

**Guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels:
A study of reviews from TripAdvisor**

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Abstract

Guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in luxury hotels are based mainly around expectations and perceptions of service and products (Lu, Berchoux, Marek & Brendan, 2015). Consumers are increasingly looking for high-quality services and high-value products in luxury hotels (Walls, Okumus, Wang & Kwun, 2011), and the website TripAdvisor provides rich data showing what luxury hotels do right and what they do wrong, based on consumer feedback (O'Connor, 2010). However, there are no studies exploring guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels using TripAdvisor as a data source. This study therefore uses TripAdvisor to examine these factors in New Zealand luxury hotels. The study has two main objectives: (a) to identify the influences on guest satisfaction; and (b) to identify the influences on guest dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels.

This study aims to provide guidance for hotel managers to develop appropriate strategies to improve guest satisfaction, and therefore make a positive contribution to luxury hotel management. The study adopted an interpretivist approach and used thematic analysis to analyse data from TripAdvisor. Positive and negative guest reviews were collected from eight New Zealand luxury hotels, from 1 July to 31 August 2017. In total, 120 TripAdvisor reviews were selected and separated into 60 positive and 60 negative guest reviews. The main influences of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction were service quality, professionalism and passion of staff, rooms, food and location. Intangible services were found to be more important than tangible products, and staff attitudes had a stronger influence on guest satisfaction than staff knowledge. 'Personalisation,' 'service surprises,' 'extra values' 'interaction,' 'welcome feelings' were keywords expressed by guests on TripAdvisor.

The results fulfilled the objectives of the study, as they added knowledge and understanding to the literature on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The benefits of this research are twofold. Firstly, it contributes to the body of knowledge in hospitality management, specifically identifying the influences of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Secondly, it provides luxury hotel managers with practical insights into guest expectations, and how they can better satisfy guests' needs.

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Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ting (Bella) An', written in a cursive style.

Ting (Bella) An

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study explores New Zealand luxury hotel guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction using data collected from TripAdvisor. This chapter provides an overview of the study, starting with background information relating to the key concepts of the research. It then explains the purpose of the study and the two major objectives. Finally, a synopsis of the method is discussed and the structure of the dissertation presented.

1.2 Background to the research

Tourism plays a significant role in the New Zealand economy in terms of generating revenue (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2014). Most revenue generated by tourism is from international, government and business travellers, or resident householders (Alonso, 2009). New Zealand accommodation options are varied, but the standard of accommodation in New Zealand is generally high compared to other countries (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2014). The top international hotel chains in New Zealand include Accor, Hilton, Hyatt, Rydges and InterContinental. Hotels in these chains are located in the major cities of Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington, and some key destinations such as Queenstown, Rotorua, and Nelson.

Although it is difficult to define the term ‘luxury’, most scholars agree that luxury products are expensive, unique, exquisite, non-essential, or instilled with meaning derived from history, art and brand culture (Wu & Yang, 2018). When the term ‘luxury’ is applied to hotels, it relates to high quality products, such as well-designed facilities, good quality food and beverages, room furniture in good condition, and personalised service. The purpose of luxury hotel business is to create a meaningful luxury consumption experience in hotel industries. The ‘consumption of luxury’ can not be investigated using an ‘experience-centric view’, but also could be delivered emotionally, sensually, and relationally by luxury service providers (Hennigs, Wiedmann, Klarmann & Behrens, 2015). For example, instead of receiving only utilitarian value, guests may learn the history of a luxury hotel brand or interact with other hotel members in a hotel community in order to create a high guest satisfaction level in the hotel industry (Wu & Yang, 2018).

New Zealand attracts a large number of travellers, resulting in increased tourism and hospitality related revenues (Schiff & Becken, 2012). Therefore, it is important for New Zealand hoteliers to understand their guests' needs, and causes of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. There are many studies examining the causes of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in luxury hotels in different countries using different approaches, such as conducting interviews or designing surveys. TripAdvisor is the largest online network for travel consumers, and the main social medium that hotel guests trust and use to present their opinions (Molinillo, Ximenez-de-Sandoval, Fernandez-Morales & Coca-Stefaniak, 2016). TripAdvisor displays detailed rich data that helps identify common causes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among reviewers (O'Connor, 2010). TripAdvisor also helps to identify guest satisfaction and guest-generated ratings, which establish a hotel's reputation online (O'Connor, 2010). The purpose of this study is to use TripAdvisor as a data source to highlight the factors that influence guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels.

In today's competitive hospitality business market, increasing importance has been placed on how marketing contributes to business performance and results (Yang, 2015). However, hotel guest satisfaction is more important because it helps with 'repeat business and word-of-mouth advertising' (Wang, Wang, Xue, Wang & Li, 2010, p. 16). In addition, online guest satisfaction is very important in the hotel industry, because guest experience is the 'lifeblood' of hotels and shows where the value is (Jani & Han, 2013). Guests have higher expectations of luxury hotels as they spend more money for the value that could be delivered by luxury hotels. Guest satisfaction provides information about guest expectations of luxury that hotels need to be fill.

Guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction are very important for luxury hotels, so it is necessary for luxury hotel managers to understand those factors which influence guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Walls *et al.*, 2011). Guest satisfaction in luxury hotels is based mainly on perceptions of luxury service (Lu *et al.*, 2015). Most customers satisfied with high-quality service from luxury hotels become loyal customers (Lu *et al.*, 2015). Those guests give friends or family positive feedback regarding their satisfaction. That means some luxury hotels build a good reputation and gain profits through creating high guest satisfaction. Therefore, understanding what influences guest satisfaction would help hospitality businesses design and deliver suitable luxury services to guests (Lu *et al.*, 2015).

Various influences for guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction have been discussed in many overseas studies. However, no studies have used TripAdvisor to explore guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. This research therefore analyses guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels, using TripAdvisor reviews to identify factors that determine levels of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In order to better understand guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels, Herzberg's theory (1966) will be used as a theoretical framework to guide understandings of feedbacks. Herzberg's theory has two parts. The first part consists of a set of factors which contribute to guest satisfaction in the luxury hotel industry, and are named 'satisfiers'. The second part consists of factors which contribute to dissatisfaction and are termed 'hygiene factors'. Physical products (hygiene factors) and intangible service (satisfiers) have been found to influence guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels.

1.3 Purpose of the research

The overall aim of this study is to identify and explore factors affecting satisfaction and dissatisfaction of guests following their stay in New Zealand luxury hotels. The study's major objective is to answer the following two questions:

1. What influences guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels?
2. What influences guest dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels?

TripAdvisor provides rich data to show what luxury hotels do right and what they do wrong based on guests' perspectives. Factors guests liked, and those that did not meet their expectations are explored. This research also provides guidance for luxury hotels to better meet their guests' expectations through understanding the causes of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The study also aims to provide directions and suggestions for future research.

1.4 Methodology

The study adopted an interpretivist and thematic analysis approach based on a qualitative methodology. Because this research sought to find out guests' opinions concerning their satisfaction or dissatisfaction about their stay, interpretivism helped to understand the meaning of human behaviour and ideas (Taneja, Taneja & Gupta, 2011).

Thematic analysis was used to categorise and analyse data from TripAdvisor. The study used a sample of hotels defined as luxury hotels by Qualmark New Zealand. Eight five-star hotels were selected and some useful TripAdvisor reviews on those hotels were collected.

This study analysed guests' positive and negative reviews from TripAdvisor. Purposive sampling techniques were used for selecting and collecting suitable information. A coding method was used to summarise and categorise the data. Some influences were explored and collated into tables based on the TripAdvisor reviews. Different causes of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction were also discussed via the thematic analysis method, and some significant findings were identified.

1.5 Overview of the dissertation

This dissertation is presented in five chapters. Following the introduction, it is organised as follows:

Chapter Two presents a literature review to provide a theoretical background. The importance of tourism is explained and a definition of New Zealand luxury hotels is offered, followed by an explanation of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction about luxury hotels. How hotel guests express and communicate their satisfaction and dissatisfaction through TripAdvisor is then briefly discussed. The literature presented in this chapter consists not only of hospitality journal articles, but also articles from tourism, business, social media and management areas.

Chapter Three provides the research design and method used for answering the research objectives. A qualitative exploratory research design and thematic analysis method were chosen for this study. Interpretivism was adopted and followed by use in the thematic analysis strategy and coding research method. Sample selection and data collection methods are then presented and described. This is followed by the thematic analysis method at the end of this chapter.

Chapter Four presents the findings and discussion of the study. This chapter aims to summarise and categorise the different factors that have significant influence on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The discussion analyses the similarities and differences between the literature and the findings. The findings show that intangible service was

more important than tangible products; staff passion was more important than their skills; and service surprises and guests' 'valuable feelings' created more guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels.

Chapter Five presents a conclusion and discusses the research objectives including some of main findings of the study. Then the implications for New Zealand luxury hotel managers are presented. Contributions to the literature and limitations of the study are also discussed. Further, directions and suggestions for future study in this field are highlighted.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A number of studies have been conducted on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction with luxury hotels globally. However, very few studies focus on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction with New Zealand luxury hotels. TripAdvisor is a useful online communication tool for collecting guests' feedback and analysing the influences of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction with luxury hotels throughout the world. However, there are no studies using TripAdvisor data to explore these factors for New Zealand luxury hotels.

This chapter begins by reviewing the literature relating to the importance of the New Zealand tourism and luxury hotel industries. Guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction with luxury hotels will also be discussed. Luxury hotels are important to the New Zealand economy, and guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction are also important concerns for luxury hotel managers. The chapter then explains how people express their opinions about what constitutes a satisfactory or unsatisfactory stay in luxury hotels, and demonstrates that there are high guest expectations of luxury hotels. Studies about the use of TripAdvisor will also be reviewed, to determine the particularity of using TripAdvisor to explore guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction with New Zealand luxury hotels. This literature review uses articles to support the idea that guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels is a significant research topic and worthy of study. The review demonstrates there is a gap in the literature which the research reported in this dissertation begins to fill. The studies presented in this chapter are not only hospitality journal articles, but also articles from tourism, business, social media and management areas.

2.2 Tourism and luxury hotels in New Zealand

With a growing number of international and domestic travellers visiting New Zealand, the tourism sector continues to play an important role in the New Zealand economy (Jaforullah, 2015). According to the New Zealand Tourism Report (2017), tourism is a leader and driver of the economic growth of New Zealand. The report shows that tourism contributed NZ\$13.1 billion or 5.6 percent of New Zealand's GDP in the year to December 2017. The New Zealand hotel industry provides a range of accommodation

options that cover different budgets. From back-to-nature camping to luxury hotels, the selection of New Zealand accommodation is varied (Jaforullah, 2015). Accommodation is the greatest source of tourism revenue at 38 percent of total tourism revenue (Jaforullah, 2015). The New Zealand hotel industry continues to grow at an impressive rate, and is becoming more competitive as international hotels make inroads into a growing number of destinations (Jaforullah, 2015). This has led to an increased emphasis on high quality products and luxury service from hotels.

