a positive attitude towards the service provider.” Julander et al., (1997) explained that customer loyalty has two magnitudes: the first one is behavioral and the other is attitudinal. The behavior loyalty means the customer is intend to repurchase the brand or services from the service provider over time, whereas, attitudinal loyalty means the customer intend to repurchase and also recommend others which is the good sign of customer loyalty (Saleem, Raja 2014).

2.13.3 Brand Image: The brand is one of the important assets of the customers through questionnaire. “Brand is reflected by the brand links held by in consumer memory”. In simple words brand image is basically what comes into the consumers mind when brand placed in front of him. Consequently, these associations are building up into the consumers mind from the direct experience of service they have, after those experiences they make conclusion by contrasting their previous experiences with the company and the set associations. There are many empirical evidences that proved customer loyalty and brand image have positive correlation with each other. Whereas, other researches proved positive contact on brand image by that service quality and customer satisfaction comprise positive relationship with brand image. Another study found that image is positively related with customer satisfaction and customer preference in luxury hotels. This showed that pleasing image leads towards customer preferences and customer satisfaction whereas, unpleasing image can lead towards customer dissatisfaction (Saleem, Raja 2014)

Nowadays the stock of hotels in Ethiopia has increased sharply over the last few years. While tourist accommodation is available as the major attraction, improvement as well as new construction is taking place, according to ministry of culture and tourism there are 140 hotels in Addis Ababa, 124 in Amhara, 5 in Afar, 13 in Benshangulgumuz, 19 in DireDawa, 16 in Gambela, 7 in Harar, 74 in Oromia, 14 in Somalia, 78 in Southern Nation Nationality and Peoples, and 38 in Tigray. (G/Egziabher, 2015)

2.14 Service Quality in Ethiopia

Nowadays, the business environment has become highly competitive and dynamic. Success in this situation demands firms to develop improved products and design appropriate marketing programs. Hotel industry in Ethiopia sooner or later will also face the challenges of globalization in terms of competition which demand improvements in services delivery and level of customer satisfaction. In the last decades, customer retention is not considered as important as in these days in our country, Ethiopia. Today, there is high competition in the market in almost every sector. Currently, business organizations are faced with competition both from local and international firms, because of globalization. The environment in which they are operating has been consistently undergoing changes. But most organizations are using marketing strategies that they have been using in the past with no modifications, especially in retaining customers and making them lifetime partners. Rethinking of their marketing strategy on customers' handling seems a long overdue activity of most Ethiopian hotels. (Urge, 2017)

2.15 Service quality in the tourism sector

Recently, the dominant position of the manufacturing sector has been overtaken due to the rise of the service sector. Accordingly, with its international identity, the tourism and accommodation industry stands among the biggest industries in the world. Tourism, which has become a supplementary component of lifestyle, is one of the primary players in the economic development of many countries (Poon and Low, 2005) and it is seen as an indispensable source for foreign currency inflow. (Dortyol, Varinli, Kitapci, 2013)

A hotel is a place that offers its facilities and services for sale. The services can vary from just one to various combinations that can all be thought of as a part of the total market concept of the hotel. Hotels should make use of Information Technology systems and networking for effective service delivery and customer focused services. Customers from outside the city need to book their hotels through the internet, thus the hotels also have to deliver E- Services for the sake of their customers' satisfaction and to make the reservation easier and accessible. (Molla, 2015)

2.16 How service quality can be improved in the organizations?

Providing excellent services require continuous improvements in the organizational culture, a culture in which people are challenged to give their best and are rewarded and recognized in the company to perform to their full potential.

2.17 Five star hotel quality standard

International standard of tourist hotel is high class hotel (from three to five-star level) where services like bedrooms, catering, conference halls and meeting rooms, multipurpose assembly hall, swimming pool, Spa (Hot Spring), gymnasium, sauna and massage, other sports facilities like tennis or squash court, mini-golf or badminton, bowling, table tennis and children playground, night club with dancing to live music or discotheque or cabaret etc. In this profile study a five star international tourist standard hotel is considered to provide local and international tourists and guests services like bedroom, catering (traditional and international), swimming pool, conference halls and meeting rooms, multipurpose assembly hall, gymnasium, Spa Service and laundry service. In Ethiopia, the Five Star Hotels are built on the basis of certain standards. These standards are shown in table-1 depicted below:

Category	Title	Indicative score expected from 5 star hotels
Exterior	Building Exterior	20
	Grounds & Gardens	15
	Parking Access Signage /Points of Entry	20
	Safety and Security	12

Subtotal of Exterior max points		70
Bed Rooms	Decoration	20
	Furniture	25
	Electronic Appliances	8
	Wardrobe/Hanging Spaces/ Clothes Hanger	3
	Curtains and window covering	15
	Flooring, Ceiling, Skirting & Cornices	15
	Bedding & Linen	20
	Form of Bedding	10
	Environmental Control	15
	Lighting/Power/Switches	20
	Mirrors	9
	Accessories	20
	Spaciousness and overall Impression	15
	Access Security	5
Subtotal Bedrooms max points		317
Bath Rooms	Type	20
	Flooring, Ceiling and Walls	15
	Fixtures and fittings	25
	Hand Basin and Toilet Areas	2
	Toweling	20
	Lighting	20
	Accessories	15
	Sub Total Bathrooms Max Points	168
	Decoration	15
	Furnishings and fittings	15
	Flooring, ceiling and skirting	15
	Lighting	20
	Atmosphere and Ambience	15
	Guest Services	5

	Escalators/Lifts (Applies to all premises of 3 floors or more)	50
	Additional Services	20
	Sub Total Public Areas Max points	200
Public Areas	Decoration	15
	Furnishings and fittings	15
	Flooring ceiling and skirting	15
	Lighting	20
	Atmosphere and ambience	15
	Guest Services	50
	Escalators, lifts	50
	Additional services	20
	Sub Total Public Areas Max Points	200
Bar & Dinning Facilities	Decoration	15
	Furnishings	20
	Flooring, ceiling Skirting and cornice	15
	Lighting	15
	Table Appointments	15
	Atmosphere and ambience	15
	Dinner Presentation	30
	Dinner Quality	50
	Breakfast	15
	Bar	25
	Additional Points	15
	Sub Total Bar and Dining Facilities Max points	285
Kitchen	Design Layout	100 or Excellent

