

**A RESEARCH ON INVESTIGATING THE RELATION OF SERVICE QUALITY AND
CORPORATE REPUTATION IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT¹**

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ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİNİN İNCELENMESİNE YÖNELİK BİR ARAŞTIRMA*

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ABSTRACT

Tourism managements in service sector should constantly improve their service qualities in order to meet the ever-changing consumer expectations by keeping up with competitive conditions. Nowadays conditions of competition, tourism management have to establish long-term relationship with their customers to protect their market share and existing customers. The concepts of service quality and corporate reputation are the most important components for tourism management to develop lasting relationship with their customers. In this context, it is crucial to determine the relation of these two concepts. Aim: Accordingly the aim of this study is to determine the relation of service qualities and corporate reputation of tourism management operating in the service sector. Besides, another purpose of this study is to analyses whether service quality has a direct and significant effect on corporate reputation. Method: In this context, the relations between the variables have been tested by using the questionnaire data conducted on the costumers (n=206) of five-star tourism management operating in Konya and theoretically stated hypotheses have been examined. Also, in the analysis of the research, descriptive statistics, respectively correlation analysis and regression analysis have been used to measure the relation and effect size between service quality variable and corporate reputation variable. Result: As a result of the research, it has been determined that there is a positive and significant correlation ($p=0,000$) between the service quality variable and corporate reputation variable. Furthermore, it has been revealed by using regression analysis that the service quality has a direct and significant ($\beta=,750$; $p=0,000$) effect on corporate reputation. Conclusion: Accordingly, it has been found as an important finding of the research that service quality expected by customers in tourism management operating in service sector affects corporate reputation positively and statistically significantly.

Key Words: Service Quality, Corporate Reputation, Tourism Management, Service Sector, Marketing

ÖZ

Hizmet sektöründe faaliyet gösteren turizm işletmelerinin rekabet koşullarına ayak uydurarak her an değişebilen tüketici beklentilerini karşılayabilmek için hizmet kalitelerini sürekli geliştirmeleri gerekmektedir. Günümüzde değişen rekabet koşullarında pazar paylarını ve mevcut müşterilerini korumak isteyen turizm işletmeleri, müşterileri ile uzun dönemli ilişkiler kurmak zorundadırlar. Turizm işletmelerinin müşterileri ile uzun dönemli ilişkiler geliştirebilmeleri için hizmet kalitesi ve kurumsal itibar kavramları en önemli unsurlardır. Bu bağlamda bu iki kavramın birbiri ile olan ilişkisini tespit etmek önem arz etmektedir. Amaç: Bu doğrultuda çalışmanın amacı; hizmet sektöründe faaliyet gösteren turizm işletmelerinin hizmet kalitelerinin, kurumsal itibar ile arasındaki ilişkiyi tespit etmektir. Bununla birlikte çalışmanın bir diğer amacı ise, turizm işletmelerindeki hizmet kalitesinin,

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kurumsal itibar üzerinde doğrudan ve anlamlı bir etkisinin olup olmadığını analiz etmektedir. Yöntem: Bu bağlamda Konya'da faaliyet gösteren beş yıldızlı turizm işletmelerinin müşterileri (n=206) üzerinde uygulanan anketin verileri kullanılarak değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiler test edilmiş ve kuramsal olarak ortaya konan hipotezler sınanmıştır. Ayrıca araştırmanın analizinde, tanımlayıcı istatistikler, hizmet kalitesi değişkeni ile kurumsal itibar değişkeni arasındaki ilişkiyi ve etki düzeyini ölçmek amacıyla sırasıyla korelasyon analizi ve regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Bulgular: Araştırma neticesinde, turizm işletmelerindeki hizmet kalitesi değişkeni ile kurumsal itibar değişkeni arasında pozitif ve anlamlı ($p=0,000$) bir ilişkinin olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca yapılan regresyon analizi sonucunda hizmet kalitesinin, kurumsal itibar üzerinde doğrudan ve anlamlı ($\beta=,750$; $p=0,000$) bir etkisinin olduğu sonucuna da ulaşılmıştır. Sonuç: Bu doğrultuda, hizmet sektöründe faaliyet gösteren turizm işletmelerinin, müşterilerin beklentileri yönünde olan hizmet kalitelerinin, kurumun itibarını pozitif yönde ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlı düzeyde etkilediği sonucu, araştırmanın önemli bulguları içerisinde yer almaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hizmet Kalitesi, Kurumsal İtibar, Turizm İşletmesi, Hizmet Sektörü, Pazarlama

