REPUBLIC OF TURKİYE
ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION, CUSTOMER EXPECTATION AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

# IN DJIBOUTI TOURISM INDUSTRY

MASTER'S THESIS

**Nouradin MAHDI MOHAMED**

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

ANKARA, 2025

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**Thesis Advisor**

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ANKARA, 2025

# APPROVAL PAGE

The thesis titled " The Relationship Between Customer Satisfaction, Customer expectation and Customer Experıence in Djibouti Tourisim Industry" prepared by Nouradin MAHDI MOHAMED has been accepted as a Master's Thesis at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Business Administration by the following jury by unanimous/majority vote.

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Date of the Defence: 26.06.2025

I hereby certify that this thesis fulfils the requirements for being a Master's Thesis at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Department of Business Administration.

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Director of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, that I have not had any unethical behaviour that violates patent and copyright rights in any stage, from the planning to the writing up of the thesis, that I have collected all the information by following academic and ethical rules and that I have cited all the information and comments used in this study. Date 26/06/2025

Signature

Nouradin MAHDI MOHAMED

# DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

For the unconditional support of my parents and close friends. To my teachers who passed on their knowledge and contributed directly to this study. To my advisor who was persistent and guided me to make this study more effective and meaningful.

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First of all, i would like to thank the glory of ALLAH who allowed and facilitated me to carry out this research, and my family who always supported me throughout this process which was not easy.

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# ABSTRACT

**The Relationship Between Customer Satisfaction, Customer Expectation And Customer Experience In Djibouti Tourism Industry**

This study investigates the relationship between customer satisfaction, customer expectations, and customer experience in Djibouti tourism industry. Its primary objective is to explore how the gap between tourists' pre-service expectations and their post-service experiences impacts overall satisfaction. Customer experience plays a critical role in shaping perceived service quality, while expectations directly influence how services are evaluated. A quantitative method was employed, with data collected from 153 tourists through a structured survey. The analysis reveals a strong positive correlation between customer satisfaction and experience, and a meaningful relationship between expectations and experience. Findings also show that when customer expectations are met or exceeded, satisfaction levels significantly improve, fostering favorable attitudes toward service providers. In developing countries like Djibouti, where tourism is gaining strategic importance, understanding this relationship is essential for designing effective service strategies. The study emphasizes the need for consistent service delivery and better expectation management to improve customer retention and competitiveness. Furthermore, the results suggest that aligning marketing messages with actual service capabilities can prevent dissatisfaction and increase loyalty. This research provides practical implications for hospitality managers, policy-makers, and service designers by underlining the value of a customer-oriented approach in tourism development.

**Keywords:** Customer satisfaction, customer expectations, customer experience, tourism industry, Djibouti

# ÖZET


## Cibuti Turizm Sektöründe Müşteri Memnuniyeti, Müşteri Beklentileri ve Müşteri Deneyimi Arasındaki İlişki

Bu araştırma, Cibuti turizm sektöründe müşteri memnuniyeti, müşteri beklentileri ve müşteri deneyimi arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Çalışmanın temel amacı, turistlerin hizmet öncesi beklentileri ile hizmet sonrası deneyimleri arasındaki farkın genel memnuniyeti nasıl etkilediğini araştırmaktır. Müşteri deneyimi, algılanan hizmet kalitesinin şekillenmesinde kritik bir rol oynarken, beklentiler de hizmetlerin nasıl değerlendirildiğini doğrudan etkilemektedir. Yapılandırılmış bir anket aracılığıyla 153 turistten toplanan verilerle nicel bir yöntem kullanılmıştır. Analiz, müşteri memnuniyeti ile deneyim arasında güçlü bir pozitif korelasyon ve beklentiler ile deneyim arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bulgular ayrıca, müşteri beklentileri karşılandığında veya aşıldığında, memnuniyet düzeylerinin önemli ölçüde arttığını ve hizmet sağlayıcılara yönelik olumlu tutumları teşvik ettiğini göstermektedir. Turizmin stratejik önem kazandığı Cibuti gibi gelişmekte olan ülkelerde, bu ilişkinin anlaşılması etkili hizmet stratejilerinin tasarlanması için elzemdir. Çalışma, müşteriyi elde tutma ve rekabet gücünü artırmak için tutarlı hizmet sunumu ve daha iyi beklenti yönetimi ihtiyacını vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca sonuçlar, pazarlama mesajlarının gerçek hizmet kabiliyetleriyle uyumlu hale getirilmesinin memnuniyetsizliği önleyebileceğini ve sadakati artırabileceğini göstermektedir. Bu araştırma, turizm gelişiminde müşteri odaklı bir yaklaşımın değerinin altını çizerek konaklama işletmeleri yöneticileri, politika yapıcılar ve hizmet tasarımcıları için pratik çıkarımlar sağlamaktadır.



