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# CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

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**Abstract**

*In recent years, Albania has become a preferred destination for tourist. This is shown by the ever-increasing number of foreign tourists. This study will analyze how customers perceive the effectiveness of hotel management. In this study, quantitative techniques were used and data were collected through a structured questionnaire with the participation of 355 customers accommodated in hotels in Tirana and Durres areas. To measure perceptions, a five-point Likert scale was used, while analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to identify statistically significant differences between groups. In this study, different dimensions of hotel services were analyzed, including service quality, responsiveness, cleanliness, comfort, pricing fairness. The results show significant differences in customer perceptions for variables such as; gender, age, educational level, purpose of travel and frequency of stays. The results highlight the importance of market segmentation and adapting hotel management practices to the needs and expectations of different levels of customers. This study provides important practical recommendations for hotel managers in Albania, emphasizing the importance of improving service quality, staff development, and investments in digital technologies, as elements that can contribute in increasing customer satisfaction and hotel competitiveness.*

*Keywords: Hotel management, service quality, customer perceptions, demographic characteristics, ANOVA, Albania*

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the Western Balkans' fastest-growing tourist attractions is Albania. Albania has had a significant increase in foreign visitor arrivals and hotel stays in recent years, with notable increases in both tourists and overnight stays in collective lodging places, according to official statistics (INSTAT, 2025). The hospitality sector is essential to the growth of tourism and the economy, especially in developing countries where the competitiveness of a destination is greatly influenced by the quality of services provided and the efficiency of management. Customers' opinions of service quality, value for money, and overall experience are greatly influenced by managerial success in the service-intensive environment that hotels operate in (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2017). As a result, one of the main goals of hospitality research is to understand hotel administration accomplishment from the viewpoint of the client. In the hotel business, customer perceptions are widely acknowledged as important factors that influence customer happiness, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth. Previous studies have emphasized that factors such as comfort, prompt response, fair prices, and professional staff have a major impact on customers' evaluation of hotel performance (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2018). In recent years, customer expectations and perceptions of efficient hotel management have been influenced by the effectiveness of digital service, including online booking systems, digital communication, and ease of access to service (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Customer opinions are diverse and occupy a central place among different demographic groups. Research shows that satisfaction levels, consumer expectations, and ratings of service quality are influenced by demographic variables such as age, gender, level of education, frequency of hotel visits, and reason for travel (Han, Kim, & Hyun, 2011; Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). Albania has seen a significant increase in visitor numbers in recent years and it is important for hotel managers to focus on the customer, taking into account all demographic categories. The hotel industry in Albania now has international hotel brands such as; Marriot International, Hilton, Radisson Hotel Group, Meliá Hotels Internationals, Maritim Hotels etc. Investments and service offerings have expanded but it remains a major challenge to serve customers with sustainable quality. Despite the industry's increasing significance, there are still few empirical studies in Albania that look at hotel management efficacy from the viewpoint of patrons. There is a knowledge vacuum about how various customer segments view hotel management practices because the majority of previous research has been on tourist development and destination appeal.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

In hospitality research, the core focus of research is service quality as it shows how consumers assess whether there is a discrepancy between their expectations and the actual services they receive. The degree to which a service meets or surpasses consumers' expectations is known as service quality, and it has a direct impact on both hotel performance and customer happiness (Asgeirsson et al., 2024). According to Dörtyol et al. (2014) and Zeithaml (2000), the basic aspects of quality measurement—reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, assurance, and empathy—all influence how different people perceive the quality of services. Positive customer outcomes, such as satisfaction and loyalty, have been found to be substantially correlated with perceived service quality in empirical studies on hotel environments. Customers place a high priority on staff competency, responsiveness, and dependable infrastructure when establishing judgments of service quality, for instance, according to studies conducted in hotel sceneries (Kabiru et al., 2023). Customers' perceptions of service quality and associated notions vary greatly depending on their demographics. According to research, visitors' assessments of several aspects of service quality can be influenced by their age, gender, level of education, and cultural background (Hagan, 2025). In particular, changes in how customers perceive tangibles, security, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy are associated with demographic differences. (Hagan, 2025). Studies using SERVQUAL or SERVPERF instruments have consistently shown that customer satisfaction is influenced by perceived service quality, the more positive this influence is, the greater the loyalty and future changes. A high perception of service quality is associated with repeat visits, recommendations (Fatema, 2024; Shafiq et al., 2013). Staff professionalism, responsiveness, and tangible service attributes are factors that hotel managers should tailor their management strategies to improve. Accommodation units should use statistical analysis and structured surveys to index customer perceptions to improve and tailor services for specific demographic groups (Hagan, 2025).