1. INTRODUCTION

As a result of the rapid globalization, competition has become more difficult for managements today. Varieties of strategies have emerged for managements under these hard competition conditions. Corporate reputation is another phenomenon that the managements have to take into consideration so as to make a difference in the competition. Reputation, which reflects the emotions, thoughts and information formed in people's mind, provide the managements with a significant competitive advantage by making a difference. Corporate reputation covers both fame and esteem, public opinion, and prestige. Fame can be achieved through advertisement in a short time whereas it requires a longer time period to establish and acquire prestige (Hall, 1992: 138; Eroğlu, 2013: 29).

In the competition conditions among tourism managements, service quality is getting more and more important day by day (Öztürk ve Kenzhebayeva, 2013: 41). Tourism managements operating in service sector aim to further their relations with their customers and improve their prestige so as to maintain their operations in increasing competition environment and gain advantage by expanding their market share (Şirin, 2016: 522). It is crucial to place importance on service quality in order to achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty by identifying constantly changing customer demands and needs, and thus to establish corporate reputation (Murat ve Çelik, 2007: 9).

This study aims to identify the relation between service quality and corporate reputation of tourism managements operating in service sector. To that effect, the literature was reviewed initially and similar studies carried out previously were scanned. The data was collected by using "service quality scale", which was adapted from SERVQUAL scale from the literature, and "corporate prestige scale". The obtained data was analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the study and the findings were derived.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Service Quality

Quality is regarded as a strategic tool for providing goods and services to meet the customers' need, for increasing operational effectiveness of the management, and for reducing the cost through effective cost controlling procedure (Murat ve Çelik, 2007: 2).

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) define service quality as the ability of the management to meet the expectations of the customers or to exceed these expectations. Odabaşı (1997) defined service quality as offering outstanding and perfect service in order to meet the customers' expectations.

Service quality, on the whole, is the assessment of distinction, excellence, and reputation elements of an management. Service quality is a concept related with satisfaction, but not the equivalence of it (Parasuraman et.al., 1988: 15; Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985: 42; Rust and Oliver, 1994: 4; Öztürk and Seyhan, 2005: 170).

Parasuraman et.al. (1985) identified service perception in general as reliability, attention, ability, accessibility, courtesy, communication, credibility (honesty), security, understandability, and concrete qualities (appearance).

2.2. Corporate Reputation

Corporate reputation in general is how a management is perceived by the outer environment. This perception is created through influence of the environment by the pecuniary and non-pecuniary belongings of the management. The presence of the managements is closely related with the service they offer or the quality of the products they produce (Guo vd., 2008: 306; Croft and Dalton, 2003: 9). Corporate reputation is formed

and assessed and develops in the minds of the stakeholders. Corporate reputation refers to whether or not the management has a good place in the eyes of the stakeholders (Neville, Bell and Mengüç, 2015: 1186).

Corporate reputation provides a number of benefits to the managements. Among these are: it creates sensitivity among the administrators related with long term goals of the management; it clarifies the goals and the paths to follow to achieve these goals; it brings competitive edge to the management in the market; and it reinforces organizational communication (Bolat, 2006: 111; Greyser, 1999: 178).

Among the leading stakeholders that affect the corporate reputation and that are directly influenced by it are the staff and the tourists/customers. These two stakeholders are the two dimensions of a management, facing both inward and outward. It is essential for a management to meet the individual expectations and needs of its personnel, and thus to improve the service quality in terms of reinforcing corporate reputation. (Akıncı Vural and Öksüz, 2007; Akgöz and Solmaz, 2010: 39).

3. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of service quality of five-star tourism managements operating in Konya on corporate reputation. This is a sectional study with respect to its approach to time. For the study, purposive sampling, one of the non-probability sampling methods, was utilized due to time constraint to access all of the customers of the related managements, high cost, and difficulties with sampling. In the scope of the study, a survey was administered with 210 participants, but 4 of the responses were eliminated due to incomplete or wrong data. That's why data analysis was performed out of 206 responses. The data was collected between April and June in 2016 by interviewing customers of randomly selected five-star tourism managements.

