

**An Investigation into the Extent to Which
Guest Knowledge and Familiarity of the
Marriott Brand Differs From Their
Experiences in A London Hotel.**

Jessica Carey

Contents

1.0 Executive Summary	
1.1 Key Words	
2.0 Context, Aim and Objectives	4
2.1 Background Information	4
2.2 Brand Ingenuity	4
2.3 Development of the Research Problem	5
2.4 Aim	5
2.5 Objectives	5
3.0 Instrumental Literature Review	6
3.1 Standardisation and the Marriott Brand	6
3.2 Marriott's Service Provisions and Expectations	6
3.3 Marriott's Service Quality Concepts	7
3.4 Difficulties of Measuring Service Quality	8
3.5 SERVQUAL	8
3.6 Summary	10
4.0 Method of Investigation	11
4.1 Questionnaire	11
4.2 Sample Size	11
4.3 Explanation for Chosen Research Method	12
4.4 Presentation of the Data	12
4.5 Research Policies and Procedures	12
5.0 Findings and Analysis	14
5.1 Tangibles	15
5.2 Reliability	17
5.3 Responsiveness	19
5.4 Assurance	21
5.5 Empathy	23
6.0 Conclusions	25
6.1 Linking the Dimensions	26
6.2 Conclusion of Study and Findings	26
6.3 Limitations of Findings	26
6.4 Recommendations for Future Researchers	27
6.5 Fulfilment of Aim and Objectives	28
7.0 Bibliography	29
8.0 Appendices	
Appendix 8.1: Quality of Service (Pilot) Questionnaire	33
Appendix 8.2: Quality of Service Questionnaire	35

List of Figures

Figure 1:	Tangible Expectation & Perception Comparisons	Page 15
Figure 2:	Reliability Expectation & Perception Comparisons	Page 17
Figure 3:	Responsiveness Expectation & Perception Comparisons	Page 19
Figure 4:	Assurance Expectation & Perception Comparisons	Page 21
Figure 5:	Empathetic Expectation & Perception Comparisons	Page 23

List of Tables

Table 1	Definitions of the five Service Quality Dimensions	Page 9
Table 2	Benefits and Hindrances of SERVQUAL	Page 9
Table 3	Benefits and Hindrances of using the chosen research method	Page 12
Table 4	Tangible Dimension Data	Page 15
Table 5	Reliability Dimension Data	Page 17
Table 6	Responsiveness Dimension Data	Page 19
Table 7	Assurance Dimension Data	Page 21
Table 8	Empathetic Dimension Data	Page 23
Table 9	How Each Objective has been Met	Page 28
Table 10	Pilot Questionnaire	Page 34
Table 11	Questionnaire- Part 1	Page 36
Table 12	Questionnaire- Part 2	Page 37
Table 13	Reflection on Development of Employability Skills: Semester 1	Page 39
Table 14	Reflection on Development of Employability Skills: Semester 2	Page 40
Table 15	My SMART Objectives	Page 43

1.0 Executive Summary

This paper aims to investigate the extent to which guest knowledge and familiarity of the Marriott brand differs from their perceptions in regards to their experiences, in order to identify whether any service gaps are present. Consideration is made as to whether there are any evident causes of gaps between guest expectations and guest perceptions.

The objectives of the paper are to explore the perception values UK guests hold in relation to their knowledge of the Marriott hotel brand and to determine the degree of service quality experienced by UK guests at a central London Marriott hotel. The paper offers recommendations for the chosen Marriott Hotel on how to manage the two methods, as well as recommendations for those who wish to further pursue the paper's conclusions with regards to the possibilities of how the paper could reap different results.

The literature review begins by discussing standardisation and the Marriott brand with reference to a case study by Sandoff (2005). The review discusses Marriott's service quality concept where Brown and Bond (1995) suggest that it is possible to manage the diagnostic power of the gap between expectations and perceived delivery while demonstrating some empirical stability and reliability. Also included is literature on customer's expectations of the provision and delivery of service and how success in this area is attainable. Lastly, discussed are ways in which Marriott measure their service qualities.

The paper gathers primary research of a quantitative nature utilising a detailed questionnaire, over a period of one week. This strategy was chosen in order to obtain a 'snap shot' of descriptive data to provide indicative evidence and exploratory findings (Pope & Mays, 1996). One hundred and fifty questionnaires were issued to all UK national guests that stayed overnight at the London Marriott Hotel over a one week period between 14th and 18th February 2011. The expectations and perceptions sections included 22 statements and questions which covered the five service quality dimensions. The questionnaire was developed using the SERVQUAL model with the inclusion within the research instrument of the Marriott's 'Spirit to Serve' 2010 version of the philosophy.

The data collected is presented in a table format using an average score for both the expectations and the perceptions. Following the individual analysis of each dimension, comparisons to other dimensions are made.

The paper comes to the conclusion that from the information gathered within the study, it is apparent that UK National guests regarded the chosen London Marriott Hotel as offering a medium level of quality and consistency to both tangible and intangible attributes. There are however inconsistencies within the Marriott brand with regards to what was expected and what the guests were actually delivered which needs to be addressed. Although it is noted that complete standardisation is impossible to achieve in a highly service oriented business, it does reiterate that organisations that have a large portfolio need to be aware of the changing needs and expectations of their guests.

To improve the validity and depth to the findings, additional studies could be considered using other locations with larger and more varied samples. It therefore only provides a preliminary insight into the topic and serves as a basis for future research.

1.1 Key Words

Guest Perception, Guest Expectation, SERVQUAL, Service Gap, Standardisation

2.0 Context, Aim and Objectives

2.1 Background Information

Marriott International is a lodging company with over 2,700 properties in its portfolio of over 66 countries (Marriott International, 2011). According to Barnes (2008), “one of the major factors leading to the success and reputation of Marriott has been the core values that the company espouses and has used as the basis of its culture since its foundation in 1927”.

Marriott first considered international penetration into the UK as a strategic motive of retaining its existing international customers. Marriott identified this as an opportunity in which to develop greater European and global awareness. Marriott’s development focused on key locations and gateways cities across Europe, including the UK (Hayward et al, 2006).

The ‘Marriott Way’ is built on the fundamental ideas of service to associates (staff), customers and the community. These ideas act as the cornerstone for all Marriott associates fulfilling the “Spirit to Serve” motto:

“Marriott associates are the best in the business. Every day they serve our guests with skill, enthusiasm and pride, and their hard work makes our success possible.”

(J. W. Marriott Jr. President, Marriott Corporation, 2008)

Alongside the company’s mission statement:

“Marriott Hotels and Resorts are committed to being the best lodging company in the world by empowering our associates to create extraordinary customer service and shareholder value.”

(J. W. Marriott Jr. President, Marriott Corporation, 2008)

2.2 Brand Ingenuity

Through an ever-evolving portfolio of innovative and award-winning brands created to answer precise market needs, Marriott continues to lead the way in customer satisfaction, and owner and franchisee preference (Marriott International, 2011). Fuelling all levels of Marriott are the proven systems, support and services that provide the means for individual brands and hotels to operate efficiently and effectively, helping each to deliver the quality experience that guests worldwide expect. This, alongside a tradition of attentive guest care, exceptional amenities, in-depth local knowledge and loyalty programs) Marriott feels, “empowers the company’s global brands to continually set industry standards around the world” (Marriott International, 2011).

Multibranding has become one of the most popular brand strategies and is used by Marriott (Clarke & Chen, 2007). It is recognised that multibranding offers “a fine opportunity to grow a business, simply because one brand cannot realise all of the customers’ needs in all of the various segments of a market that have been targeted” (Van Sister, 2004). The advantages that a multibranded strategy can offer include the enhanced opportunities for customer relationship management, which, in theory, enables organisations like Marriott to fulfil consumer needs more precisely (Barnes, 2008).

In multibranding, Marriott have been able to effectively increase the diversity in every segment of the industry and have attempted to ensure that if there was to be a problem with one brand, they could cover it with others and therefore allow the company to remain

successful (Clarke & Chen, 2007). Marriott further believes that it can “gain preference from their brand by being where the customers are” Marriott International (2011).

