

## THE IMPACT OF SERVICE QUALITY ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SRI LANKAN HOTEL INDUSTRY

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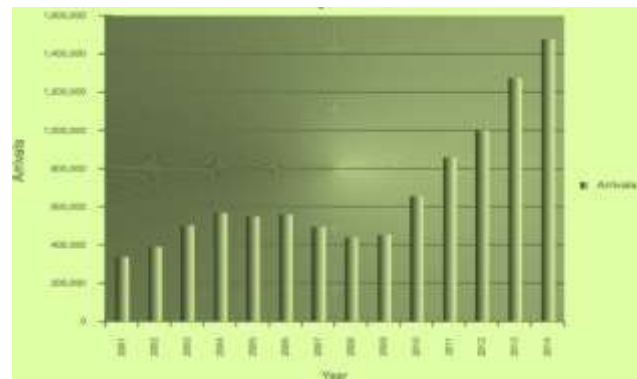
**Abstract**— As per Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 19 percent of guests chose five star hotels. Out of all the five star hotels in Sri Lanka, Hilton Colombo has been a leading hotel and it had been the market leader. However, the annual reports of Hilton Colombo show the revenue and profit has declined in the recent years. Hence the researcher hypothesized that it may be due to poor service quality. The objectives of the current study are; to study the determinants of service quality, to explore the contributions of consumer buying behaviour and to analyse the relationship between service quality and consumer buying behaviour through customer satisfaction. In the current study, the sample size is 60 customers and the data collection method used is a mixed method. The qualitative analysis was conducted through the case study approach whereas quantitative analysis was done through SPSS Amos (21). The reliability of the current study was 85.5 percent and expert's review was used to ensure the validity of the study. The model fit of the current study is analysed through CMIN/DF which is 2.422, GFI which is 0.950, PGFI which is 0.170 and RMSEA which is above the standard level of 0.05. Even though RMSEA is high, since all the other model is perfectly fitting the range, the current study can be concluded as the model is fit. Finally, the study concludes that Tangibles, Assurance, Responsiveness and Empathy were found to be positively related to behaviour. Studies done by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), Agbor (2011) and Kumar and Barani (2012) have supported the findings of the current study.

**Keywords**— Tangibles, Reliability, Assurance, Responsiveness, Empathy.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Hotel industry in Sri Lanka essentially comprises of tourist hotels and different foundations that consists resorts and hotels are affirmed by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority known as SLTDA. Sri Lankan hotel industry sector has risen the profit straight away from the expected boom in the Sri Lankan tourism industry. After

almost three decades of operating in a daring and deadly environment during the military clash, the attitude toward the industry has now totally shifted positively and it might



well play a great role in the future economic development of the country. The Figure 1.1 shows the arrival of tourists from year 2001 to 2014.

Figure 1 : Tourist Arrival by Year 2001 to 2014  
Source : SLTDA Statistical Report (2014)

According to Figure 1, it can be concluded that there is a massive growth in the tourist coming into the country in 2014 compared to 2001 (SLTDA, 2014). Sri Lanka is headed to become a noteworthy tourism destination in South Asia and from the Figure 1, its shows an enormous growth in 2014 which is almost four times to what it was in 2001 (SLTDA Statistical Report 2014).

While the tourism industry is enriched in the country, Sri Lankan Hotel Industry has been occupied by the tourists in the recent past years, Therefore, different classifications of hotels in Sri Lanka increases their opportunity to experience high number of customers in their hotels. The profit variation for the last five years has been decreased from an amount of Rupees 9.58 million in 2012 to an amount of Rupees. 2.38 million in 2015. That figures will show how far Hilton Colombo's performance have declined. On the other hand, even though the bottom-line of Hilton Colombo has declined, the revenue of Hilton Colombo is higher than that of other five star hotels till 2014. The profitability of Hilton Colombo

has gone down and the literature suggest that may be due to poor consumer buying behaviour, poor service quality, reduction in trendy food, less attractiveness of the rooms or bad customer service.

When comparing to the past year of company, it is to be noted that there is decrease in the number of customer to the company. The revenue of the company has decreased compared to the last year and thus the profit of the Hilton Colombo has also decreased. Most of the customers that have moved from Hilton Colombo are loyal customers (Hilton Colombo annual report 2010-2015). Researcher has hypothesized that there is a decrease in customers due to poor service quality. Some of the loyal customers of Hilton are trying to shift to other 5 Star hotels which provide better customer services as well as the same facilities like Hilton. Customer Buying Behaviour is impacted by many factors and one of the main factor among them is the Service Quality.

