A Study on the Perception of Domestic and International Tourists towards hotel Service in Aksum, Ethiopia

*P.Thamimul Ansari
*Prof.V.Chandrasekhara Rao

*Research Scholar, Department of Commerce & Business Administration, University College of Arts, Commerce and Law, Acharya Nagarjuna University,Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India
**Professor, Department of Commerce & Business Administration, University College of Arts, Commerce and Law, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India

Abstract

This research attempted to study customer's perception on the services in the hotel industry in Aksum. As hotels being one among the tourist products it must be built in necessary places and the services provided in these hotels must be keenly watched for the continual tourist flow in these centers. The aim of this research is to measure the customers' perceptions on the services they received from the hotel and to measure their satisfaction with the services rendered. The nature of the study is descriptive. The primary data is collected from both domestic and international tourists, which was determined using random sampling method. Questionnaire survey method was used for the collection of data. 425 questionnaires were accepted as valid and included in the evaluations. In this study descriptive statistics and one way ANOVA, One sample t-test and Likert Scaling Technique was administered to show the variation and satisfaction among domestic and international tourists. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20 version was used to analyze the data collected. Domestic respondents had visited Aksum the fourth time while majority of the international tourists visited Aksum for the first time. Both the domestic and international respondents mainly visited Aksum as a tourist. One sample t-Test revealed that the nationality of respondents and the level of satisfaction in front office was found to be significantly different. According to Likert Score the respondents were highly satisfied with the room facilities offered to them during their stay in Aksum.

Key words:

Domestic and international tourists, Ethiopia, front office, perception, room facilities.

Introduction

Ethiopia is a land of diversity and well known for affluent history and natural attractions in the world. Aksum is situated in the highlands of northern Ethiopia; it symbolizes the wealth and importance of the civilization of the ancient Aksumite kingdom. The tourism and hospitality industry worldwide, and in Ethiopia in particular, has been confronted with the problem of attracting and retaining tourists.

There is a high demand for star hotels in almost all cities in tourist destinations. As hotels being one among the tourist products; it must be built in necessary places and the services provided in these hotels must be keenly watched for the continual tourist flow in these centers.

Perception is a process by which individuals select, organize and interpret stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. (Leon and Leslie, 2007) Providing quality and value based services are the key techniques in retaining a customer and also for bringing a new customer in the customer oriented business. Customers will recognize and value the outstanding services offered to them. Over time, they will exhibit loyalty behaviors, such as continued purchasing and increased referrals. These loyalty behaviors will generate both market share and profitability increases for the service firm (Heskett et al., 1994, 1997)

The management of quality is a key issue in the management of any hotel property. It has been described as one of the three key areas underpinning corporate success in the hospitality field. The profitability of the operation is seen as being supported by the quality of hospitality services, management and the market. Hotel companies are increasingly aware of the importance of quality and clearly use it in their advertisement and promotion to customers and in the standards of performance set for their employees. Many service organizations develop their own perceptions of what customers want, which often differ from what the customers really want. The purpose of this study is to find out the general services in hotels and measure domestic and international tourist's satisfaction visiting Aksum.

Review of Literature

The business environment keeps changing due to globalization and free trade creating an increase in global competition. In such a competitive business environment managers depend on employees as to how effectively they could cope with unexpected changes. The ability to respond quickly and to satisfy the needs of customer is the success for many companies (Gursoy and Swanger, 2007). Therefore, customer satisfaction has been one of the most frequently examined topics in hospitality tourism literature, to stay competitive and deliver which rewards satisfactory financial returns to the owners and shareholders,

Pallawi B Sangode (2016) conducted a study on customer perception of the Service Quality parameters of hotels in Nagpur Region. Hospitality industry has been witnessing a boom in the country with the ever increasing customer base, and simultaneously the spending capacity of the customer has also been increasing. 7-star and 5-star hotels are increasing in a number of cities in India. This paper revealed that customer perception of the service quality of the restaurants/ hotels in the city was satisfied.