2.3 Development of the Research Problem

The research problem was developed from the author’s interest in examining the reason: why are guest expectations of the Marriott brand commonly falling below their expectations at the chosen London Marriott Hotel? A considerable number of guests felt that overall satisfaction was high, conflicting the results which showed that many had a relatively low intent to return to the property. This statement evoked a trail of inquiry into how and why this has occurred. Furthermore, although previous studies have looked at other UK based hotels, (with regards to the examination of both UK national and international travellers) none have looked specifically at the chosen London Marriott Hotel. For these reasons, the following research question was developed:

“To what extent is the standardisation of Marriott’s hotel corporate strategy not meeting the expectations of guests?”

2.4 Aim

The aim of the study is to measure the expectations of guests with knowledge and familiarity of the Marriott brand against their perceptions of their experiences of the chosen London Marriott Hotel in order to identify whether any service gaps are present.

2.5 Objectives

The study will demonstrate how:

Objective 1: To investigate the strength of the Marriott brand in order to explore the perception values of UK guests hold in relation to their knowledge of the Marriott hotel brand

Objective 2: To draw conclusion on the role of SERVQUAL to businesses and its use to Marriott as a company

Objective 3: To determine the degree of service quality experienced by UK guests at a central London Marriott Hotel

Objective 4: To identify and highlight any gaps that occur between the perception-expectation of respondents

Objective 5: To suggest any evident cause of these perception-expectation gaps identified

Objective 6: To offer recommendations for future research within the chosen research area

This study will seek to meet the aim and objectives by utilising the SERVQUAL model in order to identify potential service gaps within the chosen hotel. Literature and primary evidence will be collated and reviewed in order to meet the objectives.

3.0 Instrumental Literature Review

3.1 Standardisation and the Marriott Brand

Used in order to help management to control, predict and minimise mistakes, risks and deviation among employees (Jones et al., 1994:45), the purpose of standardisation is to:

"...provide reference documents which include solutions to technical and commercial problems concerning products, goods and services repeatedly encountered in relations between economic, scientific, technical and social partners."

Medina & Duffy (1998) and Sundbo (2002) introduce the idea that standardisation can also be acknowledged as the situation where a product or service is the same every time and everywhere, which Marriott guarantee to consistent quality. A case study by Sandoff (2005) furthers this argument whereby it is suggested that standardisation is a prerequisite for reaching rational goals. It is argued that "well-defined standards and manuals guarantee that everybody gets the same information" and that "nothing is left to chance". Marriott & Brown (1997) discuss that Marriott uses standardised procedures and systems throughout every brand and that they act as safety nets to prevent uneven, unreliable and often unremarkable service. Examining the idea further, J.W. Marriott quotes: (as cited in Marriott & Brown, 1997:16):

"The idea of having such systems and procedures for everything is very natural and logical: If you want to produce a consistent result, you need to figure out how to do it, write it down, practice it, and keep improving it until there's nothing left to improve. At the most basic level, systems help bring order to the natural messiness of human enterprise."

These tested systems and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) "make it possible to take the element of surprise out of a situation where surprise is the last thing a guest wants" (Hayward et al, 2006:3). One of the central issues for an international hotel company such as Marriott is how to organise, integrate and manage their activities in response to the simultaneous need for a sense of global strategic intent and a focus which takes into account local conditions (Go et al, 1995). Due to the nature of standardisation, Brotherton & Alder (1999) argue that the ultimate challenge is to produce a single brand with core and augmented attributes which are adapted domestically, but have international appeal thus suiting the wide audience the company aims to target.

3.2 Marriott's Service Provisions and Expectations

Service management literature describes the production of services as something that should be unique, where customised encounters take place and human beings interact with each other (Czepiel et al., 1985; Gronroos, 1990; Normann, 1992; Shostack, 1977; Zeithaml et al., 1990). Zeithaml et al (1993) propose that there is no ideal method of measuring service quality due to subjectivity inherent in the opinion of the consumer regarding excellence of a service. Other Schools believe quality is a consequence of the service provided.

Klara (2001:103) states that: "experienced customers have raised their expectations with regards to quality and good service whilst seeking better value for their money". Igelias and Guillen (2004) and Kwun and Oh (2006) have researched into quality expectation and reveal that this has a large impact on customer satisfaction. Furthering this, Andaleeb and Conway (2006) have suggested that consumer satisfaction is a predecessor to service quality, i.e. a

customer will perceive quality positively only when the service provider exceeds his/her expectations. Soriano (2001:16) supports this by stating “service quality is defined as the gap between customers’ expectations and perceptions.” Marriott believe that for the management of operations it is important to make the staff aware of and motivate them to produce a service with such a personal touch and a quality that fulfils, or exceeds, the expectations of the customer.

In order to attain sustainable success over time, Marriot believe it is critical for managers to recruit committed, dedicated, capable and competent staff to ensure that managers and employees alike remain committed to satisfying the needs and expectations of the customer. This they believe will enable them to gain a competitive advantage over others within the hospitality industry.

3.3 Marriott’s Service Quality Concepts

Service quality is a concept that has provoked interest and debate in the literature due to the difficulty in both defining and measuring it, with no overall understanding of either (Wisniewski, 2001). Proponents (including Brown & Bond, 1995) argue for the diagnostic power of the gap between expectations and perceived delivery while demonstrating some empirical stability and reliability. Detractors argue that the difference in score leads to unreliable measures and that the dimensionality and validity is erratic.

Marriott considers internal changes important in order to deliver key services once they have been identified by customers. The company believes that creating and maintaining a support system as well as encouraging associates to become more autocratic in their decision making. Additionally, the focus on ongoing training and development is of optimum importance to Marriott as the upkeep of these actions will more likely increase the chances of attaining repeat customer satisfaction.

Having communicated to its employees the necessity of responding to the needs of its customers, Marriott uses several different approaches to gather feedback from guests so that it can meet their expectations. As well as attaining customer feedback from sending out unsystematic emails to guests who have stayed in the hotel and receiving comments on problems that have been experienced within a hotel (such as slow service or incorrect service delivery), the company undertakes research to improve upon their delivered service quality. An example of a concept previously used is the "First 10 Program," which is a reference to the guests first 10 minutes in the hotel. Roger Connor (Vice President of Communications) states:

"We have redesigned our check-in process over the past several months. We broadened our definition of what's involved in check-in and we spent 12 months in 14 test hotels working out problems that had to be solved. The first 10 Program has enabled us to build on the leadership Marriott already had for its ease of check in"

This, (alongside the company’s vision to become the “number one lodging company in the world” Marriott International, 2011) suggests that Marriott view service quality of vital importance to the attainment of customer satisfaction which will in turn lead to a successful, profitable business enterprise.

3.4 Difficulties of Measuring Service Quality

The difficulties in measuring service quality lie in the fact that unlike goods, (which can be measured by objective indicators such as number of defects and durability) the quality of a service is somewhat more difficult due to its unique characteristics. Jiju et al, (2004) suggest that it derives from the field of marketing which values the human interaction between a business and its customers and that it loosely incorporates the concept of "meeting and exceeding the expectations of the customer." Harvey, (1998:56) proposes "service quality is so intangible that objective measurement is impossible; thus the challenge lies mostly in managing appearances and perceptions". Thus, a service quality measure such as SERVQUAL may enable the company to identify a benchmark for all Marriott's.

3.5 SERVQUAL

Developed in the mid-eighties by Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, SERVQUAL initially consisted of ten dimensions to measure service quality by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1988). The approach was developed as a response for not having any quality management instruments that were appropriate for the application to the service industry. The 10 dimensions were:

- Tangibles
- Reliability
- Responsiveness
- Competence
- Access
- Courtesy
- Communication
- Credibility
- Security
- Understanding

From these 10 dimensions, 97 attributes were generated representing various facets of each dimension. The pool of attributes derived from an extensive series of interviews with customers in four different commercial services. Each item was then split into two sections; one to measure expectations about organisations in general within the service category and the other to measure perceptions about the particular organisation whose actual service quality was being assessed (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). If expectations are greater than performance, then perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence, customer dissatisfaction occurs (Parasuraman et al. 1985; Lewis & Mitchell, 1990).