The core objective of this research is in consistent with the problem statement. The core objective of this research is to study the impact of service quality on consumer buying behaviour. The following secondary objectives are closely related with the core objective of this study. The current study aims; to study the determinants of service quality in the hotel industry, to explore the contributing factors of consumer buying behaviour and to analyze the relationship between service quality and consumer buying behaviour through customer satisfaction.

*Based on the objectives, the following research questions are examined in this study;*

- a. *What are the determinants of service quality in the hotel industry?*
- b. *What are the contributing factors of consumer buying behaviour?*
- c. *What is the relationship between service quality and consumer buying behaviour through customer satisfaction?*

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *The impact of service quality on customer satisfaction*

Concerning the interrelationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, Oliver (1993) initially stated that service quality would be a predecessor to consumer satisfaction paying little mind to whether these constructs

were aggregate or exchange. In a study conducted by Agbor (2011) regarding *"The Relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality"*. The core objective was to study the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction, Agbor 2011 articulated, there is an empirical evidence to support the above statement where customer satisfaction was an aftereffect of service quality. The method Agbor (2011) used in the study was "convenience sampling technique" to gather quantitative information from clients of Umeå University, ICA and Forex to get their satisfaction levels and importance of the quality of service which were substituted in the 'SERVQUAL' model. Agbor (2011) used a sample size of 300 customers and distributed questionnaires. His findings showed that the study demonstrated results for the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. In the meantime, the group result demonstrated that empathy, responsiveness and reliability were fundamentally related with service quality; empathy and reliability were altogether identified with consumer satisfaction. However, 'responsiveness' was not essentially identified with consumer satisfaction. Finally, service quality was altogether related to customer satisfaction. For the study Agbor (2011) used questionnaire as a data capture instrument.

Later, Kumar and Barani (2012) conducted a study on *"Appraisal Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Organized Retailing at Bangalore City"*. The core objective of the study is to analyze the measurements and their levels of service quality which has an impact on consumer satisfaction. In this study, Kumar and Barani (2012) illustrated that the determinant of service quality, for example, tangible, reliability, responsiveness, competence, credibility, accessibility, and customer knowledge were positively connected to consumer satisfaction. They used a sample size of 310 customers and they distributed questionnaires where the response rate was only 65 percent. They used "SPSS Version 17.0" in which only reliability, credibility tangibles and customer knowledge, have significant impact on consumer satisfaction. However, As per Oliva *et al* (1995), when performance is poor, more prominent change is expected to get satisfaction. when in midrange levels of service quality give relatively incredible expansion on satisfaction and, above average performance, enhancements don't correlate on equivalent increments in fulfillment. The quality of service has been observed to be an imperative data to customer satisfaction. The customer has a focal part in the force of the relationship since they interface with service results and their own experience in both assessments of satisfaction and future expectations (Caruana,2002). Service quality and customer satisfaction are associated from their explanation to their relationship

with alternate point of view in the fields. A few writers have consented to the way that service quality persuades customer satisfaction. Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) in their study suggested that, when seen the quality of service is high, then it will prompt increment in consumer satisfaction.

In contrast to Griffin's article which was based on America and Kumar and Barani's article which was based on India. The socio-economic factor of America and India are different and their culture and values are also different. Furthermore, the year Griffin wrote the article was in 1995 whereas Kumar and Barani's research was in 2012. When Griffin did his study, there wouldn't have been many studies on service quality and customer satisfaction. However, by the time Kumar and Barani did their research, the research gap would have been reduced to what it was during Griffin's period. Hence the strength of their support towards this article is relatively low. Furthermore, another author namely Agbor (2011) who conducted the study on 'The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the education industry was similar to the study which was conducted one year later by Kumar and Barani (2012). However, Agbor (2011) conducted the study in education industry whereas Kumar and Barani (2012) conducted the study in retail industry where it shows a distinct difference in the industries. In addition to that, Kumar and Barani (2012) conducted the study in India whereas Agbor's study was based in Sweden. The culture of Sweden is different to that of India. The socio-economic factors of Sweden are different from India. Hence the finding of their study may not be applicable to support each other's study.

