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QUALITY MEASUREMENT OF ACCOMMODATION SERVICES IN THE

KYMENLAAKSO REGION USING EXPECTATION-PERCEPTION MODEL

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ABSTRACT

This thesis gives an overview of the service quality of accommodation industry in the Kymenlaakso region in Finland and focuses on the expectation-perception approach. The main target falls on the customers of hotel companies located in the region in the autumn period of 2014.

The objective of this research was to test the difference in expected and perceived quality of services offered by hotel companies. The service quality analysis aimed to detect quality gaps and to prevent tourists' disappointment in the region.

The study was based on the analysis of expectations and perceptions questionnaires filled by the hotel visitors. The SERVQUAL model was chosen as basis for questionnaires as it measures the quality of service. In total, the number of 119 respondents participated in the survey. The statistical analysis was performed.

Based on the expectation-perception gap analysis positive and negative differences were detected with various levels of significance. Furthermore, the improvement possibilities were identified in such areas as appearance of hotel facilities, service performance and city guides or brochures availability.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information

Tourism and international operations stand as important issues in the Kymenlaakso regional strategy throughout the past years (Kymenlaakso Chamber of Commerce 2012, 3). Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences was given the task to develop tourism in the region. There is a tendency to increase importance of tourism in the area and attract new people. In order to achieve that, the region government needs to receive up-to-date data and analysis of current situation. The study of tourism areas gets important also for service companies as tourists could appear to be their customers.

One of the major areas in tourism is accommodation. Customers' opinions on these services may play a significant role in creating the impression of the whole trip or the region. The reason for studying the quality of services in this field gets vital to detect gaps and diminish them as much as possible to offer an improved service in order to satisfy customers.

When studying the quality of accommodation services it is necessary to outline that people coming to the hotel have certain expectations and when leaving they create the impression of the company based on the fulfillment of their expectations. In this research to understand the level of expectations and perceptions of services the SERV-QUAL measurement model is applied (Parasuraman et al. 1988).

1.2 Factors affecting hotel industry in the Kymenlaakso region

1.2.1 Socio-cultural factors

There are many factors that influence people visiting the Kymenlaakso region as well as their desire to visit. Among the most important ones there are social and cultural factors. Since Finland has adopted human rights education in 1995-2004, it has been promoting tolerance to other nations and welcoming tourists from abroad (Kaivola & Melen-Paaso 2007, 38). Moreover, cultural events gather people from different regions of Finland and also from abroad.

The Official Travel Site of Finland (2014) posted on their pages a list of special Finnish attractions which people could experience exclusively in Finland:

- Santa Claus visit,
- Clean nature and peaceful atmosphere,
- Real sauna experience with icy-swimming,
- Moomins and Angry Birds,
- Experiencing difference from traditional European tourist routes.

Among the most famous events happening in the Kymenlaakso region are Fashion nights, music festivals in Iitti and Koria, Kymijoki beer festival, Christmas season openings and many others. There are such tourist attractions as Tykkimäki amusement park, Poikilo art museum, Verla museum, Arboretum Mustila and Repovesi park.

Special place among the attraction takes shopping. More and more tourists especially Russians come only to experience Finnish shopping in the recently-opened in 2012 shopping center Veturi as well as Prisma and other markets of S-chain and Kesko (Visit Kouvola 2014, 16-17).

1.2.2 Educational factors

Finnish education is famous for its highest level in the world according to the Education index, which is counted by United Nations. Every Finn has the right to get education as well as immigrants permanently living in the country. For foreigners coming to study in Finland there are special courses of Finnish language. (Expat Finland 2014).

The Kymenlaakso region has free international education study programs e.g. Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences, however, in relation to accommodation services, students do not use hotel services permanently, but people visiting them, their relatives or friends, may stay in the hotel.

1.2.3 Environmental factors

Finnish government promotes environmental issues and sustainable tourism development. There is Finnish Tourist Board which controls the process on the national level

and every region's administration controls the local situation. Hotels have their own environmental solutions taken as a standard. (United Nations Commission 1998).

Invest in Kymenlaakso (2012, 14) cited Reader's Digest (2012) investigation on the best ecology level in different countries and stated that Finland is one of the leaders in ecological factors including the air and water cleanness, low rate of children's illness and high level of protection from pollution. Environmentally, the region itself supports three national nature parts, such as Repovesi, Valkmusa and Eastern Gulf of Finland archipelago (Kymenlaakson liitto n.d.)

1.2.4 Political and economic situation, legal issues

According to the Newsweek (2010) cited in Invest in Kymenlaakso (2012, 9), Finland became the best country to live in by such aspects as education, healthcare, economy, political stability and living standards. The political stability was assessed as the fifth best in the world and the level of living conditions are counted as the fourth worlds' best. Invest in Kymenlaakso (2012, 9) presented Finland as one of the favorable countries to start business pointing that the country supports innovations and qualified workers.

The Kymenlaakso region has close relationships with Russia as there is a border-crossing point in Vaalimaa which has the largest traffic with Russia in Finland (Invest in Kymenlaakso 2012, 6). It is important to note that for non-EU citizens there is a need for valid visa to enter the country. For non-EU residents visa restrictions cause obstacles to plan their trips to Finland.

1.2.5 Technical factors and infrastructure

Finland is famous for its innovative environment as well as supporting innovations. The Ministry of Employment and the Economy (n.d., 2) explains that innovations in technology such as elevators or mobile phones as well as in entrepreneurship are coming from the good education system. However, Edward Dutton (2009, 428-429) doubts Finnish innovations by pointing out that Finns often imitate or copy other countries. As an example of such, he discusses the TV shows which are borrowed from or made similar to American, German, Swedish or British ones.

Experiencing Finland, Dutton (2009, 429) appreciated the infrastructure and railroad development: trains are high-speed and on time, moreover, everything is translated into English language, therefore, foreigners could easily travel inside the country. Launch of high-speed train Allegro which connects St. Petersburg and Helsinki increases the number of travelers from Russia as Kouvola is the second stop on the Allegro route (Invest in Kymenlaakso 2012, 6).

Kymenlaakso liitto (n.d.) states that the region is a strategic logistics hub, including such units as Port of KotkaHamina, Highway E18 and the Kouvola railway hub. These factors attract business people to travel to the Kymenlaakso region.

1.3 Hotels industry and overnight stays overview in the Kymenlaakso region

1.3.1 Hotels and accommodation establishments

In a nutshell, Finnish hotel industry has branded and independent operators which are relatively called first and second tier operators. The first tier operators may have more than one brand. Restel including Cumulus and Rantasipi, Scandic, Omena and Sokos Hotels by S-Group are the examples forming this group. Second tier operators may have one or more than one unit under the one brand. (Palonperä 2013, 2) This division into two types of accommodation companies exists in the Kymenlaakso region and is presented by both independent second tier and branded first tier operators.

According to Official Statistics of Finland (2013) the total number of accommodation service providers in 2013 was 1443, including 674 hotels. In the Kymenlaakso region in 2013 the number of all accommodation providers amounted to 34 establishments including 19 hotels (Statictics Finland database 2014a). In the municipality data from Statistics Finland database (2014b) Kouvola has the biggest number of 14 accommodations establishments and 7 hotels as Kotka has 8 establishments in total with 6 hotels, the third place in the Kymenlaakso region by the number of accommodation services takes Pyhtää only with 4 establishments including 3 hotels. The other accommodation establishments different from hotels may be defined as caravans, seasonal camps or youth hostels.

The occupancy rate in Kymenlaakso hotels in 2013 was 32,7 per cent on average with the largest percentage in July and August reaching over 45 per cent. However, in Oc-

tober and November the rate stays relatively high up to 37 per cent comparing to spring numbers of 22 per cent in average. The reason for such high occupancy of hotel rooms in autumn months may become decrease in price level comparing to spring and summer prices. The average price per room in Kymenlaakso hotels is 80,50 € in 2013 and 83,80 € in 2014. (Statistics Finland database 2014c).

1.3.2 Tourists and overnight stays numbers

The total number of nights spent in hotels in 2013 amounted up to 255 thousands in the Kymenlaakso region and over 107 thousands only in the city of Kouvola (Official Statistics of Finland 2013). In comparison with 2012, the region experienced the second highest percentage growth of overnight stays up to 9,9 per cent, which is shown in the figure 1:
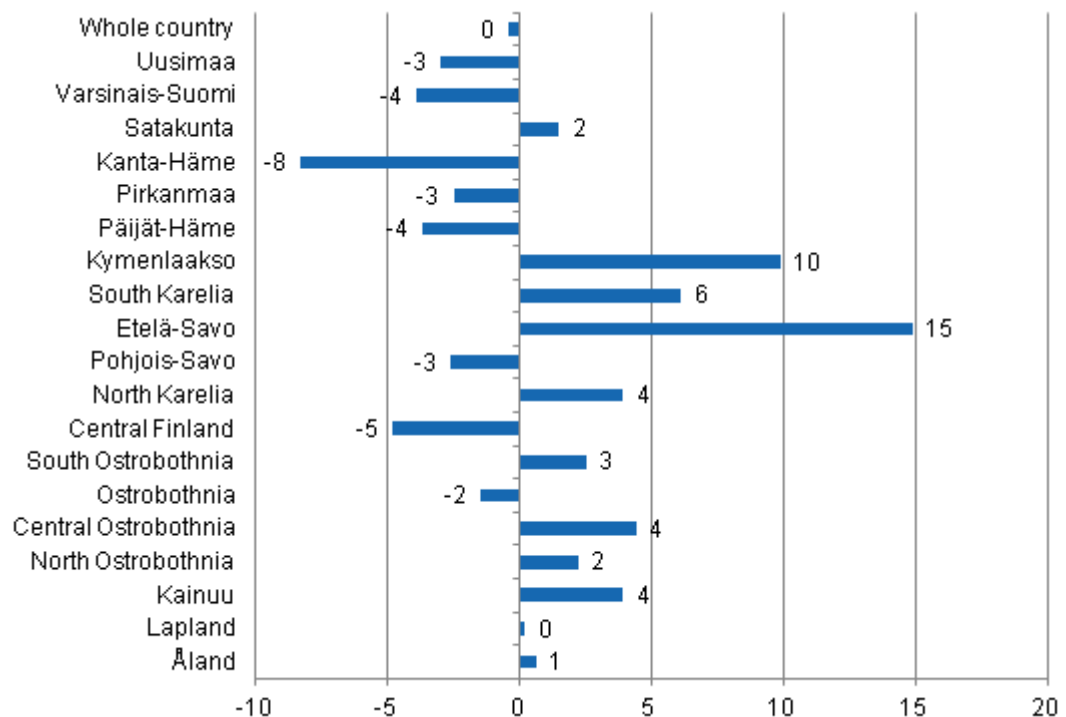
Figure 1. Change in overnight stays by region 2013/2012 in per cent (Official Statistics of Finland 2013)

Taking the numbers from Statistics Finland database (2014d), Finnish customers of all hotel establishments were counted over 110 thousand visitors with almost 158 thousand overnight stays in 2013. Foreign customers amounted up to 51,7 thousand arrivals with over 38 thousand coming only from Russia. The total number of overnight spends in the region in 2013 reached 255 thousands while foreign visitors spent up to

98 nights in hotels including 50 thousand nights spent by Russians, 2,7 by Swedish tourists, 2,6 thousands by Germans, 1,5 thousand by Americans and 1,2 thousands by Asian tourists. (Statistics Finland database 2014d).

Among all hotel customers there were different reasons to visit the Kymenlaakso region. Stating the purpose or coming to the region, the whole passenger traffic was divided into five categories: leisure trips, business, shopping, work and education (Kalenoja & Rantala 2007, 21-22).

1.4 Research problem

The problem for this research is that the overall picture of hotel and accommodation services quality in the Kymenlaakso region is not presented, thus, it is difficult to see what people visiting the region generally expect from hotels.