Today, SERVQUAL consists of a 22-item scale measuring quality performance across five dimensions, using a seven point Likert Scale measuring both customer expectations and perceptions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). The final items making up each of SERVQUAL's five dimensions suggested the following labels and concise definitions as highlighted by (Van Iwaarden et al., 2003):

Dimension	Concise Definition
Tangibles	Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel.
Reliability	Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
Responsiveness	Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
Assurance	Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
Empathy	Caring, individualised attention the firm provides its customers.

Table 1: Definitions of the five Service Quality Dimensions

The final 22-item scale and its five dimensions provide reliabilities, which are consistently high across multiple services, as suggested by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1988). Thus, the following table highlights the benefits and hindrances of using the SERVQUAL model to measure service quality.

Benefits of SERVQUAL to Marriott	Hindrances of SERVQUAL to Marriott
The SERVQUAL measuring tool “remains the most complete attempt to conceptualise and measure service quality” (Nyeck et al, 2002). The tool’s reliability would be of significant use to the company	SERVQUAL has its detractors and is considered overly complex, subjective and statistically unreliable. (Brown et al, 1993) It may be difficult to carry out the survey and analyse the data during peak times when the hotel is busy.
SERVQUAL focuses on the process of service delivery, not the outcomes of the service encounter. (Gronroos, 1982), thus suggesting that if the tool is utilised effectively, the company would be able to adapt their current training schemes to suit what the guests are looking for.	Respondents can easily be confused by the two administration methods of the questionnaire. (Gronroos, 1993, Bolton & Drew, 1991). If the system is explained correctly, the information could be invaluable. Training could be put in place to ensure that staff explain how the questionnaire could be carried out and why it is being carried out. It is predicted that this would counter this potential hindrance
Although SERVQUAL's face and construct validity are in doubt, it is widely used in published and modified forms to measure customer expectations and perceptions of service quality. (Held et al, 1999)The system is well recognised and applicable to other industries, suggesting that it is a successful method of measurement.	SERVQUAL's 5 dimensions of reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy and responsiveness) are not universals, and the model fails to draw on established economic, statistical and psychological theory. (Held et al, 1999) It would be possible to adapt the model to suit it to the environment it will be operating in (i.e. to include other important elements which the hotel considers to be key to the possible success of service delivery)

Table 2: Benefits and Hindrances of SERVQUAL

The fact that SERVQUAL has critics does not render the measuring tool mute as the scale is a tried, tested and robust instrument (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). Rather, the criticism received concerning SERVQUAL measuring tool may have more to do with how researchers use the tool. Nyeck, Morales, Ladhari, and Pons (2002) reviewed 40 articles that made use of the SERVQUAL measuring tool and discovered “that few researchers concern themselves with the validation of the measuring tool.” DeMoranville et al (2003) suggest that modifications and customisation of the instrument needs to be made in relation to the unique

and individual service industry. This may include the addition or deletion of attributes and/or dimensions to capture the areas of the service under investigation (Gounaris and Dimitriadis, 2003). To conclude, the measurement of service quality can provide specific data that can be used in quality management; hence, service organisations can monitor and maintain quality service. (Douglas & Conner, 2003). Thus, this operating tool would be of use to a company like Marriott

3.6 Summary

The literature examined identifies the past and current ways in which Marriott aims to deliver a consistent service to its guests by using various methods such as standardisation, service provisions and service quality concepts. Explained are SERVQUAL, its benefits and hindrances and how its dimensions can be applied to the service sector. The following section outlines how this research will be applied to the London Marriott Hotel in order to determine whether or not service gaps are present.

4.0 Method of Investigation

The primary research was of a quantitative nature utilising a detailed questionnaire, over a period of one week. This strategy was chosen in order to obtain a 'snap shot' of descriptive data to provide indicative evidence and exploratory findings (Pope & Mays, 1996).

"Marriott seek to offer standards consistently in all locations, domestic and international, through continuous evaluation" (Marriott International, 2011). Measuring the service quality experienced by customers who have stayed in another UK Marriott will provide knowledge as to whether the brand standards developed in the selected London Marriott Hotel are consistent with others in the UK. The research was completed by measuring the expectations of travellers with knowledge and familiarity of the Marriott brand against their perceptions in regards to their experiences in the chosen London Marriott. Having assessed the SERVQUAL instrument, modifications were implemented for this study as identified in the section entitled 'Questionnaire'. The aim of the study was to identify whether any service gaps are present between the chosen hotel against other hotels within the Marriott portfolio.

4.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed using the SERVQUAL model with the inclusion within the research instrument of the Marriott's 'Spirit to Serve' 2010 version of the philosophy. A pilot questionnaire was completed by five UK guests. After conducting the pilot test, amendments were made to the questionnaire including: simplifying the statements/questions and highlighting keywords in bold, change of the rating scale and splitting the questionnaire into two completely separate stages; that of expectations and perceptions both pre- and post-consumption of the service.

(For a copy of the pilot questionnaire, please see appendix 8.1)

The final questionnaire used for this study comprised of two sections:

- Customer expectations
- Customer perceptions

The expectations and perceptions sections included 22 statements and questions which covered the five service quality dimensions. In both stages the same statements and questions were used. However, in the expectations section, the statements and questions were generic and referred to past experience or knowledge of Marriott, whereas the perceptions section was specific to the London Marriott Hotel. Respondents were asked to identify their expectations and perceptions of 22 service quality attributes, through a rating scale of one being of lowest value and five the highest.

(For a copy of the final questionnaire used, please see appendix 8.2)

4.2 Sample Size

One hundred and fifty questionnaires were issued to all UK national guests that stayed overnight at the London Marriott Hotel over a one week period between 14th and 18th February 2011. One hundred unspoilt completed questionnaires were used for this study. The questionnaire was presented to the sample identified at the point of check-in at the London Marriott Hotel. The questionnaire was delivered personally by the author allowing a

consistent message to be delivered to the guest and thus minimising the chance of confusion or inconsistencies with the results. The expectations section and their view on the relative importance of the service dimensions were to be completed at that time. Following the service experience and upon departure from the hotel, (at the point of check-out) the respondents were then asked to complete the perceptions part of the questionnaire based on the actual service experience at the London Marriott Hotel. Obtaining this data identified a service quality value by subtracting respondent's perceptions from their expectations.

4.3 Explanation for Chosen Research Method

The following table highlights the benefits and hindrances of using a questionnaire as a method of research for this study:

Benefits of Questionnaires	Hindrances of Questionnaires
Questionnaires are considered to be less intrusive than interviews, easier to control and organise and were easiest for the respondents concerned (Bryman and Bell, 2003).	Respondents may answer superficially especially if the questionnaire takes a long time to complete. Thus, asking too many questions should be avoided.
They allow for "the systematic and orderly approach towards the collection and analysis of data, so that information can be obtained (Jankowicz, 2005).	Respondents may not wish to reveal their real responses (Milne, 1999). Thus, the respondent will be told why the information is being collected and how the results will be beneficial. They will be asked to reply honestly and informed that if their response is negative this is just as useful as a more positive opinion.
Using a questionnaire was the most effective way of collecting data for this type of study.	
Completing questionnaires render it possible to attain direct comparisons between two areas (as long as valid sampling and significant techniques have been used).	

Table 3: Benefits and Hindrances of using the chosen research method

4.4 Presentation of the Data

The data collected has been presented in a table format using an average score for both the expectations and the perceptions. Bar graphs have been used to enable the reader to visually compare the difference between customer expectations and perceptions. Following this there is an individual analysis of each dimension with comparisons to other dimensions and a conclusion to the study with recommendations for further research.

4.5 Research Policies and Procedures

Using Bryman and Bell's (2003) advice, the interviews were carried out by the author, using closed, non-leading questions and stressed legitimacy, confidentiality and academic purposes in order to minimise the problems associated with interviewing (characteristics of interviewees, their influence, social desirability and problem of meaning).

The research has followed the Research Ethics Guide by Sheffield Hallam University (2008); verbal consent was obtained from the respondent as it was felt that it was not necessary to obtain written consent as not specific quotes or opinions were to be given. The hotel will remain unidentifiable. Instead, its general location and corporate brand name only will be used throughout this project.