#### B. *The impact of customer satisfaction on consumer buying behaviour*

According to a study conducted by Canny, (2014) whose core objective is to "investigate the role of dining experience attributes on customer satisfaction on behavioral intentions in casual dining restaurant" stated that customer satisfaction influences the consumer buying behavioral intentions and Canny (2014) used convenient sampling technique to collect the data. Canny (2014) tested it by conducting a survey on a sample of 213 customers and he used Multiple regression approach to test the relationship. The study revealed that customer satisfaction positively impacts on behavioral intentions. One year later, Shih *et al* (2015) conducted a study regarding the "The Study of Consumers' Buying Behavior and Consumer Satisfaction". The core objective of the study is to find out the influence of consumers' beverage buying behavior on consumer satisfaction. In the study, they used a sample of 150 customers and they used descriptive

research method for the survey and questionnaires were used to collect the data. Shih *et al* 2015 used "Descriptive statistic and Pearson correlation coefficient was used as a method of data analysis" as the data analytical tool. Moreover, as per Baker and Crompton (2000) who were based in USA, the essential inspiration among hotel suppliers for putting exertion in assessing and enhancing their nature of execution and looking to upgrade level of satisfaction, is that such enhancements will bring about increase in guest visits. This will ultimately increase the consumer's buying behaviour. As per Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), Consumer satisfaction was additionally found as the best frame to lead consumer behaviour, which noted as the best method for organization's advertisements.

However, in converse to Canny's statement where he stated customer satisfaction influences consumer buying behaviour, it could be considered that customer satisfaction doesn't only influence consumer buying behaviour. The customers should be motivated to purchase the product and there are many other factors that influences the buying behaviour. The culture, social factors, personal factors, and psychographic factors also play a vital role in influencing consumers buying behaviour and quality of the products and the competitive pricing could also influence the buying behaviour.

#### C. *The impact of service quality on consumer buying behaviour*

In 2009, Hung-Che Wu conducted an "An empirical study of behavioural intentions in the Taiwan hotel industry" The core objective of the study was to pick up an experimental understanding of behavioural intention in the Taiwan hotels. The sampling technique that was used to collect data is 'convenience sampling'. The findings of this study depended on the examination of a sample of 580 clients who had stayed at a five-star hotel in Kaohsiung city of Taiwan. Hung-che Wu (2009) used structured questionnaires to collect data. In this study they used different data analysis techniques such as regression analysis, factor analysis and variance analysis. One of the findings in the study suggested Service quality directly influenced customer satisfaction and thus influenced consumer behaviour.

One year later Mackay *et al.* (2015) investigated on "*The interrelationship between service quality, relational benefits, customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in the South African short-term insurance industry*". In 2015 Mackay *et al.* (2015) led an examination on "*The interrelationship between administration quality, social advantages, consumer loyalty and behavioral expectations in the South African transient insurance industry*". This study examines the impact of service quality and relational advantages on consumer satisfaction, and in addition the impact of consumer satisfaction on behavioral intentions in the instantaneous insurance industry. A quantitative descriptive research design was followed and Non-probability convenience sampling was used. The sample included 892 customers and they were given questionnaires. Data analytical tool used was SPSS. The results of the structural equation model indicate that service quality and relational benefits have a significant effect on customer satisfaction, which in turn has a significant effect on customers' behavioral intentions.

As per Bitner (1990), "*substantial empirical and theoretical evidence in the literature suggests that there is a direct link between service quality and behavioural intentions*". At the point when a consumer picks a supplier that gives service that meets or surpasses his or her desires, he or she will probably pick the same supplier again. This statement is supported by Cronin and Taylor (1994), where they found that better service quality will make the customer to re-purchase the products of the brand in future which implies consumers buying behaviour is good. Among the different behavioral expectations, impressive highlight has been set on the effect of service quality in deciding customer loyalty because of repeat buying behaviour (Jones and Farquhar, 2003). According to Agbor (2011), to culminate the way that consumer fulfilment and quality of service are imperative parables in business research on consumers, Gera (2011) examined the connection between the quality of service, satisfaction, values and behavioral aims in a bank in India and one of their results communicates that "quality of service was found to fundamentally effect on the satisfaction of the customers and value perception"

However, in contrast to Hung-Che Wu (2009) who stated service quality directly influences customer satisfaction and thus consumer buying behaviour. Hung-Che Wu's study was in 2009 whereas Tominic and Pandit's study was in 2014 and

