

Customer Satisfaction in Nepalese Hotels: An Evidence from Resorts Situated in Sukute and Trisuli Beach

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of service quality explained by front office operation, location, food and beverage, accommodation, recreation and entertainment, pricing on customer satisfaction of beach resorts in Nepal. Descriptive and casual research designs are used for the study. Primary data has been collected through questionnaire survey from guests of different hotels in Sukute beach and Trisuli beach. The study finds that Recreation and Entertainment was the most influential factor determining customer satisfaction, followed by Food and Beverage, Accommodation, and Pricing and Payment. Front Office Operation and Location show limited influence when all predictors are considered together. The findings emphasize the importance of experiential and comfort-related services, offering practical insights for hotel managers aiming to improve overall service quality and enhance guest satisfaction.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, service quality, hospitality

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1. Introduction

With the emergence of various industrial sectors in Nepal, the hotel industry has witnessed rapid growth (Investment Board Nepal, 2024). High-quality services in food and beverage, front office operations, and housekeeping—delivered by skilled professionals—have played a significant role in this expansion. As the industry flourishes, it offers residents enhanced recreational opportunities, providing not only excellent cuisine but also pleasant environments that help alleviate the stress of daily life (Aryal et al., 2023). Moreover, the sector has created numerous employment opportunities for both unemployed individuals and recent graduates. Investors are increasingly showing interest in Nepal's hospitality sector, recognizing its potential for growth. Nepal, known for its natural beauty, continues to attract tourists from around the world. Hotels not only provide lodging for international visitors but also contribute positively to the national economy (Paudyal, 2019). Among the key factors driving the success of this industry is the quality of service (Jurowski & Nickerson, 2025), which has a well-documented impact on customer satisfaction.

The World Tourism Organization (1985) views customer satisfaction as a psychological state of well-being derived from fulfilling expectations through appealing products and services. Tourist motivation initiates the search for services that meet specific needs. Satisfaction occurs when these needs are met; exceeding expectations leads to delight, while unmet needs result in dissatisfaction. In tourism marketing, satisfaction is a key performance indicator and a strategic differentiator, essential for building goodwill and attracting repeat visitors (Baghirov et al., 2023).

Kotler (2000) defines satisfaction as the emotional response resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance with expectations. In the hospitality sector, customer satisfaction is closely linked to loyalty and willingness to pay (Deng & Sung, 2013), and it positively impacts financial performance through increased demand (Sun & Kim, 2013). Woodruff (1997) similarly describes satisfaction as an evaluative reaction based on performance versus expectations. A competent hotelier must consider various factors before making decisions about service adjustments. A well-designed and effectively implemented plan ensures that customer satisfaction remains unaffected. High level of customer satisfaction is closely linked to employee performance, which encompasses competence, friendliness, hospitality, courtesy, efficiency, and emotional sensitivity. Guests feel welcomed and valued when staff members are gracious and attentive. By investing in well-trained personnel, hotels can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, and secure long-term profitability.

The demand for hospitality services is driven by evolving lifestyles, which explains why customers are willing to pay for experiences that meet or exceed their expectations (Sukaisih & Hamid, 2015). Consequently, hotels strive to offer a wide range of high-quality services in the hope of encouraging repeat visits. While catering to a diverse clientele can be challenging, excellent customer service remains indispensable to the success and sustainability of any hospitality business (Kandampully et al., 2018).

In this research context, the objective of this study is to assess the effect of front office operations, accommodation, food and beverage services, location, pricing and payment systems, recreation and entertainment on customer satisfaction in Nepalese beach resorts.

2. Literature Review

A substantial number of studies such as Alegre and Garau (2010), Oyewole (2013) and Inshuti and Irechukwu (2024) have examined the concept of customer satisfaction and the factors that influence it. In business, customer satisfaction is a strategic driver of profitability, as loyal and satisfied customers contribute directly to revenue generation. With globalization intensifying competition, successful firms increasingly adopt customer-centric strategies. Empirical studies further highlight satisfaction determinants. Poon and Low (2005) found that Asian tourists value price, food and beverages, hospitality, entertainment, accommodation, location, transport, safety, and payment processes. Western tourists prioritize safety, hospitality, food, accommodation, entertainment, supplementary services, aesthetics, location, transport, and payment.

