

A

# Analysis of Service Quality through Two Dimensions in Hotels and Resorts

Aswin Sangpikul<sup>1,\*</sup>

---

*Received: August 21, 2020 Revised: September 28, 2020 Accepted: November 30, 2020*

## Abstract

Scholars and hotel practitioners are likely to understand that the assessment of service quality of accommodation business is made through one dimension, which is customers' personal opinions. In fact, through further analysis, it can be done through two dimensions, which are personal opinions and fact-based opinions. This academic article aims to expand the knowledge and to give the better understanding of the two dimensions of service quality by reviewing the literature, analyzing related past studies, and giving examples of the two dimensions of hotel service quality. The benefit of the article will assist scholars and hotel practitioners to better understand about these two dimensions (subjective and objective attributes) through the assessment of customers' personal opinions and fact-based opinions. It is hoped that scholars and hotel practitioners may apply this knowledge to reflect the real service quality in hotels and resorts thoroughly. The information from the two sources will enhance hotel managers' ability to develop or improve the service quality that can meet customer expectations and create customer satisfaction.

**Keywords:** service quality, subjective, objective, assessment, hotel, resort

---

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality, Dhurakij Pundit University

\* Corresponding author. E-mail: aswin.sal@dpu.ac.th



## การวิเคราะห์คุณภาพการบริการแบบ 2 มิติ ในธุรกิจโรงแรมและรีสอร์ท

อัศวิน แสงพิกุล<sup>1,\*</sup>

วันรับบทความ: August 21, 2020 วันแก้ไขบทความ: September 28, 2020 วันตอบรับบทความ: November 30, 2020

### บทคัดย่อ

ที่ผ่านมา นักวิชาการและผู้ประกอบการส่วนใหญ่มักเข้าใจว่าการประเมินคุณภาพการบริการของธุรกิจที่พักแรมมักประเมินจากความคิดเห็นส่วนตัวของลูกค้าเพียงมิติเดียว แต่ในความจริงแล้ว หากนักวิชาการได้วิเคราะห์อย่างลึกซึ้ง จะพบว่า การประเมินคุณภาพการบริการของธุรกิจที่พักแรมสามารถแบ่งออกเป็น 2 มิติ ได้แก่ ความคิดเห็นส่วนตัว และ ความคิดเห็นเชิงข้อเท็จจริง ดังนั้น บทความวิชาการเรื่องนี้ จึงมีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อขยายความรู้และให้ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับการประเมินคุณภาพการบริการแบบ 2 มิติ ในธุรกิจที่พักแรม โดยเนื้อหาของบทความมีการทบทวนวรรณกรรม วิเคราะห์งานวิจัยที่เกี่ยวข้อง และให้ตัวอย่างประกอบในเรื่องดังกล่าว เพื่อให้ประโยชน์แก่นักวิชาการและผู้ประกอบการได้เข้าใจถึงการประเมินคุณภาพการบริการแบบ 2 มิติ คือ การประเมินโดยอาศัยข้อมูลจากความคิดเห็นส่วนตัวของลูกค้าและความคิดเห็นเชิงข้อเท็จจริงเกี่ยวกับการให้บริการของธุรกิจที่พักแรม โดยหวังว่าความรู้จากบทความเรื่องนี้ นักวิชาการและผู้ประกอบการจะสามารถนำไปประยุกต์ใช้เพื่อประเมินคุณภาพการบริการของธุรกิจที่พักแรมให้มีความเหมาะสมกับความหลากหลายของการบริการ ซึ่งจะช่วยให้ผู้ประกอบการสามารถพัฒนาหรือปรับปรุงคุณภาพการบริการให้เป็นไปตามความคาดหวังและสร้างความพึงพอใจให้แก่ลูกค้ามากยิ่งขึ้น

**คำสำคัญ:** คุณภาพการบริการ ความคิดเห็นส่วนตัว ความคิดเห็นเชิงข้อเท็จจริง โรงแรม รีสอร์ท

<sup>1</sup> คณะการท่องเที่ยวและการโรงแรม มหาวิทยาลัยธุรกิจบัณฑิต

\* Corresponding author. E-mail: aswin.sal@dpu.ac.th

## Introduction

The hotel industry is one of the highly service-oriented businesses because their main products are the “services” or “intangibles” by providing customers with the services of rooms, food and beverage, and other facilities. In order to provide these services to customers, there are service encounters or direct interaction between employees and customers at the hotels. Most hotel services are strongly affected by employees and their performance to deliver the services as customers expect, for example, fast check-in/check-out, a comfortable room, a good restaurant with tasty food, and a relaxing swimming pool. Customers usually judge about the quality of these services from what they expect and what they actually receive from the hotels through the performance of hotel employees (Ali, 2015; Lai & Hitchcock, 2016). Customer perceptions on the actual performance of hotel employees (e.g., friendliness, prompt service, cleanliness, caring employees) are regarded as the quality of hotel services or what is called “service quality”. If customers perceive the services delivered to them are better than what they expect, they will regard that the hotel has high service quality. In contrast, if the delivered services are lower or poorer than what they expect, this may lead to customer dissatisfaction, and may affect their intention to repurchase. Given this fact, service quality becomes an important element of the hotel industry in order to deliver the services that meet customer expectations, and lead to their satisfaction.