Mackay *et al* study was in 2015. There is a gap between the conducted studies and the availability of articles in-between the period of the study may vary. In 2009 there would have been less studies conducted under service quality and consumer behaviour. However, in 2014 and 2015 the conducted studies on the field may have increased. Firstly, Hung-Che Wu (2009) conducted the study in hotel industry whereas Tominc and Pandit (2014) conducted the study in the banking sector and Mackay *et al.* (2015) conducted the study in short-term insurance industry. Secondly, Hung-Che Wu (2009) conducted the study in Taiwan whereas Tominc and Pandit (2014) conducted the study in India and Mackay *et al.* (2015) conducted the study in South Africa. The socio-economic factors of these countries are different to each other and their finding may not be applicable to different countries. In addition to that, Hung-Che Wu (2009), Tominic and Pandit (2014) and Mackay *et al.* (2015) used convenience sampling technique to collect data for which the usage of probability sampling technique would make the sample more representative of the population. Finally, Hung Che-Wu (2009) conducted the survey on 580 clients whereas Tominic and Pandit (2014) conducted the survey on a sample of 200 respondents and Mackay *et al* (2015) conducted the survey on a sample of 822 customers which is by far higher sample size than that of Hung Che-Wu (2009) and Tominic and Pandit (2014).

### III. Methodology

#### A. Conceptual framework

From the literature survey and the review, it was seen that to motivate customer to buy, service quality plays a major role and customer should be satisfied. It was also noted, that better customer service will make customers loyal to an organization and there are chances for them to recommend it to their friends and relatives. Conceptual framework as shown in Figure 2 is consistent with the research objective and literature review of the current study.

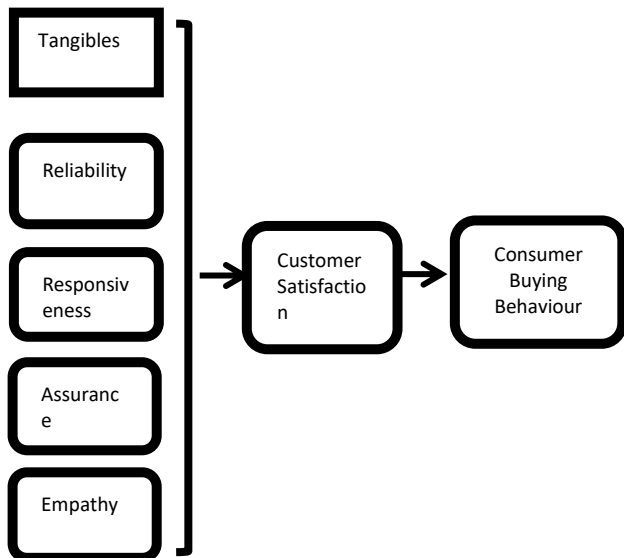


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework  
Source: Author Developed (2016)

**B. Data and Variables**

The first independent variable has indicators such as physical surrounding, location, system, techniques, structure where the variables has been supported by the authors such as Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988) Crompton *et al.*, (1991). The reliability variable includes the indicators such as accuracy, commitment, trustworthy and these indicators have also been stated by Crompton *et al.*, (1991), Rao,S.P and Sahu,C.P (2013). The third variable which is responsiveness consists four indicators such as quickness, customer happiness, time management and willingness with the literature support of Crompton *et al.*, (1991) Rao,S.P and Sahu,C.P,(2013) and Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988). Assurance includes knowledgeable, attitude, eagerness, speaking skills and courtesy where Crompton *et al.*, (1991) Rao,S.P and Sahu,C.P,(2013),Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988) have also used the same indicators in their study. The final independent variable includes indicators such as communicating languages, personal attention and caring. The moderate variable includes indicators such as extended value, positive feedback, recommending to others and purchase intention and the dependent variable includes motivation to buy, brand loyalty commitment to buy, value for money and repurchase intention. All the above variables have been measured by the five point Likert scale.