As being one of the most reliable data collection methods, survey technique was adopted for this study so as to collect accurate data. The survey form utilized for the study included two parts. In the first part, "service quality" scale, which was adapted from SERVQUAL scale developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988; 1994) for their previously conducted similar studies; and "corporate reputation" scale, which was developed as a compilation from tools used by Fombrun and Van Riel (1997), Aaker (1997), Barnett, Jermier and Lafferty (2006), Cravens, Oliver and Ramamoorti (2003), and Chun (2005) in their studies. The second part contained items to identify the demographic information of the participants.

The survey form was created in Turkish. To design the survey items a detailed literature review was made, a number of scales that were used in previous internationally published studies, some of which were referred above, were made use of. In addition, the scale items in this study were designed for customers of tourism managements. All of the items in the scales had five-point Likert scales. For data analysis SPSS 20.0 statistical software pack was used.

4. FINDINGS AND COMMENTS

First of all, frequency analyses of the demographic features of the participants were performed. Table 1 demonstrates the demographic information of the participants regarding their gender, age, marital status, profession, and educational status.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Variables (n=206)

Demographic Variables	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Demographic Variables	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	110	53,4	Marital Status	Single	102	49,5
	Female	96	46,6		Married	104	50,5
	Total	206	100,0		Total	206	100,0
Age	18-24	55	26,7	Educational Status	Primary	14	15,6
	25-31	66	32,0		High school	36	17,5
	32-38	60	29,1		Vocational School	49	23,8
	39-45	19	9,2		Undergraduate	85	41,3
	46 +	6	2,9		Master of Arts	12	5,8
	Total	206	100,0		Total	206	100,0
Profession	Self Employed	20	9,7	Profession	Private Sector	58	28,2
	Civil Servant	43	20,9		Business Manager	26	12,6
	Worker	35	17,0		Other	24	11,7
	Total	206	100,0		Total	206	100,0

Table 1 demonstrates that 53,4 % of the participants are male, and 46,6% of them are female. Also, while 50,5 % of the participants are married, 49,5 % of them are single. In addition, when we look at the age range of the participants, the majority of them (61,1 %) are between 25 and 38. When it comes to the education status of the participants, the majority of them (70,9 %) hold higher education degrees (vocational school, BA, and MA). The table also demonstrates that 28,2 % of the participants work in private sector, 20,9 % of them are civil servants, 17 % are workers, 12,6 % are business managers, 9,7 5 are self-employed, and 11,7 % of them belong to other profession groups.

Table 2. Explanatory Factor Analysis

Variables		1	2
Service Quality	S1 Committed Service	,760	
	S2 Problem Solving	,758	
	S5 Personal Relevance	,739	
	S7 Physical Facilities & Attractiveness	,733	
	S3 Desire and demand	,724	
	S6 Being Demanded	,710	
	S4 Quick Service	,702	
Corporate Reputation	S9 Financial Power		,816
	S11 Leadership		,809
	S12 Emotional attractiveness		,801
	S10 Versatility		,786
	S15 Ability		,784
	S16 Sincerity		,761
	S13 Social & Environmental Responsibility		,760
	S14 Reliance		,756
S8 Creativity and innovation		,652	
Reliability co-efficient of the scales (alpha)		0,908	0,951
Reliability co-efficient (alpha)		,955	
% total variance		69,234	
KMO		,949	
Barlett		2762,161 (sd.120; p=0,000)	

Factor analysis of the variables of the study revealed that some of the factor weights take readings under more than one factor. If an item takes similar readings in different factor columns, that item must be left out of the analysis (Durmuş et al., 2013, p.85). In this regard, the 17th item was detected to demonstrate similar factor weights under different factors. Thus, as it also breaks the cohesion, item 17 was eliminated and factor was repeated. Data analysis process was proceeded as no other item was identified to have similar factor weights under different factors.

The three factors obtained as a result of the explanatory factor analysis explains 69,234% of the total variance. Table 2 also demonstrates results of the Cronbach-alpha analysis of the scales utilized for the study within the context of sampling with 206 respondents. As it is clear from the table, internal consistency of all the scales was proven to exceed acceptable limit (0,50) offered by Durmuş et al. (2013).