Due to the importance of service quality in the hotel industry, scholars and hotel practitioners widely use service quality to measure the quality of hotel services. However, it has been observed that the measurements of hotel service quality are usually conducted through one dimension only, which is customers’ personal opinions/feelings (subjective dimension). If we further analyze inside of the service quality from past studies, there was a clue that the attributes (items) of hotel service quality could be classified into two dimensions, which were subjective and objective attributes. In other words, the assessment items of hotel service quality can be made through customers’ personal opinions (subjective attribute) and customers’ fact-based opinions (objective attribute). For example, some studies asked customers regarding the professionalism and politeness of hotel employees (Ali, 2015; Grobelna & Marciszewska, 2013). These attributes are mostly judged by customers’ personal opinions or feelings about such services. In contrast, some studies asked customers regarding hotel’s cleanliness and the prompt services from hotel employees (Tamagni, Micheli, & Zanfardini, 2003). The latter attributes are more likely to be judged through the fact of the services because customers can easily indicate the fact of these services. With these clues,

it can be argued that the assessment items of hotel service quality can be furthered classified into two dimensions. Unfortunately, rare efforts have discussed these issues in the hotel industry. Further examination of this assumption will yield a greater understanding of service quality and its proper implementations in hotel industry for better service improvement.

Given this knowledge gap in the literature, this academic article has a purpose to expand the knowledge and to give a better understanding of the two dimensions of service quality in the hotel industry, which are subjective and objective attributes. In order to achieve this purpose, this article needs to analyze the literature mainly regarding service quality in hotel studies with the following sub-topics: 1) identifying the gap of service quality measurement from past studies; 2) classifying service quality items into two dimensions (subjective and objective); 3) analyzing the subjective and objective dimensions within the service quality domains; and 4) discussing the application and examples of using the subjective and objective dimensions to measure hotel service quality.

The benefit of the article will assist scholars and hotel practitioners to better understand these two dimensions (subjective and objective attributes) through the assessment of customers' personal opinions and fact-based opinions. With the two dimensions of service quality, scholars and hotel practitioners may apply and modify the assessment items of service quality more appropriately. In particular, hotel practitioners can design the assessment items in a way that is appropriate for a wide range of hotel services (reception, rooms, restaurants, meeting services) or their special services (health & wellness services, recreational/sport services). A hotel that implements both subjective and objective dimensions in the assessment of service quality will be more likely to gain better service improvement than others due to receiving more reliable customer feedback than one approach (Sangpikul, 2020). In particular, understanding both customers' personal feelings and fact-based opinions about the services will give two mirrors (reflections) for hotels to obtain deeper and more accurate information from customers, leading to better service improvement. In order to understand the whole article, there are three parts in the following sections: general information about hotel service quality, the analyses of related literature based on each topic, and conclusion.

## **General Information about Hotel Service Quality**

### ***Hotel and Its Services***

The hotel industry (or lodging industry), is one of the main sectors of the tourism industry. Its main products are the services relating to accommodation, food and beverage, meeting and

convention, and other facilities. It is generally argued that the services of the hotels are made up of a combination of tangible and intangible elements (Lockwood, 1997). Hotel tangibles are generally perceived through the provision of physical attributes such as lobby, guest rooms, food and beverage outlets, meeting rooms, and recreational facilities. Guests usually expect to experience the quality of these tangible attributes based on hotel categories or hotel standards (e.g., one- to five-star hotels). These physical attributes are generally similar among hotels in the same category. However, the intangible element or what we call “service” is argued to be an important factor for hotel success as it can influence customer satisfaction and re-patronage or loyalty (Grobelna & Marciszewska, 2013; Lai & Hitchcock, 2016). The intangible element or the service in hotel industry is the action of helping or facilitating guests through the provision of rooms, food and beverage, and other facilities. The intangible attribute is mainly concerned with an interaction or a direct contact between employees and customers occurring during the stay. This attribute also relates to employees’ personalities, manners, and their performance in welcoming, taking care of, or assisting customers during their stay in hotels. Guests usually perceive the intangible attributes through, for example, employees’ friendliness, attentiveness, responsiveness, and personalized services (Powers & Barrows, 2006).

