

EVALUATING WHAT DRIVES CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA CENTER FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION AND HOTEL

by

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(Under the Direction of John Salazar)

ABSTRACT

The University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel serves as a conference center on the campus of the University of Georgia. An issue arose as they came to the realization that they were not effectively measuring the satisfaction of their hotel guests, and they wanted to take action on this subject. By revamping their previous customer satisfaction survey and measure of evaluation, we were able to study what variables drive customer satisfaction and the implications this provided for the hotel and conference center. Researchers hypothesized that front desk staff, room, and food and beverage would influence overall guest satisfaction. Results indicated that hotel rooms significantly influenced overall guest satisfaction with the property.

INDEX WORDS: Customer Evaluation, Customer Satisfaction, Hotel Industry, Hotel Room
Satisfaction, Quality of Service

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel is located in Athens, Georgia, and it can be defined as a university hotel and conference center. The hotel is the heart of the University of Georgia campus. The facility hosts a wide array of guests from conference attendees, pleasure travelers, business travelers, etc. The Center team was interested in revamping their guest survey because they believed that they were not effectively evaluating their customers perceived levels of satisfaction with the hotel.

Walking into a hotel, you have a natural reaction to immediately develop an opinion. A guest's immediate reaction becomes their first impression, and it stays with them during the duration of the stay. A poor first impression can contribute to a poor duration of the stay. Therefore, it is important for a hotel to ensure they are providing their customers with the services that make them feel most welcomed and satisfied starting with their first experience on the property.

The main concern for a hotel is its' customers. Customers are the driving process of the business. Hotels go above and beyond to ensure customers have the best experience possible. Customer satisfaction plays a vital role in the health of a hotel (Dominici & Guzzo, 2010). The more satisfied customers are, the more likely they are to come back to stay. Also, the more satisfied customers are, the more likely they are to recommend your hotel to others. Customer satisfaction is key to running hotel operations.

How does a hotel know if their guests are satisfied? It is important to have a customer evaluation tool. When you have an effective customer evaluation tool, you become aware of the areas you are excelling at, and on the contrast, you can determine intervention strategies for the areas causing customer dissatisfaction. Customer evaluation can be defined as “the process of assessing the properties or performance of existing or new products or services as perceived by the consumers” (Saint-Denis, 2018). In the hotel industry, many use surveys, feedback forms, verbal methods, etc. to evaluate their customers. The University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel sends out an electronic post-stay feedback survey after the guest has checked out. The need for this research arose from the hotel’s existing evaluation instrument not being structured in a way that allowed meaningful academic analysis of the hotel. Specifically, the hotel lacked the capability to concentrate on the factors that drive guest satisfaction.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the hotel attributes that influence guest satisfaction at The University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel. Specifically, researchers looked at what factors ultimately drives guest satisfaction, and discovered how the hotel can use this information. The main subjects this paper will address are:

- i. What attributes drive customer satisfaction for hotel guest at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel?
- ii. What further actions can be taken given the implications from this study?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Guest Satisfaction with the Front Desk Staff

According to Gumaste, Bhagwat, Thakkar, focusing on the hotel front desk staff is of high importance because they make the first impression on guests (Gumaste et al., 2015). Ustrov, Valverde, and Ryan found that guest satisfaction is increased by front desk staff's outward gestures and emotions rather than their actual mood (Ustrov et al., 2016). O'Neill and Mattilla suggest that the service that a hotel provides to their guest determines the health of the hotel (O'Neill & Mattila, 2004). In a study conducted by Mohsin and Lockyer, various areas of a hotel were investigated, specifically looking at service quality, to help management identify areas that needed intervention to meet and exceed customer expectations (Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010). A factor analysis was performed which resulted in five distinct areas: hotel ambience and staff, food and beverage product and service quality, staff presentation and knowledge, reservation services and overall value for money (Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010). The attributes that clustered together for hotel ambience and staff are as follows: impression of the hotel, helpful and friendly staff, first contact with hotel staff, your first impression of the hotel, the check-in and out of the hotel (Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010). The attributes that clustered together for staff presentation and knowledge are as follows: product knowledge of the staff, the appearance of the staff, dealing with complaints, timely service (Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010). Gumaste, Bhagwat, and Thakkar argue that the areas that lead to guest satisfaction and customer retention are standardized products, motivated and trained staff, and quality management (Gumaste et al., 2015). Therefore,

the following hypothesis was developed to determine what drives satisfaction within the guest's experience with hotel front desk staff.

H1: The first impression of hotel, ease of check-in and out process, quality of customer service, warm welcome, knowledge of facility, professionalism, and responsiveness will influence overall experience with hotel front desk staff.

