Service Quality and Management
of New Year Event 2020

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Abstract: Since the beginning of the 21st century, the hotel industry has started noting that continuous measurement of the service quality of their services proved to be an innovative tool for successful management. Event management started to progressively become one of the valuable tools to properly extend their complementary services and instantly attract prospective customers. Measuring service quality during an event is useful but also complex because the hotel management needs to consider several different factors such as quality of food and beverages, music, lighting, and decoration to fit customers' preferences. This study aimed to properly evaluate these factors among event guests and compare their preferences based on their place of origin and their tradition. The data were collected using a questionnaire distributed during New Year 2020 event in a 4-star hotel in Kosovo. Using ANOVA, we intended to justly compare responses from local and foreign guests. The findings of this study proved there is a significant difference between local and foreign guests' preferences when we measured service quality and customer satisfaction. This study concludes that by continuously measuring service quality, event management progressively improves and properly promotes their current services through constant evaluation from its customers.

Keywords: event industry; hotel management; local customers; foreign customers; received performance

JEL Classification: G14; Z32

1. Introduction

In the past decade, it has been more and more preferable for people to spend quality time and celebrate a special occasion away from home. Hotels have become more frequented and the hotel industry has started to look for better ways to improve their service quality and raise their customer satisfaction. According to *Statista Research Department 2020*, occupancy rates of the hotel industry increased across all regions of Europe, except Northern Europe, in 2019. In their

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research, they pointed out that rates exceeded 70 percent in all regions except Eastern Europe, where occupancy was at 67.6 percent according to the latest data. In addition, Eurostat 2019 (European Statistics) in their tourism accommodation sector presented a continuous growth with an overall increase of 2.5 % for nights spent in 2018 which was due to the increase of nights spent by foreign visitors but also of nights spent by residents. Meanwhile, with the rapid development of the field of the events industry, hotels have started to take very seriously event planning to extend their services and attract customers. According to **Allied Market Research**, the global events industry generated $1,100 billion in 2018. Getting to know how profitable this business is proving to be, the hotel industry has started to extend their services by not only offering accommodation for customers but also by attracting them with event planning. Hereby, offering a quality of service would attract a satisfied customer.

2. Literature Review

A considerable number of studies have tried to explain the concept of Service Quality in the market in general or in this particular case in the hotel industry.

Hotel managers are aware that knowing what customers want and how they evaluate the hotel's service quality (Maroco, & Maroco, 2013, pp. 119-145), is essential for a successful business. According to (Crick & Spencer, 2011, pp. 463-478), Service Quality is a term that has many attributes within itself that need to be measured, and ergo it is difficult to construct a specific definition that summarizes all components that need to be measured and how to apply them to the hotel industry. However, over the past four decades, different authors have given different opinions about Service Quality. According to some authors, Service Quality is evaluated (Grönroos, 1982, pp. 30-41)) and measured (Lewis & Booms, 1983, pp. 99-104) based on the premise that the service provided meets the customers' expectations. Accordingly, if the customer expects more than the hotel can perform, then the Service Quality is not satisfactory (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985, pp. 41-50; Lewis & Mitchell, 1990, pp. 11-17). Other authors have described Service Quality as a subjective comparison (Gefen, 2002, pp. 27-51) or a confirmation or disconfirmation of the expectations (Smith & Houston, 1982, pp. 59-62) of a customer. Later on, other authors described Service Quality as a process, performance, and deeds (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996, p. 5) or business transactions (Ramsawamy, 1996) that would generate the outcome of a satisfied customer. Building the hotel image includes seven service marketing variables (product, place, price, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence) that need to be considered (Kandampully & Suhartanto, D, 2000). Likewise, reliability is assessed based on the outcome of the received service (Fazlic & Fazlovic, 2014, pp. 155-168). To be a reliable service provider, it is necessary to have as many