5.0 Findings and Analysis

The findings were derived from a sample of 100 UK National guests who returned both the pre- and post stage questionnaires during the chosen period of time. The questionnaire was undertaken during the week, hence the reason why there were more business guests staying in the hotel at that time. 65% of respondents were male and 35% were female with the general ages of respondents being between 35 and 49. 85% of respondents said that they stayed in hotels for business rather than pleasure. There was little difference between the responses of business and stay for pleasure guests and thus, there was not enough information to mention a trend. This is a fairly consistent gender, age and business/pleasure customer profile for this Marriott's week occupancy, which means that the information will be of consequential relevance to recommendations and future research.

The results are to be presented in the five service quality dimensions (stated in the Instrumental Literature Review) and structured by presenting each service attribute individually with relevant discussion and reference to the previously attained secondary research. The data collected is presented in a table format using an average score for both the expectations and the perceptions. Acknowledgement of how respondents viewed the importance of each service dimension will also be identified.

(N.B. Figures highlighted in yellow show where a negative value in the P minus E Service Quality Section occurred)

5.1 Tangibles

“Including physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel” (Van Iwaarden et al., 2003).

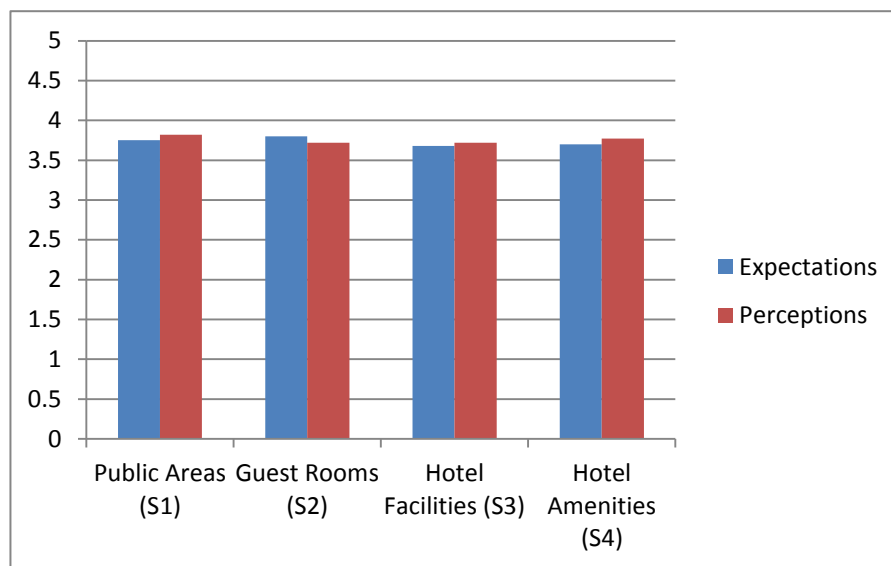


Figure 1: Tangible Expectation & Perception Comparisons

Statements	Perceptions	Expectations	P minus E Service Quality
(S1)	P1= 3.82	E1= 3.75	0.07
(S2)	P2= 3.72	E2= 3.80	-0.08
(S3)	P3= 3.72	E3= 3.68	0.04
(S4)	P4= 3.77	E4= 3.70	0.07

Table 4: Tangible Dimension Data

Public Areas (S1)

Figure 1 and table 4 present the findings in which UK guests perceived the most important tangible attribute as being the public areas. Their expectations were lower than their perceptions suggesting that the public areas within the hotel were well maintained, comfortable and relaxing and that the guests were provided with a safe and secure environment.

Guest Rooms (S2)

Guests responses show that their perceptions however fell slightly below their expectation rating at -0.08 which although is not much, it does suggest that there may be a `standardisation` weakness. On the other hand (given the difference is so small), it could also be result of human error for instance an associate overlooking a glass used by a previous guest.

Facilities (S3)

This attributes identified that their expectations of the London Marriott Hotel were positive. Expectations of facilities (including the use of business centre and fitness studio) were slightly lower than perceptions at 3.68 compared to 3.72.

Amenities (S4)

Referring to items such as; stationary, shampoo and mini bar, this category accounts for respondent's second highest perceptions ratings but third highest expectations perhaps suggesting that either the guest overlooks this particular tangible element as being of inconsequential difference to their stay.

Discussion of Tangible Dimension

As one can acknowledge by figure 1 and table 2, tangibles are of medium-high importance to respondents, which is further supported by the weighted service quality dimensions discussed later. Tangibles are of importance to guests across the whole hospitality industry and companies most commonly offer little differentiation as a result of this (Hayward et al, 2006). Thus, hotel operators need to insure tangibles are of a high-perceived quality in order to focus on the intangible elements of a provided service (Williams, 1992). Intangibles are the elements that will differentiate the hotel in the marketplace and afford premium pricing, as highlighted by Angelo & Vladimir (2001). The research gathered in this section of the study identifies that the London Marriott Hotel provides tangible attributes expected of their UK guests, with the exception of the slight reduction in the guest rooms.

5.2 Reliability

“The ability to perform the promised service with dependability and accuracy” (Van Iwaarden et al., 2003).



Figure 2: Reliability Expectation & Perception Comparisons

Statements	Perceptions	Expectations	P minus E Service Quality
(S5)	P5= 4.09	E5= 3.57	0.52
(S6)	P6= 4.50	E6= 3.83	0.67
(S7)	P7= 3.50	E7= 3.56	-0.06
(S8)	P8= 3.93	E8= 3.76	0.17
(S9)	P9= 3.93	E9= 4.07	-0.14

Table 5: Reliability Dimension Data

Brand Standards (S5)

As clearly shown in the table 3, respondent’s expectations and perceptions on brand standards are far from identical, which Zeithaml & Bitner (1996) identify is needed for high customer satisfaction. Besides having the second highest perception level in the reliability dimension at 4.09, one should acknowledge that brand standards also hold the second lowest expectation level at 3.57, making a difference of 0.52 between perceptions and expectations. This suggests one of two things: other hotels in the same brand are consistently not living up to the brand standards, or that the London Marriott Hotel is particularly confident at following the designated brand standards.

Correct Service Delivery (S6)

Correct service delivery refers to the ‘moment of truth’ as stated by Normann (1987) and Albrecht (1988), highlighting that all customer oriented management activities must be proven (Hayward and Graham, 2006). As identified in table 4, one can acknowledge from the respondents results that the London Marriott has exceeded guests’ expectations and thus

has managed Normann's 'moment of truth' correctly. Respondents rated their perceptions of the establishment at 4.50, which is 0.67 higher than that of their expectations.

Prompt Staff (S7) and Staff that are Never too Busy (S9)

Both S7 and S9 were negative and the respondents identified that their expectations did not meet their perceptions of the establishment. During each shift, there are likely to be highs and lows of staff activity, caused by variable levels of stress. This in turn is more likely to have a negative impact on the customer perception of staff.

Dependable Staff (S8)

Staff exceeded respondents' expectations on this particular service attribute, with their overall expectation of the dependability of staff being 3.76, whereas respondents felt the service they received was 3.93.

Discussion of Reliability Dimension

Within this section, it is of interest to note the remarkably high scores in regards to brand standards and correct service delivery, in which respondent's expectations and perceptions are vastly different from one another. This finding presents the argument that other hotels around the UK do not live up to the respondent's expectations with regards to the areas discussed. Bitner (1992) proposes influences that affect this expectation include: physical environment, personnel, system and/or co-customer.

5.3 Responsiveness

Includes “willingness to help customers and provide prompt service” (Van Iwaarden et al., 2003).