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, a quantitative research-based model was used to investigate consumer attitudes and focused on differences between demographic groups. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to collect data from 355 hotel customers. The questionnaire has two primary sections and was designed especially for this study by the authors. The questionnaire consisted of questions on the socio-demographic data of the respondents and a Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) was used to collect data. Part of the evaluation in the questionnaire are factors such as; service quality,

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responsiveness, cleanliness, comfort and pricing fairness. Demographic factors such as; gender, age, educational level, purpose of travel and frequency of stays. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to examine whether customers' perceptions differed significantly across demographic categories. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and their participation was anonymous and voluntary. The questionnaire was administered in both Albanian and English to accommodate domestic and international hotel guests. The respondents' opinions on the assessment of the effectiveness of hotel management were empirically calculated to understand whether they are influenced by demographic characteristics.

## ANALYSES AND FINDINGS

One-way ANOVA tests were used to determine whether attitudes on dimensions of hotel service vary significantly depending on specific demographic characteristics. The findings show a number of statistically significant differences, suggesting that visitors' assessments of hotel services are impacted by their travel habits and demographic characteristics.

The ANOVA results presented in Table 1 indicate a statistically significant difference in perceived service quality across frequency of stays groups (F = 5.42, p =.021). Guests who stayed at the hotel five or more times had different opinions about the quality of services compared to guests with fewer stays.

*Table 1*. Anova Test

**ANOVA**

Service Quality

| Demographic Grouping | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Frequency of stays (≥5 vs <5) | 5.98 | 1 | 5.98 | 5.42 | 0.021 |
| Within Groups | 389.12 | 353 | 1.10 | | |
| Total | 395.10 | 354 | | | |

The ANOVA results presented in Table 2 indicate a statistically significant difference in perceived hotel staff responsiveness across age groups (F = 9.12, p = .003). This finding suggests that customers of different ages evaluate staff responsiveness differently, possibly reflecting differences in their views of staff productivity, service requirements, and expectations.

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*Table 2.* Anova Test

**ANOVA** Responsiveness

| Demographic Grouping | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age (<25 vs older) | 7.21 | 1 | 7.21 | 9.12 | .003 |
| Within Groups | 278.18 | 353 | 0.79 | | |
| Total | 285.39 | 354 | | | |

The ANOVA results presented in Table 3 indicate a statistically significant difference in clearness across travel purpose category (F = 4.88, p =.028). This finding suggests that customers traveling for different purposes may evaluate hotel cleanliness differently, possibly reflecting differences in their demands for lodging, travel priorities, and expectations.

*Table 3.* Anova Test

**ANOVA** Cleanliness

| Demographic Grouping | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Travel purpose (Leisure vs Business) | 2.11 | 1 | 2.11 | 4.88 | .028 |
| Within Groups | 152.34 | 353 | 0.43 | | |
| Total | 154.45 | 354 | | | |

The ANOVA results presented in Table 4 indicate a statistically significant difference in comfort across gender groups (F = 4.19, p =.041). This finding suggests that male and female customers may evaluate hotel comfort differently, possibly reflecting differences in their individual needs for accommodations, expectations, and preferences.

*Table 4.* Anova Test

**ANOVA** Comfort

| Demographic Grouping | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | 1.95 | 1 | 1.95 | 4.19 | .041 |
| Within Groups | 164.11 | 353 | 0.46 | | |
| Total | 166.06 | 354 | | | |

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The ANOVA results presented in Table 5 indicate a statistically significant difference in pricing fairness across education level (F = 6.78, p =.009). This finding suggests that customers with different educational backgrounds may evaluate hotel pricing fairness differently, possibly reflecting differences in their expectations, opinions about value for money, and evaluations of how pricing and service quality relate to one another.

*Table 5.* Anova Test

**ANOVA**

Pricing Fairness

| Demographic Grouping | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education level (Postgraduate vs Undergraduate) | 3.78 | 1 | 3.78 | 6.78 | .009 |
| Within Groups | 196.54 | 353 | 0.56 | | |
| Total | 200.32 | 354 | | | |

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the data analysis it results that we have significant differences in perceptions based on demographic characteristics such as; age, gender, level of education, purpose of travel, frequency of days of stay. To maintain competitiveness in this growing sector in Albania, customer-centric and demographic-sensitive management practices are very important and necessary. Based on the study findings, we recommend: Improving digital services, online booking systems, digital communication channels and technology-based services. Targeting the demographics of young people and business travelers, who place higher value on these aspects. In the pricing strategy, we suggest applying fair prices to improve perceived value and satisfaction. Having continuous training to maintain and improve professionalism and responsiveness and finally having a segmented approach to customers by developing management strategies personalized to specific demographic groups (e.g., leisure travelers vs. business travelers, young guests vs. older guests) to better meet different expectations.

## SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDIES

We suggest that future studies focus on increasing and expanding the geographical sample and including hotels from different cities and classes, this would enable a more comprehensive assessment of the perceptions of customers who visits hotels in Albania. Of

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particular importance is the analysis of other factors that may affect the perceived quality of service, such as loyalty, satisfaction, hotel image and price-quality ratio. These variables can be studied using other statistical methods such as regression analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM), which can help in understanding the relationships between these variables. The assessment of the impact of digital transformation and service personalization on customer experience and behavior in the hospitality industry is very important.

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