Sathya Swaroop Debasish and Sabyasachi Dey (2015) studied customer perceptions of Service Quality using SERVQUAL Model towards Luxury Hotels in Odisha, India. The research was based on observing the differences between expectation and perception scores of luxury hotels' by capturing the responses from the customers using the questionnaire through improving their quality of service. The study proclaimed that the dimensions of service quality were effective.

Bekele Shifera and Singh Apar (2015) undertook a study on Perceived Service Quality and its Relationship with Customer Loyalty in Ethiopian Hotel Industry. The SERVPERF model was applied to evaluate the perceived service quality of the industry among 321 respondents. The objective was to examine the relationship between perceived service quality and customer loyalty in Ethiopian hotel industry. Quantitative research design was employed to test the developed hypothesis. The result showed that perceived service quality had strong and significant correlation with customer loyalty in Ethiopian hotel industry. Particularly tangibility, assurance, empathy, responsiveness and reliability dimensions had positive and significant association with customer loyalty in Ethiopian hotel industry.

Ibrahim Taylan Dortyol, Inci Varinli and Olgun Kitapci, (2014) aimed to identify tourists' perceptions of services provided by hotels in Antalya, Turkey and to explore hotel service quality dimensions. From the ten service quality dimensions of hotel taken for the study, "tangibles" and "food quality and reliability" influence the customer satisfaction level the most.

Juliana B. Akaegbu (2013) in an exploratory study of Customers' Perception of Pricing of Hotel Service Offerings in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria, The researchers investigated the attributes that affected hotel room pricing based on customers'. Findings showed that the availability of regular electricity and water supply, among other factors were highly perceived by customers in their decisions about pricing of hotel offerings.

Fesseha G/Anania and Mesfin Andargie, (2013) conducted a study on "Foreign Customer Satisfaction in Ethiopian Five Star Hotels, Sheraton Addis, Hilton and Intercontinental Hotels" Service quality model was used with its five dimensions of service quality tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy to estimate the level of foreign customers' expectation and perception of the hotels services. The main findings were that foreign customers were not satisfied by the services of the hotels, more over all services quality dimensions created a gap in their expectation and perception of guests.

Asad Mohsin and Tim Lockyer, (2010) in their study on "Customer perceptions of service quality in luxury hotels in New Delhi, India: an exploratory study", assessed the service quality perception of customers A usable sample of 271 participants resulted with a large majority being male. The results related to front office, room service and in-house café/restaurant, the importance score was statistically significant and higher than the performance rating. Overall, the results indicated significant difference between expectations of the guests and actual experiences.

Hailin Qu , Bill Ryan and Raymond Chu (2008) studied the importance of Hotel Attributes in contributing to Travelers' Satisfaction in the Hong Kong. The researchers surveyed 402 international travelers to explore their satisfaction levels towards service and facility quality in three hotel market segments, High-Tariff A, High-Tariff B and Medium Tariff. Six perception dimensions were extracted from 33 hotel attributes by a factor analysis which had a significant impact on the overall satisfaction of travelers with service quality and facilities in the three hotel market segments. It was found that travelers had the lowest satisfaction level towards the Medium-Tariff hotel segment.

Chun-Min Kuo (2007) studied the **i**mportance of Hotel Employee Service Attitude and the satisfaction of International Tourists. A customer perception approach was taken and emphasized critical factors (elements) of service attitude affecting the satisfaction of international tourists. It was found that the importance of employee attitudes to service and the level of satisfaction with the service varied significantly among customers of different nationalities.

Importance of the Study

A tourist attraction is a place of interest where tourist visit, typically for its inherent or exhibited natural or cultural value, historical significance, natural or built beauty, offering leisure, adventure and amusement. Aksum being a tourist destination attracts both domestic and international tourist throughout the year. Therefore the need for hotel services arises. The hospitality industry comprises a variety of segments including food service, lodging, travel and tourism and meeting and convention planning. Though the hospitality industry has experienced tremendous growth over the past several decades, customer perception is affected by advertising, reviews, public relations, social media, personal experiences and other channels. This study investigated the area - satisfaction of service, customer perceptions and their actual experience at different star categories of hotel felt by domestic and international tourists in Aksum.