It is useful to consider how 'luxury hotel' is defined in New Zealand. The Qualmark website provides a star-rating system which shows that the best quality of facilities and services are offered in New Zealand five-star hotels (Venkatraman, 2005). Another similar statement defines luxury hotels as deluxe, five-star rated, and full-service hotels (Brien, Ratna & Boddington, 2012). High star-rating for hotels increases guest expectation levels for the standards of service that they will receive (Binkowska, Roberts & Bremner, 2005). A similar study showed that high rates of hotels reflect high guest expectation levels for accommodation and facilities in New Zealand luxury hotels (Goodsir, 2008). The literature suggests that New Zealand luxury hotels have high star-rating, high rates and high guest expectations.

Different factors influence the standards of New Zealand luxury hotels. It is very important to maintain a strong interpersonal guest contact in New Zealand luxury hotels (Binkowska, 2005). Brien, Thomas, and Hussein (2013) stated that high-quality products and personalised service are the most important factors for the guests in New Zealand luxury hotels. For example, well-known brand shampoos, conditioners and body lotions all raise the standards of New Zealand luxury hotels (Brien *et al.*, 2013). Further, high standards for New Zealand luxury hotels are influenced by both human interaction and the physical environment (Ustad, 2010). Nagel (2010) discovered some interesting results: that high standards of New Zealand luxury hotels have different explanations from different types of guests. Ustad (2010) highlighted this topic by stating that it is important for New Zealand luxury hotels to maintain high-quality service and facilities, such as prime location, large rooms, high-quality food, and privacy and security for every guest.

Research about the importance of New Zealand luxury hotels in the market and the importance of those hotels offering a high-standard of service provides a fundamental

framework for the current study. However, all of the studies reviewed collected their data from interviews and surveys (Venkatraman, 2005; Brien *et al.*, 2012; Binkowska, 2005; Goodsir, 2008; Nagel, 2010; Ustad, 2010). None of them used TripAdvisor to collect guests' reviews, and few compared guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in luxury hotels (Binkowska, 2005; Ustad, 2010). Guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction with luxury hotels and some common causes are explained in the next two sections.

2.3 Guest satisfaction of luxury hotels

Guest's satisfaction with luxury hotels is based mainly on their experience of service (Lu *et al.*, 2015). Most of the satisfied guests in New Zealand luxury hotels who experience high-quality service become loyal customers, and they give friends and family positive feedback (Razzaq, Hall & Prayag, 2016). That means that some luxury hotels build a good reputation and gain more profits through providing high-quality service. Interestingly, a hotel's star rating is an important symbol which relates to guest satisfaction through setting different guest expectation levels (Radojevic, Stanic & Stanic, 2015). Allan (2016) has suggested that guests' perceptions of service during their stay in luxury hotels determines their satisfaction levels and will lead to revisit intention. Allan's study showed that guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels is based on the service they receive which meets their expectations.

A number of other factors also contribute to luxury hotel guest satisfaction. Guest satisfaction in luxury hotels is mainly based on the factors of service quality, food and beverage quality, accommodation, location, facilities, security and safety, transportation and innovation (Allan, 2016). Further, bars located in rooms, air-conditioning in rooms, free wireless internet, membership with discount for dining have positive associations with guest satisfaction (Radojevic *et al.*, 2015). In addition, Gupta and Sharma (2016) found that the factors which influence guest satisfaction levels in luxury hotels are value for money, quality of food and beverage, cleanliness, accessibility, efficiency, ambience, safety and security. Studies show that both tangible and intangible factors influence guest satisfaction. For example, a clean and quiet room is the core product that influences guest satisfaction in luxury hotels (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2010); view from the guest room was found by Khoo-Lattimore and Ekiz (2014) as an intangible factor which strongly increased guest satisfaction because it affects guests'

experience in the first minute (check-in process) and the last minute (check-out process).

Understanding guest expectations is the first step in achieving high guest satisfaction. Based on the literature, Lu *et al.* (2015) have suggested high-quality service is the main factor that causes guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Providing service surprises to delight guests adds memorable moments and maintains high satisfaction for guests (Hemmington, 2007). Lu *et al.*, (2015) also found that passionate staff influence guest satisfaction by building successful relationships and interacting with guests. Further, providing a complete service in detail and making guests feel welcome also improves guest satisfaction, because guests feel more valuable when they receive more care from hotels (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012). Articles about guest dissatisfaction in luxury hotels will be reviewed in the following section.

2.4 Guest dissatisfaction with luxury hotels

Guest dissatisfaction can result after an unsatisfactory stay in a luxury hotel, and can result in negative comments and complaints from guests (Ro, 2015). In the hospitality field, guest reaction to service failures can be categorised into problem based dissatisfaction and emotion-based dissatisfaction (Ro, 2015). If guests are dissatisfied with their stay in luxury hotels, there are three possible outcomes: guests communicate verbally with the hotels or their friends and families; guests express their negative feedback through online review tools, such as TripAdvisor; guests do not complain to others but never come back again (Matos, Vieira & Veiga, 2012). A large number of luxury hotel guests complain on TripAdvisor and show their dissatisfaction regarding the low level of service quality in those luxury hotels (Matos *et al.*, 2012).

Many articles provide possible factors which influence guest dissatisfaction in luxury hotels. Ramanathan and Ramanathan (2011) found that room quality, customer service and quality of food influenced guest dissatisfaction for business guests and guests of independent hotels. Also, the courtesy and efficiency of staff, guest supplies and amenities, quality of service, quality of food and beverages, value for money, general condition of room, cleanliness of room, and parking facilities during peak season, can all be improved in order to reduce guest dissatisfaction (Blodgett, Bakir, Bachheti & Bhaskar, 2015). Guests have different concerns about their stay in luxury hotels (Blodgett *et al.*, 2015). For example, lack of personalised service is the main problem

that causes guest dissatisfaction in New Zealand hotels because it makes the guests feel valueless (Goodsir, 2008). In addition, many guests are dissatisfied about room amenities because they expect amenities from hotels for their special days such as birthdays and anniversaries (Gupta & Sharma, 2016). Online communication forms are often used by guests to show their satisfaction and dissatisfaction about their experience and more people trust online reviews (Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008). The different types of online forms are discussed in the following section.

2.5 Herzberg's two-factor theory

Herzberg successfully identified the leading influences on employee motivation, attitudes and engagement over a period of 50 years. In 1959, Herzberg conducted a study with 200 engineers and accountants as subjects. They were asked to recollect the positive and negative experiences they had had at work, and the reasons behind their feelings about these experiences. He did this by asking people to describe instances when they were happy in their jobs and also when they were unhappy. From the results, he proposed a two-factor approach when attempting to understand motivation among employees. Herzberg found that people that felt happy about their jobs gave different responses to those that were unhappy.

Based on Herzberg (1966), some factors are identified as resulting in satisfaction while there are other factors that prevent dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors are also called extrinsic motivators and describe the various factors that prevent dissatisfaction. In the workplace, hygiene factors include job security, salary, working conditions and policies. Motivation factors are also called intrinsic motivators and describe more intangible and emotional factors, such as recognition, relationships or growth potential in the workplace. His conclusion was that management can eliminate (hygiene) conditions that cause dissatisfaction and separately, management can create conditions that internally motivate and engage employees.

If hygiene factors are met, people will not be irritated but they may not necessarily be motivated. For them to be motivated, the motivation factors must be met. Therefore, if only hygiene factors are met in workplaces, employees will not be loyal. On the contrary, if motivation factors are met, people will be motivated but they may not necessarily be satisfied. For them to be satisfied, the hygiene factors must be met.

Therefore, if only motivation factors are met in workplaces, high employee turnover will ensue, because although employees will be motivated, they will also be irritated by the lack of satisfaction with hygiene factors. To sum up, it is necessary to meet both hygiene and motivation factors for employees to maintain both satisfaction and motivation in a workplace.

This study of guest feedback on luxury hotels finds a relationship to Herzberg's theory (1966) because it explores factors that cause satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors are which decrease guest dissatisfaction levels in hotels, such as room condition, and food and beverage quality. Motivation factors are those factors which increase guest satisfaction levels in hotels, such as outstanding service, and the relationship between hosts and guests. Herzberg's theory can therefore help to understand guest expectations. Herzberg's theory is important for the current study because it provides relative assumptions and ideas of potential factors that cause guest satisfaction or dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels.

2.6 Different communication channels for guests

Guest post-purchase behaviours are acknowledged as an important factor which influence their repeat purchase behaviours and word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendations (Zainal, Harun & Lily, 2017). Guest communication forms normally include emails, websites, blogs, product review sites, newsgroups and chatrooms (Litvin *et al.*, 2008). Further, email is a one-to-one medium for which privacy is a main concern. Websites can be used for creating a first impression in order to stimulate electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) among guests. Product review sites have their own ways of communicating and means of interactivity; they are channels that writers and readers can access at any time (Pop & Acatrinei, 2011). However, emails, websites, blogs, newsgroups and chatrooms have been used rarely by guests to review their hospitality satisfaction and dissatisfaction. But product and service review sites and some travel sites have often been used for guests to provide feedback about hotels (Pop & Acatrinei, 2011).

Hotel reviews can be collected from different travel websites in the world. Web 2.0 technologies (including types of social media sites and applications) have changed the ways people communicate and share information, and enable users to express their

opinions to other people on an efficient platform without geographical and time limitations (Pacheco, 2016). Hospitality and travel review websites are often used, because the value and quality of hospitality and tourism service can be perceived by guests only after consumption (Geetha, Singha & Sinha, 2017). Further, people trust information more when it comes from other guests, and it helps them avoid inadequate choices (Stringam, Gerdes & Vanleeuwen, 2010). More and more guests believe that online reviews and comments stated by other consumers are trustworthy information (Stringam *et al.*, 2010). In addition, online communication forms significantly influence the consumption trends of hospitality guests and provide valuable information for managers in New Zealand hotels (Sun, Ryan & Pan, 2014).

These articles show that different guest communication forms use different methods and have different purposes for passing on information. Most consumers trust online reviews, which means guest online behaviours have a significant influence on hospitality and tourism industries. TripAdvisor is one web technology widely used to express opinions and has therefore been used in this study. The next section looks at how guests communicate their satisfaction and dissatisfaction through TripAdvisor.