	Sub Total Kitchen	100
House Keeping & Maintenance	Scheduling	20
	Material and Equipment storage	20
	Bedrooms	15
	Guest bathrooms	15
	Public areas	15
	Public Toilets	10
	Bar, restaurant, dining areas	20
	Maintenance	50
	Subtotal Housekeeping Maximum Points	165
General Services	Welcome Friendliness and attitude	20
	Appearance of Staff	15
	Reservation and Check-in	20
	Porter age	15
	Room Service	15
	Laundry Services	7
	Meal Service	20
	Check-out Efficiency	15
	Tourist Information	15
	Communication and Business Facilities	10
	Sub Total General Services Max Points	305
House Keeping & Maintenance	Bedrooms	15
	Guest Bathrooms	15
	Public Areas	15
	Public Toilets	10
	Bar/Restaurant/Dining Areas	20
	Maintenance	50
	Sub Total Housekeeping Max points	165
Addit ional Facili ties	Business, conference	25
	Leisure	20

	General	25
	Subtotal Additional Facilities Max Points	90
Sustainab ility	Waste	40
	Energy	15
	Business practices	15
	Subtotal Sustainability Max Points	80
Safety & Security	Entry security	30
	Fire safety	30
	Medical, first aid	50
	Subtotal security and safety Max points	110
Staff Facilities & training	Qualifications & training	20
	Work conditions, staff facilities	20
	Subtotal staff facilities and training max points	160

Grade	%
<i>5 star Grand Luxe</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>5 star</i>	<i>80</i>
4 star	70
3 star	60
2 star	50
1 star	30

There are five quality star grades awarded for the standard of facilities and services

★★★★★ GL Grand Luxe

★★★★★ Exceptional

★★★★★ Excellent

★★★★ Very Good

★★ Good

★ Acceptable

(Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2014)

2.17 Conceptual Framework

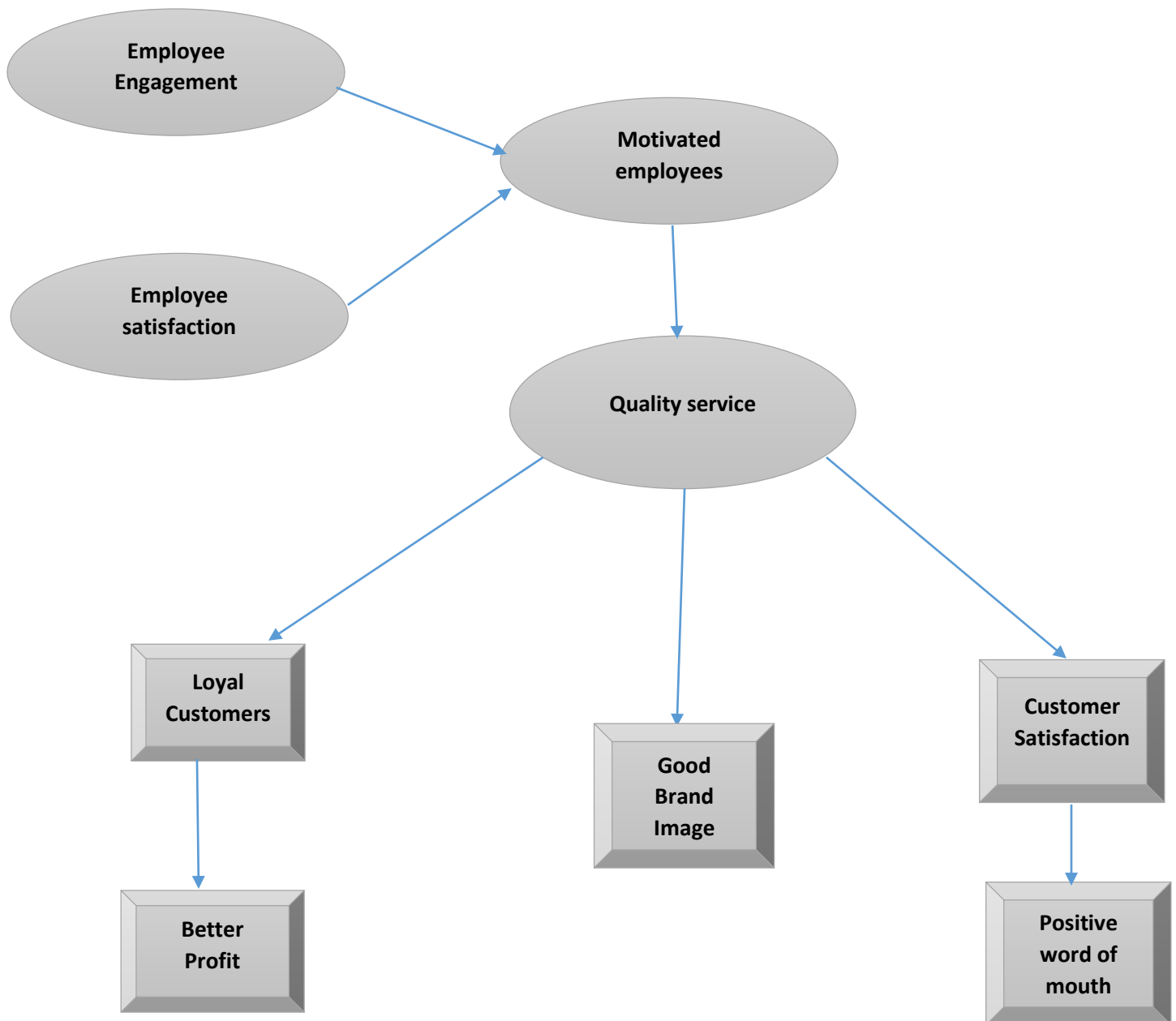


Figure 1: Extracted from review of related literature

The aim of this section is to summarize the idea about past literature and to bring out the contributions for this study area. Thus this part starts with the idea generated and the contribution follows. The general idea from the past literature is that there is a relationship between employee engagement and service quality as shown in the figure above.