Statement of the Problem

Hotels play a significant role in the tourism industry. The need for hotel service is important to make their stay comfortable. The flow of international tourists in Aksum is less when compared to the flow of domestic tourists. Tourist spending their time in Aksum is much lesser than the other destinations in Ethiopia as they mostly visit the church which is believed to hold the Ark of the Covenant. Apart from this there are few tourist attractions like Churches and archaeological museum, Steale Park, Queen Sheba Palace, Queen Sheba bath, Ezana Park, St.Panthaleon Monastery, etc. that may help to elongate their stay at Aksum. Thus the researchers aimed to investigate the reason for visit and services rendered by the

hotels. The study aims to answer the questions:- What is the nationality of the tourists visiting Aksum? What is the purpose of the visit to Aksum? What is their length of stay? How satisfied are the tourists with reference to the Reception and room service?

Objectives

The general objectives of this research are to measure the customers' perceptions on the service they received from the hotel and to measure their satisfaction with the service rendered. The specific objectives are:

1. Highlight the profile of domestic and international customers visiting Aksum
2. Measure the level of satisfaction on Front office and room facilities provided by three star hotels in Aksum

Hypothesis

 H_{01} There is no significant difference between level of satisfaction in front office service with respect to nationality.

Research Methodology

The target population of the study was domestic and international tourist who visited the city of Aksum located in the highlands of Ethiopia, Aksum symbolizes the wealth and importance of the civilization of the ancient Aksumite kingdom with an approximate population of 66,800 (CSA_Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia, 2015). The city has many ancient historical sites which attracts tourists from round the world. The introduction of Christianity in the 4th century AD resulted in the building of churches. In the 17th century of the Gondarian period rebuilt the churches which is believed to hold the Ark of the Covenant. **Research design:** The nature of the study is descriptive. **Sources of data:** The study is based on both primary and secondary data, wherein secondary data collected from books and literature review from online available studies and journals. The primary data is collected from both domestic and international tourist which was determined by random sampling method. Questionnaire survey method was used for collection of data. **Sample and procedure**: From the 450 questionnaires that were sent out, 436 were received back, representing a response rate of 97 %. After elimination of cases having incomplete data and extreme values 425 questionnaires were accepted as valid and included in the evaluations. **Statistical Analysis:** In this study descriptive statistics was used to analyze data that described demographic variables. Frequencies, Percentages, Mean and Standard deviation were utilized for the aim of analysis. One way ANOVA, One sample t-test and Likert Scaling Technique was administered to show the variation domestic and international tourist. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20 version was used to analyze the data collected. The results of analysis were presented in the following sections.

Results and Discussion

Tourist arrival to Aksum

The purpose of presenting the result offers further insight into the hospitality sector of Aksum. The tourists were selected in random at locations within the star category hotels of Aksum. This study investigated the area of customer perceptions and their actual experience at different star categories of hotel felt by guests in Aksum. Table 1 shows the arrival of tourist to Aksum.

Table1-Tourist arrival to Aksum from 1997 to 2005 EC*

Year	Foreign Visitors	Domestic Visitors	Total visitors
1997	9088	10801	19889
1998	9850	12200	22050
1999	10040	14564	24604
2000	12360	16026	28386
2001	14889	17171	32060
2002	18032	22356	40388
2003	19793	23784	43577
2004	18144	24154	42298
2005	19595	29710	49305

Source: Tigray Culture and Tourism Agency, Aksum Cluster (2006 E.C)

* Ethiopian Calendar

There is good progress in the flow of tourists starting from 1997 to 2005 E.C. Due to little improvement in promotion and infrastructure flow of tourists during 2005 EC has reached to 49305 which shows an increasing trend of tourist flow and also the significant tourism development in Aksum city.

Type of Tourist

The World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes". So we can say that a tourist is a person engaged in tourism—travel for

Table 2- Type of Tourist

Type of Tourist	Frequency	Percent
Domestic Tourist	238	56
International Tourist	187	44
Total	425	100

Source: Primary data

recreation, leisure or business purposes. Domestic tourist are those tourist involving residents of one country traveling only within that country while international tourist refers to those tourist that crosses national borders. Globalization has made tourism a popular global leisure activity. Table 2 shows the type of tourist taken for the study. The type of tourist who visited Aksum was both domestic and international tourist. As shown from Table 2 it is evident that 56 percent of the respondents were domestic tourist while 44 percent of the respondents were international tourists.