2.7 Guests' online behaviours on TripAdvisor

Hotel booking decisions are increasingly influenced by consumer feedback available on social media sites (Molinillo *et al.*, 2016). TripAdvisor (www.tripadvisor.com) is defined as the largest online network for international travellers (Cordato, 2014). TripAdvisor provides detail rich data that helps to identify common causes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among reviewers. Further, TripAdvisor profoundly affects how customers make purchase decisions through accepting customers' views disseminated on the Internet (Filieri, Alguezaui & McLeay, 2015). Potential hotel guests tend to trust written comments posted on TripAdvisor by other guests more than recommendations found on official destination marketing or hotel websites (Molinillo *et al.*, 2016). This is because TripAdvisor provides reviews from visitors who have experienced the related products and service. However, TripAdvisor is used by unknown people, and this might make it difficult to assess the trustworthiness and credibility of the information. Bronner and De Hoog (2010), found that 75 percent of reviewers contribute positive reviews to TripAdvisor. However, negative reviews have a higher impact on consumers than positive reviews (Chang, Ku & Chen, 2017). These

have led to some limitations in using TripAdvisor to collect research data.

Some studies use TripAdvisor to evaluate hospitality businesses as reviews from TripAdvisor can provide valuable data and help hospitality managers prevent potential negative feedback (Sahin, Gulmez & Kitapci, 2017). Limberger, dos Anjos, de Souza Meira, and dos Anjos (2014), found that 83 percent of respondents indicated that reviews on TripAdvisor helped them choose the right hotels; over 70 percent of guests read six to eight TripAdvisor reviews prior to making a reservation; and 68 percent of respondents stated the reviews clearly showed the attractions of the hotels. Further, Sahin *et al.* (2017) found that TripAdvisor reviews are a free way of assessing how a hospitality business is performing. The reviews highlight where improvements can be made (Sahin *et al.*, 2017). Besides, as a hospitality business gets more TripAdvisor reviews, the average rating of the property tends to increase (Xiang, Du, Ma & Fan, 2017).

TripAdvisor is a very important online platform for guests to express their opinions and gather information about New Zealand luxury hotels. It benefits not only hotel guests but also guides hotel managers to create high guest satisfaction levels (Molinillo *et al.*, 2016). Using data submitted by guests on TripAdvisor, hotel managers can understand guest satisfaction ratings for the hotels (Filiari *et al.*, 2015). Online consumer reviews from TripAdvisor show why some luxury hotels are popular among consumers (Xie, Chen & Wu, 2016). The reviews from TripAdvisor control hotels' characteristics and influence offline hotel popularity (Xie *et al.*, 2016).

TripAdvisor is therefore a useful tool for gathering positive and negative feedback about guest perspectives. The positive and negative reviews can be easily found from TripAdvisor with clear ratings and possible reasons. Now the last section of this chapter highlights the gap between the literature review and the current study. The gap shows there are no studies using TripAdvisor to explore guests' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with New Zealand luxury hotels.

2.8 Gaps between literature review and proposed study

In conclusion, the importance of satisfying guests in New Zealand's luxury hotels was pointed out in the literature review. Guests use different ways to express their perceptions, satisfaction and dissatisfaction. TripAdvisor is a credible social media tool

luxury hotels can access to know more about guest expectations and satisfaction. It presents guests' opinions of their satisfaction and hotel characteristics which influence their satisfaction (Molinillo *et al.*, 2016). Also, studies showed that value for money, quality of food and service, cleanliness, room conditions, facilities, and attitudes of staff are the main contributors which majorly determine guest experience and satisfaction. Further, service quality, food and beverage quality, efficiency of staff, value for money, room conditions and parking facilities are the main factors that influence guest dissatisfaction in luxury hotels. Guest-defined luxury hotels and their different evaluation of standards in New Zealand luxury hotels have been highlighted and this provides a framework for the current research.

However, there is a lack of research on satisfaction and dissatisfaction of luxury hotels in New Zealand using TripAdvisor as a data source. In other words, there are no studies which have analysed guests' positive and negative feedback on New Zealand luxury hotels through TripAdvisor. This study uses TripAdvisor to analyse guest satisfaction levels through gathering clear and useful online reviews. The causes of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction can be found easily from TripAdvisor. The current research focuses on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels, and categorises the influences of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study seeks to examine the factors that influence guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction with New Zealand luxury hotels. This chapter discusses the choice of research methodology and methods that address the research questions. It begins by presenting an overview of the research objectives, which show the importance of exploring guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Then, how interpretivism was adopted for this study is described. The chapter then explains the qualitative data selection process, sample size and data collection process of gathering positive and negative guest reviews. Finally, thematic analysis is discussed in the last section in order to analyse guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels.

3.2 Research objectives

The objectives were developed from the gap identified in the literature review regarding guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. The gap also shows that TripAdvisor provides a large amount of guest feedback about New Zealand luxury hotels and guests can make their own volition on TripAdvisor straight after their stay. The aim of this study is to explore the factors affecting guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction by analysing TripAdvisor reviews. This study's major objective is to answer the following two questions:

1. What influences guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels?
2. What influences guest dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels?

3.3 Research paradigm

A paradigm is a framework which is derived from a worldview about the nature of existence and knowledge (Senik, 2009). A research paradigm is "a set of basic beliefs" based on ontological and epistemological perspectives and methodological assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.107). Krauss (2005) suggested that a research paradigm guides what can be studied in the research, how it can be done and what findings can be explored. Having a paradigm is unavoidable because a paradigm influences the way of thinking about and understanding guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in this research.

Research paradigms include terms such as post-positivism, positivism, interpretivism, and critical inquiry (Gray, 2014). The terms positivist and post-positivist are both based on the objective epistemological position and ‘being’ ontological perspective, which means they hold the view that the world will not change and truth is constant (Krauss, 2005). Notwithstanding, the interpretivist and critical inquiry paradigms are based on the subjective epistemological position and ‘becoming’ ontological perspective, which refers to the view that the world is changing all the time (Krauss, 2005). Paradigms guide the current study to explore the main influences in an efficient way.

The two paradigms considered for the current study were positivism and interpretivism. A positivism paradigm generally employs quantitative methods such as questionnaires, surveys and official statistics because they are representative and have reliability (Gray, 2014). Researchers using a positivism paradigm look for relationships or changes among variables (Krauss, 2005). These characteristics made a positivist paradigm inappropriate for the current research because this study did not aim to compare relationships. Rather, the research used an interpretivist paradigm and aimed to identify and interpret the influences on guest satisfaction or dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Interpretivism helps researchers recognise meanings, reasons, motives, background and experience of different individuals (Taneja *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, interpretivism was considered appropriate for the current study to help analyse different guest experiences and explore the influences on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in luxury hotels. In addition, the rich data collected from TripAdvisor reviews constituted qualitative rather than numerical data, and the analysis of information was qualitative as it sought a deep meaning for each review. Therefore, the collection and analysis of qualitative information for this research also fitted the interpretivist paradigm, which is essentially.

3.4 Choice of methodology: Interpretive qualitative case study

Methodology is used by researchers to identify the way of attaining knowledge (Krauss, 2005). Gray (2014) described that methodology is a type of approach for gathering data. The two types of methodology are qualitative and quantitative (Gray, 2014). Qualitative research seeks in-depth understanding of human experience and background (Daher, Carré, Jaramillo, Olivares & Tomicic, 2017). Qualitative data is usually collected from individuals and is more powerful and compelling than quantitative data (Daher *et al.*,

2017). In contrast, quantitative research does not allow for detailed discussion or interpretation (Creswell, 2013).

For the purpose of this research, a qualitative methodology was considered more appropriate. Firstly, the current research focuses mainly on individual emotions and different guest experiences of New Zealand luxury hotels. Secondly, the data collected from TripAdvisor were qualitative, being verbal descriptions and interpretations of experiences.

A case study is a descriptive and exploratory analysis of a specific case, such as a person, group or event (Çakmak & Akgün, 2018). The case study method enables researchers to closely analyse the data within a specific context. A case study is a unique way of exploring any phenomenon which exists in a set of data. In terms of qualitative research, a case study method can be used as a solution when there is a big sample population which is difficult to obtain and analyse (Lauckner, Paterson & Krupa, 2012). A case study approach was considered useful in this current research; the selected special cases were luxury hotels, where guests pay a lot of money and have higher expectations of products and services offered. The target markets of luxury hotels are business and wealthy people, who may expect more value from luxury products and services.

To summarise, because of the research subjectivity and philosophical position, there were three reasons for this study to use an interpretive, qualitative, case study approach. Firstly, it was easier to use interpretivism to explore different guest hotel experiences and understand influences on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Secondly, the subjectivity of the qualitative method suited the nature of the research, because personal experiences and opinions influenced the final results. Finally, a case study research method enabled the researcher to focus on a specific group of data which helped meet the purpose of this research. The next section explains the methodology involved in selecting the population and sample size from TripAdvisor reviews.

3.5 Population selection and sample size methods

A research population is a group of objects or individuals selected for a study (Crisan & Borza, 2015). The population for this study was eight luxury hotels (five star hotels) which had over 2,000 TripAdvisor reviews at the time of this research. Qualmark is

New Zealand's official quality accreditation programme for the tourism industry (Venkatraman, 2005). Qualmark defines luxury category properties in New Zealand as those which achieve a five-star grade within the assessment criteria that are set. Qualmark provides a star-rating system which shows that New Zealand luxury hotels offering the best products and services in New Zealand are five-star hotels (Venkatraman, 2005). The high-quality products and services offered by luxury hotels can lead to high guest expectations. In other words, luxury hotel guests are likely to provide more detailed feedback than three- or four-star hotel guests, who do not pay as much, and therefore, have lower expectations. Therefore, the population for this research consisted of guests who stayed in five-star New Zealand hotels.

It was impossible to include all of the guest reviews because of the large size of the population. Therefore, it was important to use a technique to decide sample size. There are two types of sampling techniques: probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Babbie, 2013). A purposive sample is created by using a non-probability sampling method where selection of the sample is based on the judgement of the researcher (Babbie, 2013). The purposive sampling technique was adopted for this research because representative information was needed to achieve the target sample size of this study in a cost-effective and timely manner. Eight New Zealand luxury hotels and the TripAdvisor reviews of those hotels were selected by the researcher with the purpose of gathering some specific clear reviews in order to explore the influences of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

According to Qualmark (2017), there were 17 five-star hotels in New Zealand at the time of this research (see Table 1). Based on the TripAdvisor website, eight of the 17 five-star hotels with more than 2,000 TripAdvisor reviews were selected (see Table 1). They were Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour, Hilton Auckland, Cordis Auckland, Pullman Auckland, SkyCity Grand Hotel, Sofitel Queenstown Hotel and Spa, InterContinental Wellington, Hotel Montreal Christchurch. The selected hotels are located in Auckland, Christchurch, Queenstown and Wellington.