Guest Satisfaction with Room

The room is the core product that hotels provide (Wilkins et al., 2007). Choi and Chu performed a factor analysis determining the following attributes clustering together under room quality: bed/mattress/pillow are comfortable, in-room temperature control is of high quality, room is clean, room is quiet (Choi & Chu, 2001). Robbins, Grander, Knowlden, and Severt prove that hotel attributes are strongly associated with overall guest satisfaction (Robbins et al., 2021). Specifically, their study investigated how various hotel attributes influenced guest sleep satisfaction and overall satisfaction (Robbins et al., 2021). A study done by Gu and Ryan found that the hotel room attributes that guest's place most value on are cleanliness and comfort (Gu & Ryan, 2008). Olge argues that "the physical aspects and tangible dimensions of the guestrooms are keys to the satisfaction of the guest and a prime consideration for return patronage" (Ogle, 2009). Qu, Ryan, and Chu argue hotels improve room satisfaction by knowing the room attributes reflect their vision and target market (Qu et al., 2000). When looking for room enhancement at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel, it is important to take into account the rooms are small because it is a conference center, and conference attendees are the target market. Accordingly, we developed the following hypothesis to explore which variables best explain overall room satisfaction.

H2: The following items: first impression of room, cleanliness, comfort, quality of sleep, and complimentary items will influence overall room satisfaction.

Guest Satisfaction with Hotel Food and Beverage

Literature suggests that attributes regarding hotel food and beverage services are influential in guest satisfaction. Aburumman, Malkawi, A Lkurdi, and Alshamaileh found that perceived value that guests place on food and beverage service quality was higher than their quality of sleep in a hotel (H. Aburumman et al., 2022). Mohsin and Lockyer performed a factor analysis and the following items cluster into food and beverage product and service quality: variety of items on the menu, overall quality of food, prompt room service if used, quality of restaurant food, overall selection of beverages, value for money of the restaurant, prompt response from order taker (Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010). Xu and Li performed a factor analysis, and the determinants of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction towards suite hotels with food and beverage are as follows: “Determinants of Customer Satisfaction: good location, friendly staff, nice room, good value; Determinants of Customer Dissatisfaction: dirty room, restaurant, parking, swimming pool, air conditioning” (Xu & Li, 2016). Kandampully and Suhartanto suggest satisfaction with food and beverage is directly related to guest retention rates, recommendation to others, and loyalty (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2003). Han and Hyun found that high quality service and food and beverage experience is important in a guest purchasing other hotel products during their stay (Han & Hyun, 2017). The following hypothesis was created to study overall experience at the Savannah Room and Bulldog Bistro.

H3: The following items: quality of service received, value of food relative to what paid, food menu variety, food quality, and cleanliness of restaurant will influence overall experience with the Savannah Room (seated restaurant).

H4: The following items: quality of service received, value of food relative to what paid, food menu variety, food quality, cleanliness of restaurant, and bar beverage quality will influence overall experience with the Bulldog Bistro (café).

Overall Hotel Satisfaction

There is an abundance of literature expressing the importance of guest satisfaction. Gundersen, Heide, and Olsson define consumer satisfaction as “post consumption evaluative judgement concerning a specific product or service” (Gundersen et al., 1996). Guest satisfaction is important for the hospitality industry because guests are the driving factor of the business. Barsky and Labagh state improving profitability and expanding business is a result of satisfying customers (Barsky & Labagh, 1992). The issue arises for hospitality businesses when it comes to effectively measuring guest satisfaction and implementing intervention to improve guest satisfaction. Barsky and Labagh argue that by “measuring guest satisfaction and then responding to an operation’s inadequacies and shortcomings, managers can focus directly on why guest are not returning and, in this way, initiate changes that will encourage repeat business. Similarly, highly rated attributes can be enhanced and promoted so as to increase business” (Barsky & Labagh, 1992).

Further than discovering the need for and importance of guest satisfaction, it is relevant to understand what attributes of your operation are driving guest satisfaction. Many studies have been done looking closely into the important factor within guest satisfaction. Gundersen, Heide, and Olsson find that “the majority of the variation in overall satisfaction can be defined by the intangible and tangible dimensions of three departments of the hotel: reception, the housekeeping department, and the food and beverage department” (Gundersen et al., 1996). Similarly, Wilkins, Merrilees, and Harrington argue that service quality can be defined into three different segments:

physical product, service experience, and quality of food and beverage (Wilkins et al., 2007).

Wilkins, Merrilees, and Harrington go even further to say these three segments are what customers value most, therefore, hotel managers can use this information to optimize their services (Wilkins et al., 2007).