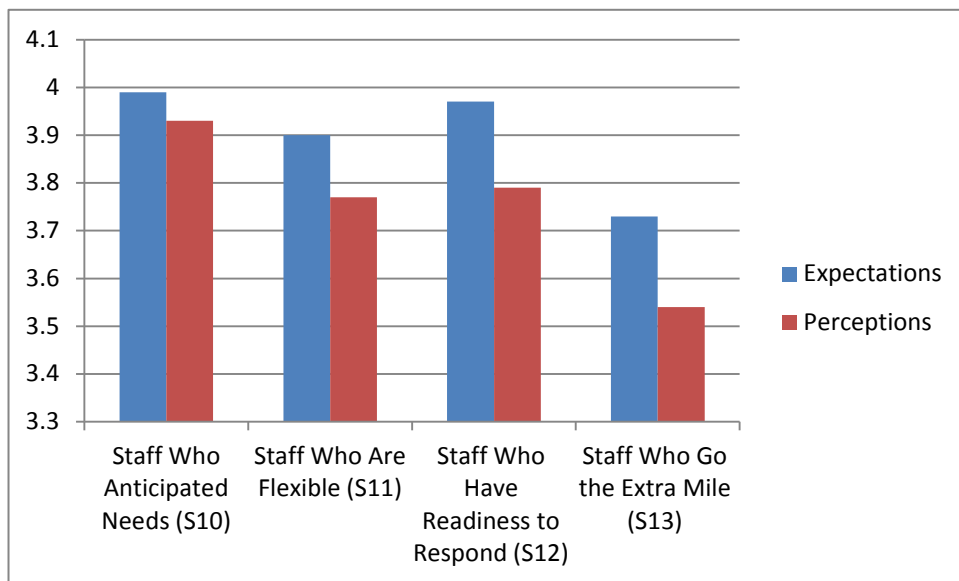


Figure 3: Responsiveness Expectation & Perception Comparisons

Statements	Perceptions	Expectations	P minus E Service Quality
(S10)	P10= 3.93	E10= 3.99	-0.06
(S11)	P11= 3.77	E11= 3.90	-0.13
(S12)	P12= 3.79	E12= 3.97	-0.18
(S13)	P13= 3.54	E13= 3.73	-0.19

Table 6: Responsiveness Dimension Data

Staff Who Anticipated Needs (S10)

This was the highest perceived service attribute and as shown by table 6, guests had high expectations of staff anticipating their needs, perhaps because it is part of the company’s “spirit to serve” motto. Unfortunately, guests felt that their expectations were not met.

Staff Who Are Flexible (S11)

Considerably lower than the ratings for staff who anticipated needs, this attribute holds the third lowest overall rating within this dimension. Respondent’s perceptions were 3.77, -0.13 negative of their expectations which were rated at 3.9.

Staff Who Have Readiness to Respond (S12)

This service attribute has the 2nd lowest P minus E service quality meaning that guests felt that during their stay with comparison to other stays within the UK, staff did not provide them with a readiness to respond. Despite this, the guest perceived the service attribute to be 2nd highest, coming second only to staff who anticipated needs.

Staff Who Go the Extra Mile (S13)

This service attribute has the lowest P minus E service quality with it being -0.19. It can be said with some concern that guests perceived staff who go the extra mile as 3.54 which is

one of the lowest ratings throughout the whole results, therefore has one of the highest discrepancy rate.

Discussion of Responsiveness Dimension

Within the responsiveness dimension, there are great differences between what the respondents expected and what they perceived during their time spent at the London Marriott Hotel. One can acknowledge the London Marriott has not achieved this because they have not “learned the expectations of their customers and incorporated them into the service delivery process” (Lee et al, 2004). In effect, they have clearly made attempts to customise the Marriott product to the cultural needs of the guest but it appears that they have yet to succeed. This dimension is critical to the development of brand standards by ensuring that they are valued by their guests. To make attempt to improve on this would be wise in order to ensure customers are loyal and provide the establishment with repeat business.

5.4 Assurance

“Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence” (Van Iwaarden et al., 2003).

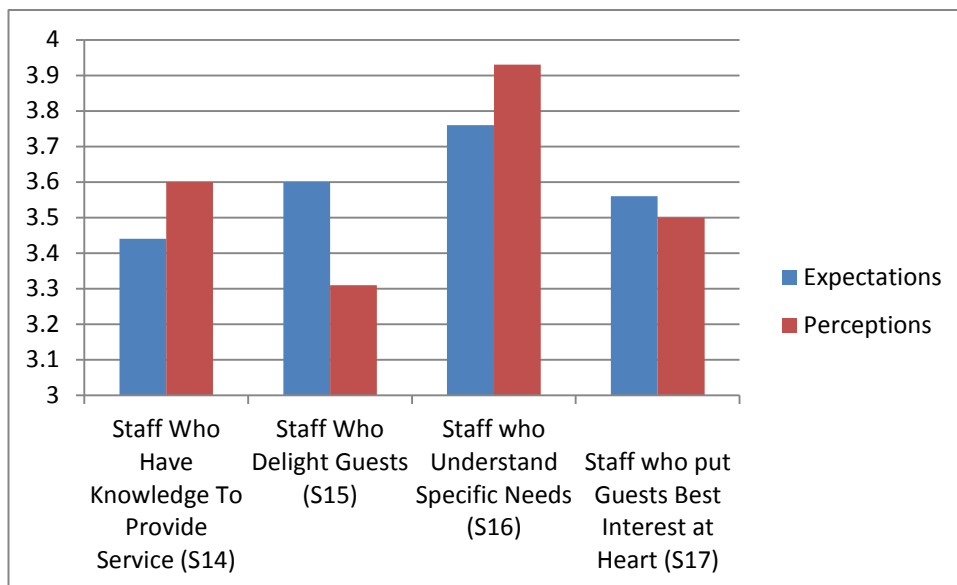


Figure 4: Assurance Expectation & Perception Comparisons

Statements	Perceptions	Expectations	P minus E Service Quality
(S14)	P14= 3.60	E14= 3.44	0.16
(S15)	P15= 3.31	E15= 3.60	-0.29
(S16)	P16= 3.93	E16= 3.76	0.17
(S17)	P17= 3.50	E17= 3.56	-0.06

Table 7: Assurance Dimension Data

Staff Who Have Knowledge to Provide Service (S14) and Staff that Understand Specific Needs (S16)

These two attributes were perceived as having positive outcomes. It is interesting to see that guests feel that staff understand their specific needs when asked but that the staff do not anticipate their needs (please see table 5 for clarification of this). Guests felt that staff had the knowledge to provide guests with their service which suggests that staff have a good understanding of products and services. This implies that there is a concentration of training in this area.

Staff Who Delight Guests (S15) and Staff That Put Guests Best Interest at Heart (S17)

Within the assurance dimension, respondents felt that these two attributes did not meet their expectations. Particular interest needs to be invested into S15 (staff who delight guests) as their expectations were 3.60 whereas what they perceived was 3.31

Discussion of Assurance Dimension

Unlike the other dimensions, there is a considerable difference between respondents' expectations and their perceptions of the London Marriott Hotel- both in a positive and negative way. Given that “Marriott seek to offer standards consistently in all locations,

domestic and international, through continuous evaluation” (Marriott International, 2011), one could argue that the establishment is perhaps not recruiting staff who are able to delight guests as they may not understand cultural differences and social nuances. Taking into consideration these issues, would enable the London Marriott Hotel to adhere to its promise of offering consistent standards.

5.5 Empathy

“Caring, individualised attention the firm provides its customers” (Van Iwaarden et al., 2003).