Table 1 Five-star hotels in New Zealand

	Business	Regions	Grade	No. of reviews	No. of rooms	No. of restaurants
1	Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour	Auckland	5	3490	171	1
2	Hilton Auckland	Auckland	5	3115	165	1
3	Cordis Auckland	Auckland	5	3085	441	1
4	Pullman Auckland	Auckland	5	2783	340	1
5	SkyCity Grand Hotel	Auckland	5	2590	320	7
6	Sofitel Queenstown Hotel and Spa	Queenstown	5	2405	180	2
7	InterContinental Wellington	Wellington	5	2375	232	3
8	Hotel Montreal Christchurch	Christchurch	5	2312	115	2
9	Stamford Plaza Auckland	Auckland	5	1996	284	2
10	Queenstown Park Boutique	Queenstown	5	1982	165	2
11	Hilton Lake Taupo	Taupo	5	1837	113	1
12	Hotel St Moritz (M Gallery Hotel)	Queenstown	5	1790	134	1
13	Millbrook Resort	Queenstown	5	1762	160	1
14	Bolton Hotel	Wellington	5	1734	139	1
15	Hotel QT Museum Wellington	Wellington	5	1688	160	2
16	The Spire Hotel	Queenstown	5	1603	120	1
17	The George Hotel	Christchurch	5	1564	139	1

In interpretive qualitative research, a sample size of 3% to 5% of the total population is appropriate for research reliability when the overall population exceeds 2000 (Jennings, 2010). The average number of TripAdvisor reviews for each of the eight luxury hotels was 2769. Therefore, the total number hotel reviews was set at 120 with 15 reviews from each the selected eight hotels. In order to make a better comparison between guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction for the research questions, 120 TripAdvisor reviews were selected as the sample size and separated into 60 positive and 60 negative reviews.

How TripAdvisor reviews were collected is explained in the next section, including the process of developing a timeline, determining who would collect the data, and identifying the data collection method and tools.

3.6 Data collection process

The dataset for this study was a compilation of eight five-star New Zealand hotels' reviews collected from the travel review website TripAdvisor between 1 July and 31 August 2017. TripAdvisor was selected as the source of data because it is the most popular and largest website for hotel reviews (Law, 2006). Further, TripAdvisor involves almost all the hotels in a particular destination and publishes reviews provided by guests who have stayed in the hotels and would like to share their positive and negative experiences (Schegg & Fux, 2010).

The factors of traveller rating, traveller types, time of the year and language are shown above the reviews for chosen hotels. TripAdvisor allows guests to rate their overall experience of luxury hotels on a '5-point Likert scale' (1 - terrible, 2 - okay, but some problems, 3 - neutral/ average, 4 - above average, 5 - excellent). The highest (excellent) and the lowest (terrible) were chosen to collect positive and negative guest reviews for this study. This criterion was chosen because 5 describes "compliments," while 1 describes complaints. In other words, data collection for this study focused on two important themes: satisfied guest reviews and dissatisfied guest reviews. Seven to eight reviews with positive and negative feedback and with clear descriptions from each hotel were collected. The data collection finished when 120 guest reviews had been collected from TripAdvisor. The collected positive and negative reviews were stored and noted. The collected guest reviews clearly showed the factors that caused their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The next section presents the data analysis process for the current study in detail.

3.7 Data analysis method

The two data analysis methods considered for the current study were content analysis and thematic analysis. The purpose of content analysis is to organise and elicit meaning from the data and to draw realistic conclusions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A thematic analysis is to identify the main and emergent topics from the content. It is the process of coding data into meaningful names and providing an indication of the concepts under

the categories (Gläse & Laudel, 2013). Thematic analysis and content analysis can both be used in qualitative research. Content analysis is more related to initial analysis and the coding process, where researchers look for similar codes. The thematic analysis is used after the coding process as researchers look for major concepts or themes from the initial themes. The qualitative thematic analysis method was considered more suitable for this study. Thematic analysis helped to achieve the purpose of the current study, which was to identify and categorise the factors or themes that cause guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. In the current study, there were different opinions expressed by guests to show their satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Thematic analysis was used to discover the main concepts and themes from those reviews and to identify the major influential themes of guest satisfaction in luxury hotels.

In general, the most widely used steps for conducting qualitative thematic analysis come from an article by Braun and Clarke (2006). They outlined six steps of thematic analysis: familiarising data, generating primary codes, searching themes, reviewing themes, naming and defining themes, and producing and presenting results (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 1: Familiarising data

This step requires the researcher to be fully engaged with the data by reading the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Based on Mason's (2002, p. 148) suggestion, the data needs to be read "interpretively, literally and reflexively." Data were read carefully in order to better understand reviewers' meanings of particular words. One hundred and twenty guest reviews were read carefully and the interesting ideas that related to guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction were noted down. The purpose of this step was to give a comprehensive understanding of the content of data and possible factors that influenced guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. It provided the foundation of the in-depth analysis.

Step 2: Generating primary codes

After becoming familiar with the data, the initial codes were identified in the features of the reviews that were interesting and meaningful. Some words that were repeated frequently were also recorded. The coding of the data was done by hand in this study.

The researcher did not use any computer software programmes such as NVivo or Atlas because it was considered that these systems could not take the whole context into account. Coding data manually is also consistent with interpretivism (Taneja *et al.*, 2011), and allows the researcher to better work with data presented in different languages. Ideas mentioned in positive and negative guest feedback were identified as constructs. The representative influential themes were highlighted and relevant information under the identified themes was copied out in transcripts. The coding process was done three times in order to ensure accuracy. The final primary codes were hotel service quality, professionalism of staff, room condition, food, location of the hotel, facilities in hotels, wireless Internet, price, lounge, spa area, professionalism of managers, upgrade opportunities, bathroom size, turndown service and valet parking (see Table 2).

Table 2 Primary influences on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction of New Zealand luxury hotels

	Primary influences	Count (n = 120)
1	Service quality	70
2	Professionalism and passion of staff	42
3	Rooms	49
4	Food	49
5	Location	39
6	Facilities	30
7	Internet	30
8	Price	24
9	Lounge	23
10	Spa and sauna	19
11	Professionalism of managers	15
12	View of room	11
13	Bathroom size	8
14	Turndown service	6
15	Valet parking	5

Step 3: Searching themes

The third step in thematic analysis is to interpret the collated data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The relevant data under each code were sorted. In Step One, 120 TripAdvisor reviews were split into different themes. The purpose of this step is to identify the major

themes from the primary themes, so it is necessary for researchers to think about the relationship between different codes, themes and theme levels in the theme searching process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Based on the initial codes presented in Table 2, subthemes were identified and combined to major themes: professionalism of managers was combined into the major theme of professionalism and passion of hotel staff; view from the room belonged to the theme of location; bathroom size was combined to the theme of room; turndown service was combined to the major theme of service quality; and valet parking belonged to the theme of hotel facilities. Table 3 presents the main themes of influences on satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels.

The number of times that each theme appeared in the reviews was noted down, in order to identify the more important factors that influence guest satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the current study (see Table 3). Each of the major influences had over 15% appearance of word frequency in guest reviews. The ten influences were also divided into half with five more influences (over 30%) and five less influences (under 30%). The word frequency of each factor has been calculated three times by reading until it was certain that no new concepts could be detected as new factors (see Schreier, 2014).

Table 3 Important influences on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction of New Zealand luxury hotels

	Important influences	Count (n = 120)	%
1	Service quality	76	63.3
2	Professionalism and passion of staff	57	47.5
3	Rooms	57	47.5
4	Food	49	40.8
5	Location	40	33.3
6	Facilities	35	29.2
7	Internet	30	25
8	Price	24	20
9	Lounge	23	19.2
10	Spa and sauna	19	15.8

Step 4: Reviewing themes

The researcher meticulously questioned and compared each coded construct in terms of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction, in order to ensure that they had been interpreted accurately with evidence from the transcripts. This continuous comparative analysis

method was recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2008); this method forces the researchers to go back to the data and ensure accuracy in the coding process. A deeper review of the identified themes was done and the relationships between themes and codes were checked in this step. The top five identified factors with more guest reviews were considered for discussion in this study. The final themes in the research were service quality, professionalism and passion of staff, rooms, food, and location.

Step 5: Naming and defining themes

After identifying the final themes, the names of the themes were provided, and the relevant and meaningful reviews were categorised under each theme. The relevant and clear quotations under each factor were identified; the quotations provided enough support for each theme and clearly showed the reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction for each factor. The identified themes emerged from the data and related to the literature.

Step 6: Producing and presenting results

In order to address the research question, the defined influences were sorted in terms of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The reviews that related to the themes were counted and tables were produced for those significant influences (see Table 3 and Table 4). The five most influences were presented with support from the five of the satisfied guest reviews and five of the dissatisfied guest reviews. In total, 15 quotations about satisfaction were selected from 60 positive guest reviews and 15 quotations about dissatisfaction were selected from 60 negative guest reviews. The selected quotations were featured with the reasons that most guests mentioned along with interesting opinions.

The results were presented in two parts: influences under guest satisfaction and influences under guest dissatisfaction. The tables for each influence were presented, with the tables presenting percentages, that is the percentage of each influence within the total number of positive and negative reviews. Percentages in the study clearly showed the proportions of those influences which made the results easier to understand. Percentage counts were used in presenting data as a summative analysis approach. Summative analysis was used in the qualitative study to identify and quantify certain words in the text with the purpose of understanding the contextual use of the words

(Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Word frequency counts for each identified theme are calculated in the data presenting part. This allows the researcher to explore the major themes of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and compare the meanings of different themes. In addition, meaningful and qualitative quotations from guest reviews were also presented in Chapter Four.

3.8 Summary

This chapter explained that this study adopted an interpretivist and qualitative case study approach. A purposive sampling method was used in the current study to obtain useful data. Techniques of coding data manually were employed to categorise the positive and negative guest feedback. Thematic analysis was used to explore the influences of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. The themes were clearly presented as results. The findings and discussion of the data are presented and described in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The five main themes that influence guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels were identified as service quality, professionalism and passion of staff, rooms, food and location of hotels. Tables are used to present the major themes categorised from the TripAdvisor reviews. The three strongest influences in each theme are presented and discussed in detail. The discussion addresses the possible reasons behind specific influences on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction and explores the similarities and differences between the results and the literature.