Tourists coming to the area create additional demand to the services offering on a daily basis and also special attractions. Companies are willing to expand according to the customers' wishes as well as to create new services.

Accommodation is a very important issue for coming tourists as it straightly connects their impression on the city and region. After a trip or a busy day spent in the city a person wants to relax comfortably and pay a reasonable price. Moreover, the tourist may have a history of visiting different hotels and have expectations to the particular hotel in the target area. If his or her expectations are not at all or poorly met, this person may assume the quality of this one and other hotels in the city is as bad thus create a negative view on the city itself and its services. Therefore, the better the service is, the more tourists are willing to come and stay in the area. Thus, measurement of service quality gets important to companies to be able to understand what attracts the tourists and what makes them leave.

Commonly, each hotel makes an assessment of its customer satisfaction by itself and does not compare the data to other companies in the business as there is a competition among them, but there is a question if companies do the service quality analysis on their own. On the other side, a tourist willing to come in the city assesses all of the existing hotels and chooses the best suitable one creating own image of expecting services according to the description and the price paid. All the hotels have different

price range and services included. Therefore, the expectations and perceptions of each different one may be also different.

1.5 Research objective

The objective of this research is *to find out how much the expectations of hotel services differ than the perceptions after using them among the tourists coming to the Kymenlaakso region by using SERVQUAL model.*

The sub-objective includes *improvement suggestions of overall hotel services in the region.*

These objectives were defined out of the necessity to measure the quality of services in the hotel industry and understand what attracts people to the area in the chosen field of accommodation. The sub-objective aims to give an idea to the hotel companies for development of their services.

Meeting people expectations hotels increase people's willingness to visit the region again, thus, it creates an opportunity to other services or shops to have more customers. These factors affect the development of economic situation of the region.

1.6 Research and development question

The main question for this study is:

At what extent the customer expectations of the quality of hotel services in the Kymenlaakso region are met?

From the determined objectives the two the sub-questions can be stated:

What are the main quality standards that people are expecting from their accommodation services?

What improvements should be made in order to meet customers' expectations and attract more people to the chosen area?

2 QUALITY MEASUREMENT IN ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

2.1 Quality element in tourism accommodation industry

Nowadays, importance of service quality is increasing. This can be explained by rising standards and expectations of customers in tourism industry (Williams & Buswell 2003, 6). Accommodation service companies being a part of the tourism should adapt themselves to the changing tendencies by monitoring and improving their performance quality in order to satisfy customer needs.

Quality of services has been constantly discussed among theorists for the past decades. According to Eraqi (2006, 474), quality is a *'key element'* to become competitive on the market. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) suggested separating quality of services from the product quality and invented a conceptual model widely used in service quality research.

Studying the concepts of service quality, Grzinic (2007, 83) supported the idea that there are not enough factors to define services quality comparing to the products (which have certain areas of quality such as defective products count, best before dates, etc.), therefore, measurement of service quality becomes a challenge.

In order to simplify service quality measurement, Peters (1987) proposed the idea of excellent service quality as one completely meeting customer needs as well as creating their gained perception as perfect. Among customers and organisations may appear an image that excellence depends on the price paid for the service, though the quality is not based on the price level and the ideal service can be offered in any organization including low-cost ones (Williams & Buswell 2003, 20).

In order to improve tourism service quality Eraqi (2006, 489) advised to pay attention on three categories, such as satisfaction of tourists (external factor), well-being of employees (internal factor) and performance of the process. Grzinic (2007, 85-86) suggests to adopt the consumer-oriented approach where hotel visitors' satisfaction or dissatisfaction depends on their expectations and perceptions of the services.

This research will concentrate further on suggestion for studying expectations and perceptions as well as measurement service quality itself.

2.2 Service quality vs. customer satisfaction

Many academics argue if the service quality and customer satisfaction have the same definition. For this study it is important to create a clear picture separating these two concepts as customer satisfaction plays minor role and measuring service quality gets the main concentration. A simple difference between those was stated by Randall and Senior (1996), claiming that the satisfaction from the service received may not be achieved, but service quality is assessed as 'good'. At the same time, Crompton and MacKay (1989) concluded the difference of these two definitions by stating that service quality is judged by the service performance itself when the satisfaction is coming from the personal experience and emotional perceptions of customers.

Parasuraman et al. (1988) pointed interrelation between service quality and customer satisfaction as customers tend to assess both of them with the same criteria. However, Berry (1995) suggested that these two should be measured by different criteria therefore Oliver (1997) defined the separated criteria, which are presented in the figure 2:

Customer judgement of service quality and customer satisfaction.

Service quality	Customer satisfaction
Evaluated using specific clues	Evaluation more holistic
Based on perceptions of 'excellence'	Based on needs
Cognitive	Emotional

Figure 2. Customer judgement of service quality and customer satisfaction (Oliver 1997)

There are several interpretations of service quality definition. For example, Grönroos (1984, 37) described it as the result of process evaluating when the consumers contrast their expectations with the perceptions of the service. Markovic et al. (2013, 38) in their research define the perceived quality as *'customer's subjective experience'* based on the attitude of the service provided by the hotel. Attitude-based approach was also supported by Jennifer Rowley (1998) in her quality research in public sector. To add

more, the service quality is the performance success of satisfying needs that customer was aiming to achieve by using this service (Zeithaml et al. 1993).

2.3 Quality measurement methods

2.3.1 SERVQUAL and Gap analysis

The most known method for measurement of service quality is SERVQUAL. According to Parasuraman et al. (1991, 445) it aimed to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of quality in every aspect of company work.

In 1985 Parasuraman et al. concluded that service quality can be measured by the gaps that might occur when using services and by improvement of the quality they meant closure of these gaps. Later, Parasuraman et al. (1990) defined five gaps illustrated in figure 3 which include:

- the information or knowledge gap, which lies in customer expectations and how managers percept their expectations;
- the standard-service gap, which is the difference in customers' and managerial perceptions about the certain standards an offered service should have;
- the gap in performance of service occurs when a company fails to meet the service delivery that was promised to a customer;
- the communication of staff with customers gap or what a company promises to their customers and what it does for them in reality;
- the gap in expectations and perceptions of services by the customer.
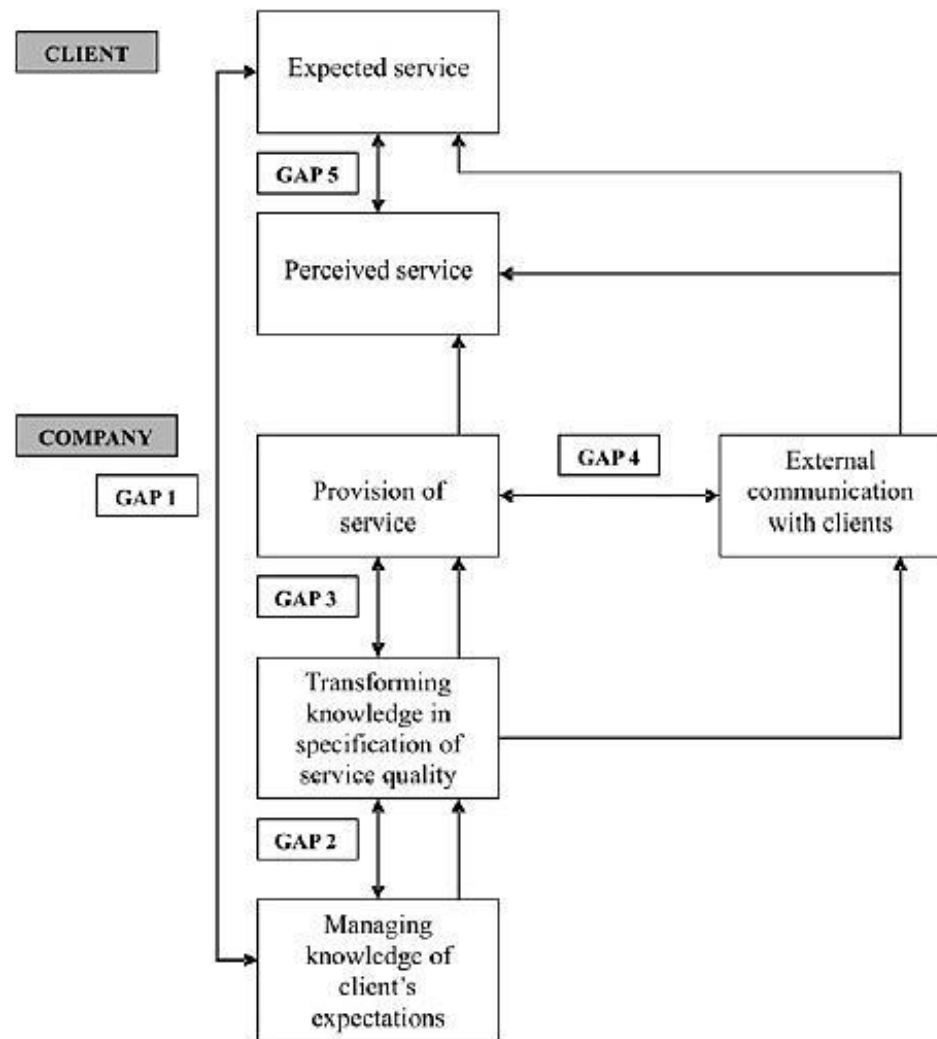
Figure 3. Conceptual model of service quality (Parasuraman et al. 1985, 44)

Taking the fifth gap as a basis, SERVQUAL started as a model with 22 assessment statements within the 5 dimensions which compare the customers' expectations with their perceptions of the service (Parasuraman et al. 1985, 1988). Originally, Parasuraman et al. (1988) determined SERVQUAL's dimensions as:

- reliability, as accurate and correct service performed on time;
- assurance, as knowledgeable staff performance and trustworthy relationship between personnel and a customer;
- tangibles, as physical appearance of premises, staff and equipment;
- empathy, as ability to provide personal treatment for each customer;
- responsiveness, as quick performance of services and willingness to communicate with customers.

Each dimension consists of four or five statements (total number is 22), which are given for assessment usually with a five-point or seven-point Likert scale (Markovic et al., 2013:38). Each statement is assessed twice: first time with the expectations that the customer has before the service and the second time is based on the perception and service receiving act (Ladhari 2009; Markovic et al. 2013, 38).

Ladhari (2009) was studying the development of this method through the years and claimed that despite the critics SERVQUAL is a good instrument for measuring the quality of services if the researcher adjusts this method for his or her special case. Moreover, he added that this tool earned most appreciation as many practitioners see it useful nowadays.

As examples of research studies made with SERVQUAL-based method there are Tsang and Qu in 2000 who researched expectations and perceptions of China hotel visitors with 35 statements, Akbaba in 2006 used 29 statements for Turkey business tourists and Markovic in 2003 inspecting Croatian hotels with the original version of the model (Markovic et al. 2013, 38).

2.3.2 Other quality measurement models

Throughout the years, service quality measurement gathered a lot of attention and eventually the original SERVQUAL experienced a lot of modifications or became a basis for new measuring methods. Brady and Cronin (2001) suggested a third-order factor model which is constructed of interaction and its result adding the third factor – environmental quality. For these three dimensions they added three sub-dimensions which are original SERVQUAL dimensions: responsiveness, empathy and assurance.

Another example of quality measurement method is SERVPERF model described by Cronin and Taylor in 1992. In this model they used the same 22 dimensions of SERVQUAL model but cut the assessment only by customers' perceptions based on satisfaction level, willingness to buy additional services and the quality of services in general (Cronin & Taylor 1992). These academics doubted the necessity of expectations factor in the SERVQUAL model as in their view, the perception assessment gives the idea of hidden expectations of the customer (Cronin & Taylor 1994). However, the approach of Cronin and Taylor was criticized by Tribe and Snaith (1997) as lack of full picture of customer satisfaction of service quality.