In the lodging industry, hotels and resorts are the two key players in the industry as there are a large number of these establishments located throughout the country than any other lodging establishments (e.g., homestays, guesthouses). This article, therefore, will mainly discuss service quality in relation to hotel and resort sectors. Both of them mainly offer similar products and services such as rooms, food and beverage, business facilities, and recreational activities. However, resorts are different from hotels in terms of property size, target customers, location, and environment. Most hotels are usually bigger properties (e.g., number of rooms), and located in urban areas serving a wide range of customers, while resorts are usually smaller properties, and located far away from cities and close to tourist attractions. Tourists who stay at resorts usually seek them for vacations and engage in leisure and recreational activities including health-related activities (e.g., spa and sports). The resort accommodations may be argued to be the places that can promote people’s well-being and the better quality of life due to the relaxing and less stressful atmosphere (Ali, 2015; Gee, 2000). Yet, both hotels and resorts are still in the service sector, which relies heavily on the intangible attribute by providing customers with quality services through employees’ performance and contact with guests. In order to provide the quality services, it is necessary for the hotels to provide customers with the services that consistently meet and exceed customers’ expectations (Powers & Barrows, 2006), and this is the focus of service quality.

### ***Concept of Service Quality***

One approach to evaluate the quality of hotel services is through service quality, which is defined as an evaluation of the difference between expectations and performances along the quality dimensions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). In other words, service quality is a comparison of expectations of a service with perceived performance (Lewis & Booms, 1983; Lo, Wu & Tsai, 2015; Parasuraman et al., 1988). It is a concept that describes the evaluation of how well a delivered service meets customer expectations (Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015; Lo et al., 2015).

In order to measure service quality in a hotel setting, scholars and hotel practitioners usually use the SERVQUAL model, a multi-dimensional research instrument designed to measure consumer expectations and perceptions of hotel services through 5 domains (Parasuraman et al., 1988): 1) reliability, 2) assurance, 3) tangibility, 4) empathy, and 5) responsiveness. The SERVQUAL model was established on an expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1981). It measured a difference or disconfirmation between customers' expectations of service performance and the actual service received (Lewis & Booms, 1983; Parasuraman et al., 1988). According to the literature (Oliver, 1981; Parasuraman et al., 1988), when performance is exceeded or is better than expected, positive disconfirmation is the result (likely satisfactory). In contrast, when performance is less or lower than expected, negative disconfirmation occurs (less satisfactory). These five domains may be referred as the RATER model (an abbreviation from the first letter of each of the five dimensions), and each of them is as follows:

1. Reliability: ability to perform service accurately and to provide the service as promised
2. Assurance: ability to inspire trust, confidence, and credibility
3. Tangibles: appearance of environment, physical facilities, and appearance of personnel
4. Empathy: ability to provide caring service or individual attention
5. Responsiveness: willingness to assist customers and provide prompt service

Given the merits of the SERVQUAL model, past studies of the lodging industry have implemented it to find out more results of customers' perceptions on service quality in different perspectives (e.g., Grobelna & Marciszewska, 2013; Tamagni et al., 2003). However, these studies may have overlooked further discussion about the assessment items of service quality in terms of subjective and objective dimensions. Understanding these additional attributes of service quality will assist scholars and hotel practitioners to implement the assessment items of service quality more appropriately for better service improvement. To fully understand these attributes, it is

necessary to identify the gap of service quality measurement from past studies in the next section, helping to better understand the background of the two dimensions of service quality.

## Identifying the Gap of Service Quality Measurement from Past Studies

First, the two terms “subjective” and “objective” should be understood. According to *the Cambridge Dictionary* (2020), subjective is related to personal beliefs or feelings, rather than based on facts, while objective is based on facts and not influenced by personal beliefs or feelings. In other words, facts are usually claimed to be objective while personal opinions are relatively subjective (Chigot, 2005; Rasdi, Ismail & Garavan, 2011).

This part aims to identify the gap of service quality measurement from past studies in order to give the background of the two dimensions of service quality. In relation to past studies about service quality, the review of literature indicates that most of them usually measured hotel service quality by mixing the subjective and objective assessment items in their studies (e.g. Ali, 2015; Grobelna & Marciszewska, 2013; Tamagni et al., 2003). This may be because there is limited literature discussing these dimensions of service quality. However, as mentioned earlier, there was evidence of measuring the subjective and objective dimensions in hotel service quality from past studies. For example, in a study of Ali (2015), there were some statements which subjectively asked customers regarding the friendliness and helpfulness of resort employees; meanwhile, customers were also objectively asked if the resort provided a variety of food items and menus in a restaurant. Similarly, Grobelna and Marciszewska (2013) used some subjective statements to ask customers regarding the courtesy and politeness of hotel employees, while they also objectively asked customers if the hotel provided customers with the promised services. In order to better understand the above argument, next section will classify service quality items from past studies into the two dimensions of subjective and objective attributes.