Reliability co-efficient of the scales used in the study was tested with explanatory factor analysis. Explanatory factor analysis of the items of the three different scales was carried out (KMO=0,949; p<0,001), and 2 factors where scale items found to be consistent were identified.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis Results

Variables	□	ss.		Service Quality	Corporate Reputation
Service Quality	3,63	0,79	Pearson Correlation Significance (Sig.) N	1 206	,750** ,000 206
Corporate Reputation	3,72	0,73	Pearson Correlation Significance (Sig.) N	,750** ,000 206	1 206

**Correlation is significant with level of 0.01

With correlation analysis, correlation coefficients between the variables were found. The correlation analysis results presented in Table 3 revealed that service quality variable and corporate reputation variable were positively and highly correlated with a score of 0,750 significances.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results

Summary of the Model	Variance Analysis		Parameter Estimates		
R ²	F value	Significance p value	Standardized coefficient (Beta)	t statistics	Significance p value
,562	261,822	,000			
Service Quality			,750	16,181	,000

Dependent Variable: Corporate Reputation

The most important value scores to be interpreted in Table 4 are the F value (F=261,822) which shows the significance of the model, and the p value (p=0,000) which shows the significance value of this score. These results demonstrate that the model is statistically significant. The explanatory power of the regression model is R²=,562. Given these results, the variance of 95% in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable included to the model. In other words, 95 % of the variance in corporate reputation is explained by the variance in the level of service quality. Estimated coefficient value (β =,750) and related t value (t=16,181) are also demonstrated in Table 4. The results of the study revealed that service quality in tourism managements has a (β =,750) and significant (p=0,000) effect on corporate reputation. The tourism managements that increase their service quality accordingly can be noted to reinforce their reputation and competitiveness. With this respect, the importance of service quality for a tourism management, which has a crucial role in creating and improving corporate reputation, is proven by the results of the study. Thus, we can denote that within competition conditions today, improving the service quality for a tourism management operating in service sector in a customer-focused manner will directly improve their corporate reputation as well.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data analysis of this study, which was aimed to contribute to the prospective researchers of similar studies and the service sector where tourism managements operate by identifying the relation between service quality and corporate reputation and the nature of this relation revealed that there is a strong, significant and positive relation between service quality and corporate reputation. In addition, it was also found that if the service quality in a tourism management meets the expectation of the customers, it will have a positive and significant impact on corporate reputation.

Fombrun and Shanley (1990) noted that the service the managements provide and the activities they offer impact their corporate reputation, and that among other factors, service quality and variety also have influence on corporate reputation.

Aaker (1997) classified the components of corporate reputation as versatility, substantiality, efficiency, enthusiasm, reliance, and quality. Aaker (1997) stated that improving the standards of its service quality in all aspects for a management will also improve its corporate reputation. Aaker, who touched on the activities to help the customers to have a positive impression about the corporation, emphasized the importance of the communication with the customers and corporate identity.

Almaçık (2011), who analyzed the effect of different components of corporate reputation on customer loyalty in his study, expressed that lack of or insufficiency of service quality is the most influential component of corporate reputation.

Koçyiğit, Özüpek and Erdoğan (2016) found out that service quality significantly and positively affects brand loyalty through such variables as perceived value, customer satisfaction, brand reliance, which are important factors with regard to corporate reputation.

On that account, if the managers of tourism managements wish to raise awareness and recognition level of their corporations, they should primarily increase corporate reputation by improving the service they offer to their customers. The tourism managements that meet the expectations of their customers, provide the service they promise, solve the problems of customers, take the demands, wishes and requests into consideration increase their service quality, and thus improve their corporate reputation.

In the light of these results obtained from a study conducted with the customers of five-star tourism managements, the related stakeholders can identify and improve the quality standards and components of corporate reputation by considering the effect of service quality on creating corporate reputation.

In this study, only a limited sampling group was accessed due to constraints related with population, time and cost. Therefore, this is a kind of prestudy carried out with two variables. For further studies, it can be

recommended to have a larger sample group or to diversify it, and to include other variables such as corporate identity, corporate personality, and corporate image in addition to service quality and corporate reputation.

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