Rauch, Collins, Nale, and Barr state that service quality is important in hotels, as it is directly related to guest satisfaction, customer loyalty, and profitability (Rauch et al., 2015). Further, they explain service quality can be supported by a three-factor structure. Three factors they identified were service delivery, service product, and service environment. They defined the factors as “service product is the actual service itself, for example, the actual accommodations and hotel amenities. Service delivery is defined as those aspects of the service experience that involve direct interaction between the customer and the service provider. For example, making a hotel reservation or registering at the front desk. The service environment refers to the appearance and condition of the facilities, furnishings and ambiance that are part of the service encounter” (Rauch et al., 2015). Schall performed 300 factor analyses on surveys from hundreds of properties and found questions on room, food, and staff were the main three key factors that contributed to understanding guest satisfaction (Schall, 2003). Therefore, the following attributes were studied to determine what drives guest satisfaction at The University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel and the following hypotheses were developed.

H5: A guest’s experience with front desk staff will influence overall guest satisfaction.

H6: A guest’s satisfaction with their room will influence overall guest satisfaction.

H7: A guest’s experience with the Savannah Room (seated restaurant) will influence overall guest satisfaction.

H8: A guest’s experience with the Bulldog Bistro (café) will influence overall guest satisfaction.

CHAPTER 3

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to evaluate what drives customer satisfaction at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel, a new version of the existing guest satisfaction survey was created. The hotel had a customer satisfaction survey, but it lacked the ability to be statistically analyzed.

An important piece of the new survey is conditional branching. In the previous survey the hotel utilized, the same questions were asked to every hotel guest. Some questions did not have a “not applicable” answer choice option, and guests had to answer questions that did not apply to them which produces inaccurate information. The new survey was developed with conditional branching meaning the survey is unique to each guest that takes it. Norman and Pleskac define conditional branching as “being used to direct respondents to skip inappropriate questions or to answer follow-up questions” (Norman & Pleskac, 2002). The survey is a combination of multiple-choice questions, matrix style questions, and free response questions. The conditional branching aspect of the survey allows us to diversify the survey with different question styles so each guest will not see the same set of questions.

A study done by Schall shows how to effectively build a survey to accurately capture guest perceived hotel satisfaction. Schall explains the importance of validity of the question, intent of the question, operational matters versus attitudes, clarity of question, unidimensionality, timing, order of questions, and sample size (Schall, 2003). Therefore, after reading literature, we took the characteristics mentioned above into account. In order to satisfy these requirements and

build an effective customer evaluation tool, we incorporated different question styles, focused on what information researchers were looking to gain out of this survey, conditional branching aspects, specific order of questions (Researchers for this study felt that it would be beneficial to see an overall question at the end of each section.), etc. to have a diversified survey that produces accurate and clear information.

The survey was distributed through the hotel's guest management system. The guest management system distributes a reservation confirmation, pre-stay form, on property form, and post-stay survey emails to the guest. The surveys are optional and only taken if it is the guest's choice. This study was conducted from November 4th, 2022, to January 31st, 2022, and was conducted within the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel using the data collected from the new version of the survey designed specifically for the organization. Two hundred eighty-four hotel guests completed the survey, and all data were collected within the hotel's guest management system.

For the purpose of this study, the following areas in the hotel were evaluated to measure guest satisfaction: hotel front desk staff, hotel room, food and beverage (Savannah Room and Bulldog Bistro). The items were presented in matrix format on the survey. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the respondent's evaluation of each hotel area (5=Excellent, 4= Very Good, 3=Good, 2= Fair, and 1= Poor). Below, the following table shows the items measured in each area of the hotel evaluated.

Table 1: Items measured in each area of the hotel evaluated

Table: Items measuring overall satisfaction	
Hotel Front Desk Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First impression of hotel 2. Ease of check-in process 3. Ease of check-out process 4. Quality of customer service 5. Warm welcome 6. Knowledge of facility 7. Professionalism 8. Responsiveness to your needs 9. Overall experience with hotel front desk staff
Room Quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First impression of room 2. Cleanliness 3. Comfort of room 4. Quality of sleep 5. Complimentary items provided for your use 6. Overall room satisfaction
Savannah Room	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality of service received 2. Cleanliness 3. Food quality (taste & appearance) 4. Food menu variety 5. Value of food relative to what you paid 6. Overall experience at Savannah Room
Bulldog Bistro	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality of service received 2. Cleanliness 3. Food quality (taste & appearance) 4. Food menu variety 5. Value of food relative to what you paid 6. Bar beverage quality (taste & appearance) 7. Overall experience at Bulldog Bistro

For this study, we ran a factor analysis on each subset of matrix variables that we planned to regress on overall satisfaction. A factor analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between the following variables to determine how they clustered together. Each cluster was subjected to reliability testing to determine the consistency of the items.