4.2 Major influences on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction

This section presents the results of the main factors that influence guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The findings show that the factors of service quality, professionalism and passion of staff, rooms, food and location of hotels were the most important themes in both satisfied and dissatisfied guest reviews (see Table 3). Sixty positive and 60 negative TripAdvisor reviews were collected from eight luxury hotels in New Zealand.

Table 4 Major influences on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction with New Zealand luxury hotels

Major influences	Satisfaction		Dissatisfaction	
	Count (n = 60)	%	Count (n = 60)	%
Service quality	42	70.0	34	56.7
Professionalism and passion of staff	28	46.7	29	48.3
Rooms	24	40.0	33	55.0
Food	22	36.7	27	45.0
Location	21	35.0	19	31.7

The percentage distribution shows the factors of service quality, rooms, professionalism and passion of staff, food and location of the hotels were all 35% or above for satisfaction, and all factors except location were above 35% for dissatisfaction.

Table 5 Other influences on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction with New Zealand luxury hotels

Other influences	Satisfaction		Dissatisfaction	
	Count (n = 60)	%	Count (n = 60)	%
Facilities	20	33.3	15	25.0
Internet	17	28.3	13	21.7
Price	15	25.0	9	15.0
Lounge	10	16.7	13	21.7
Spa and sauna	7	11.7	12	20.0

Other factors which include facilities, Internet, price, lounge, and spa and sauna, have less influence on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. The percentage distribution of those factors was between 10% and 35%, which means that although those factors have influence, they were not the main factors for guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Service quality had the most influence on both guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction (see Table 3). This shows that service quality was the key factor that was valued from the perspective of hotel guests. Venkatraman (2005) observed that New Zealand luxury hotels are five-star hotels that offer their guests the best service and add value to their experience. This finding also indicates the importance of offering high quality service in New Zealand luxury hotels in order to meet the high expectations of guests. Friar and Friar (2002) argued that even though guest room accommodation is the core product for luxury hotels, guests have higher expectations for service. Brien *et al.* (2012) agreed, noting that luxury hotels are deluxe full-service hotels and guests are seeking high standards from such hotels. The findings of the current study support the work of other authors by identifying the importance of delivering high service quality.

The data in Table 2 and Table 3 can be categorised into terms of physical factors and interactive factors. Physical factors include rooms, food, facilities and location, Internet, lounge, spa and sauna, and interactive factors include service quality, professionalism and passion of staff, and price. The findings show that interactive factors had more influence on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction than physical factors (see Table 3). Findings differ from the literature in that the physical environment and human interaction have the same influence on guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels (Ustad, 2010). This indicates that guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction were influenced

not only by physical products, but were also influenced by intangible service, interaction and relationships.

Based on the findings of this study, hygiene factors can be ranked from highest to lowest importance: rooms, food, location, facilities, Internet, price, lounge, and spa and sauna. New Zealand luxury hotel managers could pay more attention to those physical factors in order to increase guest satisfaction levels and prevent dissatisfaction. Only two motivation factors were identified in this study: service quality and staff attitudes, however, these two factors are the most important ones influencing guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Increasing the quality of tangible products decreases guest dissatisfaction levels, and paying more attention to service and staff increases guest satisfaction levels in New Zealand luxury hotels. This suggests that, if hotel managers can improve the quality of physical products, guest dissatisfaction levels may be decreased. Most importantly, it is advisable that if managers select staff members who have a positive attitude and passion, guest satisfaction may be improved by successful interaction between staff and guests.

4.3 Major influences on guest satisfaction with luxury hotels

4.3.1 Service quality

Table 3 shows that 70.0% of reviews stated that service quality influenced guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Table 5 shows that the main factors which influenced guest satisfaction on service quality were service surprises, personalised service, service in detail, efficient service, friendly staff and a high overall standard of service.

Table 6 Influences on guest satisfaction with service quality of New Zealand luxury hotels

Positive influences	Count (n = 42)	% of reviews
Service surprises	22	52.4
Personalised service	19	45.2
Service in detail	15	35.7
Efficient service	12	28.6
Friendly staff	7	16.7
High standard overall service	6	14.3

Table 6 shows that service surprises, efficient service and service in detail were the top three influences of service quality. Five examples of TripAdvisor guest feedback were selected to explain the three factors and also show the reasons for guest satisfaction with service quality in New Zealand luxury hotels:

“We did not tell the hotel it was my wife’s birthday, but we received surprises of handwritten cards in the room with a lovely birthday cake.”

“every time the room was prepared specially for me, from softer pillows to extra items in the minibar.”

“Every part of our stay had been taken care of, from picking up in airport to helping transportation and bags at the end.”

“We were treated to an upgraded room, dessert plate and welcome drink, and some of the best customer service we have experienced in years.”

“We were staying for two nights as part of a family group celebrating a golden wedding anniversary, we were so impressed by the personal attention to detail and service that such a special occasion required.”

A high percentage (52.4%) of guests was satisfied with the service provided by New Zealand luxury hotels because they found surprises from the service staff, and those surprises made them feel special. This aligns with the literature that guests’ perceptions of service during their stay mainly determine their level of satisfaction with luxury hotels (Allan, 2016). A similar study discussed the special feelings guests experienced when they were in VIP (very important person) zones, which led to higher guest satisfaction (Fombella, Sirianni, Goldstein & Cialdini, 2015). In New Zealand luxury hotels, guests were looking for something special that surprised and delighted them, for example, offering birthday cakes for guests, or flowers for guests who are on honeymoon. Hemmington (2007) advanced the same ideas, stating that hospitality industries should design their guest experience to include ‘lots of surprises’ or ‘sparkling moments,’ using creative ideas to excite and stimulate the guests. New

Zealand luxury hotels could design and deliver service surprises to guests from guest check-in to check-out in order to create memorable moments for guests. Hemmington (2007) also notes that hotels should take responsibility for guest experiences to increase the level of guest satisfaction.

Interestingly, offering service surprises to women and children had a higher probability of receiving positive feedback. Because feelings of women and children could be touched and influenced easily, they also had higher expectations of something ‘special for you’ and most of them said ‘wow’ when they received service surprises. Verhagen, Nauta and Feldberg (2013), in a similar study, stated that women are more likely to release their emotions and express their special experience. This suggests that designing surprises for children who are on their birthdays and couples who are there on special occasions helps New Zealand luxury hotels create more guest satisfaction and obtain increased positive feedback.

A high percentage (45.2%) of guests were satisfied with the service quality because they received personalised service in New Zealand luxury hotels. New Zealand luxury hotels showed their guests they were important by knowing their names and other personal information. This made guests believe they were valued and important to the hotels. This finding matches that of Razzaq *et al.* (2016), whereby personalised service offered by New Zealand luxury hotels produced high guest satisfaction by making guests feel highly valued. Offering personalised service based on guests’ preferences make luxury hotels stand out from other hotels. This also agrees with the study by Walls *et al.* (2011), whereby guest perception of personalised service increased guest satisfaction levels by making them understand the value of luxury hotels. Therefore, paying more attention to guests’ personal information may help New Zealand luxury hotels improve guest satisfaction by delivering specially designed service.

Delivering complete service provides guests with a ‘welcome feeling’, and increases guest satisfaction levels (Gupta & Sharma, 2016). A welcome feeling is an important factor that could raise guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. A high standard of service is an expression of welcome by local residents to travellers arriving in their community (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012). In the luxury hotel industry, examples of providing service in detail include greeting guests at the main hotel entrance, offering welcoming drinks and suggestions of local restaurants, and handling luggage during

check-in and check-out processes. Hotel guests feel most welcome if the staff help them with luggage (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012). Guest satisfaction may also be improved if more ‘surprises,’ ‘personalisation’ and ‘welcome feelings’ are generated.

4.3.2 Professionalism and passion of staff

Table 3 shows that 40% of guests stated that the professionalism and passion of staff had influenced their satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Table 4 shows that the main influences that determine guest satisfaction were the passion of staff, along with their friendliness, professionalism and positive attitude.

Table 7 Influences on guest satisfaction with professionalism and passion of staff of New Zealand luxury hotels

Positive influences	Count (n = 24)	% of reviews
Passion of staff	20	83.3
Friendly staff	18	75.0
Professional staff	16	66.7
Positive attitudes of staff	15	62.5

Table 7 shows that the passion, friendliness, and professionalism of staff were the top three influences with respect to staff. Five examples of TripAdvisor guest feedback were selected to explain these three factors and also show the reasons for guest satisfaction:

- “The team were genuinely thoughtful and passionate, I experienced true service from the heart”*
- “Staff were always friendly and could not do enough to assist with restaurants recommendations and give us a general feeling we would be looked after”*
- “The staff were highly professional- the doorman came to meet our taxi before it had even stopped, and had our bags out of the boot before I could get out of the taxi”*
- “The housekeeping staff exemplifies ‘attention to detail’ as they let you return to a perfectly made room, any time of the day.”*
- “The staff at the front desk is absolutely on point: prompt, professional, courteous and friendly.”*

The passion, friendliness and positive attitudes of staff were more important than professionalism and knowledge in New Zealand luxury hotels. Guests had higher expectations with respect to relationships and interaction with service providers during their stay, and the host-guest relationship was the key characteristic of hospitality that is

socially and culturally required by guests (Hemmington, 2007). Easy-going and passionate staff with positive attitudes could deliver service to guests beyond their normal requirements. ‘Special relationship’ was defined by Ariffin and Maghzi (2012) as one of the most influential dimensions in successful hospitality. They also pointed out that service providers should build personal relationships instead of transactional relationships because personalisation is preferred by guests (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012). Passionate and friendly staff make guests believe that New Zealand luxury hotels are providing ‘service from the heart’ that stands out from normal service.

Further, the passion and personality of staff led easily to professionalism and strong skills because they love serving people and would like to learn more skills in order to perform well. It is very important to select the right staff – those with passion and positive attitudes, and then provide complete training for them in New Zealand luxury hotels. Such staff could delight guests by showing their positive attitudes and providing more surprises to guests based on their knowledge. This finding is different from Lu *et al.* (2015), who argued that selecting staff with strong work experience helps organisations better achieve their goals. According to Walls *et al.* (2011), employees’ attitudes to serving people strongly influence guest satisfaction, because guest perceptions are primarily influenced by the interaction between staff and guests. Therefore, this suggests that if New Zealand luxury hotel managers pay more attention to selecting staff with passion and positive attitudes, guest satisfaction may be improved.

4.3.3 Rooms

Table 3 showed there were 46.7% of reviews stating that rooms had influenced guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Table 8 shows that the main influences which determined guest satisfaction about rooms were view, design style, cleanliness, space and quietness of rooms.