Eraqi (2006) identified key satisfaction drivers including overall service evaluation, hotel service quality, perceived value, accommodation standards, internal transport, and pricing suitability. Gu and Ryan (2008) outlined seven factors influencing hotel satisfaction: bed comfort, bathroom cleanliness, room size and condition, location, food quality, ancillary services, and staff performance. Singgalen (2024) identified key drivers of customer satisfaction in the hotel and resort sector, emphasizing cleanliness, service quality, location, and perceived value, highlighting their critical role in influencing satisfaction outcomes. The study also highlighted the growing importance of digital engagement, health and safety measures, and sustainability practices. Alegre and Garau (2010) emphasized that overall satisfaction and revisit intentions depend on comprehensive destination assessments. Oyewole (2013) examined service quality perceptions among African American patrons of buffet restaurants. Key dimensions included freshness, hygiene, variety, reliability, and value. Demographic factors such as gender, age, income, and marital status influenced both patronage frequency and service

evaluations, with implications for targeted marketing strategies. Eshetie et al. (2016) investigated service quality and customer satisfaction in selected hotels in Jimma, Ethiopia, using a modified Lodging Quality Index model. The study revealed a negative gap between expected and actual service across all quality dimensions, with five service quality dimensions showing significant positive correlations with customer satisfaction. Inshuti and Irechukwu (2024) assessed service quality's impact on customer satisfaction in Park Inn and Retreat Hotel, Rwanda. Strong positive correlations were found for responsiveness, tangibility, reliability, and empathy, confirming these dimensions as key contributors to customer satisfaction.

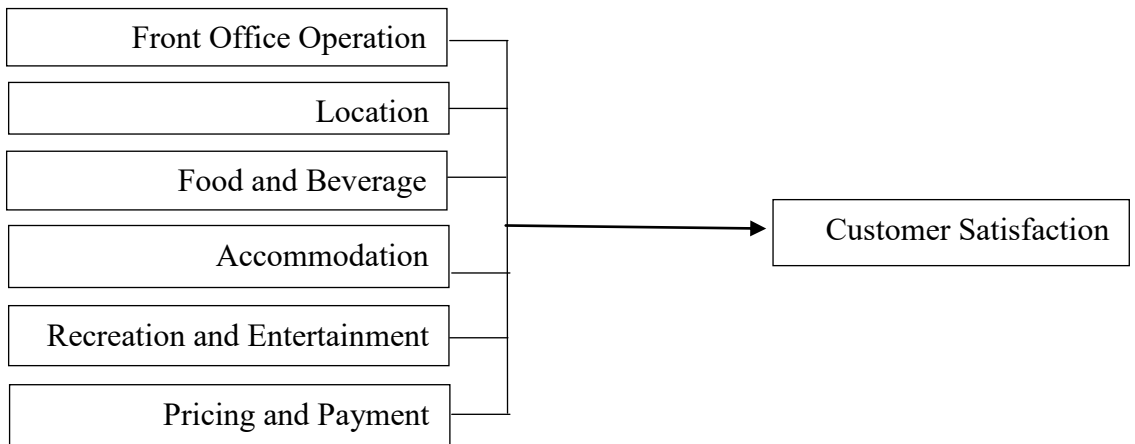
The review reveals several recurring patterns in the study of customer satisfaction. Foundational research has consistently emphasized the centrality of service quality, perceived value, and overall customer experience as primary determinants of satisfaction (Alegre & Garau, 2010; Oyewole, 2013). Contextual variations, particularly in cultural and regional dimensions, are evident in the tourism and hospitality sectors (Poon & Low, 2005; Gu & Ryan, 2008). More recent studies, such as Singgalen (2024), underscore the growing importance of digital engagement, health and safety protocols, and sustainability practices. Quantitative analyses employing models like SERVQUAL further confirm the strong positive relationship between specific service quality and customer satisfaction (Eshetie et al., 2016; Inshuti & Irechukwu, 2024). Collectively, these studies highlight the multifaceted and evolving nature of customer satisfaction, calling for context-sensitive, multidimensional, and empirically grounded approaches to its assessment.

In the context of Nepal's hospitality industry, Aryal et al. (2023) examined the influence of service quality and price fairness on customer satisfaction. Drawing on data collected from hotel guests in the Thamel area of Kathmandu, the study revealed that both service quality and price fairness exert a significant and positive impact on customer satisfaction. This result underscores the importance for hotel operators to prioritize service excellence and implement equitable pricing strategies to enhance guest satisfaction and foster long-term customer loyalty. In addition, Rana (2019) explored determinants of customer satisfaction in hotels within Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City. The study found that four service quality dimensions—tangibles, assurance, reliability, and empathy—positively correlated with customer satisfaction, with assurance having the strongest influence. Interestingly, responsiveness showed a negative relationship. These insights offer valuable guidance for hotel management in enhancing service quality and customer loyalty. The evolving preferences of customers—shifting from price-centric to service-centric expectations—underscore the importance of identifying

key factors that influence satisfaction among travelers in the hotel industry. Nepali studies such as Aryal et al. (2023) and Rana (2019) focus on urban areas. However, this study has focused on customer satisfaction in rural, riverine resort destinations such as Sukute and Trishuli—areas that remain underrepresented in the literature.