Nationality of international tourist

International tourism industry as an important economic sector has many of social, cultural and economic impacts on the economy of destination. Today, the positive impact of tourism on economic growth is an important issue in all countries, especially developing countries. It is not only the developing nations that see international tourism as a way to solve their economic

problems, the developed nations also view tourism as beneficial to furthering their economic growth. Tourism can create new jobs as well; the multiplier effect ensuing from this advantage can be considered a factor of economic growth (Sinha2002). The nationality of the respondents with respect to international tourist is given in Table 3

Table 3- Nationality of International Tourist

Country	Frequency	Percent
Australia	2	1.07
Belgium	4	2.14
Djibouti	2	1.07
Dutch	6	3.21
France	2	1.07
Germany	18	9.63
Holland	4	2.14
India	23	12.30
Ireland	2	1.07
Israel	45	24.06
Italy	4	2.14
Kenya	12	6.42
Saudi Arabia	4	2.14
Poland	8	4.28
South Africa	2	1.07
Sudan	35	18.72
Sweden	4	2.14
United Kingdom	10	5.35
Total	187	100.00

Source: Primary data

Tourism has become one of the major players in international commerce. Table 3 shows the nationality of the international tourist's. A high of 24.06 percent of the international respondents belonged to Israel. It was found that 18.72 percent of the international respondents belonged to Sudan followed by 12.30 percent of the international respondents from India. It was also revealed that 9.63 percent of the respondents were from Germany. The study shows that a number of international respondents visited Aksum from many counties round the globe.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demography refers to the vital and measurable statistics of a population. Age, sex, marital status, income, occupation and education are most often used by service providers to segment and locate the target customers. Thus the researcher included the demographic profile. The classification of respondents according to age, gender and marital status is presented in Table 4.

Table 4- Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic characteristics		Frequency N=425	Percent
Age group	Below 25	159	37.4
	25-50	234	55.1
	Above 50	32	7.5
Gender	Male	324	76.2
	Female	101	23.8
Marital status	Single	223	52.5
	Married	202	47.5

Source: Primary data

Age is an important demographic factor that has an influence on hospitality and tourist behavior. Tourists who travel far and wide and interested to visit places often vary with consumers' age. The researcher therefore classified the age group into three categories which were below 25 years, 25-50 years and above 50 years. The age category of respondents taken for the study was presented in Table 4. A high of 55.1 percent were of the age group of 25-50 years. The mean was found to be1.70 and standard deviation was said to be .601.

Like respondents age, gender too has association with willingness to travel. Much of the gender roles have occurred because of continued impact of dual income households. The respondents taken for the study revealed that 76.2 per cent of the respondents were male and 23.8 per cent of the respondents were female. The descriptive statistics of respondent's gender was carried out. The Mean was found to be 1.24 and standard deviation was found to be .426.

With regard to marital status it was found that 52.5 per cent were single and 47.5 percent of the respondents were married. The descriptive statistics of respondent's marital status was carried out. The mean was found to be 1.48 and standard deviation was found to be .500.

Socio-Economic characteristics

A perusal on the socio-economic profile of the tourist respondent's selected from Aksum for the study was conducted. Three parameters such as Educational level, Occupation and Annual income of the respondents were selected and analyzed. The result is presented in Table 5.

Table 5- Socio-Economic characteristics of the respondents

Socio-Economic characteristics		Frequency N=425	Percent
Educational status	School level	29	6.8
	Graduate	166	39.1
	Post graduate	107	25.2
	Professionals	96	22.6
	Others	27	6.4
Occupation	Business	59	13.9
	Private employment	91	21.4
	Government employment	132	31.1
	Professional	88	20.7
	Others	55	12.9
Annual Income	Below 5000 $	247	58.1
	5000 -10000$	68	16
	10000 -15000$	38	8.9
	15000 - 20000 $	53	12.5
	Above 20000$	19	4.5

Source: Primary data

It is inferred from table 5 that 39.1 percent of the respondents were graduates while 31.1 percent of the respondents were employed in the Government sector. More than half of the respondents that is 58.1 percent of the respondents belonged to the income group below 5000 $ per annum.