## Classifying Service Quality Items into Two Dimensions (Subjective and Objective Attributes)

To further understand the two dimensions of hotel service quality, this part aims to present the assessment items from past studies, and classify them into the subjective and objective dimensions as shown in Table 1. As can be inferred from the *Cambridge Dictionary* (2020) definition, subjective dimension is more inclined to be perceived by customers’ personal feelings/emotions about the services (how I feel about the services), whereas the objective dimension

is more likely to be perceived through the fact of the services (what I can evidently identify/ indicate from the services).

**Table 1** Analyzing and Categorizing Hotel Service Quality into Subjective and Objective Dimensions

Sources	Assessment Items (No Categorization of Service Quality Dimensions)	Categorization of Subjective Dimension (Personal Feeling)	Categorization of Objective Dimension (Fact-based Opinion)
Tamagni et al. (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employee's friendliness</li> <li>- Breakfast quality</li> <li>- Comfortable bed</li> <li>- Availability of parking</li> <li>- Promptness of services</li> <li>- Convenient location of hotel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employee's friendliness</li> <li>- Breakfast quality</li> <li>- Comfortable bed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of parking</li> <li>- Promptness of services</li> <li>- Availability of Internet services</li> </ul>
Grobelna and Marciszewska (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Modern hotel facilities</li> <li>- Professionalism of hotel employees</li> <li>- Courtesy and politeness of hotel employees</li> <li>- Convenient operating hours of hotel services</li> <li>- Employees' ability to answer customer's questions correctly</li> <li>- Providing prompt services to customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Modern hotel facilities</li> <li>- Professionalism of hotel employees</li> <li>- Courtesy and politeness of hotel employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convenient operating hours of hotel services</li> <li>- Employees' ability to answer customer's questions correctly</li> <li>- Providing prompt services to customers</li> </ul>
Lai and Hitchcock (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friendliness of staff</li> <li>- Comfortable and relaxing environment</li> <li>- Quality of food in restaurants</li> <li>- Quick check-in and check-out</li> <li>- Performing the services at the time promised</li> <li>- Quietness of room</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friendliness of staff</li> <li>- Comfortable and relaxing environment</li> <li>- Quality of food in restaurants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quick check-in and check-out</li> <li>- Performing the services at the time promised</li> <li>- Quietness of room</li> </ul>



According to Table 1, a review of the literature indicates that past studies may have overlooked the classification or the categorization of hotel service quality into the subjective and objective items in their studies (no categorization). All items seemed to be mixed together, and no effort has addressed these additional dimensions of service quality in their studies. In particular, it seemed that all items were more likely to be evaluated from customers' personal feeling/emotions about hotels' services due to the lack of discussion about this issue before. However, this article has analyzed and categorized the assessment items from past studies into the subjective and objective dimensions of service quality. The detail in Table 1 will benefit scholars and hotel practitioners to have a greater understanding about the nature of service quality that contains the dimensions (attributes). They may apply this knowledge to design, modify, or even balance the assessment items of service quality more properly and thoroughly within their businesses. A well-designed assessment or instrument from the two dimensions of service quality will help scholars and hotel practitioners to receive more information/feedback from customers than one approach (subjective aspect), like having two mirrors. The information from two sources is certainly better or superior than from one source as they will complement each other to provide wider and reliable feedback/results (Sangpikul, 2020).

Indeed, several studies examined subjective and objective assessments in other disciplines such as human resource management, public administration, and applied sciences. As mentioned, the terms "subjective" and "objective", based on the *Cambridge Dictionary* (2020) definition, have basic meanings that refer to personal feelings versus facts. Therefore, a number of scholars have widely used them to find out appropriate answers, methods or solutions to their studies. They have used subjective and objective approaches (e.g., methods or information) in different aspects and purposes, for example, to measure work quality, to improve work performance, or to measure the achievement of the projects. For instance, Rasdi et al. (2011) examined the factors influencing objective and subjective career success of Malaysian managers working in the public sector. The objective career success was measured by fact-based judgment on salary, bonus, vacations and other benefits, while the subjective career success was assessed by respondents' personal perception on work position, job responsibility and job satisfaction. Their study found that the objective and subjective career success of Malaysian managers in the public sector was influenced by different factors such as individual factors (e.g., self-efficacy, self-esteem, career aspirations) and organizational factors (e.g., organizational support and organizational socialization). Their study highlighted the importance of combining both objective and subjective measures to

fully understand career success. Another study by Liu, He and Xu (2019) used the subjective and objective information to assess the progress of government/private partnership projects in China. To assess the project advancement, a reasonable assessment method was required. The researchers used a combination of subjective and objective information to calculate the attribute weights for the evaluation. The subjective information was collected through interviews with project stakeholders regarding their personal opinions (good, medium, bad), while the objective information was collected through the numbers (statistical reports) from websites. The study revealed that 19 projects in China had different levels of advancement, and required government monitoring. The authors argued that the objective and subjective information was helpful in the project evaluation process.