This study employs a modified version of the SERVQUAL model originally developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988). Recognizing the need for contextual sensitivity, the framework has been adapted into a PSERVQUAL structure, aligning with service dimensions relevant to Nepalese beach resorts. This approach is consistent with prior hospitality studies that have customized SERVQUAL to reflect industry-specific attributes (Markovic & Raspor, 2010). The conceptual framework is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework



This study has extended the framework by incorporating price and payment as an additional construct. In Nepal, where price sensitivity is high and value-for-money is a key decision factor, this variable captures the economic dimension of satisfaction. The PSERVQUAL model in this study comprised six dimensions: Front Office Operation, Location, Food and Beverage, Accommodation, Recreation and Entertainment, and Pricing and Payment. The PSERVQUAL model evaluates service quality based solely on customers' perceptions of service performance, rather than the gap between expectations and perceptions. This makes it particularly suitable for empirical contexts like Nepal, where expectations can vary widely due to differences in culture, income levels, and infrastructure across regions. These dimensions are hypothesized to positively influence customer satisfaction.

3. Methodology

Descriptive quantitative and casual research designs have been used to analyze effect of predictors on customer satisfaction of hotels (beach resorts) in Nepal. The descriptive quantitative design has been employed to systematically characterize the variables under investigation and to provide an accurate representation of their attributes within the study context. Casual research design has been used to examine relationship between variables and to analyze effect of independent variables on dependent variables. The study has investigated the possible causes affecting the customer satisfaction by observing existing consequences and searching for the possible factors leading to the result.

All guests who have stayed at beach resorts located in Sukute Beach and Trishuli Beach are population of the study as these two locations are among the most frequented riverfront resort destinations in Nepal. The sampling frame is limited to those guests who were present and willing to participate during the data collection period. The study uses convenience sampling because this method allows researchers to approach guests during their stay or at checkout, ensuring timely data collection while their experiences are still fresh and accurately recalled (Connelly, 2016). The sample consisted of 200 respondents, drawn from guests staying at beach resorts located in Sukute Beach and Trishuli Beach. This sample size can be justified as the study has focused on a specific hotel type (beach resorts) and the researcher has collected data during guest stays, limiting sample size due to time and access.

Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire, designed to capture key variables related to tourist satisfaction. A 5-point Likert Scale was used to measure respondents' perception. The questionnaires were distributed at the front offices of the resorts, and guests were invited to participate upon checkout. The collected data was analyzed using IBM SPSS software, enabling descriptive and inferential statistical analysis to identify patterns and relationships within the dataset. Both descriptive and inferential statistical tools have been used to analyze the data. Additionally, econometric models, both bivariate and multivariate models, have been used to determine effect of selected variables on customer satisfaction in Nepalese hotels.

The models used for regression analysis is outlined as:

$$CS = \alpha + \beta_1(FOO) + \beta_2 (LOC) + \beta_3 (FB) + \beta_4 (ACC) + \beta_5(RE) + \beta_6 (PP) + \epsilon_i$$

Where,

CS	=	Customer satisfaction
FOO	=	Front office operation
LOC	=	Location
FB	=	Food and beverage
ACC	=	Accommodation
RE	=	Recreation and entertainment
PP	=	Pricing
α	=	Constant
β	=	Coefficients of variable
ϵ_i	=	Error term

4. Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the key service quality dimensions and the customer satisfaction as perceived by guests at beach resorts. The analysis is based on responses from 200 participants and includes measures of central tendency and dispersion. The descriptive statistics in Table 1 provide valuable insights into respondents' perceptions across seven key service dimensions in the hospitality sector. Among these, Accommodation received the highest mean score (3.35), indicating a generally favorable perception, while Food and Beverage had the lowest mean (2.84), suggesting potential areas for improvement. Front Office Operation, Pricing and Payment, and Location also showed moderately positive perceptions with mean scores around 3.00.