Multiple linear regressions conducted exploring which variables best explained overall perceived satisfaction at The University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel. The first regression model was developed to identify which of the hotel front desk variables significantly related to a guest's overall experience with the hotel front desk. The second regression explored the relationship between the room quality items and overall hotel room satisfaction. Two separate regression tests were performed to examine perceived guest satisfaction with the food and beverage division: Bulldog Bistro, and Savannah Room. The tests were designed to identify which variables best explained overall satisfaction with both outlets.

A final regression model was created to examine the relationship between the perceived overall guest satisfaction with each department or area (Front Desk Staff or Room Quality) or food and beverage outlet (Savannah Room and Bulldog Bistro) with perceived overall satisfaction with The University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Guests stay at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel for a wide variety of reasons. Reason for visit range from conference attendee, pleasure/leisure, business, university related business, university related campus/student visit, and others. We had 284 guests complete the guest satisfaction survey upon checkout during the time period of this study. Approximately 36% (N=103) of those guests were pleasure/leisure travelers, 29% (N=82) were conference attendees, 23% (N=66) were staying at the hotel while they were in town for a university related campus/ student visit, 12% (N=35) of those guests were business travelers, 8% (N=23) were visiting for university related business, and 7% (N=21) were staying at the hotel for other reasons. All guests that took the guest satisfaction survey answered the reason for visiting item. Below, table 2 shows the market segmentation within hotel guests.

The following demographics were measured for this study: gender, age, annual household income, and highest level of education completed. Approximately 42% (N=118) of respondents were male and 56% (N=159) were female. The guests' ages ranged from about 26% being 65 and over; 31% being between the age of 55 and 64; 26% aged around 45-54; 13% of respondents aged 44 and below. About 30% of guest's annual house income was \$150,000 and over; 15% of guest's annual household income was in the range between \$100,000 and \$149,000; about 20% of guest's annual household income was \$99,999 and below. About 25% of guests have completed a professional/ doctorate degree; 26% have completed a master's degree, 30% of respondents have completed a bachelor's degree; 14% have completed other

levels of education. Figure 3 depicts the demographic breakdown of the guests who completed the survey.

Table 2 Market Segmentation

	N	%
Reason for stay		
Business	35	12%
Conference/Meeting	82	29%
Pleasure/Leisure	103	36%
University Related Business	23	8%
University Related Campus/ Student		
Visit	66	23%
Other	21	7%
No answer	0	0%

Table 3 Demographic Breakdown

	N	%
Gender		
Male	118	42%
Female	159	56%
Prefer not to say	7	2%
Prefer to self-describe		
No answer		
Age		
Under 18	0	0%
18-24	4	1%
25-34	7	2%
35-44	27	10%
45-54	74	26%
55-64	87	31%
65 and over	75	26%
Prefer not to answer	10	4%
No answer		
Annual household income		
Under \$15,000	2	1%
\$15,000-\$24,999	2	1%
\$25,000-\$34,999	2	1%
\$35,000-\$49,000	8	3%
\$50,000-\$74,999	17	6%
\$75,000-\$99,999	26	9%
\$100,000-\$149,000	44	15%
\$150,000 and over	84	30%
Prefer not to answer	99	35%
No answer		
Highest level of education completed		
Less than a high school diploma	0	0%
High school degree or equivalent	7	2%
Some college	19	7%
Associate	14	5%
Bachelor's	84	30%
Master's	73	26%
Professional/Doctorate	70	25%
Prefer not to answer	17	6%
No answer		

To examine each specific area of the hotel, a factor analysis was performed to determine how well the variables within the item clustered together. Gyruke, Stone, and Beyer explain the importance of a factor analysis to prove the accuracy of the structure of the survey. They further explain how each item is best explained or “loaded highly” on the factor it is assigned to (James S. Gyurke, Brian J. Stone, Marie Beyer, 1990). The items regarding front desk staff cluster well together in this study, and they are all loaded highly on the same factor. With overall experience with front desk staff loaded the highest (0.906) and ease of check-out progress being loaded the lowest (0.577). Table 4 shows the results of the factor analysis on item: front desk staff.