**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Müşteri memnuniyeti, müşteri beklentileri, müşteri deneyimi, turizm endüstrisi, Cibuti

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In a context where the world of tourism services is evolving rapidly with innovations and consumer preferences, it becomes strategic to examine the complex dynamics of customer satisfaction, customer expectations and customer experience in the tourism and hospitality industry and how these interact to influence the overall perception of service quality (Chen & Chen, 2010). As such, these variables are closely interrelated and influence both customer behavior and loyalty as well as service quality, while playing a decisive role in the strategic framework of emerging destinations (Kandampully et al.,2015).

Customer satisfaction remains a key factor in the sustainability of service-based businesses such as tourism. It reflects how closely a consumer's experience matches or deviates from their expectations (Oliver, 1980). In turn, expectations are shaped by a variety of prior experiences, such as social and cultural influences, and promotions that make these intrinsic variables difficult to understand (Soni et al., 2018). When a service meets or exceeds expectations, it stimulates customer satisfaction and loyalty (Chi & Qu, 2008). On the other hand, when expectations are not met, this leads to customer dissatisfaction, which in turn damages the reputation of the destination (Pizam et al., 2016).

In academic research, customer experience is often approached as a multidimensional concept that encompasses several dimensions such as the emotional, sensory and cognitive aspects that illustrate customers' interactions with various services (Lemon, & Verhoef, 2016). Furthermore, it becomes necessary to look beyond the aspect of functional quality and to take into account the emotional and social resonances within the framework of the analysis of experiences, in order to better understand the complexity of the design of expectations in a multicultural environment (Lemon, & Verhoef, 2016). Thus, a clear understanding of the relationship between customer satisfaction, customer expectations and customer experience is essential for the development of services that focus on customer needs and foster customer loyalty (Gentile, Spiller, & Noci, 2007).

### 1.1 Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between customer experience and customer satisfaction within Djibouti's tourist industry.
2. To investigate the relationship between customer expectations and customer experience within Djibouti's tourist industry.

### 1.2 Research Questions

1. How do customer expectations influence the customer experience in Djibouti's tourist industry?
2. How do customer satisfaction influence customer experience in Djibouti's tourist industry?

### 1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it has the potential to enhance the field of tourist management in Djibouti, both theoretically and practically. Djibouti, a globally acknowledged tourist destination, is facing increased competition from other countries. To maintain a competitive edge and guarantee long-term success in the business, it's essential to understand the connection between customer satisfaction, expectations, and experience (Yüksel, 2001). The present study improves current understanding by analyzing the interrelation among three fundamental ideas in tourism research: experience, expectations, and customer satisfaction. Variations in expectations and satisfaction levels among international visitors in Djibouti underscore the importance of understanding customer heterogeneity and its effects on service provision (Ertürk, 2017). The findings can aid stakeholders in developing tailored strategies to synchronize customer experiences with expectations. The study's results help guides direct marketing efforts, augment overall customer satisfaction, and elevate service performance. To maintain Djibouti's competitive position in the global tourist sector, it is imperative to bolster customer loyalty, promote favorable word-of-mouth, and stimulate repeat patronage. Synchronizing service offers with customer expectations can accomplish this (Moslehpour et al., 2012).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is an important aspect of this research covering the analysis of various research studies conducted on various aspects of the research variables. In the first section, two major theories will be discussed by analyzing the theoretical foundations for the current research. This involves analysis of the general tenets of the theories and the analysis of how the theories relates to the research. The importance of providing a theoretical foundation for this research is to shape the discussion for future specific analysis including relationships between the research variables, analysis of factors behind the existence of a variable and to determine the overall directions for the research. Hence, the literature review will continue from the theoretical review to the analysis on customer experience and customer satisfaction and their relationship will be outlined, followed by customer expectations and their relationship with customer experience.