The above studies support that the subjective and objective approaches are helpful for various proposes as they are likely to give more accurate, reliable or complementary results or answers. This is because the purposes of subjective and objective approaches are different and serve different benefits. Scholars use subjective method to obtain people's personal judgments on certain issues such as what people feel, judge or interpret about a product or service. The subjective information is based on personal feeling, opinions, interpretations and emotions (Boyle & Lathrop, 2013). By nature, different people may have different perceptions on the subjective information and make various (different) judgments (Sangpikul, 2020). In contrast, an objective method is used to obtain more reliable sources or facts about something. Objective information is generally concerned with what people can measure, indicate or identify because it is obvious, fact-based, measurable or observable (Zehrer, Smeral & Hallmann, 2017). With the objective approach, people are more likely to perceive the fact of the service/process in a similar way than with personal judgments (Boyle & Lathrop, 2013). Therefore, combining the two approaches are argued to yield more accurate, reliable information, and less bias (Liu et al., 2019; Rasdi et al., 2011).

In relation to service quality, the above analysis (Table 1 and prior paragraph) has proved that the assessment items of service quality can be categorized into personal opinions and fact-based opinions. In other words, personal opinions may be referred to "subjective service quality", while the fact-based opinions may be referred to "objective service quality". In order to ensure the existence of subjective and objective service quality in the hotel industry, it is better to make another analysis in relation to the five domains of service quality in the following section. After this section, a final conclusion can be more confidently made about the two dimensions of service quality.

## Analyzing Subjective and Objective Dimensions within the Five Domains of Service Quality

This part aims to further analyze if the subjective and objective dimensions can be fully applied within the five domains of service quality. If yes, then the article can make a final conclusion about this topic which will benefit both academic community and hotel industry. Table 2 presents an additional analysis of subjective and objective dimensions in relation to the five domains of service quality. According to this analysis, the service quality items from past studies were employed again (e.g., Ali, 2015; Grobelna & Marciszewska, 2013; Lai & Hitchcock, 2016; Ogunjinmi & Binuyo, 2018; Tamagni et al., 2003; Wu & Ko, 2013), and then they were analyzed and categorized into the subjective and objective dimensions within each domain of service quality. The criteria to categorize the items into the subjective and objective dimensions are established. The items that are more likely to be judged from customers' personal opinions (how I feel) will be classified into the subjective dimension, whereas the items that are more likely to be judged from the fact of the services (what I can evidently identify/indicate from the services) will be classified into the objective dimension.

**Table 2** Analysis of Subjective and Objective Dimensions within the Five Domains of Service Quality

<b>Service Quality Domains</b>	<b>Subjective Dimension</b> (items from past studies)	<b>Objective Dimension</b> (items from past studies)
<b>1. Reliability</b> (ability to perform services accurately/ correctly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hotel employees are professional</li> <li>- Front staff are well trained</li> <li>- Dependability in handling customer' service problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff's ability to answer customer's questions correctly</li> <li>- Performing the services at the time promised</li> <li>- Staff with good communication skills</li> </ul>
<b>2. Responsiveness</b> (willingness to assist customers and provide prompt services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restaurant staff demonstrate their willingness to help customers</li> <li>- The waiting time for service is Reasonable</li> <li>- Front staff are always willing to help customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing prompt services to customers</li> <li>- Providing quick check-in/ check-out</li> <li>- Informing customers exactly when their requests are fulfilled</li> </ul>

**Table 2** Analysis of Subjective and Objective Dimensions within the Five Domains of Service Quality  
(continued)

<b>Service Quality Domains</b>	<b>Subjective Dimension</b> (items from past studies)	<b>Objective Dimension</b> (items from past studies)
<b>3. Empathy</b> (caring services or individual attention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Giving special attention to customer</li> <li>- Staff well understand customer's need</li> <li>- Staff provide customer with best services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convenience of operating hours for hotel services</li> <li>- Providing special service/request</li> <li>- Staff asking guest preference</li> </ul>
<b>4. Tangibility</b> (appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and environment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Modern hotel facilities</li> <li>- Comfortable and relaxing environment</li> <li>- Appealing hotel decoration</li> <li>- Spaciousness of room</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of parking</li> <li>- Availability of internet services</li> <li>- Variety of room amenities</li> </ul>
<b>5. Assurance</b> (ability to convey trust and confidence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employee's friendliness/politeness</li> <li>- Breakfast quality</li> <li>- Comfortable bed</li> <li>- Security and safety at the hotel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Room is quiet</li> <li>- Room is clean</li> <li>- Availability of emergency exit</li> </ul>