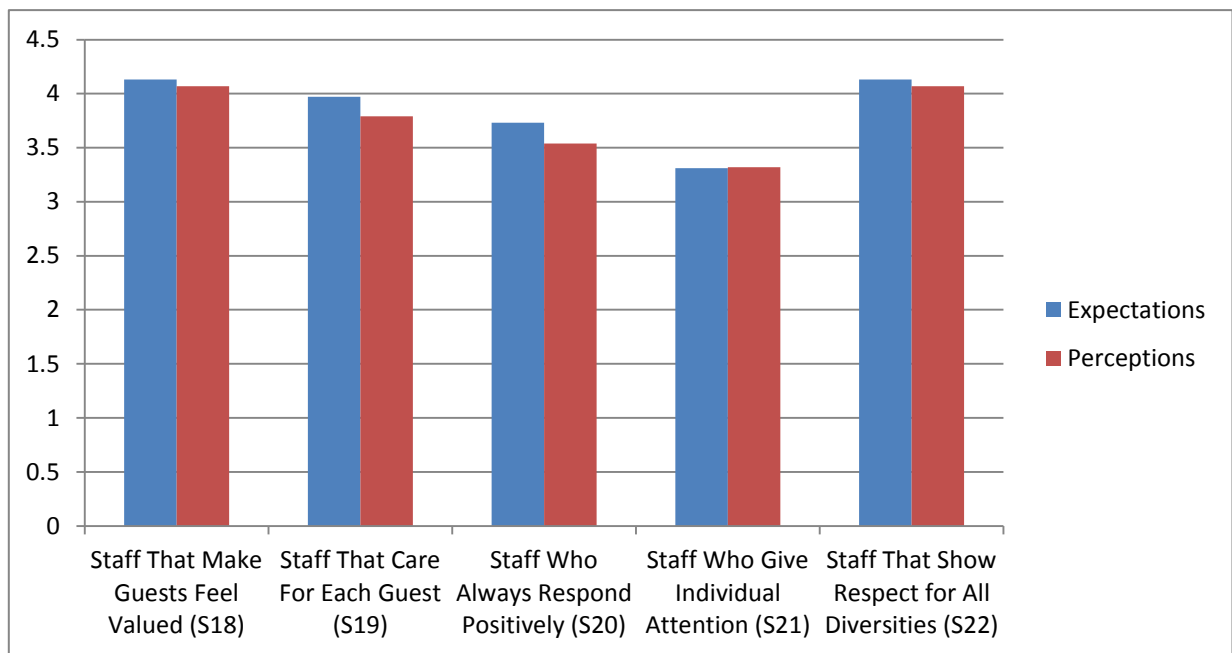


Figure 5: Empathetic Expectation & Perception Comparisons

Statements	Perceptions	Expectations	P minus E Service Quality
(S18)	P18= 4.07	E18= 4.13	-0.06
(S19)	P19= 3.79	E19= 3.97	-0.18
(S20)	P20= 3.54	E20= 3.73	-0.19
(S21)	P21= 3.32	E21= 3.31	0.01
(S22)	P22= 4.07	E22= 4.13	-0.06

Table 8: Empathetic Dimension Data

Staff That Make Guests Feel Valued (S18) and Staff That Show Respect for All Diversities (S22)

Respondents view both attributes to be of most importance within the empathy dimension as they hold the highest expectation rating of 4.13. However, this high expectation was not met, with a rating -0.06 below the perception level of 4.07. This accounts for the most significant difference in perceptions from expectations within this particular dimension.

Staff That Care for Each Guest (S19) and Staff Who Always Respond Positively (S20)

Respondents felt that in these two areas, their expectations were not met, as shown by the 2 negative values in the P minus E Service Quality column where the scores are -0.18 and -0.19 respectively. In S19, guests had high expectations of the hotel, whereas the table shows that guests did not have (what is deemed to be) high expectations for S20, where staff respond positively.

Staff Who Give Individual Attention (S21)

Respondents of this study identified that their expectations were exceeded (although very slightly) in this attribute. However, overall, guest expectations of this section were

considerably lower than all other areas within the dimension of empathy, which suggests that they did not receive individual attention on their previous stays in Marriott branded Hotels.

Discussion of Empathy Dimension

Although empathy is considered to be the least important service dimension, (Hayward and Graham, 2006) the respondents' expectations are relatively high in comparison to other dimensions. For example assurance, with the average perception of all attributes within this dimension being 3.76, compared with the average perception of all attributes within the assurance dimension which was 3.57. The highest expectations are that of staff making the guest feel valued and that they show respect for all diversities. However, their perceptions are both 0.06 below their expectations. In contrast, the lowest expectation is S21 whereby staff give guests individual attention at 3.31 and also accounts for the lowest perception level at 3.32. However, it is worth noting that this is the only one in which respondents felt that their perceptions outweighed their expectations.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 Linking the Dimensions

In theory, “all the service dimensions are brought together to create a high quality service delivery” (Hayward et al, 2006). This is not necessarily the case for the chosen London Marriott Hotel. Thus, as well as linking the areas, this section highlights and analyses the similarities and differences between the five dimensions.

The Instrumental Literature Review revealed that it is very difficult to link tangible and intangible elements together and thus they have not been included within this section.

Reliability linked to Empathy

The findings show that the reliability dimension received the most positive responses from respondents as shown by the overall levels of expectation. Guests felt that their expectations of brand standards were exceeded considerably, which suggests that Marriott’s training and development of its associates in this area is of a consistent high quality. Correct service delivery within the dimension of reliability was also perceived to be high, however within both areas, respondents felt that their perceptions far exceeded their expectations of the establishment, suggesting that their previous experiences with other Marriott’s were of a considerably lesser quality. With regards to empathy, there were some clear consistencies between the two areas, suggesting that correct service delivery alongside staff that make guests feel valued as a customer are key to the success of the establishment.

Empathy Linked To Assurance

As assurance is regarded as knowledge and courtesy of staff to inspire trust, one can easily relate this dimension to empathy, to provide individual attention. Though these dimensions are intertwined, respondents of this study viewed them somewhat differently. It is interesting to highlight that respondents felt that staff make guests feel valued and that staff care for each guest within the empathy dimension was of a reasonably high perceived value, whilst all attributes within the assurance dimension were of a low perceived value. This develops the argument that staff do care about guests needs and put their interests at heart, but still do not understand exactly what the guest expects. This may be as a result of the low perception of staff member’s ability to have the knowledge to understand what the guest wants. In this case, it is suggested that further training needs to be implemented.

Reliability linked to Responsiveness

Reliability was perceived to be of a high quality with the perceptions generally outweighing the guests’ expectation. Despite this, guests felt that staff were not particularly flexible in giving time to the guest. Similarly, guests felt that staff were not willing to “go the extra mile,” which is one of the “most important Marriott ideals” (Marriott International, 2011). This draws on two areas of significant consequence. Firstly, it suggests (as with the empathy linked to assurance section) more training needs to be implemented in the explanation of the Marriott ideals. Secondly, it suggests that staff are willing to fulfil their responsibilities as a Marriott employee, however they are unwilling to give the additional, intangible service expected by guests at this particular establishment. This suggests that responsiveness is in fact related to recruitment and selection and that the issue lies with employing the ‘right’ kind of people for the job role, who are willing to ‘go the extra mile’ for guests.

6.2 Conclusion of Study and Findings

From the information gathered within the study, it is apparent that UK National guests regarded the chosen London Marriott Hotel as offering a medium level of quality and consistency to both tangible and intangible attributes. When examining the cause of respondent's low perceptions in relation to their expectations of the establishment, one could surmise it is reflective on each of the 22 service attributes, where perceived quality was lower than expected. As all of the attributes (not including tangibles) are measured by humanistic quality involving the subjective response of people to objectives, they are challenging attributes to manage. These have the greatest impact on perceived quality, as discussed by Holbrook & Corfman (1985).

UK National guests regard the London Marriott Hotel as offering a relatively high level of quality and consistency to tangible attributes. However, with a lack in perceived quality of intangible elements, hence the lowering of guest's perceptions in regards to overall service standards. Though guests rate staff who delight guests and staff who give individual attention as low, UK National customers still view attributes of assurance and empathy of a higher quality than other listed dimensions, presenting that staff do acknowledge their mistakes which in turn help them to better understand the needs of their customers.

It is important to note that there appears to be inconsistencies within the Marriott brand with regards to what was expected and what the guests were actually delivered. Had service delivery been correctly carried out within the areas of responsiveness and assurance for example, there may have been a significant difference in the respondents' responses. The most simplistic reasoning for the low perceived rating could be human errors by the service providers; for example, a food and beverage associate incorrectly taking an order and not letting the guest know upon realising his or her mistake, or a respondent who waited longer than anticipated for food. From a different perspective, it could be the result of guests not taking into account the busyness of the establishment at that time. Either way, it is clear to see that this issue needs to be addressed.

To conclude, it is evident that the hotel is suffering from a lack of understanding of its UK National customers. Although complete standardisation is not possible in a highly service oriented business, it does reiterate that organisations that have a large portfolio need to be aware of the desires and expectations of their guests.