satisfied customers as possible. If a certain hotel wants to improve customer satisfaction and make them come back again, their service needs to keep upgrading all the time by continuously measuring their Service Quality. It is well established that there are different ways of measuring customer satisfaction. In the field of Hospitality and Tourism, there have been a few theories that tried to explain customer satisfaction. One of them is the Disconfirmation Paradigm (Oliver, 1980, pp. 460-469, Churchill & Suprenant.C, 1982, pp. 491-504; Cadotte, Woodruff & Jenkins, 1987, pp. 305-314; Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988, pp. 495-507; Tse & Wilton, 1988, pp. 204-212; Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1988, pp. 12-40; Yi, 1990; Boulding, Kalra, Staelin & Zeithaml, 1993, pp. 7-27; Oliver, 1997), which explains that the customer satisfaction can be measured if the expected service that the customer wished to receive is compared with the standard service they have already received somewhere else. This paradigm consists of four components - expectations, perceived performance, disconfirmation, and satisfaction (Mill, 2011). If expectations are fulfilled by the performance of the hotel, then customers are satisfied and disconfirmation is avoided. A widely used model to translate this theory is the SERVQUAL model, otherwise known as the Service Quality Model.

The SERVQUAL model was developed by A. Parasuraman, V. A. Zeithaml, and L. Berry who performed a research program between 1983 and 1988 to identify components of service quality. They proposed a scale for measuring these service quality components. The purpose of these measures is to minimize the gaps between customer expectations and their perception of the service performed. According to one study (Sharma, 2014, pp. 480-485), performing a SERVQUAL quality assessment on Indian Hotel Industry concluded that every contact with guests would result in a positive experience for the guests. However, different studies have done research on Service Quality and customer satisfaction by performing different types of service quality measures. Most of the studies evaluated the overall performance of hotel services but did not focus on a specific event.

3. The Aim of Study

This study aims to measure Service Quality and customer satisfaction of received performance during a special occasion celebration by finding what factors need to be more evaluated by the hotel when performing a special occasion event that would lead to a satisfied guest. Using **ANOVA** analysis, we intended to find out if there was a difference between local customers and foreign customers' preferences during such an event. In this way, we tried to extend our knowledge in the field of hospitality and tourism by answering the question if hotels should apply different approaches for local and foreign guests to satisfy both parties in the aspect of Service Quality.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Design, Rating Scale and Data Collection

In this study, we used an anonymous questionnaire as a research instrument. This questionnaire was designed to measure service quality and customer satisfaction by using a Likert scale or more precisely a 5-point scale as a part of the questionnaire. The Likert scale is a psychometric scale named in the honor of its inventor psychologist Rensis Likert, which is widely used in researches that use questionnaires. We scaled the possible answers as excellent, good, average, below average, and weak. The questionnaire was given to guests present in the New Year's Event of 2020 in "Sirius Hotel", a 4-star hotel in Prishtina, the capital city of Kosovo. The event was attended by 120 guests, and 84 of them agreed to fill the questionnaire. From 84 guests, 58 were from Kosovo (14 from Gjakova, 13 from Mitrovica, 4 from Peja and 3 from Prizren) and 26 guests were from different countries of Europe (6 from Germany, 4 from Italy, 4 from Bulgaria, 3 from Australia, 2 from Belgium, 2 from Poland, 1 from Denmark, 1 from France, 1 from the Netherlands, 1 from Sweden and 1 from Turkey). The questionnaire was distributed after the guests had consumed their dinner and were collected before the end of the event. The questionnaire contained 25 questions divided into three sections. The first section contained demographic information like age, gender, place of residence, and nationality. The second section contained questions related to the quality of service, the quality of food and beverages, a variety of menu, the decoration of the space, the lightning, the quality of music, and the hygiene of the space. By these questions, we intended to get information about the perceived performance of the guests. The third section contained questions about the reasons for deciding to attend the event in a particular hotel and whether the price was worthy. By these questions, we intended to evaluate customers' satisfaction.

Before proceeding with statistical analysis, we excluded education, occupation, and marital status as items because we did not find them useful for further analysis in the related subject of the study.

4.2. Statistical Analysis

For statistical analysis, we used INSTAT 2 and 3 to calculate the arithmetic mean, median, standard deviation, confidence interval (CI), p-value with t-test of analyzed parameters such as age-group, gender, and quality indicators of food and beverages. First, we divided participants into two groups: local guests and foreign guests. Afterward, we grouped them by gender and age (15-34; 25-34; 45-54; 55-64 and 65-74). By doing this division, we compared local guests and foreign guests by the number present, gender, their requests and evaluation of food and beverage quality, service quality, decoration, music, food menu and paid price for the event

attendance, so we could evaluate if their requests expected were satisfied. We also compared the responses of local guests and foreign guests if they had chosen again this hotel for any other event. The questionnaire allowed us to see the differences between these two groups of consumers, when it is known that the tradition of hosting organizations on New Year's Evening in Kosovo has been and still is traditional, including the tradition of food, beverages, and music.