Table 1. *Profile of Service Quality Constructs and Customer Satisfaction in Nepalese Beach Resorts*

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Front Office Operation	1.40	4.20	3.03	0.61
Location	1.75	4.00	2.95	0.46
Food and Beverage	1.25	4.00	2.84	0.65
Accommodation	1.50	4.75	3.35	0.63
Recreation and entertainment	1.33	4.67	2.93	0.69
Pricing and Payment	1.25	4.75	3.04	0.63
Customer Satisfaction	1.33	4.67	2.93	0.71

The range of scores across all dimensions indicates a broad spectrum of responses, with minimum values as low as 1.25 and maximum values reaching up to 4.75. In terms of variability, Location exhibited the lowest standard deviation (0.46), reflecting consistent perceptions among respondents. Conversely, Customer Satisfaction and Recreation and Entertainment had the highest standard deviations (0.71 and 0.69 respectively), suggesting diverse experiences and opinions in these areas.

The correlation matrix in Table 2 presents the relationships among seven service dimensions in the hospitality sector. All correlations marked with double asterisks (**) are statistically significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed), indicating strong evidence of association between the variables.

Table 2. *Relationship between Service Quality Constructs and Customer Satisfaction*

	FOO	LOC	FB	ACC	RE	PP
LOC	.22**	1		.		
FB	.52**	.44**	1			
ACC	.66**	.20**	.56**	1		
RE	.36**	.36**	.51**	.32**	1	.
PP	.50**	.07	.54**	.51**	.42**	1
CS	.50**	.40**	.67**	.53**	.79**	.54**

Customer Satisfaction demonstrated strong positive correlations with multiple independent variables, most notably Recreation and Entertainment ($r = .796, p < .01$),

Food and Beverage ($r = .671, p < .01$), and Accommodation ($r = .536, p < .01$). These findings suggest that guests' overall satisfaction is highly influenced by the quality of recreational offerings, dining experiences, and lodging facilities. Additionally, Pricing and Payment ($r = .547, p < .01$) and Front Office Operation ($r = .501, p < .01$) also showed moderate to strong correlations with Customer Satisfaction, indicating that efficient service and transparent pricing contribute meaningfully to guest perceptions.

Other notable relationships include the strong correlation between Accommodation and Front Office Operation ($r = .662, p < .01$), and between Food and Beverage and Front Office Operation ($r = .529, p < .01$), suggesting that these operational aspects are closely linked in shaping the overall guest experience. Interestingly, Location showed weaker correlations with most variables, including a non-significant relationship with Pricing and Payment ($r = .074$), implying that while location may be important, it does not directly influence perceptions of pricing or payment processes in the Nepalese hotel context.

Overall, the correlation matrix reveals the importance of enhancing recreational services, food and beverage quality, and accommodation standards to improve customer satisfaction in Nepalese hotels. These findings underscore the interconnected nature of service quality attributes and their collective impact on guest satisfaction, providing valuable guidance for strategic improvements in hospitality management.

Table 3 presents bivariate and multivariate regression results that shows effect of independent variable on customer satisfaction. In bivariate models (Models 1–6), each predictor is entered individually to assess its isolated effect on customer satisfaction. And all the models are statistically significant. The strongest effect is observed in Model 5, where Recreation and Entertainment significantly predicted customer satisfaction ($\beta = .819, t = 18.535, p < .001$), explaining 63.3% of the variance ($\text{Adj. } R^2 = .633$) in customer satisfaction. Food and Beverage also shows a strong effect (Model 3: $\beta = .733, t = 12.734, \text{Adj. } R^2 = .447$), followed by Accommodation (Model 4: $\beta = .606, t = 8.926, \text{Adj. } R^2 = .283$), Pricing and Payment (Model 6: $\beta = .610, t = 9.184, \text{Adj. } R^2 = .295$), and Front Office Operation (Model 1: $\beta = .568, t = 8.153, \text{Adj. } R^2 = .248$). Location had the weakest effect (Model 2: $\beta = .611, t = 6.132, \text{Adj. } R^2 = .155$), though still statistically significant.

Model 7 has incorporated all six predictors. The model has been statistically significant ($F(6,193) = 102.14, p < .001$), confirming the relevance of the predictors in explaining customer satisfaction. It has yielded the highest explanatory power ($R^2 = .760, \text{Adj. } R^2 = .753$). In this comprehensive model, Recreation and Entertainment has remained the

most influential predictor ($\beta = .589$, $t = 13.243$, $p < .001$), followed by Food and Beverage ($\beta = .207$, $t = 3.571$, $p < .001$), Accommodation ($\beta = .184$, $t = 3.211$, $p < .01$), and Pricing and Payment ($\beta = .113$, $t = 2.133$, $p < .05$). However, Front Office Operation ($\beta = .025$, $t = 0.430$) and Location ($\beta = .094$, $t = 1.476$) have not reached statistical significance in the multivariate context, suggesting their effects may be mediated by stronger predictors.