Similar to gap analysis, Oliver (1997) suggested the model of expectancy - disconfirmation. The model is based on the difference of customers' expectations and perceptions but has three levels of satisfaction:

- Negative disconfirmation is given when the service is worse than the customer expected;
- Simple confirmation which states that the expected service equals the perceived service;
- Positive confirmation occurs when the perceived service is better than the expected one (Oliver & De Sarbo 1988).

2.3.3 SERVQUAL cultural adaptation

In order to apply the measuring method, the 22 items of SERVQUAL need to be changed according to the research case. First step to model adaptation is to understand the nature of typical Finnish hotel. According to Finland Insider (2014) usual hotel offers breakfast including Finnish meal, Internet connection, gym and sauna. Usually here are hotels from three to five stars in Finland with international standards (Go Finland n.d.). In the Kymenlaakso region there are no five-star luxury hotels therefore they are left out of the research focus.

In three or four star hotels it is possible to choose a room up to four people and special rooms for people with disabilities. All the rooms have their own interior with beautiful outside views of the country yard or city center. In addition to the gym and sauna there are playing rooms for children, parking lots and meeting rooms. The staff is trained to help tourists with guidance about the city. In Finnish economy hotels the price is lower and there can be no receptionist, however, it has the main hotel services as beds, bathroom, TV, fridge and microwave oven. (Finland Insider 2014).

SERVQUAL is applied to all categories of hotels thus there is a limitation of question items to be asked in the empirical research. Moreover, the study of important factors of service quality for hotel visitors by Ramsaran-Fowdar (2007, 24-25) concludes that SERVQUAL dimension statements are only the basis and there are more factors to consider. Thus, it is unnecessary to use statements assessing south resort hotels because of the Finnish northern location. Furthermore, some of the statements taken from SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al. (1985) can be joint, for example, appealing

equipment and materials, correct performance and error-free records, responsiveness and willingness to provide help, providing personal attention and keeping best interest when serving a customer.

In addition to the statements factor, Ariffin and Maghzi (2012) suggest the analysis of personal information such as country of origin, gender or age of respondents participating in the research as the expectations and perceptions differ according to these factors.

2.4 Understanding the customer

2.4.1 Customer expectations and experience

First of all, it is essential to understand the nature of customer expectations. Parasuraman et al. (1988) determined expectations as *'customers' desires or wants'* which the service provider can or cannot influence. Zeithaml et al. (1990) specified the factors which shape customer expectations:

- Word of mouth;
- Personal needs;
- External communication;
- Past experience.

In addition to these four, Gummesson and Grönroos (1987) added the image of the company providing the service.

It is worth to understand that the customer may have different kinds of expectations when coming to use hotel services. For example, there are two most recognized expectation types such as normative and predictive. The normative expectations generally refer to an excellent service which customer supposed to get from the hotel while the predictive ones describe the probable level of services that customer believes to receive. (Coye 2004).

Studying the expectation levels, Miller (1977) cited in Randall and Senior (1996) outlined four of them: excellent service, predicted service performance, deserved performance and minimum level of tolerance. Based on this classification it is notable that

most of measuring methods including SERVQUAL take into consideration only ideal expectations and the others are left outside the picture while organizations are interested in lowering costs which becomes possible after defining the bottom line of customer satisfaction (Williams & Buswell 2003, 64).

Similar to those levels, Teas (1993) suggested six clarifications of expectations, by adding to the Miller's only the level of service importance and cost-fair service.

What is more, due to the constantly changing tendencies in the world, the customer expectations of services including the hotel industry are changing too. Companies interested in their customers or having a loyalty programs have to monitor the expectations and opinion-changing environment.

2.4.2 Customer perceptions and dissatisfaction

After customers make their expectations there are the perceptions of the service. There is a good definition of customer perceptions given by Oliver (1997) cited in Taylor (1997) stating that it is *'a comparison to excellence in service by the customer'*. Moreover, customer perception is an opinion built after using a service, influenced by many factors (Williams & Buswell 2003, 65). Rama Rao (2009) divides these factors into internal such as personality, personal preferences and desires and external which are characteristics of an event, a person or objects perceived by the customers.

Despite the idea that the perceptions are usually made at the end or after the service has been received, Zeithhaml et al. (1990) stated that post-service evaluation and main process of experiencing the service give a vast possibility for analysis, thus, creating perceptions. To sum up, Edvardsson (2005, 130) concluded that the perceptions are influenced by customer's emotional state during the whole process of service performance, from producing the service, to delivering and using it.

Excellent or satisfying service is not always the case. When the customer expectations are not met the dissatisfaction appears. Williams and Buswell (2003, 66) described the main factors which influence dissatisfaction: customer wishes are poorly recognized, misleading information about the service, non-competent staff, threats to the wellbeing or loss of personal belongings.

2.5 Theoretical framework adapted from SERVQUAL model

In order to fulfil the objective of the research according to the Kymenlaakso region needs the following theoretical framework based on the SERVQUAL model was developed. From the reviewed literature on the service quality models and hotel industry of the Kymenlaakso region the new expectation-perception model presented in the figure 4 was created.
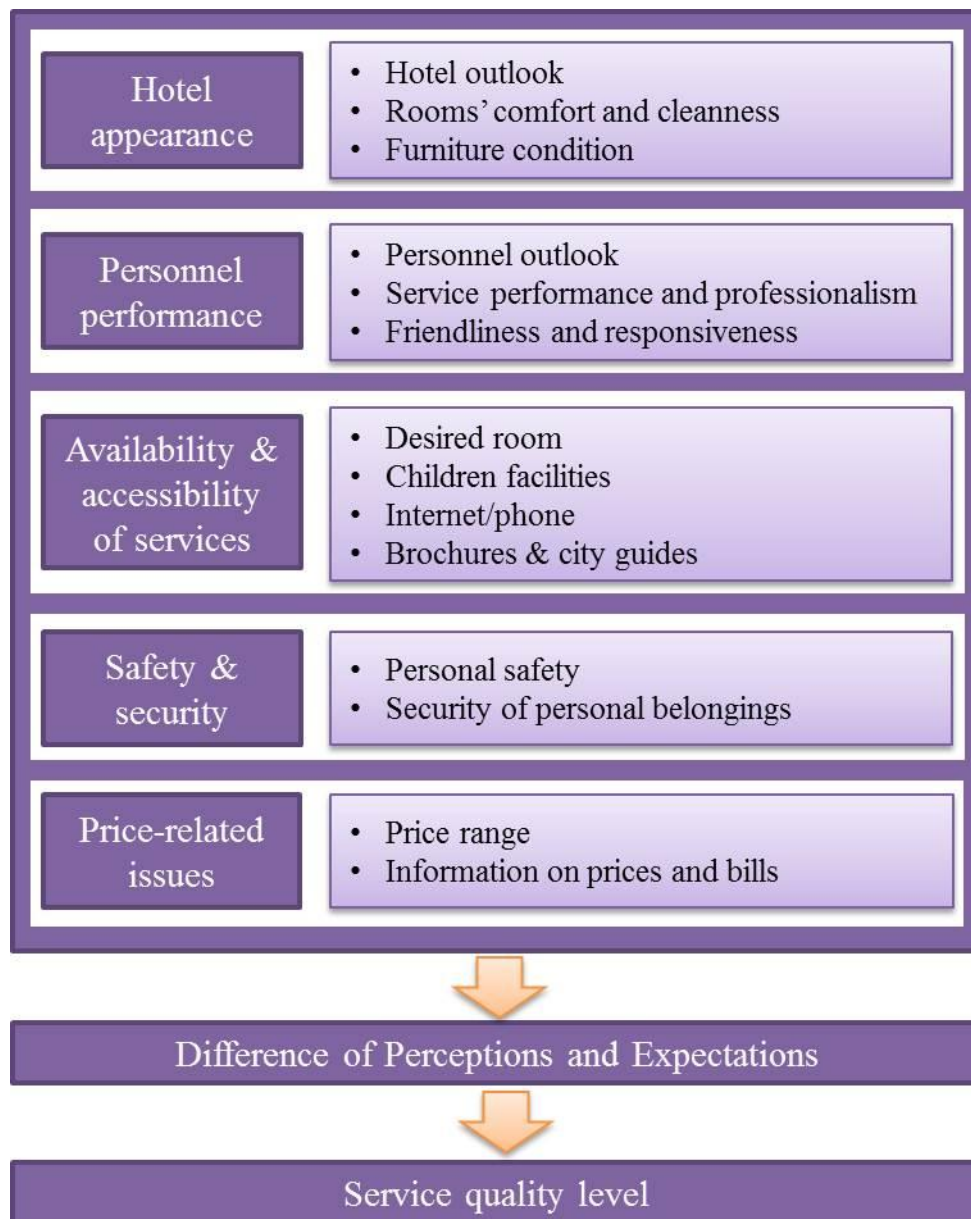
Figure 4. Expectation-perception model of service quality for Kymenlaakso hotels

The 14 items from SERVQUAL dimensions were picked, modified and added to new groups formed according to the hotel industry in the region. Cultural and economic view of the region became the basis for defining the aspects for every group. The most

important factors such as appearance, service delivery, service accessibility, security and price range were selected because of the location, climate conditions of the Kymenlaakso region and visit purposes of tourists coming to the area.

The first group of items evolved from the tangibles dimension of SERVQUAL model and included the visual appearance of facilities, hotel rooms and furniture. The second group included personnel performance, outlook, their friendliness and willingness to communicate with customers. Accessibility and availability of services group became the largest and included four items such as desired room availability, existence and accessibility of children facilities for family visits, Internet or phone availability and provision of brochures and city guides in the hotel. Safety and security of customers and personal belongings evolved from the assurance dimension of original SERVQUAL model as well as the price and bills group items were developed from the reliability dimension.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Acquisition of data

3.1.1 Acquisition method

This research uses quantitative analysis thus the chosen method for gathering data is a survey based on the SERVQUAL model. However, in order to present suggestions for improvement the service quality the survey has a qualitative element.

As the study should provide with information on difference of customer expectations and perceptions, each user of hotel services willing to participate should fill two questionnaires: the first one by judging services based on his or her expectations and the second one – by experience of receiving the services. For both times the customer is offered the same questions.

3.1.2 Population

The target population for this research is limited to the hotels visitors of major cities in the Kymenlaakso region: Kouvola including Kuusankoski and Kotka. These three cities are chosen because of the biggest numbers of hotels: there are three hotels to include in Kouvola, one in Kuusankoski and two hotels in Kotka. Another reason for targeting these cities is Kouvola with Kuusankoski is a central city of the northern part of the Kymenlaakso region and Kotka is relatively a center of the south part of the region. There are six hotels in total to place the questionnaires in.

3.1.3 Sampling frame

The sampling frame is defined by all the tourists staying in the chosen hotels in the research period of October-November 2014. If there is a family or a group of people staying together, each member can fill the questionnaire separately. The frame is also limited by the willingness of customers to be involved.

3.1.4 Sampling

Participation in the research is voluntary therefore the convenience sampling technique is used. According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2010, 139) convenient sample is applied when respondents are chosen accidentally or without special arrangements but agreed to take part in the survey.

Quinlan (2011, 214) suggests having a certain sample size when using convenience approach. According to statistics Finland database (2014a) there are 34 accommodation establishments. In the Kymenlaakso region in the period of October-November 2013 there were counted around 12500 users of accommodation services on average (Statistics Finland database 2014e). There is no data on each hotel arrival, thus the average number of 371 is counted from the whole amount of arrivals.

The Research Advisors (2006) suggest using 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error when counting the sample size according to population. As stated in the table, provided by these Research Advisors (2006) the sample size is counted as 169 when the population is in the range from 300 to 400 items. Due to the limitations and average data on arrivals the margin of error was increased to 7%. With the help of the Survey System website (2012) the new sample size of 119 answers is counted.