**C. Sample profile**

Since the objective of this study is to comprehend the impact of service quality on consumer buying behaviour, it is vital to understand the perception of customers on the five star hotels in Sri Lanka. The researcher will be executing this study in a five-star hotel in Colombo. The Population of the study is their customers. However, it's not practical to survey the entire population due to cost and time. Hence, keeping in mind the end goal to do this study, the researcher has chosen a sample size of 60 customers that incorporates both Sri Lankans and Tourists and selecting the tourist will help the researcher to determine the perception of tourist on Hilton Colombo. For the quantitative analysis, the researcher distributed questionnaires to 60 respondents under “simple random sampling method”. For the qualitative analysis, the researcher followed “convenience sampling method”. According to Saunders *et al.* (2009, p.241), “convenience sampling are those cases that are easiest to obtain for your sample, such as the person interviewed at random in the hotel.” In addition, the sample methods used in the current study is in consistent with some major studies done by scholars such as Agbor (2011), Canny (2014), Hung-che Wu (2009), Tominc and Pandit (2014), Mackay *et al.* (2015).

**D. Data analysis**

**1.Sample adequacy**

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test for Sample Adequacy

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.835
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	192.955
	df	21
	Sig.	.000

As per Table 1, Sample adequacy is 83.5 percent which indicates the sample size chosen for this study is adequate for the data analysis. Furthermore, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity significance is 0 which indicates a perfect significance.

**2.Reliability test**

Table 2: Reliability test

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	23	12.108	5	.033	2.422
Saturated model	28	.000	0		
Independence model	7	203.899	21	.000	9.709

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.398	.950	.718	.170
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	3.625	.401	.202	.301

divided by degrees of freedom which is the CMIN/DF for the default model is 2.422 (12.108/5) whereas for the independence model the CMIN/DF is 9.709. As per the norm in section 3.8, this model is fit.

**5. GFI, PGFI AND RMR**

Since the researcher has used the SPSS AMOS version 21, to analyze the model fit of this research, the Goodness of fit index (GFI), Parsimony goodness of fit index (PGFI), and the Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) has being used. The Table 4 shows the model fit of this research.

Table 4: GFI/PGFI and RMR

Source: Survey Data (2016)

The researcher included all the 7 variables of the conceptual framework which includes 5 independent variables, one moderate variable and one dependent variable to statistically test the reliability of this study. Cronbach’s alpha is the indicator of the reliability whereby according to the current study the reliability is 85.5 percent respectively. This indicates how far the sample findings would represent the population changes and hence, it can be concluded that the data gathered is 85.5 percent reliable.

**3. Validity**

The validity of the content, data and the phase is measured by using the expert review. The research supervisor has been selected as the expert and after couple of mediations the validity of the content, data and the phase of the study has been validated by the expert.

**4. CMIN/DF**

CMIN/DF is the minimum discrepancy divided by its degrees of freedom. The closer it is to zero, the better it is. Many researchers have recommended using ratios as low as 2 or as high as 5 to indicate a reasonable fit. As per SPSS Amos build in services, ratio of approximately five or less 'as beginning to be reasonable. However,  $\chi^2$  to degrees of freedom ratios in the range of 2 to 1 or 3 to 1 are indicative of an acceptable fit between the hypothetical model and the sample data.

Table 3: CMIN/DF

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.855	7

Initially, GFI should be ideally less than one to indicate a close model fit. If GFI is equal to one, then it indicates a perfect fit. However, as per Table 4, it shows that GFI is equal to 0.950 which is 95 percent and it indicates a closer fit. In addition, the PGFI is shown as 0.170. Furthermore, RMR of zero indicates a perfect fit and the above table shows RMR as 0.398 which is almost close to zero. Therefore, it indicates that there is a close fit in this research model.

**6. RMSEA**

Practical experience has made us feel that a value of the RMSEA of about .05 or less would indicate a close fit of the model in relation to the degrees of freedom. This figure is based on subjective judgment. It cannot be regarded as infallible or correct, but it is more reasonable than the requirement of exact fit with the RMSEA = 0.0

Table 5: RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.155	.040	.269	.060
Independence model	.384	.337	.433	.000

As per Table 3, it shows that the minimum discrepancy

Even though the RMSEA is 15 percent, CMIN/DF, GFI and PGFI indicates a perfect fit and hence it could be subjectively concluded that the model is perfect.

**7. Regression analysis**

Regression analysis is the way of linking variable one to another. Simply assess of relationship between variables. Using regression analysis predictions is made based on the data.