### 2.1 Theoretical Perspective

#### 2.1.1 The Evaluative Congruity Theory

Sirgy's (1984) Evaluative Congruity Model, also referred to as the Social Cognition Model, highlights the critical role of assessment congruity in determining satisfaction. Assessment congruity is a conceptual alignment process where individuals compare a thought with a related referent cognition to judge a stimulus or an interaction. The customer's emotional or motivational state is aroused by the cognitive process, which is a situation of dissatisfaction or satisfaction felt by the customer that leads them to envisage other means of compensating for their felt dissatisfaction or ensuring future satisfaction (Sirgy, 1984). The model outlines three types of congruence: negative incongruity, congruity, and positive incongruity. Negative incongruity occurs when there is a discrepancy in valence levels between a perception and its corresponding referent cognition, leading to discomfort. This concept aligns with the notions of affirmation and denial. Conversely, congruity reflects a neutral cognitive state that results in a sense of satisfaction when only minor discrepancies exist between perception and its referent cognition. Positive incongruity arises from constructive divergence between an individual’s perception and cognitive reference, generating satisfaction due to favorable outcomes.

In contrast to the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP), Sirgy's (1984) method evaluates customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction through a comprehensive analysis of the alignments between evoked and perceptual reference states. The Evaluative Congruity Model suggests that satisfaction derives from various cognitive congruities. For instance, satisfaction might emerge from the alignment between anticipated product performance before purchase and the idealized post-purchase performance. Similarly, satisfaction may stem from the correlation between expected product performance post-purchase and the performance deemed reasonable after usage, or the comparison of new product performance post-usage with prior expectations. Each alignment significantly influences customer satisfaction levels (Sirgy, 1984).

The classic Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm posits that customer satisfaction remains constant when poor performance meets low expectations, and exceptional performance meets high expectations (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2008). However, the Evaluative Congruity Theory presents a nuanced perspective, asserting that satisfaction peaks when a positive experience exceeds initially low expectations of a service. Research reveals that travelers achieve the highest satisfaction levels when their expectations are low, but their experiences exceed these expectations. The model further shows that satisfaction is moderate when both expectations and perceptions are positive. Conversely, satisfaction declines sharply when unfavorable expectations align with negative perceptions. The lowest satisfaction levels occur when positive expectations clash with unfavorable experiences. These findings affirm a key principle of Evaluative Congruity Theory: differing combinations of expectations and performance evaluations lead to varying satisfaction levels.

Specifically, this theory relates to the current research in that it provides strong associations between the factors of customers' satisfaction and the satisfaction for the services received in various hospitality outfits during tourism. For example, a negative congruity may be perceived by customers if they expect several offerings to be included in the service menu when they order for 5-star hotel service like personalized care, use of software to access customer support, free lunch, access to premium services like musicals, etc. However, when they do not see these things based on their referent cognition, they become dissatisfied with the services. This is clearly different from the expectancy theory because some of the customers may not have come in contact with tourism services before but have referent cognition from what they have observed in other places including books, reviews, or general feedbacks on social media platforms.

Hence, their congruity dimension aligns with the established thoughts on how services should be or how products should be delivered accordingly.

Wu et al. (2023) expanded on the issues affecting customers' destination loyalty in a bid to expand on the underlying explanations concerning the attitudes and feelings of tourists to specific destinations. While the findings support the current analysis of the evaluative-congruity theory, it also points to the existence of two forms of congruity including symbolic and functional congruity. Hence for Chon & Olsen (1991), customer satisfaction is an emotional state because it prompts the consumer toe evaluate different courses of actions to reduce the potential dissatisfaction and obtain future state of satisfaction.

### 2.1.2 Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory

To understand customer satisfaction, researchers have developed numerous models and theories, with Olivier (1977; 1980) expectancy-disconfirmation theory being one of the most prominent. This model underscores the importance of customer expectations in determining satisfaction. According to Martin & Simmons (2014), satisfaction is measured by comparing actual service experiences against customer expectations. However, ambiguity persists regarding the precise standards for measuring experience, the origins of these standards, and how they develop over time.