3.1.5 Questionnaire design

When designing questionnaires, there are two main aspects to consider: physical appearance and content. The visual appearance of the questionnaires concerns the length, format and the language. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2010, 121-122) advise to have short questionnaires as respondents get bored and not interested in long and tiring questions, therefore, the questionnaires for this study are as short as possible limited by one page of A4 format. The questionnaires are offered in two languages: English and Russian. According to Official Statistics of Finland (2013) Russian tourists amounted 28 per cent of all hotel customers in Finland in 2013 increasing by 7,5 per cent in comparison with year 2012 what explains the necessity of having additional questionnaires versions in Russian language.

The content of the questionnaires comes from the adapted version of the measurement model of service quality. Both expectations and perceptions questionnaires have the

same structure and questions with the only difference in headers. Each of them consists of two parts: SERVQUAL-based statements and background information. The first part supports model's dimensions. There are 14 statements to be assessed with 6-point scale including possibility to use 'I don't know' option in order to fully express the attitude to the quality of service.

The 14 statements given for assessment are divided in five groups:

- Hotel outlook, room comfort and cleanness and furniture condition;
- Staff outlook, friendliness and willingness to help, performance and professionalism;
- Availability and importance of desired room, children facilities, Internet or phone access and brochures or city guides presented in the hotel;
- Safety and security of visitors and their personal belongings;
- Price range and information on bills.

The first group of questions is fully related to the tangibility dimension of SERVQUAL model as the 'staff' group includes all five dimensions. The third group of statements supports empathy and reliability, safety and security questions belong to reliability dimension, prices and bills are related to empathy and responsiveness.

The second part of the questionnaire consists of four background questions about country of residence, age, gender and hotel visiting experience. In the end of this section respondent is offered an open-ended question where he or she can leave a comment or suggestion concerning their stay at the hotel.

3.2 Statistical framework

In the research the descriptive and interferential statistics are used. Descriptive statistics provides organization and summary of data when the interferential statistics gives possibility to compare two or more variables and construct patterns (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2010, 153).

Applying the descriptive statistics, the following measures are calculated:

1. Mean as arithmetic average;

2. Frequencies as distribution of variables (Quinlan 2011, 400-401).

Means of expectations and perceptions questionnaires are applied to detect the service quality gaps in order to fulfil the aim of the research. Frequencies show the standards of tourists' expectations and perceptions and the current state of the quality. Background information of respondents is presented with descriptive statistics as well.

From the interferential statistics the non-parametrical test for paired samples is applied. The non-parametrical test for paired samples or Wilcoxon signed-ranks test is applied to identify the distribution of differences (Zaiontz 2014).

There is a qualitative element existing in the survey which is presented in the last open-ended question. This question is concerned about wishes and suggestions to the hotels and will be presented as suggestions for improvements.

4 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Collected data description and background information

During the survey the whole sample of 119 respondents was fulfilled. Due to voluntary participation not every hotel visitor was willing to participate. The reasons for non-participations were soon train departures, business meetings or lack of interest in the research. However, all of 119 respondents were glad to be involved into research.

Background information appeared to be the same for both expectations and perceptions questionnaires as people interested in filling the expectations part were willing to participate in perceptions part to compare their opinions.

The first question in this group was respondents' country of origin. The results were the following: the biggest number of respondents was coming from Russia, their number amounted to 42 people or 34,4 per cent of the whole sample. The next group of 17 participants (13,9 per cent of the sample) is coming from Finland. There were 5 respondents per country from China, France, Sweden, 4 respondents per country from Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands and UK. Groups of 3 respondents were coming from such countries as Denmark, Norway, Spain, USA and Vietnam. Belgium, Hungary, Czech Republic and Latvia were presented in the research with two respondents from each country and finally the only one respondent per country was participating from Austria, Canada, Greece, India, Ireland and Ukraine.

Analyzing the country of origin, most of the respondents were from Russia and Europe. Asian countries, USA and Canada were the minor groups of respondents. Latin and African countries as well as Australia were not presented in the research at all. Taking into account the countries' representatives the opinion of Finnish hotel services was formed with limited cultural diversity.

The second question from this group was the age of respondents. The range of the age parameter of participants varies from 15 to 66. Figure 5 shows the age data of respondents divided into groups.

The biggest age group of respondents were people from 26 to 35 years old with the number of 33 participants which is 27,7 per cent on the sample, the next age group

was from 36 to 45 years old with 32 respondents presented by 26,9 per cent, the third biggest age group of 25,2 per cent appeared to be is 25 years and younger with the number of respondents of 30. Age group from 46 to 55 years amounted to 17 respondents or 14,3 per cent of the sample and the smallest age group became from 56 years and older with only 7 respondents which is 5,9 per cent of all respondents.
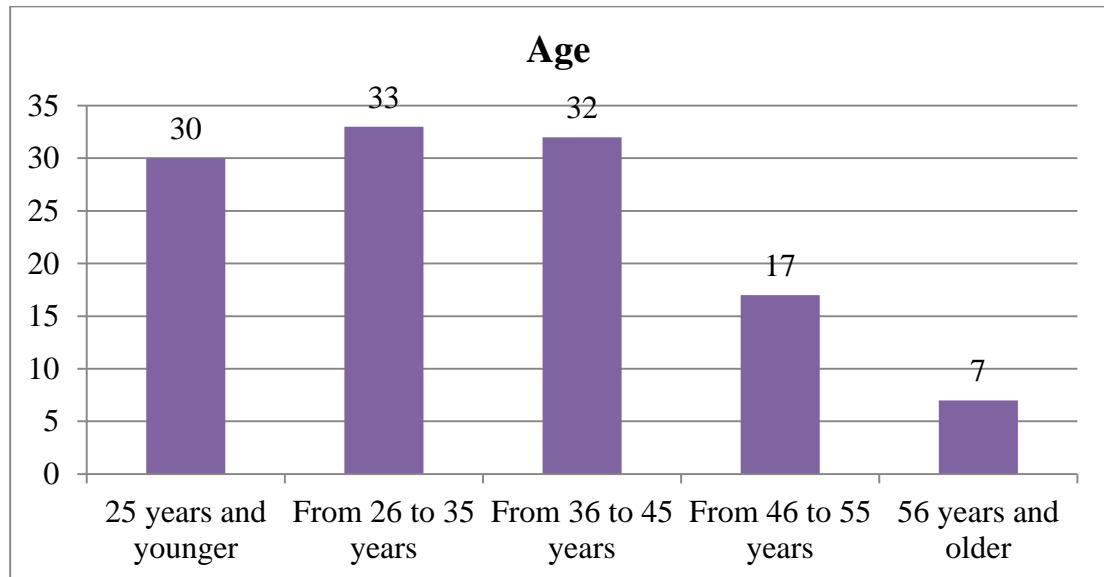
Figure 5. Age groups of respondents (n=119)

The third background question was the respondents' gender. In this case the distribution aimed to be as equal as possible thus the statements evaluation results happen to be equal in relation to gender.
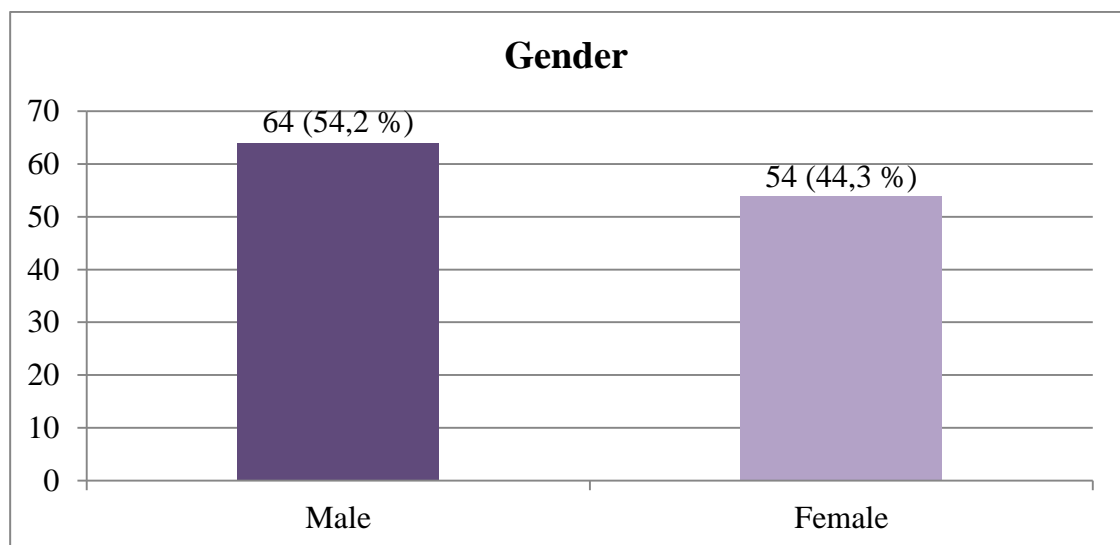
Figure 6. Gender of respondents (n=118)

Figure 6 shows the gender distribution of respondents which was the following: male were counted to 64 of the whole sample which is 54,2 per cent of the sample and female respondents were 54, which is 44,3 per cent of the sample.

The next question was asking participants' experience of visiting hotels. Figure 7 shows that most of respondents (40,7 %) were visiting hotels 5 or less times, 39 participants or 33,1 per cent has stayed in the hotel for more than 5 times, finally, for 31 respondents or 26,3 per cent of the sample it was the first stay in the hotel.

How many times have you stayed in hotels?

This is my first stay	31 (26,3 %)
5 or less times	48 (40,7 %)
More than 5 times	39 (33,1 %)
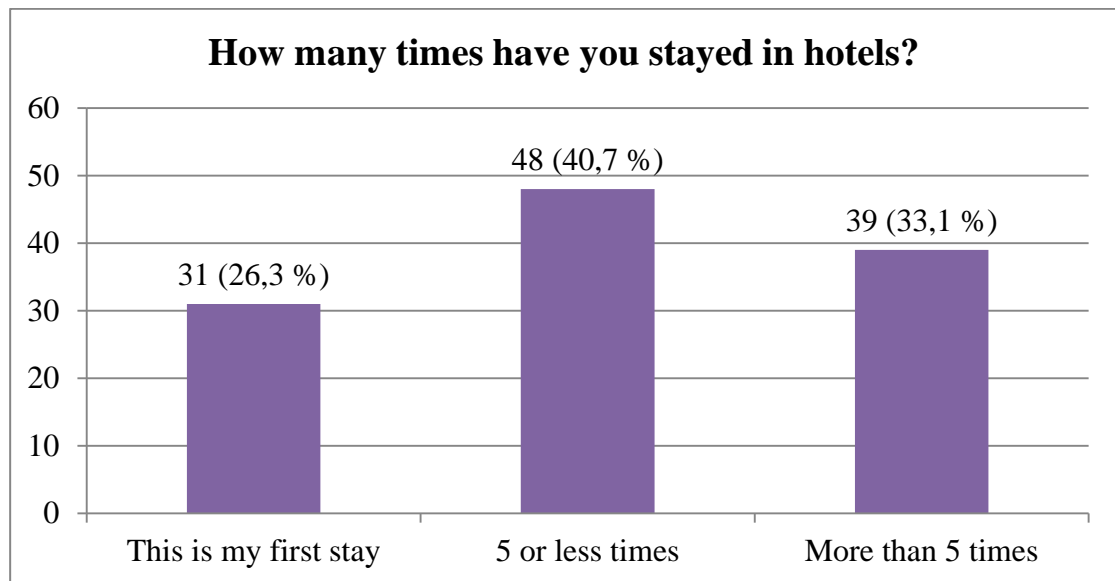
Figure 7. Respondents' experience of visiting hotels (n=118)

4.2 Average grades based on expectations and perceptions

Analyzing the attitude statements graded by respondents, there are following results. The expected services were graded from 4 to 4,5 out of 6 with the exception of trust with hotel belongings and price range in the hotel, these statements were graded 3,91 and 3,89 out of 6. The perceived services got grades from 4 to 4,5 out of 6 with the exception of price range of hotel services, which got 3,85 out of 6.

