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METHODS FOR ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF HOTEL SERVICES

The article, based on various sources, interprets methods for assessing the quality of hotel services. It determines that methods for assessing the constituent elements of service quality are based on the result and process of the service provision and identification of the quality characteristics of the service related to the conditions of service.

The article systematizes the key parameters used to calculate the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI), and also conducts a correlation and regression analysis of the relationship between the total income of hotels and hotel-type enterprises in the Republic of Azerbaijan and wages paid to employees.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, index, hotel, model, regression analysis, correlation, regression, digital transformation.

Table. 1. Figur. 2. Lit. 10.

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МЕТОДИ ОЦІНКИ ЯКОСТІ ГОТЕЛЬНИХ ПОСЛУГ

У статті з урахуванням різних джерел трактуються методи оцінки якості готельних послуг. При цьому визначено, що методи оцінки складових елементів якості послуги ґрунтуються на визначенні якісних характеристик послуги, пов'язаних із результатом та процесом надання послуги, умовами обслуговування.

У статті систематизовано основні параметри, що використовуються для розрахунку Індексу задоволеності клієнтів (ІКУ), а також проведено кореляційно-регресійний аналіз залежності між загальними доходами готелів та підприємств готельного типу в Азербайджанській Республіці та заробітною платою, яку виплачують працівники. працівників було проведено.

Ключові слова: задоволеність клієнтів, індекс, готель, модель, регресійний аналіз, кореляція, регресія, цифрова трансформація.

Introduction. In the context of digital transformation, the service sector of the world economy has an important role to play in shaping the key macroeconomic indicators of the country's economy. Research shows that the development of the service sector is associated not only with its contribution to the formation of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), the creation of new jobs to ensure employment of the population, as well as the reduction of unemployment, but also with the provision of quality services to the population. The development of the service sector provides ample opportunities to create added value for the country's service sector and agriculture and enhance the quality of life, as well as improve the equal investment climate while achieving competitiveness in international trade in services. The development of the service sector fundamentally depends on quality management in this area. It is worthy of note that the theory and methodology of quality management in the service sector is still in its infancy. Research reveals that researchers pays special attention to developing a methodology for assessing service quality, which can be

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considered as a necessary component of the quality management function, for example, at the service life cycle stage, as well as control. All this, on the one hand, is more consistent with the general logic of the development of quality management based on control. On the other hand, due to the intangible nature of services, the collection and analysis of qualitative data is often the only source of information about the current state of the management object and its visualization. It can be further noted that the task of developing a unified methodology for assessing the quality of services in the field of studying quality management problems in the service sector has not yet been solved.

Main part. Research indicates that it is more appropriate to classify all methods for assessing the quality of services according to two main criteria. Since the first sign of classification is the object of assessment, its assessment can be grouped into three methods:

- methods for assessing the components of service quality;
- methods for assessing consumer experience;
- methods for assessing customer satisfaction.

The second classification feature characterizes the purpose of methods for assessing the quality of service and allows dividing the methods into the following three groups:

- methods for collecting information about the quality of services;
- quality assessment methods for forming a conclusion about the quality's compliance with reference or standard values;
- combined methods, including methods for collecting, processing and interpreting information about the quality of service.

Methods for assessing the quality of services must be used in conjunction with the formation of a unified methodology for assessing quality as one of the most important management tools.

Methods for assessing the constituent elements of service quality are based on result and process of service provision, and the use of a certain set of service quality characteristics related to the service conditions. The most common method for assessing the quality of services, which retains its leading importance in the modern era, is the SERVQUAL method, proposed by A. Parasuraman, L. Berry and V. Zeithaml in 1985. This method is mainly based on the following two important assumptions [4, 5, 6, 7]:

- the first assumption shows that the consumer rates the quality of the service by comparing their expectations with the perception of the quality of the service;
- the essence of the second assumption is that the consumer rates the quality of a service from the viewpoint of its individual elements, i.e. importance, reliability, sensitivity, trust.

Quality assessment consists of two stages. Consumers use a seven-point Likert scale to rate their overall expectations and perceptions of the above five components of service quality based on 4 or 5 questions for each component. Responses are scored in the form "strongly disagree" or "strongly agree". Based on a comparison of expectations and perceptions, quality coefficients are calculated for each component, and a global service quality coefficient is formed based on the average value method.