Comparison between average percentages of quality indicators in the New Year 2020 Event estimated by local and foreign participants was done with the One-way Analysis of Variance ANOVA test (p-value <0.001).

5. Results

5.1. Characteristics of Respondents

In this study participated 84 people of which 58 (69 %) were local guests and 21 (31%) were foreign guests (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, and Turkey). Female participants were 43 or 51.2%, while male participants were 41 or 48.8%. The majority of participants were up to 54 years old (79.8%) and others were above 55 years old (20.2%). Most of the participants belonged to the age group of 25-34 years old (34.6%), followed by the age group of 35-44 years old (22.6%). The demographic data of the questionnaire respondents of the New Years' Event in a 4-star hotel in Prishtina are described in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic data of participants in New Year 2020 event.

Variables and characteristics		Participants	
		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	41	48.8
	Female	43	51.2
Age group	15-24 years	7	8.3
	25-34 years	29	34.6
	35-44 years	19	22.6
	45-54 years	12	14.3
	55-64 years	9	10.7
	65-74 years	8	9.5
Cities of Kosovo	Gjakova	14	16.7
	Mitrovica	13	15.5
	Peja	4	4.8
	Prishtina	24	28.6
	Prizren	3	3.4
	Kosovo	**58**	**69**
Other countries	Austria	3	3.6
	Belgium	2	2.4

Bulgaria	4	4.8
Denmark	1	1.2
France	1	1.2
Germany	6	7.1
Italy	4	4.8
Netherland	1	1.2
Poland	2	2.4
Sweden	1	1.2
Turkey	1	1.2
Foreign	**26**	**31**
Total	84	**100**

5.2. Empirical Results of Analyzed Data

In table 2, are shown the results of the reasons for choosing the particular hotel by the participants to spend the New Year Evening of 2020. The three main reasons that guests chose the hotel to spend the New Year event were: the hotel was among the bests in the city (45.2%); a friend or a relative recommended it (42.9%) and they liked the environment (28.6%). However, the three main reasons why foreign guests chose the hotel to spend the evening were: a friend or a relative recommended it (76.9%), they like fun (57.7%) and their organization chose the hotel for them (30.8%).

Table 2. The Three Most Important Reasons that Guests Chose this Hotel to Spend the New Year 2020

Question	All participants (84)		Other countries (26)		Kosovo (58)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
I wanted to try something new	14	16.7	4	15.4	10	17.2
The hotel is among the best in city	38	45.2	5	19.2	34	58.6
I saw hotel on social media	18	21.4	3	11.5	15	25.9
I like the environment	24	28.6	3	11.5	21	36.2
Courtesy and friendship of	11	13.1	2	7.7	10	17.2

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employees					
My travel agent recommended this hotel	**1**	**1.2**	**3**	**11.5**	**0**	**0**
When I stay in the city, I almost always stay in this hotel	**2**	**2.4**	**1**	**3.8**	**1**	**1.7**
This was the only large hotel available	**5**	**6.0**	**3**	**11.5**	**2**	**3.4**
Special music events held at the hotel	**12**	**14.3**	**3**	**11.5**	**9**	**15.5**
My organization chose the hotel	**8**	**9.5**	**8**	**30.8**	**0**	**0**
A friend/ relative recommended me	**36**	**42.9**	**20**	**76.9**	**15**	**25.9**
Proper package price	**3**	**3.6**	**1**	**3.8**	**2**	**3.4**
I like the location of the hotel	**18**	**21.4**	**5**	**19.2**	**13**	**22.4**
I like fun	**21**	**25.0**	**15**	**57.7**	**6**	**10.3**

Finally, the main reasons why local guests chose the hotel were: the hotel was among the bests in the city (58.6%), they liked the environment (36.2%) and they saw the hotel in social media (25.9%), as well as a friend, recommended to them (25.9%). There was a significant statistical difference of $p > 0.005$ between foreign participants reasons (19.2%) and local participants reasons (58.6%) to choose the

particular hotel to spend the New Year 2020 evening (The hotel is among the best in the city). Also, there was a significant statistical difference between the reasons of local participants (25.9%) and foreign participants (76.9%) for choosing the particular hotel to spend the New Year 2020 evening (A friend/relative recommended me).