According to the scale of the questionnaire, grade 4 means that respondents were satisfied with services, however, only on a general level. There are average grades for expectations and perceptions presented in the table 1.

Table 1. Average grades according to expectations and perceptions of services

Statements	Expectations mean (1-6)	Perceptions mean (1-6)
The interior and exterior of the hotel looks attractive	4,54	4,09
Rooms are clean and comfortable	4,44	4,24
Furniture and equipment are in good condition	4,23	4,27
Personnel looks neat and professional	4,43	4,43
You get the services you ordered on time and correctly	4,21	4,23
Personnel is friendly and willing to respond	4,00	4,10
Your desired room is available for you	4,17	4,49
There are children facilities available	4,08	4,18
You have free Internet/phone access in the hotel	4,15	4,10
There are brochures or/and city guides in the hotel	4,18	4,09
You feel safe in this hotel	4,35	4,30
You trust the hotel with your belongings	3,91	4,29
Prices at the hotel are reasonable	3,89	3,85
The information about prices and bills is clear and accurate	4,35	4,50

4.3 Wilcoxon signed-ranks test

There are the results of non-parametric test presented below. The first part of the analysis shows the comparison of expectations and perceptions or ranks. Negative ranks show that the expectations were higher than the perceptions of the service, positive ranks indicate higher perceptions than the expectations and ties state that the respondents felt no difference between perceived and expected service. The second part of the Wilcoxon analysis shows the significance in the services. (Laerd statistics 2013).

4.3.1 Ranks of expectations and perceptions

The results of the ranks analysis of statements are divided into 4 tables: the hotel outlook assessment group, personnel performance and outlook group, service availability group and joint table of safety and price-related issues groups.

From the table 2 it is seen that the interior and exterior of the hotel assessment got more negative answers, thus 52 respondents were expecting higher level than the perceived one. There are 34 respondents who stated that their perceptions appeared to be

higher and 27 respondents marked their attitude towards hotel outlook was the same according to their expectations and perceptions. Looking at the rooms comfort, the negative ranks (52) also exceeded the positive ranks (32), thus, the expectations of the service were higher than the perceptions. There are 39 respondents who stated their opinion as same. The furniture and equipment condition, however, got more positive ranks (47) than negative ones (39), and the overall picture of this statement got higher perceptions. The number of respondents who did not change their opinion was 28.

Table 2. Hotel outlook ranks assessment

Statements		N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
The interior and exterior looks attractive	Negative ranks	52	49,1	2553
	Positive ranks	34	34,94	1188
	Ties	27		
	Total	113		
Rooms are clean and comfortable	Negative ranks	44	38,25	1683
	Positive ranks	32	38,84	1243
	Ties	39		
	Total	115		
Furniture and equipment are in good condition	Negative ranks	39	46,86	1827,5
	Positive ranks	47	40,71	1913,5
	Ties	28		
	Total	114		

The table 3 shows the assessment of the personnel performance. The outlook of the personnel got positive difference with the perceptions (45) exceeding the expectations (38). The number of respondents who did not change the opinion was 31. Service performance was assessed with positive difference as well, with positive ranks of 41 and negative ranks of 39. The same opinion was stated by 36 respondents. The third aspect of the personnel group was friendliness and willingness to respond of the hotel staff. The difference in positive ranks (46) and negative ranks (41) showed that the perceptions were higher than the expectations. There were 24 people who gave the same level on this issue.

Table 3. Personnel outlook and performance rank assessment

Statements		N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
Personnel looks neat and professional	Negative ranks	38	44,89	1706
	Positive ranks	45	39,56	1780
	Ties	31		
	Total	114		
You get the services you ordered on time and correctly	Negative ranks	39	40,59	1583
	Positive ranks	41	40,41	1657
	Ties	36		
	Total	116		
Personnel is friendly and willing to respond	Negative ranks	41	42,63	1748
	Positive ranks	46	45,22	2080
	Ties	24		
	Total	111		

In the group of service availability the room availability and presence of children facilities got positive difference in perceptions and expectations of service quality. However, the Internet or phone accessibility as well as availability of city guides and brochures in hotels were assessed with higher expectations. The numbers are shown in the table 4.

Table 4. Availability of services rank assessment

Statements		N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
Your desired room is available for you	Negative ranks	32	35,48	1135,5
	Positive ranks	48	43,84	2104,5
	Ties	31		
	Total	111		
There are children facilities available	Negative ranks	36	38,57	1388,5
	Positive ranks	37	35,47	1312,5
	Ties	19		
	Total	92		
You have free Internet/phone access in the hotel	Negative ranks	42	40,81	1714
	Positive ranks	38	40,16	1526
	Ties	28		
	Total	108		

There are brochures or/and city guides in the hotel				
	Negative ranks	41	40	1640
	Positive ranks	36	37,86	1363
	Ties	32		
	Total	109		

The assessment of personal safety and security of personal belongings were ranked on the high level of perceived services with the large difference of positive and negative ranks. The number of 35 and 30 respondents stated the same opinion on the safety and security. The price level and information on prices were ranked also with the higher perceptions, thus people were satisfied with these aspects. The results are presented in the table 5.

Table 5. Safety and price-related issues rank assessment

Statements		N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
You feel safe in this hotel	Negative ranks	34	42,43	1442,5
	Positive ranks	41	34,33	1407,5
	Ties	35		
	Total	110		
You trust the hotel with your belongings	Negative ranks	27	39,76	1073,5
	Positive ranks	50	38,59	1929,5
	Ties	30		
	Total	107		
Prices at the hotel are reason-able	Negative ranks	38	43,34	1647
	Positive ranks	44	39,91	1756
	Ties	27		
	Total	109		
The information about prices and bills is clear and accurate	Negative ranks	32	39,41	1261
	Positive ranks	43	36,95	1589
	Ties	32		
	Total	107		

4.3.2 Test statistics of Wilcoxon signed-ranks

The results of the test statistics analysis are shown in the table 6. From the table 6 there are statistically significant changes that could be seen from the p-value calculated in the test.

Table 6. Test statistics of Wilcoxon signed-ranks

Statements (perceptions - expectations)	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed), p-value
The interior and exterior of the hotel looks attractive	-3,024[a]	,002
Rooms are clean and comfortable	-1,166[a]	,244
Furniture and equipment are in good condition	-,190[b]	,849
Personnel looks neat and professional	-,172[b]	,863
You get the services you ordered on time and correctly	-,181[b]	,856
Personnel is friendly and willing to respond	-,715[b]	,474
Your desired room is available for you	-2,373[b]	,018
There are children facilities available	-,215[a]	,830
You have free Internet/phone access in the hotel	-,460[a]	,646
There are brochures or/and city guides in the hotel	-,718[a]	,473
You feel safe in this hotel	-,095[a]	,924
You trust the hotel with your belongings	-2,225[b]	,026
Prices at the hotel are reasonable	-,257[b]	,797
The information about prices and bills is clear and accurate	-,886[b]	,376
[a] – positive ranks used, [b] – negative ranks used		

All the values are in the range of 0,002 to 0,924. The strong statistical significance was detected in such areas as furniture and equipment condition (,849), personnel outlook (,863), correct and on-time service performance (,856), children facilities (,830), Internet or phone access (,646), safety in the hotel (,924) and reasonable prices (,797). The significance of services was also seen in such categories as rooms' cleanness and comfort (,244), friendliness of personnel (,474), brochures and city guides availability (,473) and information on prices and bills (,376). Such statements as outlook of the hotel (,002), desired room availability (,018) and trust to the hotel with personal belongings (,026) were detected as low significance.

4.4 Frequencies data description and analysis

In order to visually describe the differences between customers' expectations and perceptions there are frequency tables for each of 14 statements from the first SERVQUAL part of the questionnaires. Each of these tables includes positive gaps marked with green colour where perceptions of services were higher, negative gaps marked with red colour where perceptions were lower than expectations and cells marked in yellow where expectations of hotel services were the same as perceptions. In several cases, one or two statements were left unassessed due to personal reasons of respondents. Such issues were minor and had no effect on the overall analysis.

4.4.1 Statement 1: The interior and exterior assessment

The table 7 shows the distribution of answers among respondents. There are 3 respondents who stated no opinion on the attractiveness of the hotel facilities statement.

Table 7. The interior and exterior attractiveness assessment

The interior and exterior looks attractive (expectations)		The interior and exterior looks attractive (perceptions)						
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	Total
Mostly disagree	Count	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
	%	,0%	33,3%	66,7%	,0%	,0%	,0%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	0	2	2	5	4	1	14
	%	,0%	14,3%	14,3%	35,7%	28,6%	7,1%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	0	3	7	7	13	3	33
	%	,0%	9,1%	21,2%	21,2%	39,4%	9,1%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	1	6	8	10	13	6	44
	%	2,3%	13,6%	18,2%	22,7%	29,5%	13,6%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	0	2	4	3	6	4	19
	%	,0%	10,5%	21,1%	15,8%	31,6%	21,1%	100,0%
Total	Count	1	14	23	25	36	14	113
	%	,9%	12,4%	20,4%	22,1%	31,9%	12,4%	100,0%

The total expectations on these issues were the following: 19 respondents totally agreed that the hotel facilities that they expect will appear attractive; however, only 14 respondents stated the same attitude after experiencing the service. The biggest number or 44 respondents stated that they mostly agree that the expected hotel will have attractive facilities as only 36 participants mostly agreed that the perceived hotel out-

look was attractive. The results for partly agree statements were 33 for expectations and 25 for perceptions, partly disagreed on the expectations side 14 respondents and on the perceptions side 23 respondents. No one totally disagreed in their expectations that the facilities are attractive although one person totally disagreed with this statement after experiencing the hotel. 3 people mostly disagreed in their expectations with the statement as 14 people mostly disagreed according to their perceptions.

Concluding the results of the first assessment statement, the expectations of respondents were poorly or not at all met concerning the attractiveness of the hotel facilities as many people disagreed on the attractiveness of hotel exterior and interior.

4.4.2 Statement 2: Rooms' cleanness and comfort

The table 8 shows the distribution of received results on expected and perceived attitudes concerning the hotel rooms. From the positive attitudes the expected services got 33, 36 and 21 answers and the perceived services got 32, 34 and 18 answers. The negative attitudes had less popularity in answers with expectation-based of 33, 22 and 3 answers and perceptions-based 24, 5 and 2 answers. According to expectations, 2 respondents marked 'no opinion' in relation to room cleanness and comfort.

Table 8. Rooms' cleanness and comfort

Rooms are clean and comfortable (expectations)		Rooms are clean and comfortable (perceptions)						
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	Total
Mostly disagree	Count	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
	%	33,3%	,0%	,0%	66,7%	,0%	,0%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	1	0	6	3	9	3	22
	%	4,5%	,0%	27,2%	13,6%	40,9%	13,6%	100,-%
Partly agree	Count	0	1	8	14	7	3	33
	%	,0%	3,0%	24,2%	42,4%	21,2%	9,1%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	0	3	9	7	12	5	36
	%	,0%	8,3%	25,0%	19,4%	33,3%	13,9%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	0	1	1	6	6	7	21
	%	,0%	4,8%	4,8%	28,6%	28,6%	33,3%	100,0%
Total	Count	2	5	24	32	34	18	115
	%	1,7%	4,3%	20,9%	27,8%	29,6%	15,7%	100,0%

According to the received data the rooms are assessed on a good level as positive attitude marks significantly exceeded the negative marks. However, the expected quality of rooms in the hotels reached higher number of answers than the perceived, thus the service users were not completely satisfied.

4.4.3 Statement 3: Furniture and equipment condition

Analyzing the furniture and equipment the positive perceptions attitudes exceed the expectations attitudes with the difference of 2 respondents who marked 'totally agree' and 5 respondents who marked 'mostly agree' to the furniture and equipment. However, those who partly agreed on this statement according to their expectations exceed the number of those who marked the same attitude according to their perceptions. The negative attitudes were presented with less significant numbers; however, in most cases the negative perceptions were higher than the negative expectations. No opinion gave 3 respondents according to their expectations and only one person according to the perception of services. The full picture answers' distribution is presented in the table 9.