Visit to Aksum

Aksum is a tourist destination 1024 km from Addis Ababa. Many tourists who visit Ethiopia never fail to visit Aksum because of its ancient historical sites. Apart from tourists there are businessmen, NGO's, Govt. employees and the like who visit Aksum. Therefore the reoccurrence of visiting varies among the respondents. Table 6 shows the respondents total number of visits to Aksum.

The study revealed that 50 percent of the domestic respondents had visited Aksum the fourth time and the least of 12.61 percent of the respondents visited Aksum for the second time. With regard to international tourist a high of 31.55 percent of the respondents visited Aksum for the first time closely followed by 30.48 percent of the respondents who visited Aksum the fourth time. This includes mainly respondents from India 14 (24.56 percent) as they work in Ethiopian Universities; Sudan 12 (21.05 percent) being business men and from Israel 10 (17.54 percent) visited Aksum as a religious tourists. Majority of the domestic respondent's length of stay for 2-3 days was found to be 32.77 percent while the international respondent's length of sat for 1 to 2 days was found to be 66.31.

Table 6 - Visit of the respondents to Aksum

Visit of the respondents to Aksum		Domestic tourists		International tourist	
		Frequency N=238	Percent	Frequency N=187	Percent
Frequency of Visit	First visit	44	18.49	59	31.55
	Second Visit	30	12.61	35	18.72
	Third Visit	45	18.91	36	19.25
	Fourth Visit	119	50.00	57	30.48
Length of Stay	1 Day	33	13.87	12	6.42
	1 – 2 Days	68	28.57	124	66.31
	2 – 3 Days	78	32.77	44	23.53
	Above 3 Days	62	26.05	07	3.74

Source: Primary data

The association between type of tourist and number of visits to Aksum revealed a chi-square value of (3, N=425) = 19.572, $p<.05$. It is thus concluded that there is statistical significant association between the variables type of tourist and number of visits made by the respondents.

Purpose of visit to Aksum

In today's hospitality environment, the true measure of company success lies in an organization's ability to satisfy customers continually. There are a wide variety of tourists who visit Aksum for various reasons like business, site seeing, convention, attending conference or seminars. Table 7 shows the purpose of visits to Aksum by the respondents.

Table 7- The respondents purpose of visit to Aksum

Purpose of Visit	Domestic		International	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Tourist	73	30.67	77	41.18
Convention	50	21.01	31	16.58
Business	52	21.85	50	26.74
Conference	63	26.47	29	15.51
Total	238	100.00	187	100.00

Source: Primary data

From the study it was found that 30.67 percent of the domestic tourist and 41.18 percent of international tourists visited Aksum for tourism purpose. The study revealed that majority of the respondents visited Aksum as a tourist.

The association between type of tourists and purpose of visit to Aksum revealed a chi-square value of (4, N=425) = 11.209, $p<.05$. It is thus concluded that there is statistical significant association between the variables type of tourists and purpose of visit to Aksum.

Customer satisfaction towards Front Office Service

Front office is the nerve centre of a hotel property. Communications and accounting are two of the most important functions of a front desk operation. Effective communication - with guests, employees and other department of the hotel - are paramount in projecting a hospitable image. The plethora of studies with regard to customers' attitudes toward services has focused on perceived customer service satisfaction in hotels. The satisfaction level of respondents on front office service was analyzed under nine variables - using ANOVA to find the significance between the level of satisfaction in front office and nationality. The result is depicted in Table 8.