Table 2 shows that the service quality items from past studies can fit and be well categorized into the subjective and objective dimensions of service quality. For example, under reliability dimension, customers were likely to be subjective to evaluate staff's performances (good/fair/poor). On the other hand, customers were likely to be objective to judge whether the promised service was given (e.g., giving welcome drink, allowing late check-out). In another case of responsiveness dimension, customers might be subjective to personally judge about the friendliness of employees; meanwhile, they could be objective to indicate if the service was given promptly or without delay. Following Table 2, the subjective and objective service quality items can fully fit and apply to each domain of service quality. Learning and understanding this fact will extend the knowledge of service quality in another perspective, and will help scholars and hotel practitioners to implement or modify the measurement of service quality items more appropriately for better services improvement of hotels. To greatly benefit the hotel industry to be able to apply the knowledge of two dimensions of service quality in various functions or services of hotel industry, the next section will provide examples of subjective and objective assessment items in hotels and resorts.

## Application of Subjective and Objective Dimensions to Measure Hotel Service Quality

The final part aims to give the examples of applying or implementing the subjective and objective dimensions of service quality to the hotel industry. The examples are given in terms of individual items of service quality regarding what customers expect to receive the services from major departments of hotels and resorts. Hotel managers may use these examples, and apply or modify them to measure the service quality of their hotels and resorts more appropriately.

**Table 3** Examples of Implementing Subjective and Objective Dimensions of Service Quality in Hotels and Resorts

Hotel Departments	Subjective Items	Objective Items
<b>Front desk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friendly/helpful employees</li> <li>- Willingness to help customers</li> <li>- Employees with good manner</li> <li>- Skilled/experienced employees</li> <li>- Attentiveness to customer request</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Front staff with smiling face</li> <li>- Employees' knowledge &amp; communication skills</li> <li>- Providing promised services</li> <li>- Providing prompt/right services at the first time</li> <li>- Correct reservation/transaction</li> </ul>
<b>Room/housekeeping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comfortable bed</li> <li>- Modern equipment/facilities</li> <li>- Room decoration</li> <li>- Good condition of in-room facilities</li> <li>- Understanding customer preferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Housekeeper with smiling face</li> <li>- Providing promised services</li> <li>- Cleanliness of room/bathroom</li> <li>- Quietness of room</li> <li>- Room size</li> <li>- A variety of mini bar items</li> </ul>
<b>Restaurants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friendly/polite employees</li> <li>- Employees with good manner/grooming</li> <li>- Skilled/experienced employees</li> <li>- Attentiveness to customer request</li> <li>- Quality/hygiene of food &amp; beverage</li> <li>- Restaurant decoration/atmosphere</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convenience of business hours</li> <li>- A variety of menus</li> <li>- Appropriate waiting time</li> <li>- Correct transaction/bills</li> <li>- A variety of food and beverage outlets</li> </ul>

**Table 3** Examples of Implementing Subjective and Objective Dimensions of Service Quality in Hotels and Resorts (continued)

Hotel Departments	Subjective Items	Objective Items
<b>Banquet services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skilled and professional staff</li> <li>- Employees with good grooming</li> <li>- Attentiveness to customer request</li> <li>- Decoration/atmosphere of banquet rooms</li> <li>- Modern banquet dining equipment</li> <li>- Ability to solve problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A variety of banquet menus</li> <li>- Choices of banquet rooms</li> <li>- Spacious banquet rooms</li> <li>- Availability of information signs</li> <li>- Performing right services</li> <li>- Providing promised services</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting/conference services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Modern meeting facilities/equipment</li> <li>- Modern decoration of meeting rooms</li> <li>- Skilled/experienced employees</li> <li>- Attentiveness to customer request</li> <li>- Understanding customer needs</li> <li>- Atmosphere of meeting/conference rooms</li> <li>- Ability to solve problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sufficiency of parking area</li> <li>- Availability of communication services</li> <li>- Choices of meeting rooms &amp; size</li> <li>- Choices of meals &amp; coffee breaks</li> <li>- Availability of conference amenities</li> <li>- Fast customer response</li> <li>- Providing promised services</li> </ul>
<b>Recreational facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friendly/helpful employees</li> <li>- Good condition of equipment</li> <li>- Modern equipment</li> <li>- Atmosphere/environment of a place</li> <li>- Attentiveness to customer request</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convenience of business hours</li> <li>- Cleanliness of equipment/facilities</li> <li>- Cleanliness of recreational areas</li> <li>- Sufficiency of staff on duty</li> <li>- A variety of recreational activities</li> </ul>
<b>Health and spa services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Atmosphere of a place</li> <li>- Relaxing environment/decoration</li> <li>- Skillful/friendly employees</li> <li>- Understanding customer needs</li> <li>- Personalized service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employees' knowledge &amp; communication skills</li> <li>- Staff with smiling face</li> <li>- Providing promised services</li> <li>- Providing prompt services</li> </ul>