Table 4 Front Desk Staff Factor Analysis

	Component 1
Overall experience with hotel front desk staff	0.906
Quality of customer service	0.852
Warm welcome	0.815
Professionalism	0.803
Ease of check-in process	0.730
First impression of hotel	0.699
Responsiveness to your needs	0.627
Knowledge of facility	0.577
Ease of check-out process	0.507

It can be seen in Table 5 that all the items measured to explain overall room satisfaction loaded highly on the same factor. Overall room satisfaction loaded the highest (0.925) and complimentary items provided loaded the lowest (0.653). This proves the items cluster well together in this study. Table 5 depicts the results of the factor analysis.

Table 5 Room Satisfaction Factor Analysis

	Component 1
Overall room satisfaction	0.925
Comfort of room	0.904
First impression of room	0.829
Cleanliness of room	0.826
Quality of sleep	0.804
Complimentary items provided	0.653

The items regarding Savannah Room in this study also clustered well together and loaded on the same factor, but the results were surprising. The highest loading item was food quality (0.846), and the lowest loaded item was overall experience at the Savannah Room (0.656). This differs from the results above where overall item is the highest loading item. This could be different due to guests defining restaurant experience as something other than the variables we used. Table 6 depicts the results from the factor analysis performed on item: Savannah Room.

Table 6 Savannah Room Factor Analysis

	Component 1
Food quality (taste & appearance)	0.846
Value of food relative to what you paid	0.782
Quality of service received	0.778
Food menu variety	0.770
Cleanliness of restaurant	0.698
Overall experience at Savannah Room	0.656

The items regarding the Bulldog Bistro clustered well together in this study except for the bar beverage variable. The bar beverage variable loaded on a different factor than all other variables. On factor 1, the highest loading item was quality of service received (0.770) and the lowest loading item was cleanliness of restaurant (0.702). Bar beverage quality was the only item loading on component 2 (0.942), and this could indicate the guests do not associate the bar with the Bulldog Bistro. The overall experience with Bulldog Bistro did not load the highest which could also suggest that guests define experience by something other than the variables we used in this study. Table 7 displays the results of the factor analysis on item: Bulldog Bistro.

Table 7 Bulldog Bistro Factor Analysis

	Component 1	Component 2
Quality of service received	0.770	
Food quality (taste & appearance)	0.764	
Value of food relative to what you paid	0.760	
Overall experience at Bulldog Bistro	0.743	
Food menu variety	0.738	
Cleanliness of restaurant	0.702	
Bar beverage quality (taste & appearance)		0.942

In order to determine the internal consistency in the study, a reliability test was performed (Akbaba, 2006). The reliability test indicated Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.824 (front desk staff) to 0.605 (Bulldog Bistro). For the purpose of this study, researchers decided to use 0.50 and above as a threshold for an acceptable Cronbach's Alpha. Therefore, this study has an acceptable internal consistency. Table 8 shows the following Cronbach Alpha coefficients for each item.

Table 8 Reliability Test for Internal Consistency

	Cronbach's Alpha
Guest Satisfaction	
Hotel Front Desk Staff	0.824
Room Satisfaction	0.856
Savannah Room	0.842
Bulldog Bistro	0.605

In order to explain the relationship between the items measured (front desk staff, room satisfaction, food and beverage) and overall satisfaction, a linear regression model was conducted on front desk staff to investigate which variables best explain satisfaction within this area of the hotel. The independent variables were first impression of hotel, ease of check-in and out process, quality of customer service, warm welcome, knowledge of facility, professionalism, and responsiveness to your needs. The dependent variable was overall experience with hotel front desk staff. The linear regression indicated that quality of customer service is the leading factor driving guest satisfaction with front desk staff ($B=0.381$ and it is statistically significant). The regression had a high R squared value ($R^2=0.768$) indicating that 76.8% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the model. The results from the linear regression are depicted in Table 9 below.

Table 9 Front Desk Staff Linear Regression Analysis

N	284				
R Squared	0.768				
Variable	B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-0.504	0.193		-2.617	0.009
First impression of hotel	0.026	0.043	0.022	0.597	0.551
Ease of check-out process	0.073	0.029	0.081	2.49	0.013
Ease of check-in process	0.129	0.038	0.129	3.388	<.001
Quality of customer service	0.381	0.051	0.349	7.394	<.001
Warm welcome	0.219	0.046	0.214	4.782	<.001
Knowledge of facility	0.043	0.02	0.073	2.091	0.037
Professionalism	0.199	0.044	0.195	4.555	<.001
Responsiveness to your needs	0.037	0.02	0.066	1.899	0.059
DV: overall experience with hotel front desk staff					

A second linear regression model was performed examining the relationship between the quality of sleep, cleanliness of room, first impression of room, complimentary items provided, and comfort of room and overall satisfaction with the hotel room. From the linear regression, it can be seen that cleanliness of room is the leading variable that drives overall room satisfaction ($B=0.344$ and it is statistically significant). The regression has a high R squared value of 0.785. This value indicates that 78.5% of the variation in overall room satisfaction is explained by the model. Table 10 displays the results from the linear regression on room.