It is inferred from Table 8 that among the nine variables taken for the study the following three variables: The front office staff are cordial (FO5) $F(1,423) = 0.091$, $p>.05$, The bill is issued free of error (FO8) $F(1,423) = 0.667$ $p>.05$ and The front office staff are courteous, friendly and patient with the customers (FO9) $F(1,423) = 2.912$, $p>.05$ were found to be greater than .05. Hence there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction in front office with respect to nationality of respondents. The study reveals that the remaining six variables: The ambience of the reception is pleasant (FO1) $F(1,423) =12.734$, $p<.05$, The reception room facilities are comfortable (FO2) $F(1,423) =27.003$, $p<.05$ Front office staff are in formal attire (FO3) $F(1,423) =8.82$, $p<.05$, The front office staff have good communication skills (FO4) $F(1,423) =16.839$, $p<.05$, the front office staff are quick in opening the order (FO6) $F(1,423) = 8.554$, $p<.05$, The front office staff provide necessary guidance and information about the hotel (FO7) $F(1,423) = 5.173$, $p<.05$ were found to be lesser than .05. Hence there is significant difference in the level of satisfaction in front office with respect to nationality of respondents.

Table 8- ANOVA on Front Office Service and Nationality of respondents as factor

Front Office Service		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
FO1	Between Groups	9.439	1	9.439	12.734	0.000
	Within Groups	313.558	423	0.741		
	Total	322.998	424			
FO2	Between Groups	26.1	1	26.1	27.003	0.000
	Within Groups	408.855	423	0.967		
	Total	434.955	424			
FO3	Between Groups	8.299	1	8.299	8.82	0.003
	Within Groups	398.021	423	0.941		
	Total	406.32	424			
FO4	Between Groups	16.146	1	16.146	16.839	0.000
	Within Groups	405.609	423	0.959		
	Total	421.755	424			
FO5	Between Groups	0.069	1	0.069	0.091	0.764
	Within Groups	320.087	423	0.757		
	Total	320.155	424			
FO6	Between Groups	7.943	1	7.943	8.554	0.004
	Within Groups	392.773	423	0.929		
	Total	400.715	424			
FO7	Between Groups	5.319	1	5.319	5.173	0.023
	Within Groups	434.917	423	1.028		
	Total	440.235	424			
FO8	Between Groups	0.693	1	0.693	0.667	0.415
	Within Groups	439.627	423	1.039		
	Total	440.32	424			
FO9	Between Groups	2.838	1	2.838	2.912	0.089
	Within Groups	412.301	423	0.975		
	Total	415.139	424			

Source: Computed data

Customer satisfaction towards room facilities

Hotels provide a greater sense of warmth and individuality. Hotels offer full services to the guest such as room service, dining room, gift shop, beauty shop and the like. The main facilities looked by the respondents in a clean comfortable room to rest, access to food and entertainment facilities and a courteous and concerned staff. The room is expected to have an area for socializing and meeting other people, access to stores and shops and a secure surrounding. Table 9 shows the satisfaction of the respondents regarding room facilities of the star hotels in Aksum.

The t-test for customer satisfaction towards room facilities revealed that the mean value for all the twelve variables (RF1) The cot/mattress/pillow are of expected standard t (425) = -23.791 , p < 0.05, (RF2) The bed linens, towels, blankets are hygienic t (425) =-22.151 , p < 0.05 ,(RF3) The furniture in the room are in good condition t (425) = -23.462, p < 0.05, (RF4) the luggage racks/ cupboard are sufficient t (425) = -19.995, p < 0.05, (RF5) the room has a good night lamp t (425) =-17.265 , p < 0.05, (RF6) The TV and audio system function well t (425) =- 16.975, p < 0.05,

Table 9- One-Sample t-Test measuring mean towards room facilities

Room Service	One-Sample Statistics			Test Value = 3		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
RF1	425	1.95	0.913	-23.791	424	0.000
RF2	425	2.00	0.933	-22.151	424	0.000
RF3	425	1.95	0.926	-23.462	424	0.000
RF4	425	2.06	0.966	-19.995	424	0.000
RF5	425	2.12	1.048	-17.265	424	0.000
RF6	425	2.10	1.094	-16.975	424	0.000
RF7	425	2.54	1.232	-7.639	424	0.000
RF8	425	2.22	1.207	-13.308	424	0.000
RF9	425	1.87	1.041	-22.357	424	0.000
RF10	425	1.99	0.94	-22.076	424	0.000
RF11	425	2.16	1.078	-16.058	424	0.000
RF12	425	2.16	1.134	-15.273	424	0.000

Source: Computed data

(RF7) Mosquito nets are of good condition t (425) =-7.639, p < 0.05, (RF8) The room has internet/ wi-fi facilities t (425) =-13.308, p < 0.05, (RF9) The attached bath cum toilets are cleaned every day t (425) =-22.357, p < 0.05, (RF10) The wash basin is maintained well t (425) = -22.076 , p < 0.05 , (RF11) the room is supplied with necessary kits t (425) = -16.058 , p < 0.05, (RF12) The lock system/safe deposit box are in good condition t (425) = -15.273, p < 0.05 was found to be lesser than the hypothesized mean value.