Table 8 Influences on guest satisfaction with rooms of New Zealand luxury hotels

Positive influences	Count (n = 28)	% of reviews
View	22	78.6
Design style	20	71.4
Cleanliness	17	60.7
Space of rooms	14	50.0
Quiet	9	32.1

Table 8 shows that view, design style and cleanliness were the top three influences concerning rooms in New Zealand luxury hotels. Five examples of TripAdvisor guest feedback were selected to explain the three factors and also show the reasons for guest satisfaction with rooms:

“Our room has amazing marina view with movement of boats all the time.”

“The rooms are comfortable with reasonable layout and modern design.”

“The rooms are bright and clean, they are at five-star hotel level.”

“The rooms are super clean and comfortable with all the usual amenities normally available at hotels such as these: robe, slippers, hair dryer, magnifying mirror etc.”

“The room was so spacious and accommodated the roll out bed for four daughters without compromising any space at all: beds were amazing.”

View, design style and cleanliness of rooms in New Zealand luxury hotels were the most important influences that determined guest satisfaction. Guests stated that the view from their rooms had the strongest influence on guest satisfaction. More specifically, guests described amazing views from their rooms in these ways: ‘view of waterfront,’ ‘view of Sky Tower,’ ‘view of city,’ ‘view of mountain,’ and ‘view of lake.’ Rooms that are clean, bright, big, beautifully designed and quiet can be offered by most five star hotels in New Zealand (Razzaq *et al.*, 2016). This finding is also consistent with the study by Chan and Baum (2007), which highlighted the importance of intangible aspects (view) as well as tangible factors (rooms). During check-in and check-out processes guests can be reminded of the beautiful view, which may result in a last-minute increase of guest satisfaction (Khoo-Lattimore & Ekiz, 2014).

Design style and cleanliness were also important for guest satisfaction with luxury rooms. A similar study emphasised the importance of offering clean rooms, as accommodation is the one of the core components of hotels (Friar & Friar, 2002). In addition, the findings show that guest satisfaction was achieved by unique design styles of hotel lobbies and guest rooms, and the designs that combine hotel traditions and city

features. Another study found that guest satisfaction with luxury hotels was not only influenced by the unique design of rooms, but also by room design styles based on local traditional features (Allen & Allen, 2008).

However, by contrast, Binkowska (2005) argued that room amenity is the most important element that increases guest satisfaction, because it adds extra value to rooms. It is advisable for New Zealand luxury hotel managers can ensure the basic condition of rooms such as cleanliness. Adding special concepts and local traditions into room design may improve guest satisfaction by creating a unique experience for guests.

4.3.4 Food

Table 3 shows that 36.7% of guests stated that food influenced guest satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Table 9 shows that the main influences which determined guest satisfaction about food were choice, presentation, taste and portions of food.

Table 9 Influences on guest satisfaction with food of New Zealand luxury hotels

Positive influences	Count (n = 22)	% of reviews
Choice of food	18	81.8
Presentation of food	17	77.3
Taste of food	16	72.7
Portion of food	10	45.5

Table 9 shows that choice, presentation and taste were the top three influences with respect to food. Five examples of TripAdvisor guest feedback were selected to explain the three factors and also to show the reasons for guest satisfaction with food:

“Various types of food; you name it they have it”

“Food was excellent and beautifully presented and displayed”

“The food tastes outstanding- there is no way you can go wrong here”

“Breakfast is perfect - fresh squeezed juices, fruit, vegetables, vegan and gluten-free options, fresh smoked salmon and cheeses, cannot wish more from the restaurant.”

“We ate most breakfast, lunches and dinners at the restaurant on site, and were really happy with the quality and freshness of the food.”

The results of this study show that food was an important factor for increased guest satisfaction, especially if it was well prepared, planned, presented and served. The most significant commendation on food was the availability of a large choice. This finding

supports Khoo-Lattimore and Ekiz’ (2014) explanation of how various food choices can enhance guest overall satisfaction in hotels. Luxury hotel guests have higher expectations for the food provided by hotel restaurants. Therefore, providing high quality food with professional presentation can gain competitive advantage for New Zealand luxury hotels. However, Lim and Chan (2013) found that food delivery processes to guest rooms and tables were the most significant factor that influences guest satisfaction. This is similar to the findings in Section 4.3.1 where high quality and personalised service added more value to a guest experience. In the light of these statements, it is recommended that New Zealand luxury hotels provide a wide selection of food and deliver professional dining service, so guest satisfaction may be improved.

4.3.5 Location

Table 3 shows that 45% of guests stated that location had influenced their satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Table 7 shows that the main influences which determined guest satisfaction about location were proximity to shopping centres and restaurants, and access to transportation and the main business district.

Table 10 Influences on guest satisfaction with location of New Zealand luxury hotels

Positive influences	Count (n = 21)	% of reviews
Close to shopping centre	17	81.0
Easy for transportation	14	66.7
Close to restaurant	10	47.6
Close to main business district	10	47.6

Table 10 shows that proximity to shopping centres and restaurants and access to transportation were the top three influences. Five examples of TripAdvisor guest feedback were selected to explain the three factors and also to show the reasons for guest satisfaction with location:

“Location was great from a logistic point of view i.e. centre of the town, activities, bus stops, etc.”

“The location was superb for all the sight-seeing requirements, public transport or just popping over to the viaduct for a bite to eat”

“The location is good for access to the main food market and close to many famous restaurants and bars”

“The location could not have been better for us with day-trips with Waiheke, Les Mills classes and dinner at viaduct.”

“The location is great with a short 5 minutes walking to the main shopping area with lots of branded stores.”

Location of luxury hotels with good access to the main transportation and shopping centres led to a high level of guest satisfaction in New Zealand. The findings show that New Zealand luxury hotels should not only be located based on the needs of their target market, but also be easily accessible for guests. This is similar to the study that showed that major natural and man-made attractions, stations, shopping malls are location-related factors that attract tourists and increase their satisfaction (Binkowska, 2005). Further, a good location could satisfy guests and create advantages by meeting guests' different requirements. This result supports Khoo-Lattimore and Ekiz' (2014) statement that good location offers different guests close proximity to different amenities. Many New Zealand luxury hotels located in mid-cities. Guest satisfaction may be improved if New Zealand luxury hotels have good locations that provide and maintain easy access for their guests.

4.4 Major influences on guest dissatisfaction with luxury hotels

4.4.1 Service quality

Table 3 shows that 56.7% of reviews stated that service quality had influenced guest dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Table 11 shows that the main influences which determined guest dissatisfaction on service quality were lack of efficient staff, lower level of service than expected, no value for money and overall poor service.

Table 11 Influences on guest dissatisfaction with service quality in New Zealand luxury hotels

Negative influences	Count (n = 34)	% of reviews
Lack of efficient staff	23	67.6
Lower level of service than expected	22	64.7
No value for money	20	58.8
Overall poor service	16	47.1

Table 11 shows that the lack of efficient staff, a lower level of service than expected and no value for money were the top three influences of guest dissatisfaction with service quality. Five examples of TripAdvisor guest feedback were selected to explain the three factors and also to show the reasons for guest dissatisfaction with service quality.

“Inefficient staff provides slow service in every department that you would not want in a luxury hotel.”

“Star rating creates certain expectations but the hotel has not reached those expectations, the service is so bad that it has spoiled my whole experience.”

“Average level service and food. I could not fault this hotel certainly offers no value for money.”

“It is very disappointed to have the slow service at both front desk and restaurant in a five-star hotel.”

“Poor service, bad attitude and lazy staff made this hotel not valued for money.”

Service provided by staff in New Zealand luxury hotels mainly increased guest dissatisfaction with service quality. The literature stated that observing the performance of a luxury hotel employee is an opportunity for the guests to evaluate the service level of the luxury hotel (Binkowska, 2005). Because staff affected and displayed the quality of service and the quality of the luxury hotel, guests dissatisfied with staff performance led to guest complaints about service quality. This is in contrast to Table 4, where friendly staff with positive attitudes led to guest satisfaction with service quality. After selecting the right staff, training is also advisable to reduce guest dissatisfaction, because passionate staff can be very proactive to deliver service but knowledgeable staff provide more efficient service to guests (Lu *et al.*, 2015).

Guest dissatisfaction with service quality was also caused by gaps between guest expectations of service and their actual perception of staff performance. A high star-rating for New Zealand luxury hotels leads to higher guest expectations of levels of service (Goodsir, 2008). Guests have different expectations of service caused by different experiences of being served in luxury hotels (Lu *et al.*, 2015), and different income levels of guests, which cause the other influences of value for money. The majority of guests said that it was important they were well-served so that the money spent was worth it. Offering personalised service is a useful way to increase the value of service (Goodsir, 2008). For example, setting rooms with flowers and congratulatory cakes for honeymoon guests are adding value to service. This is consistent with what Binkowska (2005) highlighted in her study, that providing something special to guests based on the purpose of their trips or preferences helps hotels reduce guest dissatisfaction. This suggests that if New Zealand luxury hotel managers and staff can offer personalised service to increase the value of service and boost guest loyalty by delivering what hosts promised and what guests expected, guest dissatisfaction may be reduced.

4.4.2 Professionalism and passion of staff

Table 3 shows that 55% of guests stated that the professionalism and passion of staff influenced their level of satisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Table 12 shows that the main influences which determined guest dissatisfaction were unfriendly staff, the poor attitudes of staff, inefficient staff and lack of knowledge of staff.

Table 12 Influences on guest dissatisfaction with professionalism and attitude of staff in New Zealand luxury hotels

Negative influences	Count (n = 33)	% of reviews
Unfriendly staff	26	78.8
Poor attitudes of staff	19	57.6
Inefficient staff	15	45.5
Lack of knowledge	14	42.4

Table 12 shows that unfriendly staff, the poor attitudes of staff, and inefficient staff were the top three influences of guest dissatisfaction with staff. Five examples of TripAdvisor guest feedback were selected to explain the three factors and also to show the reasons for guest dissatisfaction:

“The staff are not knowledgeable enough, some are not friendly enough during our stay”

“Staff poor attitude when these mistakes were highlighted was awful with no hint of an apology”

“The staff were cold and not friendly, they took a long time to fix problems for us”

“The staff smile and say ‘good morning’ and ‘good evening’ but when you need something resolve they seem clueless.”

“As we pulled into the entrance there was no staff to greet us and collect luggage even though there were staff milling around, it just lacked a five-star professionalism.”