When looking for Quality indicators of service, food, and beverages in the New Year 2020 event in "Sirius Hotel" (a 4-star hotel), most of the participants said that the quality of service, the quality of the drinks and the quality of the food was excellent (73.8%; 71.4% respectively 65.5%). Also, the variety of the Menu was ranged excellent with 57.1% by participants.

Table 3. Quality Indicators of Food, Beverages in the New Year 2020 Event.

Questions about Quality:	Excellent		Good		Average		Below average		Weak	
	No	**%**	No	**%**	No	**%**	No	**%**	No	%
The variety of the menu was:	48	**57.1**	26	**31.0**	8	**9.5**	2	**2.4**	0	**0.0**
The quality of service was:	62	**73.8**	18	**21.4**	4	**4.8**	0	**0.0**	0	**0.0**
The quality of the food was:	55	**65.5**	22	**26.1**	5	**6.0**	2	**2.4**	0	**0.0**
The quality of the drinks was:	60	**71.4**	21	**25.0**	3	**3.6**	0	**0.0**	0	**0.0**
How would you rate the taste of your dinner?	53	**63.1**	23	**27.4**	8	**9.5**	0	**0.0**	0	**0.0**
What was the temperature of the food?	45	**53.6**	35	**41.7**	4	**4.7**	0	**0.0**	0	**0.0**
Please give your assessment of purity?	55	**65.5**	17	**20.2**	10	**11.9**	2	**2.4**	0	**0.0**
Please rate the decorations	27	**32.1**	33	**39.3**	19	**22.6**	5	**6.0**	0	**0.0**

Please give your assessment of lighting?	40	**47.6**	39	**46.4**	5	**6.0**	0	**0.0**	0	**0.0**
Please rate your music?	50	**59.5**	23	**27.4**	7	**8.3**	1	**1.2**	3	**3.6**
The value of the price paid was:	31	**36.9**	42	**50.0**	9	**10.7**	2	**2.4**	0	**0.0**
Overall, how would you rate the hotel?	56	**66.7**	24	**28.5**	2	**2.4**	0	**0.0**	2	**2.4**

Most participants (66.7%) rated the hotel as excellent, 65.5% of participants gave their assessment of Purity, and 63.1% rate the taste of dinner as excellent. Also, the temperature of the food was excellent for most of the participants 63.8%. But only 23% of participants rated excellent for decorations. (Table 3).

In table 4, we presented a comparison of quality indicators of food, beverages in the New Year 2020 event between local and foreign participants. Menu variety, quality of service, food, and beverages was highly rated by local guests in comparison to foreign participants. Foreign participants rated the variety of the menu and taste of the dinner as average (30.8%) compared with local participants which rated it as excellent (74.1% respectively 84.5%).

In table 5, we showed mean values of quality indicators for the New Year 2020 Event assessed by local and foreign participants. 73.7% of local participants evaluated highly quality indicators, compared to foreign participants (22.1%). Thereby, there was a significant difference in the quality assessment between local and foreign participants (p<0.0001)

Table 4. A Comparison between Kosovarian and Other Country Participants about Quality Indicators of food, Beverages in the New Year 2020 Event

Questions about Quality:	Excellent %		Good %		Average		Below average		Weak	
	Kosovo	Foreign	Kosovo	Foreign	Kosovo	Foreign	Kosovo	Foreign	Kosovo	Foreign
The variety of the menu was:	74.1	19.2	25.9	42.3	0	30.8	0	7.7	0	0.0
The quality of service was:	93.1	30.8	6.9	53.8	0	15.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
The quality of the food was:	89.7	11.5	10.3	61.5	0	19.2	0	7.7	0	0.0
The quality of the drinks	86.2	38.5	13.8	50.0	0	11.5	0	0.0	0	0.0