To measure the level of satisfaction of the respondents Likert Scoring technique was applied. The results are presented in table 10.

The twelve variables were used to measure the respondents' satisfaction towards room services. All the variables taken for the study was found to be above the mid value 1275.

Hence it is concluded that the respondents were highly satisfied with the room facilities offered to them during their stay.

Table 10- Likert Score measuring customer satisfaction towards room facilities

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Likert Score
RF1	750	724	201	42	6	1723
RF2	685	760	210	36	10	1701
RF3	780	664	243	28	8	1723
RF4	670	684	267	42	10	1673
RF5	685	640	237	74	12	1648
RF6	750	600	228	62	18	1658
RF7	525	456	330	124	34	1467
RF8	770	460	270	80	26	1606
RF9	1000	500	213	26	16	1755
RF10	740	660	261	34	8	1703
RF11	690	584	273	70	15	1632
RF12	745	528	279	58	22	1632

Source: Computed data   (Mid Value = 425*3 = 1275).

Findings

The clearest implications from this study for hotelier are by meeting or exceeding the customers' satisfaction. The study has brought out the following significant findings:

There is good progress in the flow of tourists starting from 1997 to 2005 E.C. because of the promotion and infrastructural development. It is evident that 56 percent of the respondents were domestic tourist while 44 percent of the respondents were international tourists. The length of stay of the respondents was on an average two-three days only.

The number of international respondents who visited Aksum was found to be from many countries round the globe. A high of 24.06 percent of the international respondents belonged to Israel. With regard to marital status it was found that 52.5 per cent were single and 47.5 percent of the respondents were married. More than half the respondents (58.1 percent) belonged to the income group of below 5000 $ per annum.

Domestic respondents had visited Aksum the fourth time while majority of the international tourists visited Aksum for the first time. Both the domestic and international respondents mainly visited Aksum as a tourist. One sample t-Test revealed that the nationality of respondents and the level of satisfaction in front office was found to be significantly different. Accoring to Likert Score the respondents were highly satisfied with the room facilities offered to them during their stay in Aksum.

Recommendations

The researchers recommended the following

Aksum has around six standard three star hotels. As there is an increase in the tourists flow to Aksum more number of star and international hotels can be developed.

The length of stay for the tourist can be elongated by identifying more tourist attractions in and around Aksum.

Guest perceptions must be regularly monitored by the hotels through personal interviews, questionnaires, qualitative assessments, return visit records and other means to know and meet the needs of both domestic and international customers.

Conclusion

Through promotional campaign hotels assure many services of high standard. Tourists respond to these campaign and stay in such hotels. The hotel services must be delivered once the customer enters the portals of the hotel. The customers not only seek the quality of the service rendered by the hotels but more important the employees who render the service too. Since, hotels engaged in rendering personal services they deal directly with guests. Therefore, they have to be highly perceptive to customer's desires and attitudes.

The present study depicted the perception of domestic and international tourists towards hotel service in Aksum. The respondents in every area like front office operations, hotel design and ambience, food and beverage service, housekeeping, bar services, laundry services value quality services. The analysis had showed that the respondents were delighted with the room facilities offered to them during their stay. However among domestic and international respondents the level of satisfaction with regard to front office was found to be significantly different.

Limitations

Notably, the limitations of the study are as follows:

The result of the study represents response of the tourists to Aksum during the data collection period only. Hence it does not imply for the entire season.

The respondents were drawn from different nations and hence their perception and expectations differ considerably.

Scope for Further Research

This study focused on Front office and room facilities provided by star hotels. Therefore further research can be extended on service areas of food and beverage services, bar services, laundry services, room services, housekeeping services, transportation services and travel guides.

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