Employee engagement: When employers have a good communication with their staff and involve them on idea generation and decision making they become interested on their work. An engaged worker must positively commit to the organization. The employee must be willing to make changes, which require that he or she cares enough to change. The engaged worker possesses trust in his or her organization, especially that one's input and energy will not backfire. An engaged worker also is certain that his or her effort actually leads to positive results in the organization.

Employee Satisfaction: customer satisfaction is an outcome of purchase and use resulting from the buyers' comparison of the rewards and costs of the purchase in relation to the anticipated consequences". It is also defined in terms of an emotional state that usually arises in response of evaluating a particular service. (Qadeer 2013)

Employee Motivation: Motivation is directly related to various employee' attributes i.e. satisfaction level, positive recognition and appreciation, feeling personal accomplishment and receiving positive feedback that leads to positive performance. Through motivation an organization can retain its employees. (Kundu 2017)

Service Quality: Many services are personnel intensive, customized to suit heterogeneous needs and preferences. These are jointly produced by both producer and customer(s) and are intangible. Gronroos model divides customer's perception about the quality of a specific service into two dimensions i.e technical and functional quality. It is also known as Technical/Functional Quality framework. For example, technical quality might consider the effectiveness of car repair, cleanliness of hotel room. And functional quality might include, the care and manner of personnel involved in processes of service delivery. (Qadeer 2013)

As a result of quality service the organization becomes beneficial on satisfying more customers, creating good brand image and getting a lot of loyal customers. Satisfied customers will more likely recommend others by positive WOM. When the number of loyal customers increase in number it shows that revenues of organizations are getting higher. Customers will have a good brand image as a result of good brand image.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study used five dimensional SERVQUAL scale to measure the service quality. These dimensions are: responsiveness, reliability, assurance, tangibility and empathy. These constructs have higher correlation with each other. (Saleem, 2014) And the study used exploratory research methods. The population frame was customers and employees of 5 star hotels in Ethiopia

Data was collected using in-depth interview, one for hotel management and employees the other for hotel customers. Primary data was collected through in-depth interview from five of the hotels who allowed the researcher to collect data. Secondary sources of data was collected from online reviews on www.tripadvisor.com. The data analysis was done using qualitative method.

3.2 Population of the study

The data was collected from customers of 5 star hotels located in Addis Ababa city regarding service quality and from the staff of the hotels regarding employee engagement. The total population was seven 5 star hotels available throughout the country. In order to get appropriate data, the study incorporated both primary and secondary sources of data.

3.3 Sample of the study

It was planned to contact all the 7 five star hotels in Ethiopia as data can be collected from the entire population to end up with an information-rich case study in which the study explore research questions and gain theoretical insights. But 2 of the hotels refused to allow the researcher to collect data from them. So a total of 5 hotels participated in the study. From these five hotels 2 of them didn't want to let the researcher contact their customers and only allowed their employees to participate in the study. So 2 employees participated from each of the five hotels which makes a total of 10 employees. But only three hotels agreed to let their customers participate. 5 customers were contacted because from Ellili Hotel only one customer was willing to participate and data was also getting saturated by that time. Convenience sampling was applied to choose sample

respondents of customers, managers and front line employees for the collaboration of giving interviews.

From hotels Getfam & Capital Hotels, a front line employee, a manager and 2 customers participated. From hotels Radisson Blu & Golden tulip the researcher was allowed only to contact two employees from each hotel. From Ellili hotel two employees and only one customer participated because another willing customer to involve in the study was not found. Customer reviews posted on trip advisor website was used for Sheraton Addis & Marriot Executive Apartments because management of these two hotels didn't give permission for the research to be conducted.

No	Hotel	Employees		Customers
		Frontline	Management	
1	Sheraton Addis	-	-	-
2	Getfam Hotel	1	1	2
3	Capital Hotel	1	1	2
4	Readisson Blu Hotel	1	1	-
5	Ellili Hotel	1	1	1
6	Marriot Executive Apartments	-	-	-
7	Golden Tulip Hotel	1	1	-
Total		5	5	5
				15

Customer reviews on tripadvisor.com for Sheraton, Radisson, Marriot and Golden Tulip are incorporated in the study.

3.4 Data analysis and Presentation

After the primary and secondary data gathering procedures are completed, the data is transcribed, coded and analyzed in a way to produce important information that can answer basic questions and achieve objectives of the study and also show future implications of the study.

The responses of informants/respondents are presented and analyzed qualitatively. Data collected from interviews and explanations of the qualitative analysis is written in statements.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

To ensure that the study was conducted as thoroughly and ethically as possible, the customers and employees of hotels participated for this study were made aware that their identities and answers would remain confidential.

The following ethical guidelines were put into place for the research period:

1. Participants were notified participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time
2. The research data remained confidential throughout the study and the researcher obtained the participant's permission to use audio recorders during interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings of the study are presented and discussed section by section based on the specific objectives of the study. Expressive comments made by respondents are extracted and presented as quotes.

The findings are presented in four major sections in line with the research questions and the specific objectives of the study.

Section 4.1: Status of service quality among 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa.

Section 4.2: Engagement of frontline employees in decision making and idea generation.

Section 4.3: Employee engagement and its relationship with service quality and employee satisfaction.

Section 4.4: Customers level of satisfaction and their opinion on quality of services.

4.1. Status of service quality among 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa

Findings about current status of quality services provided by 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa are presented in six sub-sections.

- 4.1.1 Tangible elements.
- 4.1.2 Reliability of quality services.
- 4.1.3 Assurance and safety.
- 4.1.4 Empathy of staff.
- 4.1.5 Responsiveness of the hotels.