The results of quality assessment using the SERVQUAL methodology are interpreted. A zero value of any of the quality coefficients means that the level of quality

expectation and the level of quality perception coincide according to this criterion or subcriterion. Negative values indicate that the level of expectations exceeds the level of perception. Finally, positive values indicate that perceived quality exceeds expectations.

Note that the authors conducted 9 years of research to arrive at the final version of the 22-question questionnaire, which became a standard by 1994. Conducting research using this methodology allows identifying the reasons for the low quality of services, which are called inconsistencies. These include inconsistency of knowledge, inconsistency of standards, inconsistency of service provision, inconsistency of internal communications, inconsistency of perception, inconsistency of interpretation and inconsistency of services [3, p. 48]. In response to these shortcomings, researchers have proposed a number of methods for assessing service quality based on the SERVQUAL method. Currently, more than thirty of its variants are known, adapted for different types of services. LODGSERV methods are widely used for the hotel business, DINESERV for catering services, and also quality scale for retail services. Modifications of the method have also been developed for healthcare, banking, telecommunications services, library and information services, police and a number of other areas. Recently, research aimed at determining the influence of the characteristics of the national mentality on expectations and perceptions related to the quality of service, as well as understanding the components of service quality, has become widespread. Modifications of the SERVQUAL method are recognized for countries such as Turkey, Australia, Canada, Croatia, India, USA, Korea, Hong Kong, Belgium, UAE, and Spain [5,6].

Currently, the method of calculating the Consumer Satisfaction Index (CSI), developed by specialists from the Stockholm School of Economics in 1989, is also widely used globally. This index is based on the use of two methods: telephone conversations with representative samples of consumers and econometric modeling.

It is worthy of note that the Consumer Satisfaction Index is used as one of the parameters for the long-term forecast of profitability and market value of companies, industries and the economy as a whole, and allows determining the causes and factors of consumer satisfaction and loyalty. The Customer Satisfaction Index is based on the ratings of three parameters shown in Table 1. This rating is determined on an intermediate scale from 1 to 10 [6, 7].

Table 1. Parameters used to calculate the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI), [6, 7]

Evaluation parameters	Evaluation criteria with 1 point	Evaluation criterion with 10 points
Overall customer satisfaction (X1)	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
Meeting Expectations (X2)	Doesn't meet expectations	Exceeds expectations
Comparison with an ideal organization/service (X3)	Not very close to ideal	Very close to ideal

The average value of individual points is used to calculate the index using the following formula:

$$\text{CSI} = \frac{(x_1 - 1)K_1 + (x_2 - 1)K_2 + (x_3 - 1)K_3}{9} \times 100 \quad (1)$$

Where, K_1, K_2 and K_3 are the weighting coefficients used in calculating the index. Note that the weights used to calculate the index vary depending on the industry. In the United States, this index is calculated annually for more than 225 companies, 45 industries, 10 sectors of economic activity and the economy as a whole. The accumulation of the main indices of satisfaction of companies at the industry level and above is carried out on the basis of the company's market share, the industry's contribution to the sector's income and the industry's contribution to the country's GDP [7]. Although the index is used to assess the satisfaction of consumers from products and services, it seems more obvious that it has a methodological basis taken from service quality management and combines the features of SERVQUAL, SERVPERF and standardized quality methods [5, 6].

Although the Consumer Satisfaction Index has a subjective basis, it is used for comparative purposes and acts as a macroeconomic indicator used to assess the impact of generalized consumer satisfaction on the state of the country's economy, including GDP growth and changes in consumer prices. All the methods we have considered, which differ in the objects of assessment, can be classified as combined, since they include procedures for collecting and processing data [1, 2, 3, 4].

The methods listed above are applicable to quality management in almost any service organization. They allow covering external and internal consumers, as well as the activities of competitors, determine the ability to document all potentially failed elements of the service system and generate feedback both on individual operations and on the quality of the service as a whole. The variety of methods for assessing the quality of services and the complexity of their systematization are associated with the following features:

1. The very subjectivity of assessing the quality of services, when assessments can be made by consumers, service workers, experts, organization management, competitors and other interested parties. Comparing the assessments of consumers and service providers allows taking corrective actions and determining how well the service provider's activities meet consumer requirements.