Table 10 Room Linear Regression Analysis

N	284				
R squared	0.785				
Variable	B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-0.829	0.171		-4.833	<.001
Quality of sleep	0.179	0.044	0.177	4.096	<.001
Cleanliness of room	0.344	0.05	0.278	6.925	<.001
First impression of room	0.259	0.046	0.238	5.658	<.001
Complimentary items provided	0.044	0.028	0.053	1.602	0.11
Comfort of room	0.337	0.06	0.301	5.66	<.001
DV: overall room satisfaction					

For food and beverage, two separate regressions were created to examine the Savannah Room and the Bulldog Bistro (the two different restaurants at the hotel). We regressed food menu variety, cleanliness of restaurant, quality of service received, value of food relative to what you paid, and food quality (IVs) on overall experience at the Savannah Room (DV). From the regression, it can be seen that quality of service received is the leading variable driving guests overall experience with Savannah Room ($B=0.503$). This model has a relatively low R squared value ($R^2=0.323$), which indicates that only 32.3% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the model. The low R squared value and lack of significant variables in this regression could be correlated with the factor analysis producing overall experience at the Savannah Room as the lowest loading item. Table 11 the results of the linear regression analysis for the Savannah Room.

Table 11 Savannah Room Linear Regression Analysis

N	97				
R squared	0.323				
Variable	B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	0.700	0.588		1.191	0.237
Food menu variety	0.164	0.139	0.164	1.181	0.241
Cleanliness of restaurant	0.081	0.137	0.067	0.591	0.556
Quality of service received	0.503	0.147	0.394	3.418	<.001
	-				
Value of food relative to what you paid	0.015	0.137	-0.017	-0.112	0.911
Food quality	0.079	0.155	0.072	0.511	0.611
DV: overall experience at the Savannah Room					

For the Bulldog Bistro the regression model explored for the relationship between food menu variety, cleanliness of restaurant, quality of service received, value of food relative to what you paid, bar beverage quality, and food quality (IVs) and overall experience at the Savannah Room (DV). From the regression, it can be seen that food quality is the leading variable driving guests overall experience at the Bulldog Bistro ($B=0.238$). This model has a relatively low R squared value ($R^2= 0.428$), which indicates that only 42.8% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the model. The low R squared value and lack of significant variables in this regression could be correlated with the factor analysis producing different results than expected. If we excluded bar beverage quality, it could increase the R squared value based on the factor analysis results. Table 12 the results of the linear regression analysis for the Bulldog Bistro.

Table 12 Bulldog Bistro Linear Regression Analysis

N	194				
R squared	0.428				
Variable	B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	2.069	0.273		7.576	<.001
Food menu variety	0.046	0.047	0.070	0.993	0.322
Cleanliness of restaurant	0.089	0.060	0.103	1.476	0.142
Value of food relative to what you paid	0.037	0.048	0.056	0.772	0.441
Quality of service received	0.145	0.070	0.153	2.084	0.039
Bar beverage quality (taste & appearance)	0.027	0.016	0.094	0.1686	0.093
Food quality (taste & appearance)	0.238	0.040	0.414	5.973	<.001

Ultimately, the goal of this study is to determine what drives satisfaction within the hotel. Therefore, we ran a linear regression on overall satisfaction. The independent variables were overall experience with front desk staff, overall room satisfaction, overall experience at the Savannah Room, and overall experience at the Bulldog Bistro. The dependent variable was overall satisfaction. From this regression, it can be seen that overall room satisfaction is the leading variable in driving overall satisfaction at the hotel (beta=.530 and it is statistically significant). The model has a relatively good R squared value ($R^2=0.582$). This value indicates that 58.2% of the variation in overall satisfaction is explained by the model. Table 13 represents the results from the regression on overall satisfaction.

Table 13 Overall Satisfaction Linear Regression

N	67				
R squared	0.582				
Variable	B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	1.213	0.411		2.954	0.004
Overall Room Satisfaction	0.393	0.069	0.530	5.698	<.001
Overall experience with Hotel Front Desk Staff	0.228	0.072	0.293	3.162	0.002
Overall experience at Savannah Room	0.083	0.045	0.156	1.847	0.069
Overall experience at Bulldog Bistro	0.050	0.058	0.073	0.852	0.397
DV: overall satisfaction					

Discussion

This examined eight hypotheses to determine what drives guest satisfaction at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel. Three specific areas of the hotel were analyzed looking at the relationship between experience with front desk staff and overall satisfaction, room satisfaction and overall satisfaction, and food and beverage experience and overall satisfaction. In order to better understand what drives satisfaction at the hotel, researchers first wanted to investigate what drives guest satisfaction within these three areas.