6.3 Limitations of Findings

While this research provides a useful insight into how Marriott operates in accordance to its brand standards and delivery of consistent service quality, it has several limitations. The questionnaire used a small proportion of respondents, only used closed questions and used a model chosen by the author which may not in fact be of great use to a company like Marriott, who use their own systems to measure service quality.

Within the tangibles dimension it is suggested that the London Marriott Hotel have developed their service provision originating from their customers expectations; however, the intangible aspects should be treated differently. This should be viewed as a time when an organisation could provide service that exceeds their customer's expectations. However, the intangible aspects should be treated differently. This should be viewed as a time when organisations could be providing a service that exudes customer expectations, thus, resulting in higher levels of overall satisfaction.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Researchers

This study was carried out with a systematic approach and as such has uncovered areas which require further research. Having analysed only a small proportion of guests who stayed at the hotel, it is clear to see that further research could be carried out in order to gain a greater understanding of the areas in which guests feel the hotel could improve.

Carrying out the questionnaire when more 'stay for pleasure' guests are in-house may show a trend and the author may then attain a different set of results from the respondents, highlighting that they received a better or worse service from the hotel. If this were to happen, it is recommended that the author carries out the questionnaire during a peak time when stay for pleasure guests are in house, for example over Public holidays, social events or public occasions such as the imminent Royal Wedding. If guests are more relaxed on their stay, it is possible that the results will be different as they may be willing to overlook certain areas to the dimensions. For example if staff are busy and the guest waits longer than expected for their service, the guest may overlook the occasion and appreciate that the staff members are busy. The Royal Wedding would be a particularly interesting time to carry out the questionnaire as all departments would be expecting the hotel to be busier as a result of the increase in walk-in guests. It would be interesting to see if guests take this into consideration and thus change their expectation of service delivery.

For other areas of research, the author could focus on international (non- UK National) travellers and then compare the results to those of this report which included UK nationals. This may highlight a trend that has not been previously considered. Further research could involve broadening the findings by taking the questionnaire to other gateway cities to see if the results differ and if necessary, question why this has occurred.

6.5 Fulfilment of Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study was to measure the expectations of guests with knowledge and familiarity of the Marriott brand against their perceptions of their experiences of the chosen London Marriott Hotel in order to identify whether any service gaps are present. The project used the SERVQUAL model to identify potential service gaps within the chosen hotel. Literature and primary evidence was collated, reviewed and analysed in an attempt to meet the chosen objectives.

The following table shows how the objectives have been met.

Objective Number	How the Objective has Been Achieved
<u>Objective 1</u>	The Marriott brand was thoroughly investigated throughout the Context and Instrumental Literature Review as well as being part of the reliability dimension within the second part of the questionnaire. Discussion of brand ingenuity with relevance to how Marriott have (over time) increased their portfolio overseas has shown that Marriott have been able to effectively “ensure that if there was to be a problem with one brand, they could cover it with others and therefore allow the company to remain successful (Clarke & Chen, 2007:34). The SERVQUAL Model made it possible to explore the generic perception values of UK guests, however an in-depth understanding of the reasons why guests felt that the dimensions were, on the whole, perceived to be lower than expected was not possible to understand. Conducting interviews would be an effective way of developing a greater understanding of guest’s knowledge of the Marriott hotel brand.
<u>Objective 2</u>	The origins of SERVQUAL, benefits and hindrances and academic’s opinions of the use of such a model are discussed within the Instrumental Literature Review. The models’ use to the general service industry with specific focus on Marriott as a company has been identified and explored.
<u>Objectives 3 and 4</u>	These objectives have been met and the results can be seen in the findings and analysis section of the study. Within some areas there are considerable service gaps between what guests expect from the company and what they are receiving. This is different to how Marriott perceive themselves as a brand. Within the Context section of the project it is reported that Marriott believe that the company “continues to lead the way in customer satisfaction and owner and franchisee preference (Marriott International, 2011), which suggests that there are anomalies either within the primary or secondary research. Naturally, the company is going exceptionally well which suggests that customers are generally happy with the service they are delivered. Thus, there is a need for further research to determine why there are differences of opinions over the issue of service gaps.
<u>Objective 5</u>	A number of suggestions have been given as to why gaps between the perceptions and expectations are present within the hotel, highlighting human error which although cannot always be rectified at the moment of impact, can be monitored and training opportunities can be deployed.
<u>Objective 6:</u>	Offer recommendations for future research within the chosen research area Recommendations for future research within the chosen area have been given, with considerations made to the limitations of this study.

Table 9: How Each Objective has been Met

7.0 Bibliography

- Barnes, D. (2008). "Operations Management: An International Perspective." Thompson Learning. London, UK.
- Barret, N. (1986). "A Study of the Internationalisation of Australian Manufacturing Firms". PhD Thesis, University of New South Wales, Sydney.
- Beardwell, L. & Holden, L. (1995). "Human Resource Management: a Contemporary Perspective". Pitman Publishing, London.
- Bilkey, W.J. & Tesar, G., (1977). "The Export Behaviour of Firms." *Journal of International Business Studies*. pp. 93–98.
- Brannen, M. & Wilson, J. (1996). "What does Mickey Mouse Mean to you?" Financial Times.
- Brotherton, B, (2008), *Researching Hospitality and Tourism*, London: Sage
- Business Environments. (2011). "Globalisation/Internationalisation." [online]. Last accessed on 17th February, 2011 at: <http://www.businessteacher.org.uk/business-environments/globalisation-internationalisation/>
- Cavusgil, S.T., (1980). On the Internationalisation Process of Firms". *European Research* **8** 6, pp. 273–281.
- Clarke, A. & Chen, W. (2007). "International Hospitality Management: Concepts and Cases." Butterworth-Heinemann. Oxford, UK.
- DJS Research. (2011). "What Are The Pros and Cons of Data Collection Methods?" [online]. Last accessed on 6th April 2011 at: <http://www.marketresearchworld.net/index.php>
- Easton, G., & Li, Z. (1993). "The Dynamics of Export Channels: A Case Study of Exporting from the UK to the Peoples Republic of China". Paper presented at the Ninth Industrial Marketing and Purchasing Conference, University of Bath.
- Enz, C. (2010). "Hospitality Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases." 2nd Ed. John Wiley & Sons. New Jersey, USA.
- Field, A., (2009), *Discovering Statistics using SPSS*. 2nd Ed., London: Sage
- Fletcher, R. "A Holistic Approach to Internationalisation." (2001). *International Business Review*. Vol 10: 1, Pp. 25-49.
- Go, F. & Pine, R. (1995). "Global Strategy in the Hotel Industry". Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

Hall, E.T. & Hall, M. (1990). "Understanding Cultural Differences". Intercultural Press, Boston, MA.

Hayward, R & Graham, D. (2006). "International Orientation of a Service Brand; An Exploratory Case Study of Marriott in Leeds, UK." Sheffield Hallam University.

Held, D. and McGrew, A.; Goldblatt, D. and Perraton, J. (1999). "*Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*." Stanford: Stanford University Press. pp. 32-86.

Hofstede, G., (1980). "Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work Related Values." Sage, Thousand Oaks, California.

Holiday, A., (2007), *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*. 2nd Ed., London: Sage University

Jiang, J., Klein, G. & Carr, C. (2002). "Measuring Information System Service Quality: SERVQUAL from the Other Side." *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 26:2. pp. 145-166.

Johanson, J. & Vahlne, J. (1993). "Management of Internationalisation." In: Zambou, Z.L. and Pettigrew, A.M., Editors, 1993. *Perspectives on Strategic Change*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Boston, pp. 43–78.

Johanson, J. & Wiedersheim-Paul, F. (1975). „The Internationalisation of the Firm: Four Swedish Cases." *Journal of Management Studies* **12** 3, pp. 305–322.

Lages, L & Fernandes, J. (2005). "The SERPVAL Scale: A Multi-item Instrument for Measuring Service Personal Values." *Journal of Business Research*, Vol.58, Issue 11, pp. 1562–1572.

J. W. Marriott Jr. (2008) In Barnes, D. (2008). "Operations Management: An International Perspective." Thompson Learning. London, UK.