4.1.1 Tangible Elements

Hotels should devote particular attention to tangible elements like physical comfort of the hotels to achieve higher client satisfaction. The staff also must look professional and presentable because they are an integral part of the property. The physical appearance of hotel staff helps to maintain

the overall appearance, but the way they act also contributes to the hotel's reputation. (Dimitrovski, 2015)

Hotel cleanliness and comfort are the most important factors in hotel selection. From the study we can say that most of the customers coming to stay in these hotels have no reservations on the overall settings, cleanliness and the way the hotels are designed and decorated. They find the bed rooms comfortable; lobby and stair ways clean enough and functional.

This is also seconded by feedbacks written on tripadvisor's website.

"This is a good hotel with spacious, clean and modern apartments, the service at reception and concierge was courteous and helpful, a great alternative in Addis and good location. They offer transport to pick up some groceries nearby" (Customer review on Marriot Hotel)

One of the complaints raised by the interviewees is related to the electricity plugs; either they are not working or they are not fit to the different varieties.

"Everything is good but I was wondering why some of the electric plugs do not fit in to the walls and many of them in my room does not work. It is very simple issue but luxury hotels like this should worry about these kinds of fittings" (Customer 2, Captial Hotel)

Similarly a reviewer on the tripadvisor website complained about the window size of one of the 5 star hotels.

"A slight disadvantage may be that the architectural design of the building does not include rooms with some sort of balcony or at least 'French windows', because the two rather small size windows (one each for living and bed room) with plastic frames and handles are installed at a window sill height of about 1.10m and cannot be opened because of the big-size curtain rails that jammes the windows." (Customer review on Marriot Hotel)

4.1.2 Reliability of quality services

Reliability is the foundation for the continued success of hotels by building trust of customers. It is the ability to perform the promised services in a dependable, accurate and fully responsible manner, without negligence and failure (R. Hussain, 2015)

For example having a reliable hotel Internet service allows guests to check emails or join conference calls easily, rather than going to the nearest coffee shop. Also, being prepared for large conferences and business meetings with strong internet connectivity needs will increase customer satisfaction, improve service, and also increase guest loyalty.

Although most of the services are reliable the lack of reliable internet and electricity power interruptions are mentioned as critical challenges. Hotel managers recognize these but as this is a country wide problem it has become hard to fix it.

“It was difficult for me to do my work using internet. But I was told that it is a country wide problem” (Customer 1, Getfam Hotel)

“There were few power breaks during my visit, which had an impact to use elevators.” (Customer review on Golden Tulip)

4.1.3 Assurance and safety

Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence will appeal the customer visit the hotel again. Most of the participants during the interview stated that they feel safe while staying in the hotels and almost all looked at reviews before deciding to book their hotels because it is really important to know the safety of the place they are staying.

“The deco and atmosphere are great and safety isn’t an option it’s compulsory. And the recommendations given by the staff were great” (Customer review on Golden Tulip Hotel)

4.1.4 Empathy of staff

Customers become more attracted when individualized attention is provided by the hotel staff. Employees should deal with customers in a caring manner and having the customer’s best interest at heart. Employees who understand the needs of their customers have the capability to please and delight them.

In this regard, all customers who participated in this study confirmed that staffs are generally respectful and sympathetic.

“I always get lost when trying to go to the swimming pool but there is one man working here who always takes me there holding my hands with a smiling face. He really is helpful for me” (Customer 1, Ellili Hotel)

4.1.5 Responsiveness of the hotels

The responsiveness Service Quality refers to the willingness of the company to help its customers in providing them with a good, quality and fast service. This is also a very important dimension, because every customer feels more valued if they get the best possible quality in the service. (Gunarathne, 2014)

One factor is the speed with which employees respond to users. Although the response time is important intuitively, research results indicate that it is not always true. It is reported that time is not a dominate factor until the waiting time becomes too long. (Akkiraju, 2018)

Failing to meet deadlines or ignoring customer inquiries can increase client dissatisfaction in a hotel service and motivate them to investigate competitor's services. Although good customer service is part of customer responsiveness, customer responsiveness takes customer service a step further. Sean Meehan and Charlie Dawson, explain in a 2002 "Business Strategy Review" article that customer responsiveness is accurately and insightfully giving customers what they need, want or don't yet know they want and doing so more quickly than anyone else.

The findings of the study with regard to responsiveness of the hotels is not universal. Some of the interviewees complain about the long waiting time before they get what they asked for.

“For example cutlery should be on the table while we eat but I couldn't find any this morning so I had to ask the waiter to bring me and I waited almost for 10min waiting for cutlery. It is very small issue but it is unexpected from a luxury hotel” (Customer 2, Capital Hotel)

In summary the general quality of services provided by 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa can be viewed as good except the unreliability of internet services, electric power interruptions and limitations with regard to being responsive to customer requests.

In the current competitive environment, where most hotels have similar facilities, the survival of hotels depends on delivery of quality services. There are three main types of service quality; physical product, service experience and quality of food and beverage. On the other hand, studies stressed the increasing role of service quality in the light of the employee motivation required to support the brand image/promise of the hotel. Studies also demonstrated that the personality traits of the front-line employees of hotels correlated significantly to the guests' perception of service quality. Key indicators for excellent service include employees with a passion for service and for their work, as well as employee honesty, trustworthiness and ability to deal with emergencies. Because of this, hotel managers should train their personnel to ensure delivery of polite, respectful and friendly service. (Lu, Berchoux, Marek, Brendan Chen, 2015)

There is also growing evidence that hotel design has both marketing and strategic implications. Another aspect of the tangible factors in hotel industry is the ambient conditions that can include color, music, lighting, seating comfort and overall cleanliness of the places inside the hotels. It has been confirmed that all of these items have their effect on customers' perceptions and responses to the environment (Baker & Collier, 2005; Parasuraman et al., 1988).

4.2. Engagement of frontline employees in decision making and idea generation

It is believed that employee participation in idea generation and decision making will enhance motivation of staff encouraging them to do more and better and this will ultimately help to improve quality of services.