was: How would you rate the taste of your dinner?	84.5	15.4	15.5	53.8	0	30.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
What was the temperature of the food?	63.8	30.8	36.2	53.8	0	15.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Please give your assessment of purity?	84.5	23.1	5.2	53.8	10.3	15.4	0	7.7	0	0.0
Please rate your decorations?	37.9	19.2	32.8	53.8	25.9	15.4	3.4	11.6	0	0.0
Please give your assessment of lighting?	58.6	23.1	32.8	76.9	8.6	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Please rate your music?	81	11.6	15.6	53.8	3.4	19.2	0	3.8	0	11.6
The value of the price paid was:	46.6	15.4	43.1	65.4	10.3	11.5	0	7.7	0	0.0
Overall, how would you rate the hotel?	84.5	26.9	12.1	65.4	3.4	0.0	0	0.0	0	7.7

Table 5. A Comparison between Average Percentages of Quality Indicators in the New Year 2020 Event Estimated by Local and Foreign Participants

Parameter:	Excellent		Good		Average		Below Average		Weak	
	Kosovo	Foreign	Kosovo	Foreign	Kosovo	Foreign	Kosovo	Foreign	Kosovo	Foreign
Mean:	73.7	22.1	20.8	57	5.1	15.3	0.2	3.8	0	1.6
No of answers:	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Std deviation:	17.9	8.3	12.7	8.9	7.7	9.5	0.9	4.3	0	3.8
Std error:	5.1	2.4	3.6	2.5	2.2	2.7	0.2	1.2	0	1.1
Minimum:	37.9	11.5	5.2	42.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maxim	93.1	38.5	43.1	76.9	25.9	30.8	3.4	11.6	0	11.6

um: Median:	82.7	21.1	15.5	53.8	1.7	15.4	0	1.9	0	0
Lower 95% CI:	62.3	16.7	12.7	51.3	0.2	9.3	-0.3	1.08	0	-0.8
Upper 95% CI:	85.1	27.4	28.9	62.7	10.1	21.4	0.9	6.6	0	4.05

One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) The P value is < 0.0001, considered extremely significant. Variation among column means is significantly greater than expected by chance.

While evaluating customer satisfaction, 76.2% of participants answered they would choose this hotel again if they planned another event, while 8.3% of participants answered they would not choose this hotel again and 15.5% of participants answered they might choose this hotel again.

Figure 1. Guests Preference to Choose the Same Hotel Again

Most participants (79.8 %) encountered no problem during this event. Most of the complaint was from foreign participants (14.3%) comparing with local participants (6%). (Figure 2).
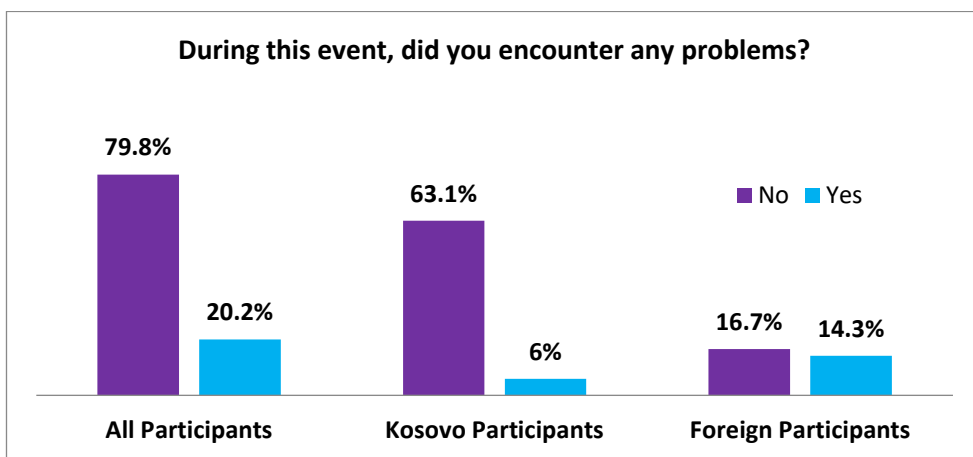
During this event, did you encounter any problems?