2. Multi-criteria assessment, when it is determined that the quality of the service meets the requirements of internal and external documents and the wishes of all interested parties.

3. Large number of evaluation objects related to the multicomponent composition of the service product.

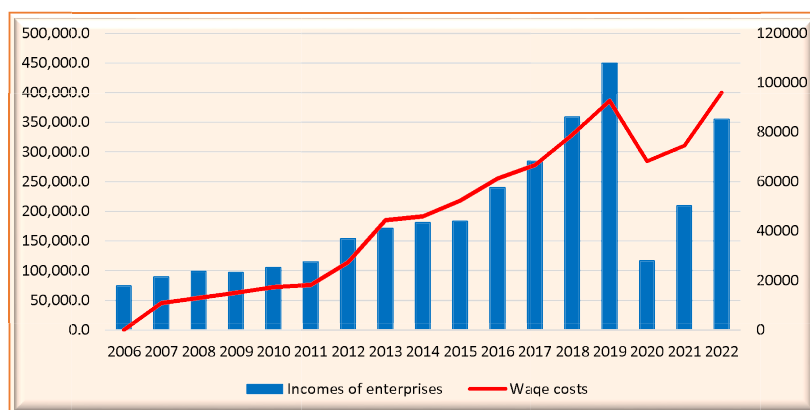
4. The integral nature of the assessment, which requires the timely combination of operational technological control and quality assessment methods by the consumer, due to the parallel processes of provision and consumption of many types of services.

5. The predominant qualitative nature of the assessment is due to the insufficient availability of quantitative objective data about the service. The difficulty of assessing quality parameters is mainly due to bottlenecks associated with formalization, generalization and analysis of assessment criteria.

6. Heterogeneity of services, when evaluation criteria, depending on the type of service, may differ both in priority and in the set of indicators included in them. For example, there is no need to always pay more attention to interior design solutions and customer information support.

Therefore, when choosing methods for assessing qualitative indicators, as opposed to quantitative ones, it is necessary to determine the scope of their application, unless such specification is required due to the rather impersonal nature of evaluation indicators.

Research reveals that one of the main factors for improving the quality of hotel services is associated with an increase in employee wages, bonuses and social expenses. An increase in these costs enhances customer satisfaction, influencing the improvement of the quality of hotel services, and provides an increase in hotels income. The Figure below shows the total income of hotels and hotel-type enterprises in the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as the cost of wages paid to employees.



Figur 1. Total income of hotels and hotel-type enterprises in the Republic of Azerbaijan and wages paid to employees, in M manats, compiled based on data [8]

As the Figure indicates, the total income of hotels and hotel-type enterprises in the Republic of Azerbaijan showed growth dynamics for 2006-2019. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, incomes decreased to 116.8 M manats in 2020, but increased in subsequent years to 355.3 M manats in 2022. In accordance with the income received from all types of services, wages paid to employees changed with the same dynamics and decreased in 2020 compared to 2019, and in subsequent years increased to 74.6 M manats in 2022. These scenarios assume that incomes of hotels and hotel-type enterprises are closely tied to employee wages. From this viewpoint, if we build a graph in MS Excel in order to conduct a correlation and regression analysis of the relationship between these indicators, we will get the result as follows.

As the Figure shows, there is a high correlation between the total income of hotels and hotel-type enterprises in the Republic of Azerbaijan and the wages paid to employees, expressed through a linear regression equation $y=3.236X+4235$. It indicates that an increase in the wages of hotel employees in Azerbaijan by one unit leads to an increase in the total income of this sector by 3.34 units.



Figure 2. Relationship of the total income of hotels and hotel-type enterprises in the Republic of Azerbaijan with wages paid to employees, compiled based on data [8]

Conclusions and Offers. The research identified specific characteristics resulting from the variety of methods for assessing the quality of hotel services and the complexity of their systematization. The key parameters used to calculate the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) were also selected, with the interpretation of the methodology for their assessment.

Research work established that one of the main factors to improve the quality of hotel services is increasing employee wages, bonuses and social expenses. An increase in these expenses in hotel-type enterprises in Azerbaijan leads to a greater increase in total income.

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