Table 9. Furniture and equipment condition

Furniture and equipment are in good condition (expectations)		Furniture and equipment are in good condition (perceptions)						
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	Total
Totally disagree	Count	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	%	,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	100,0%	,0%	100,0%
Mostly disagree	Count	0	2	0	3	1	0	6
	%	,0%	33,3%	,0%	50,0%	16,7%	,0%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	0	2	3	9	6	1	21
	%	,0%	9,5%	14,3%	42,9%	28,6%	4,8%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	1	3	4	9	14	6	37
	%	2,7%	8,1%	10,8%	24,3%	37,8%	16,2%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	1	2	5	10	10	6	34
	%	2,9%	5,9%	14,7%	29,4%	29,4%	17,6%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	0	2	1	4	4	4	15
	%	,0%	13,3%	6,7%	26,7%	26,7%	26,7%	100,0%
Total	Count	2	11	13	35	36	17	114
	%	1,8%	9,6%	11,4%	30,7%	31,6%	14,9%	100,0%

Received data shows that furniture and equipment satisfy customers as most of the perceptions positive answers exceeded the expectations answers.

4.4.4 Statement 4: Personnel outlook

The expectations of personnel outlook were rather high with the positive attitudes marks of 41, 42 and 14 when the perceptions got not that good positive attitude numbers of 27, 40 and 22. The negative attitude marks distribution was the following: the expectations got assessment of 13, 3 and 1 answers as the perceptions exceeded the expectations with the numbers of 18, 6 and 1. One person gave no opinion about expected service and 3 respondents stated no opinion according to perceived services.

Table 10. Personnel outlook

Personnel looks neat and professional (expectations)		Personnel looks neat and professional (perceptions)						Total
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	
Totally disagree	Count	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	%	,0%	,0%	100,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	100,0%
Mostly disagree	Count	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
	%	,0%	,0%	33,3%	66,7%	,0%	,0%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	1	1	4	1	5	1	13
	%	7,7%	7,7%	30,8%	7,7%	38,5%	7,7%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	0	3	2	9	16	11	41
	%	,0%	7,3%	4,9%	22,0%	39,0%	26,8%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	0	2	7	11	15	7	42
	%	,0%	4,8%	16,7%	26,2%	35,7%	26,7%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	0	0	3	4	4	3	14
	%	,0%	,0%	21,4%	28,6%	28,6%	21,4%	100,0%
Total	Count	1	6	18	27	40	22	114
	%	,9%	5,3%	15,8%	23,7%	35,1%	19,3%	100,0%

Analyzing the table 10, the personnel outlook did not fully meet the expectations of hotel customers even though the highest level of positive attitude had the difference of 7 answers.

4.4.5 Statement 5: Service performance

The correct and on time performance of services presented in the table 11 was assessed as satisfying; however the respondents formed the negative expectations-perceptions gap in the attitude mark 'mostly agree' with the significant difference of 10 answers. The importance of the service performance aspect is proved by the fact that there were no missing opinions when assessing the expectations side.

Table 11. Correct and on time service performance

You get the services you ordered on time and correctly (expectations)		You get the services you ordered on time and correctly (perceptions)						Total
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	
Mostly disagree	Count	1	2	3	4	2	0	12
	%	8,3%	16,7%	25,0%	33,3%	16,7%	,0%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	0	1	6	5	4	5	21
	%	,0%	4,8%	28,6%	23,8%	19,0%	23,8%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	1	0	5	10	7	5	28
	%	3,6%	,0%	17,9%	35,7%	25,0%	17,9%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	1	2	10	8	14	6	41
	%	2,4%	4,9%	24,4%	19,5%	34,1%	14,6%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	0	0	1	5	4	4	14
	%	,0%	,0%	7,1%	35,7%	28,6%	28,6%	100,0%
Total	Count	3	5	25	32	31	20	116
	%	2,6%	4,3%	21,6%	27,6%	26,7%	17,2%	100,0%

4.4.6 Statement 6: Personnel friendliness and willingness to respond

The table 12 shows the distribution of attitude marks on the personnel behavior towards customers.

Table 12. Personnel friendliness and willingness to respond

Personnel is friendly and willing to respond (expectations)		Personnel is friendly and willing to respond (perceptions)						Total
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	
Totally disagree	Count	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	%	,0%	,0%	100,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	100,0%
Mostly disagree	Count	0	1	1	2	4	1	9
	%	,0%	11,1%	11,1%	22,2%	44,4%	11,1%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	1	3	8	5	6	5	28
	%	3,6%	10,7%	28,6%	17,9%	21,4%	17,9%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	2	3	4	8	9	6	32
	%	6,3%	9,4%	12,5%	25,0%	28,1%	18,8%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	1	2	3	8	5	5	24
	%	4,2%	8,3%	12,5%	33,3%	20,8%	20,8%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	0	1	4	2	7	2	16
	%	,0%	6,3%	25,0%	12,5%	43,8%	12,5%	100,0%
Total	Count	4	10	22	25	31	19	111
	%	3,6%	9,0%	19,8%	22,5%	27,9%	17,1%	100,0%

Looking at the negative answers, the expectations level is rather high as well as the perception level. However, the positive perceptions totally exceed the negative attitudes as well as the expectations concerning this statement. The assessment of the personnel performance showed good marks thus the majority of respondents were satisfied with this aspect during their stay.

4.4.7 Statement 7: Availability of the desired room

Concerning the availability of the desired room the negative expectations exceeded the negative perceptions and the positive perceptions reached higher level than positive expectations. The table 13 shows that the numbers of 38, 40 and 18 positive perceptions attitude marks show that participants were satisfied and got their desired room to stay in. Even though, there are 15 negative perception answers in total, the vast majority of respondents gave high grades to this attribute.

The conclusion which follows from the data is that Kymenlaakso hotels have almost in all cases the ability to offer a room for customers according to their needs and preferences.

Table 13. Availability of the desired room

Your desired room is available for you (expectations)		Your desired room is available for you (perceptions)						Total
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	
Totally disagree	Count	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	%	,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	100,0%	,0%	100,0%
Mostly disagree	Count	0	0	2	3	2	2	9
	%	,0%	,0%	22,2%	33,3%	22,2%	22,2%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	0	1	1	9	10	4	25
	%	,0%	4,0%	4,0%	36,0%	40,0%	16,0%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	0	0	2	11	8	6	27
	%	,0%	,0%	7,4%	40,7%	29,6%	22,2%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	0	1	4	13	14	1	33
	%	,0%	3,0%	12,1%	39,4%	42,4%	3,0%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	1	1	2	2	5	5	16
	%	6,3%	6,3%	12,5%	12,5%	31,3%	31,3%	100,0%
Total	Count	1	3	11	38	40	18	111
	%	,9%	2,7%	9,9%	34,2%	36,0%	16,2%	100,0%

4.4.8 Statement 8: Availability of children facilities

Children facilities appeared to be an important issue for families with little children and at the same time this statement got very high rate of 'no opinion' response: 14 for expectations and 13 for perceptions. The reason for non-response would be lack of interest in these facilities due to solo or business visit without a family. The positive responses were quite high with 32, 21 and 14 on expectations and 31, 31 and 7 on perceptions, which makes children facilities very important and also well-performed attribute. The table 14 shows the distribution of answers.

Table 14. Availability of children facilities

There are children facilities available (expectations)		There are children facilities available (perceptions)						Total
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	
Totally disagree	Count	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
	%	50,0%	,0%	50,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	100,0%
Mostly disagree	Count	0	1	0	0	4	0	5
	%	,0%	20,0%	,0%	,0%	80,0%	,0%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	1	2	1	10	4	0	18
	%	5,6%	11,1%	5,6%	55,6%	22,2%	,0%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	0	1	6	7	13	5	32
	%	,0%	3,1%	18,8%	21,9%	40,6%	15,6%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	0	1	5	8	7	0	21
	%	,0%	4,8%	23,8%	38,1%	33,3%	,0%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	0	0	3	6	3	2	14
	%	,0%	,0%	21,4%	42,9%	21,4%	14,3%	100,0%
Total	Count	2	5	16	31	31	7	92
	%	2,2%	5,4%	17,4%	33,7%	33,7%	7,6%	100,0%

4.4.9 Statement 9: Free Internet/phone access in the hotel

Assessing the Internet and phone availability in the hotels almost in all cases the perceptions exceeded the expectations. This creates a good factor for positive cases as the positive quality gap occur and causes negative effect on the negative side as visitors were not completely satisfied with the provision of these services.

Table 15. Free Internet/phone access in the hotel

You have free Internet/phone access in the hotel (expectations)		You have free Internet/phone access in the hotel (perceptions)						Total
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	
Totally disagree	Count	0	2	1	0	0	1	4
	%	,0%	50,0%	25,0%	,0%	,0%	25,0%	100,0%
Mostly disagree	Count	1	4	3	0	5	1	14
	%	7,1%	28,6%	21,4%	,0%	35,7%	7,1%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	0	2	3	8	5	2	20
	%	,0%	10,0%	15,0%	40,0%	25,0%	10,0%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	1	2	5	4	4	3	19
	%	5,3%	10,5%	26,3%	21,1%	21,1%	15,8%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	0	3	8	4	10	3	28
	%	,0%	10,7%	28,6%	14,3%	35,7%	10,7%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	0	2	2	4	8	7	23
	%	,0%	8,7%	8,7%	17,6%	34,8%	30,4%	100,0%
Total	Count	2	15	22	20	32	17	108
	%	1,9%	13,9%	20,4%	18,5%	29,6%	15,7%	100,0%

Internet speed and availability shown in the table 15 was an important attribute among young and also business people who were expecting a good quality of the Internet. The data shows that the Internet or phone were less or not important for people who put negative expectations or no response.

4.4.10 Statement 10: Brochures and city guides

Brochures and city guides appeared to be an important issues with high positive expectations. Availability of such information in hotels gets vital for those who stay there and wish to get acquainted with the city and its attractions. The data distribution shown in the table 16 was with the high positive attitude from the expectation and perception side.

Table 16. Brochures and city guides

There are brochures or/and city guides (expectations)		There are brochures or/and city guides (perceptions)						Total
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	
Totally disagree	Count	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
	%	,0%	,0%	33,3%	,0%	66,7%	,0%	100,0%
Mostly disagree	Count	0	0	4	2	1	0	7
	%	,0%	,0%	57,1%	28,6%	14,3%	,0%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	2	2	7	4	6	1	22
	%	9,1%	9,1%	31,8%	18,2%	27,3%	4,5%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	0	3	6	9	7	5	30
	%	,0%	10,0%	20,0%	30,0%	23,3%	16,7%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	0	6	4	6	11	3	30
	%	,0%	20,0%	13,3%	20,0%	36,7%	10,0%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	0	1	2	3	6	5	17
	%	,0%	5,9%	11,8%	17,6%	35,3%	29,4%	100,0%
Total	Count	2	12	24	24	33	14	109
	%	1,8%	11,0%	22,0%	22,0%	30,3%	12,8%	100,0%

4.4.11 Statement 11: Safety in the hotel

The table 17 gives visual presentation of respondents' answers on safety issues.

Table 17. Safety in the hotel

You feel safe in this hotel (expectations)		You feel safe in this hotel (perceptions)						Total
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	
Totally disagree	Count	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
	%	50,0%	,0%	50,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	100,0%
Mostly disagree	Count	0	1	0	3	0	0	4
	%	,0%	25,0%	,0%	75,0%	,0%	,0%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	0	3	1	5	7	1	17
	%	,0%	17,6%	5,9%	29,4%	41,2%	5,9%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	0	3	2	9	17	3	34
	%	,0%	8,8%	5,9%	26,5%	50,0%	8,8%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	0	2	5	8	18	4	37
	%	,0%	5,4%	13,5%	21,6%	48,6%	10,8%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	1	0	3	4	3	5	16
	%	6,3%	,0%	18,8%	25,0%	18,8%	31,3%	100,0%
Total	Count	2	9	12	29	45	13	110
	%	1,8%	8,2%	10,9%	26,4%	40,9%	11,8%	100,0%

Respondents of the survey staying in Kymenlaakso hotels were expecting high level of safety and security which is proved by high positive expectations and very low negative ones. Looking at the perceptions side, the vast majority of 45 respondents marked their opinion as 'mostly agree' that they feel safe in the hotel; however, in other two positive attitude marks the expectations exceeded the perceptions.