Figure showing bar chart with:
- All Participants: No 79.8%, Yes 20.2%
- Kosovo Participants: No 63.1%, Yes 6%
- Foreign Participants: No 16.7%, Yes 14.3%

Figure 2. Problems During Event Management between Local and Foreign Guests

Figure 3 presents complaints during the New Year Event. Foreign participants complained about loud music (13.1%), compared with local participants who didn't mind it (0%). Furthermore, 15.5% of foreign guests complained about food being served too late while 6% of local guests had the same complaint.
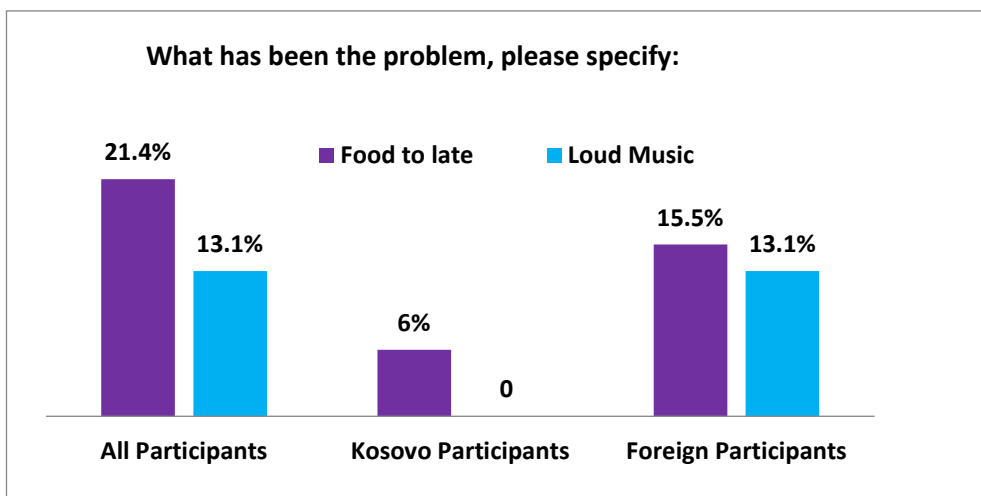
What has been the problem, please specify:

Bar chart with legend Food to late, Loud Music:
- All Participants: Food to late 21.4%, Loud Music 13.1%
- Kosovo Participants: Food to late 6%, Loud Music 0
- Foreign Participants: Food to late 15.5%, Loud Music 13.1%

Figure 3. Guests' Complaints about Food and Music

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Our study started with the primary attention of attempting to measure the Service Quality in the area of event planning in the hotel industry by generating results on a not widely studied field. The empirical results pointed out that studied attributes like the quality of food, beverages, music, lighting, and decoration were differently perceived by local customers and foreign customers. Service quality expectations varied between local and foreign customers under the same event planning circumstances. While local customers found all quality indicators to be in general satisfactory, foreign customers had another perceived performance from what they had expected. Local customers were fonder of traditional food and traditional music than foreign customers. Foreign customers might have been curious to try traditional food served in an event but might as well not enjoyed it so the hotel might need to increase the variety of the menu. The reasons why customers chose a particular hotel to spend a special occasion may be of great importance for hotel management because in this way they have received a variety of answers that would help them in making future adjustments in the advertisement in order to attract more foreign customers/tourists. According to these notable results, we would come to a previous statement that event management is a complex function in practice, indeed. (Pivac, Blesic, Stamenković & Besermenji.S, 2011).When offering a quality in service that fulfills your potential customers' expectations, you will gain a higher level of customer satisfaction (Khan & Fasih.M, 2014, pp. 331-354, Wu, Huang & Chou, 2014, pp. 171-180; Boon-Liat & Md. Zabid Abdul, 2013, pp. 99-112; Auka, Bosire & Matern, 2013, pp. 32-61, Markovic & Jankovic, 2013, pp. 119-145). In this way, hotel management needs to conduct satisfaction surveys regularly, so they can continuously measure customers' satisfaction (Tefera & Govender, 2017, pp. 22-25). Based in our results, this study concludes that there is a significant difference between local customers' and foreign customers' expectations and perceived performance in a special event planned by hotel management, which performance can be improved by further evaluation of the guests' list and taking into account their place of origin in order to indulge everyone's preferences so they would come back for the same quality of service.

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