Levitt, T. (1983). "The Globalisation of Markets." *Harvard Business Review*. **83**, pp. 92–102.

Lee, Y & Hing, N. (1995). "Measuring Quality in Restaurant Operations: An Application of the SERVQUAL Instrument". *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. Vol. 14 No. 3/4, pp. 293-310,

Long, J. (2007), *Researching Leisure, Sport and Tourism*, London: Sage

Maddox, R. (1993). "Cross-cultural Problems in International Business: The Role of the Cultural Integration Function". Quorum Books, London.

Marriott International. (2011). "Brands." [online]. Last accessed on 30th March 2011 at: <http://www.marriott.com/hotel-development/marriott-brands.mi>

Nyeck, S., Morales, M., Ladhari, R., & Pons, F. (2002). "Ten Years of Service Quality Measurement: Reviewing the Use of the SERVQUAL Instrument." *Cuadernos de Diffusion*, 7(13), 101-107. Retrieved July 8, 2007, from EBSCOhost database.

- Rao, T. & Naidu, G. (1992). "Are the Stages of Internationalisation Empirically Supportable?" *Journal of Global Marketing* **6** 1/2, pp. 147–170.
- Reid, S. (1981). "The Decision Maker and Export Entry and Expansion." *Journal of International Business Studies* **12** 2, pp. 101–112.
- Sandoff, M. (2005). "Customisation in Hotels: A Paradox or Not?" Vol 17:6. Pp. 529-535.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009), *Research methods for business students*, 5th Ed, Harlow: Prentice Hall
- Van Suster, R. (2007). In Clarke, A. & Chen, W. (2007). "International Hospitality Management: Concepts and Cases." Butterworth-Heinemann. Oxford, UK.
- Welch, L. & Luostarinen, R. (1988). "Internationalisation: Evolution of a Concept." *Journal of General Management*. **14** 2, pp. 34–55.
- Williams, K. (1992). "Behavioural Aspects of Marketing." Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford.
- Woodside, A.G. (ed), (2007), *Advances in culture, tourism and hospitality research*, Oxford: Elsevier
- Zeithaml, P Parasuraman, B & Berry D, "Delivering Quality Service; Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations," Free Press, 1990.

8.0 Appendices

Appendix 8.1: Quality of Service (Pilot) Questionnaire	33
Appendix 8.2: Quality of Service Questionnaire	35

Appendix 8.1: Quality of Service (Pilot) Questionnaire

Quality of Service Pilot Questionnaire

The aim of the study is to measure the expectations of guests with knowledge and familiarity of the Marriott brand against their perceptions of their experiences of the chosen London Marriott Hotel in order to identify whether any service gaps are present. The questionnaire will be used to compare your opinions on this topic with those of other UK National Guests staying in the Hotel between the 14th and 18th February, 2011. Any information or opinions you give will remain strictly anonymous and confidential.

Please show the extent to which you think the hotel **should** possess the feature described by each statement.

If you feel a feature is **not at all essential** for a Marriott hotel, please write the number 1.

If you feel a feature is **absolutely essential** for a Marriott hotel, please write the number 10.

The scale runs from 1-10.

Questionnaire

Q No.	Question	Score 1-10 (Another Visited Marriott)	Score 1-10 (This Marriott)
1	Public areas are clean and well looked after		
2	The physical facilities in a Marriott guest room are clean and visually appealing		
3	The hotel facilities in general should be in excellent physical and working condition		
4	The hotel amenities should be excellent		
5	The hotel should be consistent with its brand standards so that the guest knows what he or she is expecting		
6	Staff should ensure correct service delivery		
7	Staff should be prompt at all times		
8	Staff should to be dependable at all times		
9	Staff should never be too busy to adhere to a guests request		
10	Staff anticipate the needs of guests		
11	Staff who are flexible		
12	Staff who have a readiness to respond to a guest request		
13	Staff who are willing to "go the extra mile"		
14	Staff who are knowledgeable to provide a guest with the service they require		
15	Staff who delight guests		
16	Staff who understand the specific needs of a guests		
17	Staff who put the guest's best interest at heart		
18	Staff that make a guest feel valued		
19	Staff that care for each quest		
20	Staff who always respond positively to a guest's request		
21	Staff who give individual attention to a guest's needs		
22	Staff that show respect for diversities		

Table 10: Pilot Questionnaire

Thank you for your time.

Appendix8.2: Quality of Service Questionnaire

Quality of Service Questionnaire- Part 1

The information obtained from this interview will be used in a study for an undergraduate degree at Sheffield Hallam University, with the title:

“To what extent is the standardisation of Marriott’s hotel corporate strategy not meeting the expectations of guests?”

The aim of the study is to measure the expectations of guests with knowledge and familiarity of the Marriott brand against their perceptions of their experiences of the chosen London Marriott Hotel in order to identify whether any service gaps are present. The questionnaire will be used to compare your opinions on this topic with those of other UK National Guests staying in the Hotel between the 14th and 18th February, 2011. Any information or opinions you give will remain strictly anonymous and confidential.

Please show the extent to which you think the hotel **should** possess the feature described by each statement.

If you feel a feature is ***not at all essential*** for a Marriott hotel, please write the number 1.

If you feel a feature is ***absolutely essential*** for a Marriott hotel, please write the number 5.

The scale runs from 1-5.

Generic Questions

Age:

20-34 35-49 50-64 65-80 80+

Male/Female

Are you:

Business/ Stay for Pleasure Guest

Questionnaire – Part 1

To be completed on check in

Q No.	Question	Score 1-5
1	Public should be clean and well looked after	
2	The physical facilities in a Marriott guest room are clean and visually appealing	
3	The hotel facilities in general should be in excellent physical and working condition	
4	The hotel amenities should be excellent	
5	The hotel should be consistent with its brand standards so that the guest knows what he or she is expecting	
6	Staff should ensure correct service delivery	
7	Staff should be prompt at all times	
8	Staff should to be dependable at all times	
9	Staff should never be too busy to adhere to a guests request	
10	Staff anticipate the needs of guests	
11	Staff who are flexible	
12	Staff who have a readiness to respond to a guest request	
13	Staff who are willing to “go the extra mile”	
14	Staff who are knowledgeable to provide a guest with the service they require	
15	Staff who delight guests	
16	Staff who understand the specific needs of a guests	
17	Staff who put the guest’s best interest at heart	
18	Staff that make a guest feel valued	
19	Staff that care for each quest	
20	Staff who always respond positively to a guest’s request	
21	Staff who give individual attention to a guest’s needs	
22	Staff that show respect for diversities	

Table 11: Questionnaire

Thank you for your time,

Quality of Service Questionnaire- Part 2

The following set of statements relate to your feelings **about the London Marriott Hotel you are in**. For each statement, please show the extent to which, in your opinion, you believe the hotel has met the statement.

Please show the extent to which you think the hotel **has** possessed the feature described by each statement.

Once again, If you feel a feature is ***not at all essential*** for a Marriott hotel, please write the number 1.

If you feel a feature is ***absolutely essential*** for a Marriott hotel, please write the number 5.

The scale runs from 1-5.

Questionnaire – Part 2

To be completed on check out

Q No.	Question	Score 1-5
1	Public areas are clean and well looked after	
2	The physical facilities in the guest room are clean and visually appealing	
3	The hotel facilities in general are in excellent physical and working condition	
4	The hotel amenities should be excellent	
5	The hotel is be consistent with its brand standards	
6	Staff ensured correct service delivery	
7	Staff are prompt at all times	
8	Staff are dependable at all times	
9	Staff are never be too busy to adhere to a guests request	
10	Staff anticipate the needs of guests	
11	Staff are flexible	
12	Staff had a readiness to respond to a guest request	
13	Staff are willing to “go the extra mile”	
14	Staff are knowledgeable to provide a guest with the service they require	
15	Staff delight guests	
16	Staff understand the specific needs of a guests	
17	Staff put the guest’s best interest at heart	
18	Staff make you guest feel valued	
19	Staff care for each quest	
20	Staff always respond positively to a guest’s request	
21	Staff give individual attention to a guest’s needs	
22	Staff show respect for diversities	

Table 12: Questionnaire- Part 2