4.4.12 Statement 12: Trust to the hotel with personal belongings

Analyzing the trust in the hotel with personal belongings the situation appeared to be very positive as the negative perceptions were smaller than the expectations when the positive perceptions exceed the expectations on 1, 6 and 7 responses. Survey participants in the big picture were more than satisfied to leave their belongings at the hotel while they are in the city, even though 8 of them had no opinion on this statement before coming to the hotel and 4 of them stated no opinion even after using a service. From this data which is presented in the table 18 it is possible to conclude that the assurance of the hotels has a strong positive level which has a good effect on visitors' impression.

Table 18. Trust to the hotel with personal belongings

You trust the hotel with your belongings (expectations)		You trust the hotel with your belongings (perceptions)						
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	Total
Totally disagree	Count	2	0	2	0	1	0	5
	%	40,0%	,0%	40,0%	,0%	20,0%	,0%	100,0%
Mostly disagree	Count	1	1	0	3	4	4	13
	%	7,7%	7,7%	,0%	23,1%	30,8%	30,8%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	2	2	4	10	3	1	22
	%	9,1%	9,1%	18,2%	45,5%	13,6%	4,5%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	0	0	4	8	13	3	28
	%	,0%	,0%	14,3%	28,6%	46,4%	10,7%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	0	2	5	4	10	6	27
	%	,0%	7,4%	18,5%	14,8%	37,0%	22,2%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	0	0	1	4	2	5	12
	%	,0%	,0%	8,3%	33,3%	16,7%	41,7%	100,0%
Total	Count	5	5	16	29	33	19	107
	%	4,7%	4,7%	15,0%	27,1%	30,8%	17,8%	100,0%

4.4.13 Statement 13: Prices assessment

High number of respondents (29, 18 and 1) expected the price range to be unreasonable and the perceived data showed that 20, 17 and 4 respondents think that the price range in Kymenlaakso hotels is relatively high. The perceptions of the price level exceeded the expectations level in overall assessment of positive attitude marks, thus the price level of hotel services is counted as appropriate. Attitudes to price range are presented in the table 19.

Table 19. Prices assessment

Prices at the hotel are reasonable (expectations)		Prices at the hotel are reasonable (perceptions)						
		Totally disagree	Mostly disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	Total
Totally disagree	Count	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	%	,0%	,0%	100,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	100,0%
Mostly disagree	Count	0	6	6	2	2	2	18
	%	,0%	33,3%	33,3%	11,1%	11,1%	11,1%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	1	3	4	10	7	4	29
	%	3,4%	10,3%	13,8%	34,5%	24,1%	13,8%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	0	2	6	8	5	2	23
	%	,0%	8,7%	26,1%	34,8%	21,7%	8,7%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	1	5	2	7	5	3	23
	%	4,3%	21,7%	8,7%	30,4%	21,7%	13,0%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	2	1	1	4	3	4	15
	%	13,3%	6,7%	6,7%	26,7%	20,0%	26,7%	100,0%
Total	Count	4	17	20	31	22	15	109
	%	3,7%	15,6%	18,3%	28,4%	20,2%	13,8%	100,0%

4.4.14 Statement 14: The information about prices and bills

The price and bills information aspect showed positive results as there were very few negative answers with the number of 16 in total of perceptions and 26 in total of expectations. All the other responses were given with positive attitude. Perceptions exceeded the expectations show that there is a positive gap occurred and people are surprisingly satisfied by the services. Distribution of answers is presented in the table 20 below.

Table 20. The information about prices and bills

The information about prices and bills is clear and accurate (expecta-tions)		The information about prices and bills is clear and accurate (perceptions)					
		Totally disagree	Partly disagree	Partly agree	Mostly agree	Totally agree	Total
Mostly disagree	Count	0	1	2	3	3	9
	%	,0%	11,1%	22,2%	33,3%	33,3%	100,0%
Partly disagree	Count	0	5	6	4	2	17
	%	,0%	29,4%	35,3%	23,5%	11,8%	100,0%
Partly agree	Count	0	3	11	15	4	33
	%	,0%	9,1%	33,3%	45,5%	12,1%	100,0%
Mostly agree	Count	0	3	9	11	3	26
	%	,0%	11,5%	34,6%	42,3%	11,5%	100,0%
Totally agree	Count	1	3	10	3	5	22
	%	4,5%	13,6%	45,5%	13,6%	22,7%	100,0%
Total	Count	1	15	38	36	17	107
	%	,9%	14,0%	35,5%	33,6%	15,9%	100,0%

4.5 Customers' suggestions for improvement

The last questions of the questionnaires did not have much attention among respondents as they had an open-ended structure. The table 21 gives a picture of expectations wishes.

Table 21. Wishes or suggestions based on expectations

Category of wishes	Customers' wishes
Personnel performance and service delivery	- Helpful service in English and Russian language; - Russian-speaking staff.
Availability of services	- Personal computer and Internet in the room; - Playrooms for children, family facilities; - Vegetarian menu.
Price-related issues	- Free parking lot; - Cheaper prices for hotel services.
Additional wishes to the hotel	- Silence in the room, especially in the morning; - Free sweets.

Most of all, people wanted to have quiet and comfortable rooms, good working Internet as many of them were on business trips and families wanted good facilities for their children. Tourists visiting different countries were aimed at good English-speaking staff as well as Russian visitors expected a good service in Russian language.

The afterwards comments resulted in positive and negative impressions. From the positive experience the comments had good opinions about family facilities and good treatment for children, the food service was good, however, negative impression was left by the parking lots which had an additional fee, high prices for services and language skills of the personnel. The table 22 gives the full picture of comments and suggestions of respondents after using a service.

Table 22. Comments or suggestions based on perceptions

Comments or suggestions group	Customers' comments or suggestions
General comments	- Good place to stay with families; - Average hotel; - I liked the hotel, I will come again; - Nice presents for children, thank you!
Personnel performance or service delivery	- Good food service; - Ordinary place, non-helpful staff for English-speakers; - No Russian-speaking personnel.
Availability of services	- Internet connection did not allow to work comfortably.
Comments or suggestions related to prices	- Too expensive, the prices 'bite'; - Expensive and useless parking lot; - Strange parking fees.
Hotel appearance and other suggestions	- Comfortable room, thanks; - Better facilities appearance; - More energetic music, please.

The improvements suggestions are based on the qualitative element of the survey and the respondents' answers. Reviewing the wishes and suggestions of respondents, the hotels of the region have a room for improvements. Comparing the wished service and the perceived quality of non-existed or poorly performed service makes visitors feel uncomfortable and create the negative picture of the hotel thus these gaps based on suggestions are better to be fulfilled.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary of main findings

Based on the survey results, the overall picture of the hotel industry in the Kymenlaakso region is in a satisfying state. Accommodation companies should constantly support their services, the outlook of hotel facilities and personnel trainings. The main question for this research was to examine how the expectations of hotel customers differ from their perceptions. Giving as answer to this question, there are positive and negative differences in expectations and perceptions with different levels of significance.

The adapted for Finnish hotels SERVQUAL model helped to highlight strong sides and outline the main weaknesses of the accommodation industry in the region as well as gave the direction for improvements.

Reviewing the general results of the survey, most of the respondents were satisfied with their hotel choice and wished to experience the hotel again. However, a significant number of respondents pointed out their perception gaps that they would like to narrow for the next visit.

General appearance of the hotel and rooms was ranked by participants as satisfying; however, the two negative gaps of three showed that customers wish to see improved facilities on a higher level. The advice for the hotel companies is to maintain their appearance even though the significance level of this factor is moderately low.

Staff performance group was assessed as good on a general level; nonetheless, the respondents' wishes were aiming at excellent level of performance. Thus, the staff appearance and performance resulted into two slightly positive gaps out of three as friendliness and willingness to help customers have a room for improvement. The importance level of staff activities was ranked of high significance.

The availability of services was divided into two groups of importance for respondents: high and moderate significance, thus the maintaining of these attributes gets vital for accommodation industry. The overall level of these services is satisfactory but very close to the expected quality.

Completing the picture of hotels service quality, safety issues and price range and information have positive gaps and ranked on a good level with the exception of satisfactory price range. The significance of these factors is moderate thus it is worth to monitor by hotel companies.

From the gap frequencies analysis a conclusion can be made that the most important attributes in accommodation services are reliability of hotel and staff in provision the required services, assurance or performing professionalism when serving a customer and empathy as personal treatment and attention to customer needs.

Maintaining the service quality implies also the improvements according to the data received. The main prospects for improvements for the Kymenlaakso hotel industry are active interaction with customers and well-trained English-speaking staff. Due to the large amount of Russian tourists coming to the region it is preferable for hotels to have Russian-speaking staff.

5.2 Implications for accommodation services

The objective for this research was to identify the differences of expectations and perceptions of accommodation area in the Kymenlaakso region in order to increase the tourist inflow to the region. From this research it is seen that tourist inflow comes generally from European countries and from Russia. For the region it is useful to interact with Russian tourists because of the close border and constant tourists' income.

What is more, the expectations and perceptions of hotel industry are on the level of from satisfactory to good therefore, the region gets relatively good reviews from the accommodation side but it is possible to create a tendency to make the services of higher standards.

As it was concluded, tourists visiting the region wished to have more city guides to experience more of the region attractions. Thus, it is vital for tourism industry to provide the accommodation companies with enough brochures and tourist guides in order to create awareness among visitors with consequential desire to return to the area.

5.3 Limitations and suggestions for further research

This research was carried out with the limited period of time taking only the autumn months to conduct the survey. The full picture of service quality in the Kymenlaakso accommodation industry can be described with the survey organized during longer period taking into account all the seasons of the year.

The second suggestion for future research development is to have more diverse cultural picture. Different cultural groups give broader prospect of opinions and allow improvements of the services according to international tastes. International picture in the service quality research may give an opportunity also to understand the purpose of visits and give improvements to the whole tourism industry in the region.

This research did not provide with reasons of visiting the Kymenlaakso region by people from different countries. Even though the majority of respondents were from Russia and Finland, there is a possibility to study further why so many people of different nationalities were staying in the hotels of the Kymenlaakso region.

Due to the reason that respondent were leaving unanswered some questions even though an 'I don't know' option was included in the questionnaire, the further research could examine this phenomenon and ask respondents why they leave empty cells.