In this framework, customer expectations reflect the set of beliefs that they hold about the anticipated outcome of a service interaction. According to the principle of disconfirmation of expectations, the feeling of satisfaction derives from subjective evaluations of the gaps between initial expectations and actual perceptions of a product or service (Pizam & Milman 1993). The model comprises four key components: expectations, performance assessment, validation, and satisfaction/dissatisfaction (Kivela et al., 1999; Ozdemir, 2012).

Satisfaction arises when perceived performance exceeds expectations, while a shortfall results in dissatisfaction. When performance meets expectations, the outcome is neutral, yielding neither satisfaction nor disappointment (Ozdemir, 2012). Thus, expectations, perceived performance, and belief disconfirmation all play pivotal roles in shaping customer satisfaction (Wang et al., 2018).

There are four stages to achieving customer satisfaction: Initial Expectations: Consumers hold preconceived notions about items before deciding to purchase at time

Perceived performance denotes the judgements customers make about a product's performance after purchase, impacted by their experiences from time 1 to time 2 (Wang et al., 2018). Belief disconfirmation occurs when consumers assess actual performance about their initial expectations. Unachieved performance reflects negative confirmation of expectations, while performance that exceeds desired expectations reflects positive confirmation. Rebuttal of ideas and perceived performance ultimately influences satisfaction (Oliver & Swan, 1989). Research supports the hypothesis that satisfaction strongly influences repurchase intentions (Wang et al., 2018). For instance, in retail, enhanced vendor satisfaction fosters customer loyalty and reduces the likelihood of switching to competitors. This demonstrates the critical role of positive psychological experiences in influencing future customer behavior. Additionally, online product reviews have emerged as valuable proxies for customer satisfaction, serving as tools to enhance customer retention and drive revenue growth (Moon et al., 2010).

It is crucial to recognize that there are fundamentally two methods for examining dis/confirmation of expectations. The first is the inferred approach (also known as the subtractive approach), and the second is the direct approach (or the subjective approach) (Meyer & Westerbarkey, 1996). The inferred approach entails calculating the discrepancy between expectations and performance evaluations. This process necessitates that researchers gather distinct information regarding customer service expectations and perceived performance. These scores are subsequently subtracted to create a third variable, known as the dis/confirmation or difference score. The inferred (subtractive) disconfirmation approach is based on the theory of comparison (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) and posits that the impact of a post-experience comparison on satisfaction can be articulated as a function of the algebraic difference between product performance and a comparative standard. The inferred approach has garnered substantial support from research in cognitive psychology, where psychological variables represented as algebraic rules have been shown to reflect human information processing across a diverse range of situations.

Conversely, the direct approach necessitates the application of summary judgmental scales to assess dis/confirmation, such as ratings from better than expected to worse than expected. The researcher avoids calculating the difference scores, as respondents can be directly queried about the degree to which the service experience surpassed, met, or fell short of their expectations. As an alternative, the subjective disconfirmation approach embodies a unique psychological construct that includes a

subjective assessment of the difference between product performance and the comparison standard (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982). In essence, subjective disconfirmation encompasses a series of psychological processes that may mediate perceived discrepancies in product performance.

The theory of expectancy-disconfirmation theory adds to the current research by explaining how people form expectations about services offered by the companies across different tourism destination. Findings from the analysis of the details of the theory suggest that when expectations of the customers are not met, they tend to exhibit negative disconfirmation which means that they are dissatisfied and vice versa. Hence, the performance of the product or services provides tangible explanations to how satisfaction is developed among customers. Within the tourism sector, this means that customers may decide to continue their engagement with an organization if the vendor delivers what has been promised and confirms the expectations of the customers. In the case where their expectations are not met, they may not return to the tourism destination or partner with the tourist vendor. Hence, it becomes imperative to consider issues around customers' expectations and how disconfirmation can be derived. For example, we can decide on disconfirmation by critically analyzing the experiences of customers while the expectations may be previewed under the purview of the quality of services that were delivered to these customers.