As mentioned by majority of the interviewed frontline staff, in most cases they participate in providing feedback and idea generation but their involvement in decision making is very limited. In most cases decisions come from top management. Management of these hotels are conscious

about the importance of engaging employees which can help in increasing the number of loyal customers.

Exceptionally one of the hotels uses a completely different strategy towards giving the autonomy to make decisions to the staff. Every person working in that hotel is engaged and clearly enjoying their work as they have the responsibility to make relevant decisions and report it to their supervisors.

“In our hotel everyone is empowered and have the right to decide on the spot. The only requirement is to write a note. We are also called to staff meetings and every staff including us will be there to generate ideas. We also express our opinions freely” (Employee 2, Radisson Blu Hotel)

Most of the five star hotels engage their employees by consulting them how to proceed, let them talk what they have faced with customers but inversely few are way behind than the others and still do not understand the relationship between engaging employees and achieving larger market share.

“There is no such kind of experience in our hotel. Everything is being done by management we are just implementers” (Employee1, Getfam Hotel).

“A lot of ideas come from employees that are useful for decision making so we incorporate them before passing final decisions and get them commented by our employees before implementation” (Employee 2, Radisson Blu Hotel)

This shows opinions coming from staff have the strength to change the views of managers and helps them to get innovative ideas.

Success of any organization depends majorly on its human capital. The employees in the hospitality industry are valuable assets to their respective organization. The performance and profitability of the hotels rely mainly on the performance of employees. It also means that these employees need to be satisfied with various aspects of their job to give their best performance. It has become extremely important on the part of organization to know their employees better understand their goals and aspirations as well as expectations from the organization. Efficient

human capital management and maintaining higher degree of job satisfaction level in hotel business determine not only the performance of the hotel but also help the growth of the entire revenue. (Pathak, 2017)

From the responses of most participants employees feel satisfied when they are heard by their supervisors and when management encourages them to express their observations including some level of decision making authority but this is not the situation in most of the cases.

“We give our feedbacks to our supervisors but we haven’t seen them considered. Most of us do not want to raise ideas and give comments. We are here only to cover our living costs.” ((Employee 1, Getfam Hotel)

And all respondents from the front area who has a direct contact with a number of customers daily understand the benefits of engaging employees. They believe in its direct relationship with organization’s performance.

“Employee engagement helps the management to make the right decision.” (Employee 1, Ellili Hotel)

Successful hotels always include staff training as their important development strategy because it helps them to have more responsive employees. In this study all the respondents participated in the study revealed that their employers believe in providing trainings regularly. Because of the competition the hotel managers are working highly on updating their employees through intensive trainings like on the job training, online trainings, coaching/mentoring and lecturing.

The employees also stated that the trainings helped them in upgrading themselves in providing the best services.

“We are given different online trainings like lobster. It helps us upgrade ourselves in many ways. Cross trainings are given depending on the preference of the staff. It means anyone working in one department can get trained in another field of department if interested eg. A lady working in housekeeping can get trained in cooking if is she has the interest. Efforts are there to make the services uniform with other international chain hotels” (Employee 2, Golden Tulip Hotel)

Staff training enhances the capabilities of employees and strengthens their competitive advantage. Effective training will improve the personal characters and professional abilities. Not only employees, management and organization would benefit from staff training, customers and guests benefit as well, because of the received quality hotel services. (Xiao 2010)

The key influencers for organizational effectiveness are leadership and employee motivation. Leadership style extensively influences employee's commitment and dedication. Good physical working conditions such as right temperature, adequate lightning, proper ventilation, noise free atmosphere have positive effects on the motivation and performance of workers. (N. Kuppuswamy, 2017)

The study revealed that the majority of the hotels are working hard in order to get their employees motivated to provide best possible service for their customers. But it seems few do not yet understand the relationship between motivating employees and pleasing customers with the service they render.

"We are not motivated to give ideas for the management because we have never seen our ideas taken into action" (Employee 1, Getfam Hotel)

"There was a policy not to accept customers entering to our hotel carrying a food from outside. I requested the management to allow some customers who come in to our hotel with their own food because I came to know that their medical situations does not let them use the food we provide. Rather than losing these customers and their surroundings I convinced my supervisors that we should let them use the rest of our services. I saw it implemented and felt proud of myself and encouraged to give other ideas" (Employee 1, Ellili Hotel)

It shows that this employee felt like she has contributed something valuable and gratified for the acceptance she has got from her organization. This makes her motivated and comfortable with her employer. She is working actively towards pleasing the customers that are coming in to stay in the hotel which results in good performance to let the customers end up being loyal.

4.3 Employee engagement's relationship with service quality & employee satisfaction

Employee engagement results from individual feelings such as happiness at work, employee morale, and job satisfaction. Moreover, it is assumed that engaged employees will contribute positively to improvement in quality of hotel services and overall organizational performance. (Levitt, 2017)

All interviewees expressed their positive views on the relation of engaging employees with improvements in quality of services and this in turn will help to have a lot of loyal customers.

“We are the ones who have direct communication with the customers so engaging employees plays an important role in providing a better service which helps in getting better profit”. (Employee 1, Getfam Hotel)

“Motivated staff brings good service that impresses customers and makes them loyal which results in high profit” (Employee 1, Capital Hotel)

All managers who participated in this study also agreed on the relationship between employee engagement and better quality service and more profit but most are not practically working on it. But they agree that this will damage the business that they are running in the world of high competition.

These days' organizations are coming with flat organizational structures to make every staff responsible and active by decreasing the number of hierarchies. This will help shortening service provision time as every staff gets empowered.

From the responses of participants it is recognized that, A hotel can provide the best quality service but it may not fulfill all customers' needs as everyone's needs are different. It is only when a customer gets satisfied becoming a loyal customer that we can say good quality services is provided. It is also revealed that good quality service creates a good brand image in the mind of a customer and allows the hotels to make more profits.