Table 6: Relationship between empathy, assurance, tangibles, reliability and responsiveness to customer satisfaction

Moderate Variable: Customer Satisfaction  
**\*\* 95 percentage of confidence interval,**

According to Table 6, when empathy increase by one odd, customer satisfaction is increased by 0.015 odd and when assurance increase by one odd, customer satisfaction is increased by 0.423 odd. Moreover, when tangibles increase by one odd, customer satisfaction is increased by 0.273 odd and when responsiveness increase by one odd, customer satisfaction is increased by 0.251 odd. Furthermore, under 95 percent confidence interval assurance, tangible and responsiveness have a significant impact on customer satisfaction. However, reliability has an inverse effect of -0.024 and it's does not have any significance with customer satisfaction. According to the literature of Agbor (2011), who conducted a study on the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality, Agbor (2011) conducted a survey and one of his finding indicated that reliability had an inverse effect with service quality and customer satisfaction. According to the definition of reliability, i.e. "*the capacity to perform the guaranteed benefit constantly and precisely*", (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988. p.23). This can be justified in Hilton Colombo's scenario as it could mean that even if it is a valid variable, customers see it as a compulsory attribute and not an essential attribute to make them shop at Hilton Colombo.

Table 7: Relationship between empathy, assurance, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness and customer satisfaction to consumer buying behaviour

	Standard Total Effect	Standard Total Error	Significance Level	
Empathy	0.011	0.105	0.900	
Assurance	0.318	0.101	0.010	**
Tangibles	0.205	0.079	0.010	**
Reliability	-0.018	0.088	0.880	
Responsiveness	0.189	0.095	0.040	
Customer Satisfaction	0.753	0.060	0.010	**

Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behaviour

According to Table 7, when empathy increase by one odd, consumer buying behaviour is increased by 0.011 odd and when assurance increase by one odd, consumer buying behaviour is increased by 0.318 odd. Moreover, when tangibles increase by one odd, consumer buying behaviour is increased by 0.205 odd and when responsiveness increase by one off, consumer buying behaviour is increased by 0.189 odd where an increase by one odd in customer satisfaction will bring about an increase of 0.753 odd in consumer buying behaviour. However, reliability has an inverse effect of -0.018 on consumer buying behaviour. Ultimately under 95 percent confidence interval assurance, tangibles,

	Standard Total Effect	Standard Total Error	Significance Level
Empathy	0.015	0.140	0.900
Assurance	0.423	0.136	0.010
Tangibles	0.273	0.100	0.010
Reliability	-0.024	0.117	0.880
Responsiveness	0.251	0.126	0.040

responsiveness and customer satisfaction have a significant impact on consumer buying behaviour.

**E. Qualitative analysis**

The case study approach was used for qualitative analysis. During the qualitative analysis, an in-depth interview was held with the general manager of Hilton Colombo to get ideas, thought and experiences of himself. The general manger Mr. Manesh shared his thoughts on all the variables relating to the conceptual framework.

**1. Case A**

*'There is some conspiracy on this factor since the tourists are from different parts of the world and some do not have any idea of travelling in Sri Lanka. When the customers ask for information and when it's provided, sometimes they additionally ask the front office to arrange them a vehicle and more often they ask for three wheelers which is more famous in Sri Lanka. When they return to the hotel premises they are not happy with the cost for the three wheelers and even though its not under our control, perhaps some tourists don't understand that and we absolutely understand their position. Despite this fact, our front desk representatives are thoroughly trained to provide committed service that would satisfy any customers and they make sure the customers re-purchase a stay in our hotel when they visit the country again. Moreover, our house keeping service who makes sure the*

*hotel is kept clean are trustworthy that the customers can keep their safeties in the room and leave without any hesitation. The hotel is trustworthy and we have CCTV cameras under operation 24/7. Sometimes there are representative in the hotel to accompany the older people to nearby places and that is one of our special service to customers who are above 55 and that's an optional service. If the customers want assistance they could request for it and our special panel is always ready to satisfy them by going an extra step above service. However, there are some local customers who expect an ethical help from the hotel and since Hilton Colombo is a well reputed five-star hotel in the city, they don't agree and they are always perform ethical practices and with a smile he added, they at times make a fuzz at the premises in the late-night hours' (Fernando 2016).*

#### 2. Case B

*'the importance of the empathy dimension. He said, in a hotel every customer wanted to be treated better than others and that's a basic part in human nature. We as the customer's representative, the team at Hilton Colombo gives the maximum effort to give personal assistance to the customers by having the goal of the Hotel in mind. Every employee at this hotel wants each and every customer to be satisfied during the stay of the hotel and we leave foot prints in their mind to ensure their re-purchasing intention is high at Hilton Colombo when they think of the word vacation. All our staffs are continuously taught of communication skills in every training programs as communication is one of the significant factor when providing service to a customer. the benefits Hilton Colombo provides for the chosen employee for the best employee of the month. All our staffs are competitively working hard to satisfy the customers and they ensure maximum effectiveness' (Fernando 2016).*