### 2.2 Customer Experience

The existing body of literature concerning customer experience lacks consensus on both the definition of customer experience and its associated application to specific contexts. There is considerable confusion regarding whether experience should be viewed as a reaction to an offering or as an evaluation of the offering's quality (e.g., Kumar et al. 2014). Consequently, in certain studies, customer experience is found to overlap with outcome variables such as satisfaction or value, while in others, it is treated as an independent variable that leads to satisfaction. Moreover, some research perspectives consider experience to be a characteristic of the product itself rather than the customer's reaction to it (e.g., Pine and Gilmore 1998), which stands in stark contrast to the interpretive tradition that consistently regards experience as a subjective perception by the individual, often equating it with value-in-use (Addis and Holbrook 2001).

Another area of conceptual ambiguity in the current literature pertains to the assumptions regarding the nature of experiences. As Carú and Cova (2003) observe, a significant portion of marketing research presumes that positive experiences are "memorable," if not "extraordinary." The existing research tends to differentiate between ordinary and extraordinary experiences as distinct phenomena (Klaus and Maklan 2011). However, these studies generally concentrate on the extraordinary or ordinary aspects of the offering, such as river rafting or experiential events (Schouten et al. 2007) or routine and mundane offerings (Carú and Cova 2003), rather than on the customer's reactions to these stimuli. Given that customer responses can vary from weak to strong (Brakus et al. 2009), we suggest that this intensity serves as a more effective marker for distinguishing between ordinary and extraordinary customer experiences. Therefore, this classification can be utilized as a continuum rather than a dichotomy; the weaker the customer responses and reactions, the more ordinary the experience becomes, and conversely (Carú and Cova 2003).

Based on the several postulation and differences in the assumptions behind customer experience, this research maintains the definition that connects different perspectives including Lemke et al. (2011) where customer experience is defined as "the client's subjective reaction to an unfamiliar encounter and complete immediate involvement with the firm, along with its evident superiority or excellence." This concept extends beyond product interactions to encompass a broad range of user experiences that redefine how customers perceive satisfaction. Becker and Jaakkola (2020) emphasize that customer experience can either serve as a standalone influence on satisfaction or function as an ancillary factor, depending on elements like fulfillment and value. In service industries, managing customer experience has emerged as a critical competitive priority (Garg et al., 2012). Customer experience assessments often integrate service quality, aiming to clarify objective evaluations while acknowledging the subjective nature of individual interactions (Khan et al., 2015).

In the context of tourism, another term that may be used to describe customers' experience is the customers' journey. According to Labben and Burger (2024), the customers' journey describes the customers' end-to-end experience which is different from satisfaction by considering various transactions or touchpoints. In this regard, contemporary tourism outfits do not just want the experience of customers to start from the onboarding in a hotel or getting access to a tourist destination (Ciriaco et al., 2025). Instead, the experience of the customer starts before gaining access to the product or

services. For example, bringing a new customer on board, or helping them to resolve technical issues with the bookings suggest an early interaction between the customer and the business.

Klaus and Maklan (2013) expand traditional service quality measures to include attitudes and emotions, offering a broader understanding of how direct and indirect interactions between customers and organizations shape their experiences. This holistic approach frames customer experience as an intricate process engaging emotional, intellectual, physical, sensory, and sensual dimensions. Klaus and Maklan (2013) specifically define customer experience as "the client's cognitive and emotional evaluation of all direct and indirect interactions with the firm regarding their purchasing behavior." In competitive market economies, the increasing emphasis on subjective quality reflects its vital role in fostering customer loyalty. High service quality significantly influences purchasing intentions, while unmet expectations often result in customer attrition, reducing both client base and revenue.

Although there are several metrics to estimate the extent of customers' experiences, the emotions of customers during the provision of services often provide the first glimpse of the experiences (Sykora et al., 2022). For example, a customer with positive experience would show a smile when leaving a resort compared to one with a negative experience. Hence, workers within the tourism industry are taught to understand the emotions of customers in other to ensure that the experiences of these customers are provided promptly and effectively since customer emotions during service consumption provide profound insights into how individuals evaluate the overall quality of their relationship with the provider. Similarly, (William et al., 2016) argue that understanding these emotional dimensions is essential for enterprises seeking to enhance customer loyalty and ensure long-term success. Nonetheless, there are more objective means to measure the experience of customers including experience surveys which may be provided during tourism visits or after tourism visits (Hosany et al., 2022). These surveys include a list of items helps to gain insights into the reasons customers' experiences are positive or negative. For example, open-ended questions give room for open feedback from the client to suggest where the business can improve and what can be done to enhance customers' experience (Xu, 2021). In addition, close-ended items can be used to determine the relationship between certain variables like gender, age, and customer' experiences.