Researchers found that quality of customer service was the leading factor driving guest satisfaction with hotel front desk staff. The next leading factor of guest satisfaction in the front desk staff area is a warm welcome. Third, guest value professionalism when dealing with front desk staff. Therefore, these are all three characteristics of mannerism that front desk staff can be aware of to increase guest satisfaction. The variable that had the least value in explaining guest satisfaction with hotel front desk staff was first impression of hotel. H1 is true as the variables

influence overall experience with front desk staff. Ease of check-in process, quality of customer service, warm welcome, and professionalism are significant.

For room satisfaction, it was found that cleanliness of room is the leading factor driving guest satisfaction with room. Secondly, it was found that comfort of room is the next leading factor driving guest satisfaction with room. The next variable leading in explaining guest satisfaction with room was first impression of room. All three of these variables are characteristics of the “feel” of the room. Therefore, housekeeping can greatly improve room satisfaction with these three variables. The variable that had the least value in explaining guest satisfaction with room was complimentary items provided. H2 is true as the variables influence overall experience with room, and they are significant with the exception of complimentary items provided.

For the food and beverage area of the hotel, we looked at the Savannah Room (seated restaurant) and Bulldog Bistro (café). It was found that the quality of service received was the leading factor driving guest satisfaction in the Savannah Room. The variable ‘quality of service’ was the only variable that was significant in this regression. Therefore, we can use this information with the results gathered from the factor analysis. Since the dependent variable, overall satisfaction with Savannah Room, was the lowest loaded factor in the factor analysis and the R squared was low in the regression analysis, the model we chose to explain satisfaction in this area might not be the best fit. Guests may perceive experience with a different perspective than researchers did when building out this study. H3 produced one significant result which was quality of service received. Food quality was the leading factor influencing guest satisfaction in this study, and it was the only significant variable. In the factor analysis, it was seen that bar beverage quality loaded on a different factor than all other variables. Therefore, it could be that

guest perceive the bar aspect of the Bulldog Bistro separately than the café itself. Excluding bar beverage quality from the model could have made the model a better fit to examine guest satisfaction at the Bulldog Bistro. H4 only produced one significant result which was food quality.

From this study, researchers found that the driving factor of overall guest satisfaction was overall hotel room satisfaction. The next leading factor that influenced overall guest satisfaction was overall experience with hotel front desk staff. The two restaurants in food and beverage, Savannah Room and Bulldog Bistro, were insignificant. H5 and H6 do influence guest satisfaction, and they are significant. H7 and H8 are not significant.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Concluding Thoughts

The purpose of this study was to determine which attribute at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel drives guest satisfaction. Through this study, we evaluated front desk staff, room, and food and beverage. Specifically, we looked into these three categories to see how the hotel could improve guest satisfaction from an operational standpoint. It was found that simple matters such as the way guests are greeted, the cleanliness of the hotel, and the quality of service a guest receives at this hotel greatly impact their overall satisfaction.

This knowledge is beneficial for a hotel to be aware of because guest satisfaction significantly influences business profitability. Sim, Mak, Jones explain that your long-lasting customer relationships are most profitable and valuable (Sim et al., 2006). Therefore, as a hotel business, understanding what is excelling at the hotel and what needs improvement can lead to a healthy hotel. Therefore, this knowledge is important to be aware of as customer preferences are always evolving.

Limitations

One limitation to this study was the sample size. The sample size was significantly less than the original plan for this study. Due to an unexpected shutdown of the guest management system, data was collected for a shorter period of time which resulted in a smaller sample size.

A natural disaster took place during the duration of this study, and therefore, satisfaction results could be negatively biased towards that incident. There was a significant number of complaints during this time period as guests' stay was interrupted by the events that took place.

Another factor that could have potentially limited this study is the lack of comparison between market segments. Information on the market segmentation was gathered, but there was no analysis performed. This could have provided useful implications for the hotel to use as a tool to improve satisfaction within their largest market.

Forward

This analysis can be generalized as one way to perform guest evaluation practices to improve business performance. In the future, this same study can be improved by reanalyzing this survey with a larger sample size. With an unexpected guest management shutdown, our sample size was much lower than anticipated.

Specifically, for the University of Georgia for Continuing Education and Hotel, they can now use this information to provide an intervention to improve guest satisfaction. A beneficial follow-up study would be to analyze if, after an intervention is implemented, there is any significant change in guest satisfaction.