#### 3. Case C

our customers who stay at our hotel are giving positive feedback but not all. There are uncertainties but most of them are giving positive feedback and sometimes they mention the recommendations too where the hotel administration takes a serious note of it and work on to implement the recommendation so that when they visit us the next time they are satisfied and will also be motivated to give us more comments. There are quite a few loyal customers who visit our hotel regularly when they visit Sri Lanka, mostly the business people who visit the country for conferences and business purposes. We are also happy and proud to see some loyal customers using their social media blogs to check-in at the hotel and give positive feedbacks on

their blogs which we appreciate from the bottom of our heart. In the post, they highly recommend Hilton Colombo to their friends. Overall most of the customers are happy and satisfied with the hotel and they have made continuous re-purchasing and remain as our loyal customer (Fernando 2016).

#### IV. FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The above study which focuses on the impact of service quality on consumer buying behaviour with special reference to Hilton Colombo. According to the literature, majority of the scholars have suggested that in today's competitive market, service quality is a key factor in satisfying customers through which the consumer's buying behaviour is influenced. In addition, it is also suggested that developing long term customer relationships is vital for an organization to satisfy the customers and better service quality can improve the long-term relationship through which the organization could enhance the competitive advantage in a competitive market place.

Tangibility as a factor is one of the major reasons for a customer to choose a hotel. Customer choose to dine out or stay in a hotel because they wanted to experience a better atmosphere. Service quality does not mean just offering a delicious food. It's about how comfortable a customer feels when they stay at the hotel. Initially, the customer should be happy with the location of the hotel. If the customer decides to stay at a five-star hotel and if the location of the hotel is not in a suitable place, there is a high possibility for the customer to change his mind and stay at a different hotel whose location is good. Secondly the customer would consider the internal environment when choosing a hotel. The customer should feel relax when they stay at the hotel and they do not want an environment where they don't feel relaxed. The internal environment can give a customer a relaxing mind set if the environment is set in an environmentally friendly way that with going ahead with lights that forces the customer to feel like they are at a carnival. Moreover, when a hotel is surrounded with better natural resources like beach etc. the hotels have an added advantage to attract customers.

As per the finding of the current study, it was found that 61 percent of respondents have agreed to the indicators of tangible dimension and hence can be found that tangible factors are being considered largely by the customers and it can be found that Tangibility has a positive relationship with consumer buying behaviour and customer satisfaction. According to the findings of the current study, it was found that overall mean score of tangible was 4.48. The findings of



the current study are in-consistent with the study of Rao and Sahu (2013) whose overall mean study was 4.45. The mean score of the both the studies are almost same and hence it can be concluded that there is a relationship between both the study's findings. Moreover, tangibility factor has been considered has an essential dimension of service quality by authors such as Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), Zeithmal *et al.* (2006) and Kumar and Barani (2012). Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) have said tangibility is one of the main factors that influences service quality and it positively impacts the buying behaviour of consumer. Furthermore, Kumar and Barani (2012), in their study also stated that tangibles were positively connected to consumer satisfaction.

Reliability as a factor is also another important dimension in service quality. A customer when choosing a hotel will have an idea about how the hotel is and if the hotel doesn't give the expected satisfaction, the customers lose interest and may not repurchase again. Staffs should be in a way that customers will keep their trust on them and when an information is provided to a customer, it needs to be accurate. If the information provided to the staff is not accurate and if the customer ends up at the wrong place, the customer's mindset about the hotel's service will degrade and that will have a serious impact on the consumer's buying behaviour. According to the findings of the current study, 50 percent of the respondents have agreed to the indicators of reliability dimension and hence can be found that customers consider reliability dimension largely. However, the final finding of the current study indicated that reliability has an inverse effect and was found to have no impact on customer satisfaction and consumer buying behaviour. Moreover, reliability was found to inverse in relationship as per the study conducted by Agbor (2011) and hence the findings of the current study is in-consistent with Agbor (2011). Furthermore, in a study conducted by Karunaratne and Jayawardene (2010) reliability factor had not satisfied the customers.