4.4. Customers level of satisfaction and their opinion on quality of services

Service firms have been increasingly competing for market share on the basis of delivery time. Many firms now choose to set customer expectation by announcing their maximal delivery time. Customers will be satisfied if their perceived delivery times are shorter than their expectations. (Ho, 2003)

Most of the participants in the interview process expressed that their expectation while deciding to stay in the 5 star hotels is to find luxurious place to get comfort and an excellent treatment from the staff. Responsiveness has a top value because they are paying higher to get everything they need on time.

“Service quality for me is responsiveness for requests and availability of essentials which includes internet, swimming, Gym, best food and trained staff.” (Customer 1, Capital Hotel)

The services provided by the staff of these hotels has a huge value than the other things like appearance and taste because as most of them said if the people are good enough to give attention on customer care the rest of expectations will usually be met. A customer of hotel A wrote the following review on tripadvisor website.

“The front desk staff are professional and the check-in was flawless, despite our arrival during the early morning hours. The room is quite, well-appointed and clean with many amenities. The bathroom is average size” (Customer review on Sheraton Addis)

How an organization responds to a complaint can also have a major impact on its customer's post complaint consumer behavior, from repurchase intentions to likelihood to engage in word-of-mouth activities, and it may even affect the valence of the word-of-mouth message. (Davidow, 2009)

Key problems that were mentioned by all interviewees consistently are inconsistent and low speed internet and limited parking space. Guests have many demands that require them to be well connected to internet at all times. They want strong Wifi available on every part of the compound as it is a high standard hotel, for a reasonable or free cost. Finding ways to maximize connectivity

and providing business essentials will keep guests productive and happy. Internet connectivity problem is the major concern of all interviewed customers.

Most of the hotels have limited parking spaces and complaints are coming largely from visitors who rent conference halls for meetings and some walk-in guests.

“The hotel was built targeting primarily on international guests but it is now serving more than expected walk-in guests and organizations who uses our meeting halls. These people complain because of our small parking space. Most of our room guests do not drive rather use our shuttle service or may have a driver to pick and drop them off.” (Employee 2, Radisson Blu Hotel)

The roads of Addis Ababa are becoming more congested by vehicles from time to time; particularly during peak hours because of the huge amount of cars on the road. So it would be difficult for hotel users if they couldn't find a safe place to park their cars.

“Parking is limited and the traffic in front of the hotel is a mess. Otherwise, this is a really good hotel for Addis standards. Spacious, comfortable rooms (smoking rooms also still available), comfortable bed, good bathrooms and friendly service. The hotel has a gym, sports bar, cigar bar, restaurant and lobby café. Reasonably close to the African Union and 5 to 10 minutes from the airport. Very good choice in a town that has numerous lousy hotels.” (Customer reviews on Golden Tulip Hotel)

Some guests also complained about the quality, variety, and taste of complementary breakfast provided by the hotels.

The most effective way to ensure repeat customers is to provide a product or service that meets or exceeds the customer's expectations every time. Unfortunately, when delivering a service, this task is formidable and, at times, impossible. Although service failure has the potential for destroying loyalty, effective application of recovery techniques may enable service managers to maintain or even increase loyalty. (Miller, Craighead, Karwan, 2000)

This study revealed that there are different service recovery mechanisms being applied by the hotels to address concerns of customers.

“I didn’t like the food they brought me for lunch but they changed it for free of charge.”
(Customer 1, Hotel B)

“We upgrade room without additional charge or we put regret letter with a fruit basket in the room of a disappointed customer” (Employee 1, Ellili Hotel)

When offering the customer something in the form of compensation, it makes him feel valued. It increases his loyalty to the hotels.

When it comes to luxury, service quality and satisfaction, positive customer experiences are vitally important, because a positive experience will cause the customer to wish to return or stay longer and to recommend the establishment to others. In addition, the Internet and social media make it easier than ever for customers to describe and share their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, thus influencing others. As a result, hotel operators must concentrate on the quality of every detail of service encountered by their guests, and the customers’ emotional judgments about their hotel stays become the basis for the companies’ efforts to differentiate themselves from competitors and achieve competitive advantages. (Lu, Li 2015)

In this study customer perceptions on frontline employees shows that almost all of them are satisfied with the service provision in the reception area. None of them had bad experiences rather inspired by best treatment they have got when they checked in and whenever needed explanation in different issues.

“It is sometimes difficult to communicate as there are differences in pronunciation between us. We can see from their faces that they are unable to understand what we are saying but they are polite and try to fix problems on their own” (Customer 1, Ellili Hotel)

This study discovered that customers are satisfied. Because as they said they have a level of expectation from a developing country and the service provision that they received exceeds the expectation they used to have.

Due to its informal, interpersonal nature, word of mouth is a potentially powerful and credible communication source. Both positive and negative word of mouth are strategically important

because it is typically associated with extreme satisfaction or dissatisfaction. (Cantallops, Salvi 2014)

Most of the participants noted that they will recommend the hotels they are staying in because they are gratified with many of the services.

Slight mistakes can affect customer's general insight towards the overall hotel service so management of these hotels should work on training the staff on how to approach the customers and explain everything to them politely in detail. And if mistakes happen they should know that it should be admitted and apologize customers for what happened or compensation should be provided to please the customer which will help him forget the incident that may lead into negative word of mouth. Advancements in information technology and the introduction of new methods of communication have led to increasingly significant changes in consumer behavior. These changes have produced a shift in focus in companies' marketing strategies and business administration, especially in the hotel industry. Purchase decision processes are composed of several variables that influence consumer choice for certain products and services. Customers might choose a hotel based on its location (for instance, close to an airport, tourist location, or city center), brand name, various facilities (such as swimming pool, children play ground, spa and fitness center), service quality, price, loyalty program, and quality ratings by past guests. Any or all of these would enter into the customer choice.

As presented in the quote below one customer was disappointed because incomplete information was provided about price changes.

"I won't recommend this hotel because I was cheated with price change. I booked the room with 92USD online before I came here after I stayed for 5 days I told them I wanted to extend my stay at last when I check out they told me to pay 146USD for each extended days. I am so disappointed because they should have notified me everything first" (Customer 1, Capital Hotel)

Another customer who wrote a review on tripadvisor wrote a complain about the inconsistency of quality service.