According to Table 3, the examples will help hotel practitioners to gain deeper understanding of what is called “subjective” and “objective” service quality in each functional department so that they can better plan or design these items to assess the service quality of their hotels/resorts more properly. The examples from Table 3 will also yield a better understanding of which attributes of hotel services are more appropriate for subjective or objective assessment. Before this article, most scholars tended to create the assessment items of service quality based on a limited framework/

approach (e.g., subjective approach – how customers feel about the services). This may limit the appropriateness of assessment items that do not thoroughly reflect the subjective and objective dimensions of service quality. However, with this article, scholars now have more flexibility to create or design more appropriate assessment items through subjective and objective dimensions. They can create the assessment items of service quality in a way that is more appropriate for their services, for example, from regular services (front desk, rooms, restaurants, meeting services) to the special services of the hotels such as health, wellness or recreational services. Both dimensions will complement each other to yield wider and reflective information from customers about the services of hotels and resorts.

For example, during check-in, customers will usually expect to meet friendly and attentive receptionists (subjective dimension); meanwhile, they will also expect to receive prompt/fast services (objective dimension) when they are allowed to check-in. In case of guests' rooms, customers will subjectively expect to experience the good maintenance of in-room facilities; meanwhile, they will also objectively expect to receive a correct room type or a special request if the hotels promise them (e.g., twin bed, double bed, connecting room). Alternatively, in a setting of spa service, customers will subjectively expect to receive professional spa treatment from experienced therapists; meanwhile, they will also objectively observe if the therapist provides them with the services as requested (e.g., requesting light pressure on certain areas of body). Given such examples, the assessment items of service quality can be created more properly in accordance with the nature or characteristics of hotel services. In addition, a specialized hotel or resort providing health and well-being programs (e.g., destination spa) may design or modify the items of service quality to be more appropriate for their services (e.g., wellness activities, nutrition programs). Understanding about this issue will help hotels and resorts to create or design the assessment items to be more flexible and suitable for a wide range of services in their businesses. Consequently, the discussion of the subjective and objective dimensions of service quality will help scholars and hotel practitioners to better understand the characteristics of service quality by learning customer personal opinions (subjective) and what service attributes should be measured through fact-based opinions (objective). Now they can design, create or modify the service quality items more properly to measure the services from major functional departments of hotels and resorts (e.g., front desk, rooms, banquet, meeting, spa/health services). If the hotels can measure the quality of their services more thoroughly and appropriately, it is expected that they will have more information from customer feedback, and this will lead to the better improvement of service quality ultimately.

## Conclusion

To conclude, this article has expanded the knowledge of service quality into two dimensions in the hotel and resort sectors by reviewing and analyzing the findings from past studies as shown in Tables 1 and 2. Now it can conclude from the article that there is an existence of two dimensions (attributes) of hotel service quality, which are subjective and objective dimensions. In other words, these two dimensions may refer to the subjective and objective service quality that can be obtained from customers' personal opinions and their fact-based opinions about hotels and resorts' services. Without this article, scholars and hotel practitioners may still perceive that the assessment items of service quality are the subjective-oriented approach based from customers' personal opinions or their feelings due to the lack of literature about this topic. However, the article has expanded the knowledge of service quality by giving a clearer picture of subjective and objective dimensions of service quality. Now it is expected that they should have a better understanding about this characteristic of service quality.

For future policy on the management of hotel service quality, scholars and hotel practitioners may apply or modify this knowledge to further examine hotel service quality more thoroughly from major functional departments, especially target the departments relying on high service contacts or high expectations from customers (e.g., front desk, guest rooms, restaurants, banquet services, spa and health services). A proper design of service quality assessment through the knowledge of subjective and objective dimensions (what should be assessed through the personal feelings and what should be measured through the fact of the services) will help hotel managers to receive more in-depth information/feedback from customers than one approach, like having two mirrors. Certainly, the information from two sources will enhance business competitiveness to be able to develop or improve the service quality more efficiently and appropriately to meet customer expectations, and to create customer satisfaction accordingly. Each hotel should annually conduct its survey about service quality to obtain important feedback regarding its staff and service performance. This feedback will enable the hotel to determine how well it has delivered the services that meet customer expectations.