Table 3. *Individual and Combined Effects of Service Quality Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction*

Model	Variables							R ²	Adj. R ²	F	Sig. (F)
	Constant	FOO	LOC	FB	ACC	RE	PP				
1	1.16 (5.23)	.56 (8.15)						.25	.24	66.47	.00
2	1.13 (3.81)		.61 (6.13)					.16	.15	37.60	.00
3	.85 (5.10)			.73 (12.73)				.45	.44	162.15	.00
4	.90 (3.89)				.60 (8.92)			.28	.28	79.67	.00
5	.53 (4.02)					.81 (18.53)		.63	.63	343.56	.00
6	1.08 (5.23)						.610 (9.184)	.29	.29	84.34	.00
7	.68 (-3.30)	.02 (.43)	.09 (1.47)	.20 (3.57)	.18 (3.21)	.58 (13.24)	.11 (2.13)	.76	.75	102.14	.00

Note: Figures within () are t-values

The transition from bivariate to multivariate models has revealed that while all predictors have shown significance when tested individually, only four have retained their significance when considered together. This shift has indicated that Front Office Operation and Location, despite their initial impact, may not independently influence customer satisfaction when other service dimensions are accounted for. Their diminished significance in the full model has suggested overlapping or indirect effects, particularly through more dominant variables such as Recreation and Entertainment and Food and Beverage. The study has demonstrated that Recreation and Entertainment, Food and Beverage, Accommodation, and Pricing and Payment are the most critical service dimensions influencing customer satisfaction in Nepalese hospitality sector.

5. Discussions

The regression results offer empirical support for the multidimensional nature of customer satisfaction in the context of Nepalese beach resorts. Consistent with previous literature (Alegre & Garau, 2010; Oyewole, 2013; Inshuti & Irechukwu, 2024), this study reaffirms that service quality dimensions significantly influence customer satisfaction, both individually and collectively. All six service quality dimensions demonstrated statistically significant positive effects on customer satisfaction individually. Among these, Recreation and Entertainment emerged as the most influential individual predictor, explaining over 63% of the variance. This finding aligns with Poon and Low (2005), who identified entertainment as a key satisfaction driver for Asian tourists, and with Singgalen (2024), who emphasized the growing importance of experiential and recreational services. Food and Beverage and Accommodation also showed strong individual effects, corroborating earlier findings by Gu and Ryan (2008), who highlighted food quality and room standards as central to hotel guest satisfaction. Similarly, Pricing and Payment demonstrated a significant influence, echoing the conclusions of Aryal et al. (2023), who found price fairness to be a critical determinant of satisfaction in Nepal's urban hospitality sector.

The multivariate model, which incorporated all six predictors, yielded the highest explanatory power ($\text{Adj. } R^2 = .753$), indicating that the combined effect of service quality dimensions offers a robust explanation of customer satisfaction. Notably, Recreation and Entertainment, Food and Beverage, Accommodation, and Pricing and Payment retained their statistical significance in the full model, suggesting their dominant role in shaping guest experiences. In contrast, Front Office Operation and Location, though significant in isolation, lost their predictive power when considered alongside other variables. This reduction may reflect overlapping variance or indirect effects, as suggested by Eshetie et al. (2016), who reported similar patterns of diminished influence in multivariate contexts.

6. Conclusion

This study has provided empirical evidence on the individual effects of six service dimensions on customer satisfaction in Nepalese hotels. Recreation and Entertainment has emerged as the most influential predictor, which suggests that leisure and entertainment offerings play a central role in shaping guests' overall experiences and satisfaction levels. These findings have underscored the importance of prioritizing service dimensions that directly enhance the guest experience. The study concludes that

customer satisfaction in the Nepalese hospitality sector is most strongly driven by experiential and comfort-related factors rather than operational or locational aspects alone. The study has used cross-sectional design and sample was drawn from beach resorts in Sukete and Trisuli only. Future studies should aim for broader geographical coverage for increasing generability of findings and use longitudinal design to capture causal dynamics over time. In addition, there is a further scope of including emerging dimensions such as digital engagement and sustainability practices.

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