In New Zealand luxury hotels, the attitudes and passion of staff were more important than their skills and knowledge. Guests always focused on the importance of interaction when describing their feelings and expectations. As discussed in Section 4.3.2, interaction between guests and staff was the main factor which influenced guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction with staff performance. Allen and Allen (2008) did a similar study that suggested that staff attitudes strongly influence guest perceptions of overall service and their revisit intention in luxury hotels. More specifically, the term ‘rude’ was often used by guests to describe the staff in New Zealand luxury hotels, and

more particularly front-line staff. A possible explanation for this might be that some luxury hotel staff are arrogant and do not pay enough attention to guests who stay in standard rooms (Khoo-Lattimore & Ekiz, 2014). Brien *et al.* (2017) found that since most front-line staff in New Zealand hotels achieved only high school or diploma studies, they might not be well-educated and lack respect for guests. The above results suggest that New Zealand luxury hotel managers should pay more attention to identifying and selecting suitable individuals who love hospitality and have a passion to serve people (Orkin, 2015). The above result also suggests that if hotel managers cared more about a candidate's personality and positive attitude during the hiring process, guest dissatisfaction may also be reduced.

4.4.3 Rooms

Table 3 shows that 48.3% of guests stated that room condition influenced their dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Table 13 shows that the main influences which determined guest dissatisfaction with rooms were amenities, branded products, Internet, the view from the room, design and layout, and noise.

Table 13 Influences on guest dissatisfaction with rooms in New Zealand luxury hotels

Negative influences	Count (n = 27)	% of reviews
Amenities	20	70.0
Branded products	17	58.6
Internet	14	48.3
View from room	12	41.4
Design and layout	10	34.5
Noise	8	27.5

Table 13 shows that amenities, branded products and Internet in rooms were the top three influences for guest dissatisfaction with rooms. Five examples of TripAdvisor guest feedback were selected to explain the three factors and also to show the reasons for guest dissatisfaction:

“We did not receive any welcome amenities of fruits or dessert platter as I expected so I considered that price a bit expensive.”

“I have never heard the brand of personal care products in my room and I am sure they are not at luxury levels.”

“The Internet is not unlimited and my access to the Internet terminated two seconds after checkout, it was a little disconcerting when you are trying to arrange transport to the airport.”

“All rooms look in to each other with floor to ceiling windows, curtains have to be kept closed during the day and night as there is no privacy.”

“The room temperature was difficult to adjust, it was either way too hot or way too cold.”

Results show that room amenity was the most frequently mentioned theme generating guest compliments. New Zealand luxury hotel guests expected more ‘extra’ and ‘special’ items to add value to their stay. Organising unique amenities and improving room conditions avoids guest dissatisfaction. Shergill and Sun (2004) stated that additional amenities are the most important factors for guests to evaluate room value in luxury hotels. The findings show that most New Zealand luxury hotels only provide amenities to guests who were celebrating special occasions such as anniversaries or birthdays. The reason might be that every amenity has a cost, and adding more amenities requires hotels to invest more. The volume of amenities has a direct impact on bills (Shergill & Sun, 2004). New Zealand luxury hotel managers need to understand that room amenities can effectively decrease guest dissatisfaction. Further, if managers could design marketing approaches and pricing structures to balance costs, guest dissatisfaction may be reduced by giving more amenities.

Guests expected that products in luxury and branded hotels were well-known and branded. An interesting finding of this study is that female reviewers generally preferred personal care items (such as Hermes body lotion and L’Occitane hand cream), but males preferred more electronic products (such as Bose headphones and Samsung television). Internet access in guest rooms and hotel lobbies was the one of the most influences that increased guest dissatisfaction. Nowadays people travel with multiple devices so high-speed Internet is indispensable (Friar & Friar, 2002). Therefore, if luxury hotels offer high-speed and unlimited Internet access to guests, guest dissatisfaction may be prevented.

4.4.4 Food

Table 3 shows that 45% of reviews stated that food had influenced guest dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Table 14 shows that the main influences which determined guest dissatisfaction on food were food choice, tableware, portions of food and food taste.

Table 14 Influences on guest dissatisfaction with food in New Zealand luxury hotels

Negative influences	Count (n = 27)	% of reviews
Food choice	20	74.1
Tableware	18	66.7
Portions of food	16	59.3
Food taste	12	44.4

Table 14 shows that food choice, tableware, portions of food were the top three influences for guest dissatisfaction with food. Five examples of TripAdvisor guest feedback were selected to explain the three factors and also to show the reasons for guest dissatisfaction:

“The food spread at the restaurant was so limited and certainly doesn’t appeal to travellers coming from different countries”

“The tableware set is old and very low quality and lots of fingerprints on my water glass”

“The food on my wife’s birthday 22 June was terrible to say the least. Cold, overcooked, tasteless and extremely small portions”

“The food was very below standard, I spent \$28 dollars for a burger but it was with a stale bun and chewy meat.”

“The breakfast was mixed, the fruits and smoothies were great but the hot food was bland.”

The tangible factors of limited food choice, low tableware quality and small portions of food lead to guest dissatisfaction. Guests in New Zealand luxury hotels were seeking a memorable dining experience, and the tangible product choice and quality were important from a guest perspective. In contrast, Lim and Chan (2013) stated that dining service quality is the main concern for most guests in luxury hotel restaurants. This finding matches the previous result in Section 4.2: in New Zealand luxury hotels the intangible factor of service quality could lead to guest satisfaction while the tangible factor of product quality lead to guest dissatisfaction. It is recommended that if hotel food and beverage managers designed more choices for the menu, provided delicious and nutritious food, served food at the right temperature and with beautiful presentation, guest dissatisfaction may be avoided.

4.4.5 Location

Table 3 shows that 31.7 % of guests stated that location had influenced their dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Table 15 shows that the main influences

which determined guest dissatisfaction with location were distance from main attraction, and activities, and noise.

Table 15 Influences on guest dissatisfaction with location of New Zealand luxury hotels

Negative influences	Count (n = 19)	% of reviews
Distant from main attraction	15	80.0
Distant from activities	14	73.7
Noise	8	42.1

Table 15 shows the top three influences for guest dissatisfaction with location. Five examples of TripAdvisor guest feedback were selected to explain the three factors and also to show the reasons of guest dissatisfaction:

“Location as it is ‘relatively’ distant from Auckland’s main attractions and the harbour”

“The location is away from the city centre and take 10 to 15 minutes’ walk to the hustle city centre”

“The location is sitting in the city centre where getting noisy at night”

“The location isn’t great as it is not really close to the major tourist sights nor near the CBD or financial district, it is noisy at night time.”

“The location of the hotel is a shocker as it is far away from anything, it is good for getting on the motorway south but not much else.”

Many guests complained about the location of the hotel which influenced their plans during their stay. The results indicate that distance from the main attractions led to guest dissatisfaction with New Zealand luxury hotels. Luxury hotels which are located mid-city have the advantage of closeness to main shopping malls, transportation and activities, all of which are important to travellers. However, the findings show that locations in city centres also caused guest dissatisfaction because of low quality of sleep. This was consistent with Binkowska’s (2005) findings that noisy rooms and low sleep quality can cause very high guest dissatisfaction because high sleep quality is the most important requirement that luxury hotels should provide for guests. Therefore, although it is advisable for hotels to be located close to main attractions, luxury hotels need a soundproof system in guest rooms so that guest dissatisfaction can be reduced through the provision of a high level of sleep quality for guests.

4.5 Conclusion

The influential factors which determined guest satisfaction were the same as the influential factors that determined guest dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. The themes of service quality, professionalism and passion of staff, rooms, food and location of hotels were defined as the most influential factors for guests to evaluate their satisfaction and dissatisfaction. As discussed in Section 4.2, influential factors that determined guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction reflect the concepts of Herzberg's theory. After analysing the themes that were found from the TripAdvisor reviews, Table 16 was constructed to summarise those influences and categorise them into tangible and intangible elements based on Herzberg's theory.

Table 16 Major influences on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in terms of Herzberg's Two-Factor theory

Hygiene factors (Physical products/aspects)		Motivation factors (Intangible service/ interaction/ aspects)	
Satisfaction	Dissatisfaction	Satisfaction	Dissatisfaction
<i>Rooms:</i> Room design style; Cleanliness <i>Food:</i> Food choice; Presentation of food; Taste of food <i>Location:</i> Near shopping centre; Near transportation; Near restaurant	<i>Rooms:</i> Room amenities; Branded products; Internet <i>Food:</i> Food choice; Tableware; Portion of food <i>Location:</i> Far away from main attraction; Far away from activities; Noise	<i>Rooms:</i> View from room <i>Service quality:</i> Service surprises; Personalised service; Service in detail <i>Professionalism and passion of staff:</i> Passion of staff; Friendly staff; Professional staff	<i>Service quality:</i> Lack of efficient staff; Service lower than expectations; No value for money <i>Professionalism and passion of staff:</i> Unfriendly staff; Poor attitudes of staff; Inefficient staff;

Table 16 shows that both tangible and intangible factors influenced guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. The findings show that the intangible factors of service quality, professionalism and passion of staff had a stronger influence than the tangible factors of rooms, food and location. As discussed in Section 4.3.3, view was an intangible aspect but it had influence on guest satisfaction with the tangible product of room. This result is consistent with the study by Chan and Baum (2007) who

stated that combining tangible and intangible assets can maximise resources and accrue more benefits for hospitality businesses. This suggests that if New Zealand luxury hotel managers understood that both tangible and intangible factors interact to maximise value, the overall guest satisfaction may improve. For example, offering high quality and various types of food with personalised service; or delivering a congratulatory cake to honeymoon guests by a friendly staff.

In New Zealand luxury hotels, if guests were satisfied with hygiene factors, such as cleanliness and design of rooms, tasty and varied choices of food and location, guests could be loyal but provided only a few positive online reviews. For them to feel loyal, and therefore provide more positive reviews, the motivation factors also needed to be met. On the contrary, if guests were satisfied with motivation factors, such as detailed and personalised service, and friendly and professional staff, guests could be happy but might still provide negative online reviews. For them to provide less negative reviews, the hygiene factors also had to be met. To sum up, it is necessary to meet both hygiene (physical products) and motivation (intangible services and interactions) factors to maintain a guest satisfaction and loyalty.

The results of this study have fulfilled the objectives of this research by analysing the influences of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The following chapter provides the conclusions relating to the influences on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the conclusion in relation to the research objectives and explains the implications of the study which provide guidance for the stakeholders of New Zealand luxury hotels. The contributions and limitations of the study will also be presented, as well as directions and suggestions for future research.

5.2 Research objectives

This study has added to the literature exploring luxury hotel guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction by providing a New Zealand context. After undertaking the research in eight New Zealand hotels, the main conclusions are as follows:

(1) Service quality: Satisfaction vs. dissatisfaction

Service quality was the strongest influence on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Service surprises had a significant influence on improving guest satisfaction by making guests feel that they were special and important. Hemmington (2007) also found that service surprises added memorable moments to a guest experience. The findings from Section 4.3.1 support this idea by stating that offering personalised service was important because it makes hotel guests feel highly valued and most welcome. Inefficient service by staff was the main cause of dissatisfaction. Lack of passionate and knowledgeable staff decreased service quality levels and caused guest dissatisfaction (Lu *et al.*, 2015). The findings from Section 4.4.1 supported the view that inefficient staff with negative attitudes caused a poor interpersonal relationship between hosts and guests. To sum up, providing service with more ‘surprises,’ ‘personalisation’ and ‘welcome feelings’ increased guest satisfaction, while staff with negative attitudes and poor knowledge led to guest dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels.