To implement, it is argued that the assessment items of hotel service quality should be made on two dimensions because they will help the hotel management team to get more detail from customer opinions both subjectively and objectively. To assess the subjective service quality, Table 3 is the good examples for the implementations. For example, the subjective assessment may be applied to ask customers regarding their feelings or opinions about the hotel services in terms



of employees' personality/manner/performance, the condition or maintenance of hotel facilities, and hotel environment/atmosphere. The improvement of this subjective dimension may be concentrated on the development of employees' attitudes, personality, work skills (through proper training) as well as the maintenance or the monitor of hotel facilities from the management team to deliver the services that meet customer expectations. At the same time, the objective assessment may be implemented to ask customers about what they can identify or indicate about the fact of the services such as prompt check-in/check-out, correct transaction, functions of hotel facilities, and the appearance of physical environment. With the fact-based feedback, the service improvement may be emphasized on service process/procedure, facility maintenance, staff knowledge training, and the development of physical elements. Improving service quality through the objective approach is argued to be easier than the subjective one because it is fact-based information that is obviously or evidently identified from customers (Sangpikul, 2020). Interesting, the objective dimension may assist the management team in adding/modifying fact-based assessment items when appropriate in major functional departments to provide the better services that will meet customer expectations.

For academic contribution, this article has contributed to the deeper understanding of hotel service quality in terms of subjective and objective dimensions. It has expanded the knowledge about the characteristics or another aspect of service quality in hotel industry regarding the *subjective service quality* and the *objective service quality*, in other words, the subjective and objective dimensions of service quality. This article, therefore, has formed *the conceptualized knowledge* of what are called "subjective" and "objective" dimensions of service quality in the hotel sector. This knowledge can be applied to other service industries as well (e.g., airlines, restaurants, tour operators). In particular, future studies of the hotel industry may apply this knowledge in various approaches (e.g., quantitative or qualitative method) to gain more information or better understanding about the subjective and objective service quality in the lodging industry.

## References

- Ali, F. (2015). Service quality as a determinant of customer satisfaction and resulting behavioral intention: A SEM approach towards Malaysian resort hotels. *TOURISM*, 63(1), 37-51.
- Boyle, P., & Lathrop, E. S. (2013). The value of private label brands to U.S. consumers: An objective and subjective assessment. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 20(1), 80-86.
- Cambridge dictionary. (2020). Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>
- Chigot, P. (2005). Effects of sound in offices: Subjective experience vs objective assessment. *Facilities*, 23(3), 152-163.
- Gee, C. Y. (2000). *Resort development and management*. Detroit, MI: Education Institute of the American Hotels & Motel Association.
- Grobelna, A., & Marciszewska, B. (2013). Measurement of service quality in the hotel sector: The case of Northern Poland. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 22(3), 313-332.
- Lai, I. K. W., & Hitchcock, M. (2016). A comparison of service quality attributes for stand-alone and resort-based luxury hotels in Macau: 3-dimensional importance-performance analysis. *Tourism Management*, 55, 139-159.
- Lewis, R. C., & Booms, B. H. (1983). The marketing aspects of service quality. *Emerging Perspectives on Services Marketing*, 65(4), 99-107.
- Liu, N., He, Y., & Xu, Z. (2019). Evaluate public-private-partnership's advancement using subjective and objective information from stakeholder perspective. *Technological and Economic Development of Economy*, 25(3), 386-420.
- Lo, A., Wu, C. & Tsai, H. (2015). The impact of service quality on positive consumption emotion in resort and hotel spa experiences. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 24, 155-179.
- Lockwood, A. (1997). Quality management in hotels. In S. Witt, & L. Mutinho (Eds), *Tourism marketing and management handbook* (pp. 352-355). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Memarzadeh, F., & Chang, H. J. (2015). Online consumer complaints about Southeast Asian luxury hotels. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 24(1), 76-98.
- Ogunjinmi, A. A., & Binuyo, I. Y. (2018). Relationship between destination service quality and tourists' satisfaction in Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort, Nigeria. *Tourism*, 66(4), 362-378.

- Oliver, R. C. (1981). Measurement and evaluation of satisfaction process in retail setting. *Journal of Retailing*, 57(3), 25-48.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12-40.
- Powers, T., & Barrows, C. (2006). *Introduction to management in the hospitality industry*. Newark, NJ: Wiley.
- Rasdi, R., Ismail, M., & Garavan, T. (2011). Predicting Malaysian managers' objective and subjective career success. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 22(7), 528-549.
- Sangpikul, A. (2020). The assessment of spa service quality with 2 dimensions: Subjective and objective assessment dimensions. *Christian University Journal*, 26(1), 81-99.
- Tamagni, L., Micheli, E., & Zanfardini, M. (2003). Multidimensional scaling analysis in the determination of hotel quality dimension - Patagonia, Argentina. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 4(1), 111-128.
- Wu, H. C., & Ko, Y. J. (2013). Assessment of service quality in the hotel industry. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 14(2), 218-244.
- Zehrer, A., Smeral, E., & Hallmann, K. (2017). Destination competitiveness - A comparison of subjective and objective indicators for winter sports areas. *Journal of Travel Research*, 56(1), 55-66.