“I stayed in this hotel 3 years ago and had a great stay. Even though it is ridiculously priced I decided to stay here again. This time I was with my wife and wanted to show her the hotel. It is without doubt the best hotel in Addis with sitting in great splendor and the gardens are beautiful. The pool area, bar and service by all is superb. However, I was a little disappointed this time around due to the following:

- 1. The F&B has really gone down. We had a business lunch in the Indian and it was bland, no taste, surly service and no atmosphere. We also ate in the Italian at night and the food was very poor.*
- 2. We upgraded to an Executive Room and it was very small, it had a small patio but no chairs to enjoy the view. The lounge was good though.*
- 3. As mentioned before the prices have sky rocketed.”*

However, it is a fine hotel in all other areas, we enjoyed the live band at night time too. Go here if you want the luxury but eat out in Addis!”(Customer review on Sheraton Addis)

Creating and maintaining customer loyalty helps the hotels to develop long term, mutually beneficial relationships with customers. These loyal customers show attachment and commitment toward the hotel, and are not attracted to competitor’s offerings. Furthermore, loyal customers are willing to pay more, express higher buying intentions and resist switching. (Kandampully, Zhang 2015)

Most of the customers who participated in this study stated that they will use the same service in the future from the same hotel that they are now staying in. And all said that comes from the best service they have been rendered which makes them decide to come back if they will get another chance to visit Addis Ababa.

Customer loyalty will bring the confidence in taking a bigger market share, better profits, trust and positive word of mouth etc. In summary most of the participants got satisfied from the service because they used to have their own expectation set for an African developing country otherwise the service quality is generally low compared to other 5 star hotels in other parts of the world.

“The service here is significantly different in the level of quality that I saw in Istanbul. The hotel I stayed in Istanbul was a higher quality in architecture, facilities and resources but it will not be fair to compare it with this one.” (Customer 2, Capital Hotel)

“I travelled to 95 countries and also stayed in five star hotels of several countries but comparison doesn’t make sense here. I am really impressed with the service from a developing country like this. For example Indian five star hotels are a bit more luxurious than this one because India as a country has more resources than Ethiopia.” (Customer 1, Ellili Hotel)

“Summing up this is a 2-star hotel by European/international standard, posing as a 5-star.Ps: They show all sorts of certificate of excellence badges from TripAdvisor, Booking... at their front office. The figures are far from accurate.” (Customer reviews on Marriot Hotel)

“I stayed 3 days in this hotel and it's unlike any other international wing of this hotel I've stayed in. From the first time you enter the front gate and see the police sitting off to the side with their AK-47, you realize this is a relative island of luxury in a sea of poverty. The hotel seems to have a lot of security people, including government security people. When I went for a walk on their small jogging trail, two of the hotel employees questioned if I was staying in the hotel. One of them wanted me to show him my hotel key to prove I was staying there. This hadn't happened in any other luxury hotel I stayed in on 3 different continents.” (Customer review on Sheraton Addis)

The major bottleneck reported from managers was lack of trained personnel in the area of tourism. The number of professionals in this area is limited so that is an obstacle towards giving the best service. Because of this problem Hotel C built its own Hotel and Tourism training center to help minimize the gap.

“We have our own training center employees are trained for free and outsiders are charged to get the service” (Capital Hotel, Employee 2)

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

The findings have shown that most of the customers are satisfied with the services. As many of them have their own expectations from a developing country. The services of luxury hotels in Ethiopia is beyond their expectation. As to the participants it difficult to compare these hotels with internationally located hotels because of lack of resources and few number of hospitality professionals found in a developing country like ours. So it still needs improvement to reach to the excellence of international hotel services.

The study revealed that employees are engaged in many of the hotels even though the level of engagement is different from hotel to hotel. Managers of luxury hotels in Ethiopia have understood the importance of employee engagement and already started implementing it in order to give quality services. Another core concept that they are applying to deliver quality service is giving trainings to the employees regularly to upgrade their knowledge from time to time to help them compete with the highly competitive market. From the findings it was seen that huge level of efforts have been made from the management of these hotels towards providing the best possible service by trainings employees and trying to give them attention to give feedbacks on day to day activities to help avoid disappointments from the customer side.

From the study it is clearly seen that employee engagement has a valuable contribution to bring quality of service which in turn creates customer satisfaction. Because it was recognized that highly involved/engaged employees get motivated and initiated to perform better than the ones who are not given attention.

It is recognized that all of these hotels have service recovery mechanisms to compensate unsatisfied customers to avoid negative WOM. All hotels also try to get feedbacks of customers in different ways like disseminate feedback forms in the rooms of customers. Checking online reviews regularly and communicating with frontline employees to help them work on filling gaps.

With all this there are few customers complaining on the responsiveness of employees and taste of foods. But the majority participants like the customer handling service and treatments they get from the employees.

It was seen that in all of the hotels the issue raised as a challenge to deliver quality service is lack of trained personnel in the sector. There are limited institutes producing hotel and tourism professionals in the country. So the management of these hotels find it challenging to recruit a well trained staff who can please customers in a professional way. As the number of these professionals are few the hotel managers are forced to hire employees with other backgrounds and give different trainings to make them familiarize with their jobs. Because of this some hotels opened colleges to train employees and others use more of their time to upgrade the knowledge of their employees through different online and on the job trainings.

The main Challenges raised from customers are Internet connectivity and parking problems in most of the hotels. As most of the customers who are staying in these luxury hotels came for business, they are highly in need of internet connection. And they find it difficult to work and communicate with their colleagues. As to the participants, parking is not a problem of guests who use room service but they have seen congested surroundings when they pass by. Guests renting conference halls are usually the ones who need parking spaces when coming for meetings but parking spaces of most luxury hotels are crowded and not enough.