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APPENDICES

A. Multiple Choice Survey Questions

Question	Answer Choice
1. What was your primary reason for this stay?	Business Conference/Meeting Pleasure/Leisure University Related Business University Related Campus/ Student Visit Other
2. Was event space conducive to your learning experience?	Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor NA
3. Did our event space provide the proper tools to allow you to be attentive?	Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor NA
4. Did our event space allow you to have fruitful conversations with other attendees?	Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor NA
5. How did you make your room reservation?	Hotel Website Third Party Website On the phone My reservation was completed by someone else Other
6. How would you rate the ease of your reservation process?	Excellent Very Good

	Good Fair Poor NA
10. Did you dine at the following restaurants during your stay? Please select all that apply:	Bulldog Bistro (café) Savannah Room (seated restaurant) I did not dine at either restaurant during my stay
13. Please select all hotel amenities used during your stay:	Business Center Complimentary Bikes On-Site Fitness Center Outdoor Firepits/Courtyards Wi-Fi None of the above
14. How satisfied were you with the Complimentary Bikes during your stay?	Extremely satisfied Very satisfied Moderately satisfied Slightly satisfied Not at all satisfied
15. How satisfied were you with the Business Center during your stay?	Extremely satisfied Very satisfied Moderately satisfied Slightly satisfied Not at all satisfied
16. How satisfied were you with the On-Site Fitness Center during your stay?	Extremely satisfied Very satisfied Moderately satisfied Slightly satisfied Not at all satisfied
17. How satisfied were you with the Outdoor Firepits/Courtyards during your stay?	Extremely satisfied Very satisfied Moderately satisfied Slightly satisfied Not at all satisfied
18. How satisfied were you with the Wi-Fi during your stay?	Extremely satisfied Very satisfied Moderately satisfied

	Slightly satisfied Not at all satisfied
19. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with your stay?	Extremely satisfied Very satisfied Moderately satisfied Slightly satisfied Not at all satisfied
20. How likely are you to recommend us to others?	Extremely likely Likely Neutral Unlikely Extremely unlikely
21. How likely are you to stay with us again?	Extremely likely Likely Neutral Unlikely Extremely unlikely
22. Thinking about your overall experience and the reason for your visit, how would you rate the value you received for what you paid? Was your stay...	Worth more than what you paid Worth somewhat more than what you paid Worth what you paid Worth somewhat less than what you paid Worth less than what you paid
23. Did you experience any problems during your stay?	Yes No
24. Did your problem get resolved?	Yes No
25. What is your gender	Male Female Prefer not to say Prefer to self- describe
26. What is your age?	Under 18 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65 and over Prefer not to answer
27. What was your annual household income last year?	Under \$15,000

\$15,000-\$24,999
\$25,000-\$34,999
\$35,000-\$49,000
\$50,000-\$74,999
\$75,000-\$99,999
\$100,000-\$149,000
\$150,000 and over
Prefer not to answer

28. What is the highest degree of education you have completed?

Less than a high school diploma
High school degree or equivalent
Some college
Associate
Bachelor's
Master's
Professional/Doctorate
Prefer not to answer

B. Matrix Survey Questions

8. Please rate your experience with our hotel front desk staff:

Attributes	Answer Choice
1. First impression of hotel	Excellent
2. Ease of check-in process	Very Good
3. Ease of check- out process	Good
4. Quality of customer service received	Fair
5. Warm welcome	Poor
6. Knowledge of facility	NA
7. Professionalism	
8. Responsiveness to your needs	

9. Please rate your experience with your hotel room:

Attributes	Answer Choice
1. First impression of room	Excellent
2. Cleanliness of room	Very Good
3. Comfort of room	Good
4. Quality of sleep	Fair
5. Complimentary items provided for your use	Poor
6. Overall room satisfaction	NA

10. Please rate your experience at the Bulldog Bistro:

Attributes	Answer Choice
1. Food menu variety	Excellent
2. Cleanliness of restaurant	Very Good
3. Value of food relative to what you paid	Good
4. Quality of service received	Fair
5. Bar beverage quality (taste & appearance)	Poor
6. Food quality (taste & appearance)	NA
7. Overall experience at Bulldog Bistro	

11. Please rate your experience at the Savannah Room:

Attributes	Answer Choice
1. Food menu variety	Excellent
2. Cleanliness of restaurant	Very Good
3. Food quality (taste & appearance)	Good
4. Quality of service received	Fair
5. Value of food relative to what you paid	Poor
6. Overall experience at Savannah Room	NA