Assurance is yet another important determinant of service quality. When a customer chooses a hotel, the staffs should have the necessary knowledge in order to guide the customers throughout the period of time that the customers stay at the hotel. Meanwhile, the attitude of the work and the eagerness within the staff in order to guide and help the customers should be positive, therefore the customers are liberated to suggest or demand for requirements. No matter having the knowledge attitude and eagerness on the positive side of the staff if the speaking skills are not up to the standard, therefore speaking skills is vital. It is important for the hotel to train their staffs with all the relevant knowledge that is need to perform better service. Staffs need to be

courteous when they perform an action in-front of the customer and the positive attitude when they approach the customers can impact on the perception of the customer. Customers basically like hotels where the staffs are friendly and eager to provide better service. One of the key element is the language they use to communicate with the customers and the communicating skills. As per the current study, it was justified that staffs are well trained with special communication skills program. According to the findings of the current study, it was found that 37 percent of people have agreed to the indicators of assurance. Hence it can be concluded that customers look in to assurance has an important factor. Furthermore, from the findings of the current study, it can be concluded that assurance is positively related to consumer buying behaviour and customer satisfaction. Based on the findings, overall mean score of assurance was found to be as 4.95. This finding is in-consistent with the findings of Rao and Sahu (2013) whose overall mean score of assurance was found to be 4.37. Hence it can be concluded that there is a relationship between both the studies. Moreover, the study is co-related with the literature since assurance has been stated as an important factor by authors like Parasuramn *et al.* (1985), Rao and Sahu (2013), Karunaratne and Jayawardena (2010).

Responsiveness is the other determinant of service quality. When a customer checks in at a hotel, the time management and the speed of work are factors highly considered. If an individual is checked in for a business conference purpose, the food received at the right time is very important. If there is a delay in food received, the customer will also get delayed on to the conference too. Therefore, to keep the customers happy, it is essential to provide the service at the right time. According to the findings of the current study, it was found that 37 percent of respondents have agreed to the responsiveness factor and it can be concluded that responsiveness do play a role in customer satisfaction even though it's not like the other dimensions like tangibles and reliability. Based on the findings, the overall mean score of responsiveness was found as 3.54. This was in consistent with the findings of Rao and Sahu (2013) whose overall mean score for responsiveness 4.33. Even though there is a small difference it could be concluded that there is a relationship between the findings. Moreover, the findings are in consistent with the literature of Karunaratne and Jayawardene (2010), Yavas *et al.* (1997) and Rao and Sahu (2013).

Empathy is the final determinant of service quality that was discussed in the current study. When a customer chooses a hotel to stay, generally the customer would want to stay in a hotel where there are no language barriers. If there is a

language barrier between the staffs and the customer, it would create a gap and hence there are high chances for customers to be dis-satisfied. From a customer's point of view, customers wanted to feel that they are not away from home. They will expect more caring from the staffs when providing a service and especially when personal attentions are given to customers, they will like they are being treated like a king and hence the customers are satisfied. From the findings of the current study empathy has been considered as a factor that determines customer satisfaction and thus consumer buying behaviour. From the analysis done in the current study it was found that Hilton Colombo offers competition among the staffs to improve the competitiveness among them which will result in better service provided. When the staffs are competing to each other, customers tend to get more advantage since they get a superior quality service. The findings of the current study on empathy are in consistent with the studies done by authors such as Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), Rao and Sahu (2013), Yavas *et al.* (1997) Jamal and Anastasiadou (2009).

Overall, based on the findings of the current study, Tangibles, Assurance, Responsiveness and Empathy are positively related to customer satisfaction and hence the consumer buying behaviour. Among these determinants, Assurance was considered as the critical dimension of the service quality that influences consumer buying behaviour through customer satisfaction whereas empathy was found to be the least critical dimension. Furthermore, reliability was found to inversely related with consumer buying behaviour through customer satisfaction. Furthermore, this study also made use of the advice given by Negi (2009) that Empathy, assurance and tangibles should not be neglected in evaluating service quality. However, inverse effect of reliability was supported by Agbor (2010). Hence, it could be concluded that findings of the current study are in consistent with the literatures discussed. Finally, it can be concluded that, the customers of Hilton are concerned about the hotel's physical surrounding, location, infrastructure, quickness. However, the customers of Hilton Colombo are more concerned about the Knowledge the hotel has on their customers, attitude of the staffs, Speaking skills, and courtesy.



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## V. References

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