5.2 Conclusion

- 1) The findings of this study revealed that the quality of service provided by most of the 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa is generally good compared to the expected level of service from a developing country like Ethiopia. Most customers had a low expectation when they come but they found the service quality to be generally good compared to their low expectation. Otherwise the service quality is generally low compared to services provided by 5 star hotels in the other parts of the world.
- 2) Inconsistent and low speed internet service and lack of adequate parking area are the two major problems of the 5 star hotels. In addition, low quality, few variety complimentary breakfast and limitations with regard to providing correct and comprehensive information are also problems.
- 3) Employees generally participate in providing feedbacks that help to improve quality of service to their supervisors but decisions are mainly made by higher level managers except with the case of one hotel by which every staff member has an authority to make relevant decisions.
- 4) According to the finding of the study there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and improvements in quality of service and satisfaction of employees. And this is being widely practiced in most of the 5 star hotels in Addis Ababa.
- 5) Overall customers are satisfied by the services they get from the 5 star hotels but the lack of responsiveness to their requests and concerns is a challenge in some hotels. This could be mainly due to limited decision making power given to the employee.
- 6) There are various service recovery methods being implemented by the hotels but this will not be as effective without adequate decision making power given to the staff.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study the followings are recommended:

- Hotels need to work closely with the Ethio-Telecom company to improve internet connectivity. Although there is a general connectivity problem in the country still there are different organizations that get better services because of the importance of the service they provide. Hence, these hotels need to find a way to show the challenge to the concerned government body and work diligently to address the serious connectivity problem.
- The limited parking area need to be addressed through close collaboration with the Addis Ababa city administration land management authority or by working with investors that can construct parking space close to these hotels.
- Improving the quality of food served as a complimentary breakfast by collecting feedbacks from customers and by exploring practices from other similar hotels in the other parts of the world and by training chefs is necessary.
- Involvement of staff in providing ideas and feedbacks should be strengthened and continued. Similarly giving regulated decision making responsibilities to the staff is essential. Without this, it will be unlikely to improve responsiveness to customer complaints and the quality of services will deteriorate from time to time.
- Implementing different initiatives including awarding best performing staff, introducing competitive benefit packages, providing need based continuous trainings are critical to maintain motivation of employees which is key to maintain service quality, create loyal customers, and enhance profitability of the hotels.
- Hotels need also to have a mechanism to collect feedback from the customers. This could include reviewing feedbacks that are posted online, sending emails asking for feedbacks

from customers that stayed in the hotels, inviting external local or international experts to review services. Without this, it will be hard to stay competitive in the current market.

- Investing in the opening of new training centers mainly tourism sector targeting to produce well trained professionals who will contribute a lot for these luxury hotels is important. It was recognized that in most of the hotels top management is filled with foreigners so it will help minimize the amount of money being paid to bring foreigners if well trained personnel are large in number locally.

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APPENDIX 1

Relationship of constructs with interview questions

Constructs	Questions
<i>Employee Engagement</i>	1. How are employees engaged/involved in decision making and idea generation? 2. What do you think are the benefits of engaging employees? 3. Have you ever generated ideas that would be useful for the hotel service and notified to the management? Are they considered? 4. Have you ever participated in management meetings? Who are the members? How frequently do they meet?
<i>Satisfied Employees</i>	1. How does organization top management incorporate your feedback? Are you satisfied?
<i>Motivated Employees</i>	1. Have you ever been consulted by the management of the hotel on idea generation and decision making?
<i>Service Quality</i>	1. What is service quality for you? Service quality in the hotel industry. What is your expectations from 5 star hotels when you decide to stay in these hotels? 2. What is your feeling about frontline employee's behavior towards customer handling? 3. Did you have bad experiences while staying in these hotels? Would you explain? How do you think this will be avoided? 4. How did you find the overall hotel settings, decoration, comfort and cleanliness? 5. Have you seen reliable service? For example what makes you feel that it is reliable?

	6. How responsive are the staff of the hotel? Are you satisfied? 7. Are the employees caring? Did they treat you well? 8. Do you feel safe here? How did you know that it is a safe place to stay?
<i>Better Profit</i>	1. Do you think engaging employees will result in higher revenues?
<i>Loyal Customers</i>	1. Will you choose this hotel among others to come back and use the service in the future?
<i>Good Brand Image</i>	1. What comes to your mind when you hear or see the name of the hotel that you are staying in?
<i>Customer Satisfaction</i>	1. Do you think you are satisfied with the services you got from this hotel?
<i>Positive word of mouth</i>	2. What measure do you take when you get satisfied with the service you get from the hotel? Do you tell others or recommend this hotel?

APPENDIX 2

SERVQUAL Dimensions

Reliability

Did you find the guest room ready as promised?

Do you think the hotel staff was fast enough in billing issues?

Tangibility

Do the employees have professional dress code?

Is the room quite comfortable and clean?

Do you think the hotel has good architectural design?

Do you like the setting and materials used to decorate internal part of the hotel?

Responsiveness

Did the staff give you detailed information of the services?

Whenever you request something did the hotel staff respond on time?

Assurance

Did you check the safety of the hotel before booking? How?

What do you expect from the hotel to make your stay safe?

Empathy

Do you think the employees are compassionate and give individual attention for guests?

APPENDIX 3

Participant Number/ _____

Date: _____

Consent Form for Interviews: A Qualitative study on the Assessment of service quality and Employee engagement: The case of 5 star hotels in Ethiopia

If you are happy to participate then please complete and sign the form below. Please initial the boxes below to confirm that you agree with each statement:

Initial box:

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

☐

I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.

☐

I agree for this interview to be tape-recorded. I understand that the audio recording made of this interview will be used only for analysis and that extracts from the interview, from which I would not be personally identified, may be used in any conference presentation, report or journal article developed as a result of the research. I understand that no other use will be made of the recording without my written permission, and that no one outside the research team will be allowed access to the original recording.

☐

I agree that my anonymised data will be kept for future research purposes such as publications related to this study after the completion of the study.

☐

I agree to take part in this interview.

☐

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Copies: Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form.