The future research can take the bigger population and sample quantities in order to identify precise quality gaps in expectations and perceptions of tourists in the Kymenlaakso area. Finally, there is a possibility to include qualitative methods in the survey and conduct the qualitative research joint with the quantitative side.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Service quality attributes

Table 1: Service quality attributes

SERVQUAL dimensions (Parsuraman et al. (1985))	Quality attributes in the hotel industry★
Tangibility (physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel) 1. Modern-looking equipment 2. Visually appealing facilities 3. Visually appealing materials 4. Neat appearance of employees	*Tangibility* (physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel) 1. Modern and comfortable furniture 2. Appealing interior and exterior hotel décor 3. Attractive lobby 4. Cleanliness and comfort of rooms 5. Spaciousness of rooms 6. Hygienic bathrooms and toilets 7. Convenient hotel location 8. Neat and professional appearance of staff 9. Availability of swimming pool, sauna and gym 10. Complimentary items 11. Provision of clean beaches 12. Provision of beach facilities (beach mattresses, umbrellas, beach towels, etc.) 13. Visually appealing brochures, pamphlets, etc. 14. Availability of non-smoking areas in restaurants 15. Image of the hotel
Reliability (ability to perform the expected service dependably and accurately) 1. Delivery of promises 2. Dependability in handling the customers' problems 3. Correct performance of the service the first time 4. Maintenance of error-free records 5. Delivery of services at the time promised	*Reliability* (ability to perform the expected service dependably and accurately) 1. Staff performing services right the first time 2. Performing the services at the time promised 3. Well-trained and knowledgeable staff 4. Experienced staff 5. Staff with good communication skills 6. Accuracy in billing 7. Accuracy of food orders 8. Accurate information about hotel services 9. Advance and accurate information about prices 10. Timely housekeeping services 11. Availability of transport facilities 12. Reliable message service
Responsiveness (willingness to help customers and provide prompt service) 1. Keeping customers informed about when the service will be performed 2. Providing prompt service to customers 3. Willingness to help customers 4. Responsiveness to customers' requests	*Responsiveness* (willingness to provide prompt service) 1. Willingness of staff to provide help promptly 2. Availability of staff to provide service 3. Quick check-in and check-out 4. Prompt breakfast service
Assurance (courtesy and knowledge of staff and their ability to inspire trust and confidence) 1. Courteous staff 2. Ability of staff to instill confidence in customers 3. Making customers feel safe in their transactions 4. Knowledgeable staff to answer customer questions	*Assurance* (courtesy displayed by hotel staff and their ability to inspire trust and confidence) 1. Friendliness of staff 2. Courteous employees 3. Ability of staff to instill confidence in customers

Table 1: *(continued)*

SERVQUAL dimensions (Parsuraman et al. (1985))	Quality attributes in the hotel industry★
Empathy (caring, individualized attention provided to customers) 1. Understanding the customers' requirements 2. Providing customers with individual attention 3. Convenient operating hours 4. Dealing with customers in a caring fashion 5. Having the customers' best interest at heart	*Empathy* (caring, individualized attention provided to guests by hotel staff) 1. Giving special attention to the customer 2. Recognizing the hotel customer 3. Calling the customer by name 4. Availability of room service 5. Understanding the customers' requirements 6. Listening carefully to complaints 7. Problem-solving abilities of staff 8. Hotel to have customers' best interest at heart 9. Customer loyalty programme *Core hotel benefits* (the central aspects of the service: benefits to hotel customers) 1. Comfortable, relaxed and welcome feeling 2. Quietness of rooms 3. Variety/quality of sports and recreational facilities 4. Security of room 5. Security and safety at the hotel 6. Comfortable and clean mattress, pillow, bed sheets and covers 7. Reasonable room rates 8. Variety of basic products and services offered (toothpaste, soap, shampoo, towels, toilet paper, stationery, laundry, ironing, tea, coffee, drinking water) 9. Guest room items in working order (kettle, air-conditioning, lighting, toilet, fridge, etc.) 10. Quality of food in restaurant 11. Reasonable restaurant/bar prices 12. Choice of menus, buffet, beverages and wines 13. Provision of children's facilities (playground, baby-sitting, swimming pool, etc.) 14. Provision of evening entertainment *Hotel technologies* (technological services available to hotel guests) 1. In-room technologies (telephone, voicemail, on-demand PC, television, internet plug, meal ordering, email, wake-up system) 2. Hotel technologies (online reservation, email, internet, fax, international calling facilities, hotel website, direct hotel email, computerized feedback form, special promotions on hotel website, acceptance of credit and debit cards) ★ Items are grouped judgementally and not through statistical processes like factor analysis

(Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2007:23-24).

Appendix 2. Required Sample Size

Required Sample Size[†]

Population Size	Confidence = 95%				Confidence = 99%			
	Margin of Error				Margin of Error			
	5.0%	3.5%	2.5%	1.0%	5.0%	3.5%	2.5%	1.0%
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
20	19	20	20	20	19	20	20	20
30	28	29	29	30	29	29	30	30
50	44	47	48	50	47	48	49	50
75	63	69	72	74	67	71	73	75
100	80	89	94	99	87	93	96	99
150	108	126	137	148	122	135	142	149
200	132	160	177	196	154	174	186	198
250	152	190	215	244	182	211	229	246
300	169	217	251	291	207	246	270	295
400	196	265	318	384	250	309	348	391
500	217	306	377	475	285	365	421	485
600	234	340	432	565	315	416	490	579
700	248	370	481	653	341	462	554	672
800	260	396	526	739	363	503	615	763
1,000	278	440	606	906	399	575	727	943
1,200	291	474	674	1067	427	636	827	1119
1,500	306	515	759	1297	460	712	959	1376
2,000	322	563	869	1655	498	808	1141	1785
2,500	333	597	952	1984	524	879	1288	2173
3,500	346	641	1068	2565	558	977	1510	2890
5,000	357	678	1176	3288	586	1066	1734	3842
7,500	365	710	1275	4211	610	1147	1960	5165
10,000	370	727	1332	4899	622	1193	2098	6239
25,000	378	760	1448	6939	646	1285	2399	9972
50,000	381	772	1491	8056	655	1318	2520	12455
75,000	382	776	1506	8514	658	1330	2563	13583
100,000	383	778	1513	8762	659	1336	2585	14227
250,000	384	782	1527	9248	662	1347	2626	15555
500,000	384	783	1532	9423	663	1350	2640	16055
1,000,000	384	783	1534	9512	663	1352	2647	16317
2,500,000	384	784	1536	9567	663	1353	2651	16478
10,000,000	384	784	1536	9594	663	1354	2653	16560
100,000,000	384	784	1537	9603	663	1354	2654	16584
300,000,000	384	784	1537	9603	663	1354	2654	16586

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(The Research Advisors, 2006).

Appendix 3. Expectations questionnaire

DEAR VISITOR!

Please, fill in this questionnaire about service quality of the hotel you are staying at!
We want to understand what you expect from this hotel in order to improve the service.

1. There are 14 statements below, please mark you attitude to them according to your expectations:

	← Extremely bad			Extremely good →		

1) The interior and exterior of the hotel looks attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
2) Rooms are clean and comfortable	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
3) Furniture and equipment are in good condition	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
4) Personnel looks neat and professional	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
5) You get the services you ordered on time and correctly	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
6) Personnel is friendly and willing to respond	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
7) Your desired room is available for you	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
8) There are children facilities available	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
9) You have free Internet/phone access in the hotel	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
10) There are brochures or/and city guides in the hotel	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
11) You feel safe in this hotel	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
12) You trust the hotel with your belongings	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
13) Prices at the hotel are reasonable	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
14) The information about prices and bills is clear and accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know

2. Where do you come from? (country) _____

3. What is your age? _____

4. What is your gender?
   a. Male   ___
   b. Female ___

5. How many times have you stayed at the hotel?
   a. This is my first time
   b. 5 or less times
   c. More than 5 times

6. Please, leave some wishes for your stay in this hotel

_____

_____

THANK YOU!

Appendix 4. Perceptions questionnaire

DEAR VISITOR!

Please, fill in this questionnaire about service quality of the hotel you were staying at!
We want to understand how the hotel fulfilled your expectations in order to improve the service for next time.

1. There are 14 statements below, please mark to what extent you agree or disagree with them:

$\longleftarrow$ Strongly disagree   Strongly agree $\longrightarrow$

1)	The interior and exterior of the hotel looks attractive	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
2)	Rooms are clean and comfortable	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
3)	Furniture and equipment are in good condition	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
4)	Personnel looks neat and professional	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
5)	You get the services you ordered on time and correctly	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
6)	Personnel is friendly and willing to respond	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
7)	Your desired room was available for you	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
8)	There are children facilities available	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
9)	You have free Internet/phone access in the hotel	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
10)	There are brochures or/and city guides in the hotel	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
11)	You feel safe in this hotel	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
12)	You trust the hotel with your belongings	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
13)	Prices at the hotel are reasonable	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know
14)	The information about prices and bills is clear and accurate	1 2 3 4 5 6 I don't know

2. Where do you come from? (country) _____

3. What is your age? _____

4. What is your gender?
    a. Male ___
    b. Female ___

5. How many times have you stayed at the hotel?
    a. This is my first time
    b. 5 or less times
    c. More than 5 times

6. Please, leave a comment or suggestion about your stay in this hotel

_____

_____

THANK YOU!

Appendix 5. Expectations questionnaire in Russian

УВАЖАЕМЫЙ ПОСИТИТЕЛЬ!

Пожалуйста, поучаствуйте в опросе по качеству обслуживания в этом отеле! Наша цель – понять, что Вы ожидаете от Вашего пребывания в отеле, чтобы улучшить наше обслуживание.

1. Ниже представлены 14 утверждений, оцените уровень предлагаемых услуг, основываясь на Ваших ожиданиях:

$\longleftarrow$ $\longrightarrow$

Полностью не согласен   Полностью согласен

1)	Внешний вид отеля выглядит привлекательно	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
2)	Номера в отеле уютные и прибранные	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
3)	Мебель и предметы быта в хорошем состоянии	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
4)	Персонал выглядит опрятно и профессионально	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
5)	Заказанные Вами услуги выполняются точно и своевременно	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
6)	Вас обслуживает дружелюбный и отзывчивый персонал	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
7)	Предпочитаемый Вами номер доступен для Вас	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
8)	В отеле есть детские игровые комнаты	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
9)	В отеле доступен бесплатный Интернет/телефон	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
10)	Вам предложены брошюры и/или путеводители по городу	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
11)	Находясь в отеле, Вы чувствуете себя в безопасности	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
12)	Вы доверяете свои вещи на хранение в отеле	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
13)	Цены в отеле приемлемые	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
14)	Вам доступна полная и точная информация о ценах и оплате	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю

2. Откуда Вы приехали? (страна) _____

3. Сколько Вам лет? _____

4. Какой ваш пол?
   а. Мужской   ___
   б. Женский   ___

5. Сколько раз вы останавливались в отеле?
   а. Впервые
   б. 5 раз и менее
   в. Более 5 раз

6. Вы можете оставить пожелания отелю по поводу своего пребывания:

_____

_____

СПАСИБО!

Appendix 6. Perceptions questionnaire in Russian

УВАЖАЕМЫЙ ПОСИТИТЕЛЬ!

Пожалуйста, поучаствуйте в опросе по качеству обслуживания в этом отеле! Наша цель – понять, насколько отель оправдал ваши ожидания.

Ниже представлены 14 утверждений, оцените уровень предложенных услуг, основываясь на Ваших впечатлениях:

$\leftarrow$ $\rightarrow$

Полностью не согласен Полностью согласен

1)	Внешний вид отеля выглядит привлекательно	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
2)	Номера в отеле уютные и прибранные	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
3)	Мебель и предметы быта в хорошем состоянии	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
4)	Персонал выглядит опрятно и профессионально	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
5)	Заказанные Вами услуги выполняются точно и своевременно	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
6)	Вас обслуживает дружелюбный и отзывчивый персонал	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
7)	Предпочитаемый Вами номер доступен для Вас	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
8)	В отеле есть детские игровые комнаты	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
9)	В отеле доступен бесплатный Интернет/телефон	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
10)	Вам предложены брошюры и/или путеводители по городу	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
11)	Находясь в отеле, Вы чувствуете себя в безопасности	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
12)	Вы доверяете свои вещи на хранение в отеле	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
13)	Цены в отеле приемлемые	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю
14)	Вам доступна полная и точная информация о ценах и оплате	1 2 3 4 5 6	я не знаю

1. Откуда Вы приехали? (страна) _____

2. Сколько Вам лет? _____

3. Какой ваш пол?
   a. Мужской ___
   b. Женский ___

4. Сколько раз вы останавливались в отеле?
   a. Впервые
   b. 5 раз и менее
   c. Более 5 раз

5. Вы можете оставить Ваши комментарии и предложения по поводу своего пребывания в отеле:

_____

_____

СПАСИБО!