(2) Professionalism and passion of staff: Satisfaction vs. dissatisfaction

The passion, friendliness and positive attitudes of staff, influenced both guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Passionate and friendly staff were more important than knowledgeable staff in New Zealand luxury hotels, as shown in

Section 4.3.2 of the findings. Luxury hotel guests preferred more interaction and relationship building with hosts. As Ariffin and Maghzi (2012) have shown, the host-guest relationship is one of the most influential dimensions in successful hospitality. Further, the quality of service delivery was based mainly on staff attitudes. Positive guest experience is created by staff with positive attitudes towards serving people (Walls *et al.*, 2011). The findings from the current study support this statement by showing that passionate staff delivered more personalised service and surprises to guests in order to improve guest satisfaction and prevent guest dissatisfaction.

(3) *Rooms: Satisfaction vs. dissatisfaction*

Beautiful views from rooms had a strong influence on guest satisfaction, perhaps because it affected the first and last minutes of a guest experience. This result is different from that in the study by Allen and Allen (2008), they suggested that guest satisfaction was based not only on the beautiful design of guest rooms, but also is also the room design relating to the host culture. Section 4.3.3 shows a similar finding: guests were satisfied with unique design styles of rooms that combined hotel traditions and features of local cities. Further, a lack of room amenities was one of the main causes that guest felt they were not valued and led to guest dissatisfaction with New Zealand luxury hotels. The findings in Section 4.4.3 show that well-known products were expected by guests in luxury hotels and many guests were dissatisfied with the room products because those products did not meet luxury standards.

(4) *Food: Satisfaction vs. dissatisfaction*

As Khoo-Lattimore and Ekiz (2014) explained in their study, guests have very high expectations of food choice and a wide selection of food helps satisfy more international guests. The findings in Section 4.3.4 also show that the availability of food choice was important for both guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In addition, low tableware quality in restaurants was one of the main causes of guest dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels (see Section 4.4.4). Because most guests expect branded and high-quality products in a luxury environment (Yang & Mattila, 2014), guests in New Zealand luxury hotels were seeking a memorable dining experience in their restaurants, and the tangible food choice

and high quality of tableware could represent the quality of restaurants in luxury hotels.

(5) Location: Satisfaction vs. dissatisfaction

Guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels were based on location-related accessibility for guests (Binkowska, 2005). The findings in Section 4.3.5 show that guest satisfaction was influenced by hotels whose location provided good access to main shopping centres, transportation and business centres. In addition, the findings in Section 4.4.5 show that guest dissatisfaction was caused by locations that were far away from main attractions, stations and shopping malls. The findings also show that although city-centre locations had the advantage of good access for guests which led to guest satisfaction, guest dissatisfaction was increased by the noise in city centres which led to a low quality of sleep for guests.

5.3 Implications

5.3.1 Adding personalisation and surprises in intangible service

Results from this study show that in New Zealand luxury hotels intangible service was more important than tangible products, as personalised guest services were a source of satisfaction. Goodsir (2008) also found that delivering unique service to guests is important in meeting guest expectations and increasing guest satisfaction levels. It is therefore recommended that if service providers pay more attention to guests' personal information, it may help New Zealand luxury hotels improve guest satisfaction. Further, the findings suggest that if hotels take more responsibility for adding memorable moments to the guest experience, there may be more satisfied guests in New Zealand luxury hotels. As Hemmington (2007) found, creating more 'service surprises' and 'sparkling moments' can delight guests and exceed their expectations. The importance of creating special memories for guests has been highlighted in the literature. It is suggested that staff should engage with guests and pay more attention to understanding guests' requirements in order to create a positive guest experience. In addition, it is also advisable for hotel managers to design a reward system in order to motivate staff. These may improve guest satisfaction with service quality in New Zealand luxury hotels.

5.3.2 Adding high value in tangible products

According to the findings of the current study, the value guests perceive has been highlighted as an important factor that influences guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Guests in luxury hotels were seeking extra and special value during their stay. Therefore, providing extra, experiential value to make guests feel most welcome is recommended to hotel managers. It is also advisable that New Zealand luxury hotel managers ensure the basic quality of products such as cleanliness of rooms and freshness of food. Further, extra value can improve guest satisfaction effectively in New Zealand luxury hotels. As Gupta and Sharma (2016) have stated, adding room amenities can delight guests during their stay in luxury hotels. Therefore, it is recommended that hotel managers add more value to tangible products, for example, delivering flowers and champagne to honeymoon guest rooms and cakes to birthday guest rooms. In addition, the findings from the current study and from the literature reflect that providing a personalised dining service and adding more international food choices on menus are suggested for luxury hotels managers to improve guest satisfaction. Further, if luxury hotel managers can add local city traditions and concepts into room design, that may also improve guest satisfaction.

5.3.3 Selecting and training staff

The results from this study show that in New Zealand luxury hotels, interaction and relationships between staff and guests were very important in New Zealand luxury hotels. Therefore, it is advisable if luxury hotel managers are attentive to recruitment. Selecting staff with passion and positive attitudes is important because skills and knowledge can be obtained through training, but staff personality and passion cannot be instilled by training (Chen, 2017). As Cox (2015) discussed in his study, personal attitudes and passion motivate people to work hospitably in a hospitable environment. The findings of this study suggest that hotel staff with positive attitudes and passion provide more empathetic service and authentic value to guests. Further, training staff and ensuring they can deliver professional service to a high standard may increase guest satisfaction. For a high level of guest satisfaction, it is also suggested that managers set clear goals for their teams and train team members based on understanding guest expectations.

5.4 Contributions and limitations of the study

5.4.1 Contributions to the literature

This study aimed to explore guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction with luxury hotels in New Zealand. The most significant contribution of the current study is that the results provide guidelines for luxury hotel managers to better satisfy their guests. The study focused on luxury hotels in New Zealand, guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in luxury hotels, different online communication forms and guest behaviours on TripAdvisor. This study has revealed high levels of guest expectations for New Zealand luxury hotels. Further, this study has shown its uniqueness in regard to the research location and the research method of using TripAdvisor as the data source, and the findings reflect local social and economic backgrounds.

The contribution this study makes reflects the concepts of Herzberg's theory (1966). Extrinsic factors in the workplace (hygiene factors) prevent people from becoming dissatisfied, but intrinsic factors (motivator factors) create more satisfied guests. More specifically, the 'hygiene factors' related to the physical products such as rooms, food, location and facilities, and the 'motivator factors' related to intangible service and interaction with staff that delighted guests in luxury hotels. This indicates that for New Zealand luxury hotels providing high quality rooms, food and beverages, facilities and a good location decreases guest dissatisfaction, while offering high quality and unique service and building successful relationships with guests increases guest satisfaction.

In addition, respondents in this study highlighted the significant influence of intangible factors on guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction; most guests expecting high quality service, extra value and successful host-guest relationships. In general, this study contributes to the literature with respect to guests' viewpoints of their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with luxury hotels in New Zealand. Future studies can build based on the findings from this study, explore other influences of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and discuss in more depth intangible service and tangible products in New Zealand luxury hotels.

5.4.2 Limitations of the study

Although this study contributed to existing knowledge of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in luxury hotels, several limitations can be identified. Firstly, the current study adopted some non-probability sampling techniques. According to the large population of international travellers in New Zealand luxury hotels, the sample size of 120 in this study for eight hotels may not represent the population very well. Therefore, the generalisability of the results could be limited. Secondly, the study was conducted from 1 July to 31 August 2017, which was off-peak season in New Zealand with fewer travellers. Therefore, guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction may have been affected by seasonal factors. Data from the eight weeks in winter was limited for the research in this field. The findings and results would be more reliable if more guests' reviews were collected for a longer time period or from other seasons. Thirdly, TripAdvisor might be more popular among younger guests and families. Instead of expressing satisfaction and dissatisfaction through online review tools, older guests might choose to verbally communicate, such as telling the hotel staff about their experience. And business people might not have time to write their opinions online. These factors led to the limited reviewer types on TripAdvisor. Lastly, the findings were collected online rather than face-to-face, so there could be some "self-report bias" (Kim, Murrmann & Lee, 2009, p. 618), where hotel managers might write positive comments and feedback for their own hotels.

This research adopted qualitative thematic analysis and data were analysed by only one researcher and thus the researcher's personal perspectives may have affected the process of data collection and analysis. The reliability and results of this study may therefore have been influenced. The study did not require ethics approval as secondary data does not require such approval. Ethical issues normally need to be addressed in the research proposal when researcher has direct contact with the participants (Babbie, 2013). In the current study, the data collected from TripAdvisor did not trigger any privacy concerns as there was no direct contact between the researcher and participants. Therefore, ethical issues were not a concern for this study.

5.5 Directions for future studies

This research explored some influences of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Questions raised by the results and the limitations of this study suggest that future studies in this field could work fruitfully in the following directions:

The study used the online communication tool, TripAdvisor, to collect the data.

TripsAdvisor provides rich data along with the benefit of saving in both cost and time.

Firstly, it is recommended that future studies utilise a qualitative approach to produce more interesting findings through different online communication forms. However, more guest feedback from different seasons and languages should be collected in order to gather more information from different time periods and types of guests. It is advisable for future studies to explore the satisfaction and dissatisfaction for different types of guests in luxury hotels, because different types of guests have different requirements. Secondly, limited types of reviewers limited the results of this study. It is recommended that future studies collect guest feedback not only from online tools but also from design surveys or questionnaires to get more in-depth data from guests, in order to further explore the influences of guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels. Thirdly, although the study found some factors that could influence guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction, it is still not clear to what extent guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction affected guest decision-making and hotel development strategies. Therefore, it is recommended that future research explores the relationship between guest satisfaction and their actual consuming behaviours in luxury hotels.

5.6 Summary

This chapter highlighted the practical implications for luxury hotel managers based on the results of this study. It covered contributions and limitations of the current research, and also provided directions for future studies in this field. In general, this research has examined guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction in New Zealand luxury hotels, and the results provide guidance for luxury hotels to better satisfy their guests. As outlined in the introductory chapter, this study contributes new knowledge to the literature and provides useful directions and suggestions for sustainable development in the hotel industry.

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