Customer experience may comprise of different components that needs to be explored by business to harness the interest gained from their customers through a positive experience. One of such components is empathy involving the need for customers to feel valued and appreciated by the brands that they patronize. However, not all brands known how to integrate empathy into their customers' experience and journey. Conversely, integrating empathy into a business may simply involve providing the solutions that the customer seeks for by answering questions that might have led them to the business in the first instance. For example, a tourism firm may want to ensure that the security is provided during their stay in a reservation. A tourist business is supposed to understand the need for such demands and provide the services accordingly. The objective is not merely to sell your product and tally that sale as another statistic; rather, it is to empathize with a customer seeking answers and to ensure they receive them. Empathy fosters an emotional connection between the customer and the brand, resulting in stronger relationships, unsolicited referrals, and increased sales.

Personalization is yet another feature involving the offer of distinctive and customized experience to each customer, tailored to their preferences and tastes. The focus is on making the customer feel valued and understood this could involve simple gestures such as addressing them by name, suggesting products that align with their interests, or recalling their past purchases.

Furthermore, it is insufficient to merely cultivate empathy or provide personalized services; it is also essential to effectively communicate great value. Value pertains to the benefits or advantages that a customer gains from a product or service. An exemplary customer experience is one that provides exceptional value to the customer, fulfilling or surpassing their expectations and leaving a favorable impression of the brand.

Organizations have important roles to play in the enhancement of customer experience from the providing services and products in a way that customers feel fulfilled to management of the experiences gained by these customers. However, there is an argument on how customers' experience may be managed concerning whether customer experience is created or offered to customers of which strong arguments support the existence of both. In the context of tourism and hospitality experiences, customer experiences can be offered by suggesting different packages to customers (Kandampully et al., 2018). In this regard, customers may want to gain access to different packages during their tourist experience including packages that suit their

financial capabilities or their need for exclusivity making customer experience as a form of offering from the vendors to the customers. Conversely, the customers' experience is created by ensuring that customers get the experience that they seek after selecting specific tourist package by meeting and exceeding their expectations (See Yachin, 2018).

Research that considers customer experience as reactions to consumption processes provides valuable insights for managing uncontrollable touchpoints. For instance, Carú and Cova (2015) recommend that companies observe and respond to the collective behaviors of customers interacting with one another. Tax et al. (2013) propose that businesses should recognize other companies involved in the consumer journey and collaborate with these entities to enhance the overall customer experience. Some scholars argue that organizations ought to identify all stakeholders that impact the customer journey (Teixeira et al. 2012). By mapping offering-related stimuli as comprehensively as possible, companies can create offerings that align more effectively with customers' lives (Patrício et al. 2011). Therefore, businesses can leverage their understanding of external stimuli and contextual factors to their benefit, despite the inability to control these elements.

### 2.3 Customer Satisfaction

When a service or product meets or partially exceeds customer expectations, this leads to customer satisfaction. (Sanchez et al., 2018). Customer satisfaction is acknowledged as a vital evaluation of tourist services and is crucial for the development of enterprises and offerings (Sanchez et al., 2018). According to Nobar and Rostamzadeh (2018), customer satisfaction is a corporate principle that emphasizes the necessity of creating value for costumers, effectively managing and anticipating their expectations, and demonstrating the capability and dedication to fulfil their demands. Customer satisfaction signifies a comprehensive assessment of a company's performance based on all previous encounters. Consumer satisfaction, as articulated by Tielung and Untu (2021), denotes the comprehensive feeling customers have about items or services after their acquisition and utilization. Tielung and Untu (2021) outline several benefits of consumer satisfaction, including the establishment of a sturdy foundation for financial transactions, potential enhancement of consumer loyalty,

creation of positive word-of-mouth referrals, maintenance of the firm's favorable reputation among clients, and the potential for profit margin growth.

(Zhou et al., 2014) note that numerous subsectors of the tourism industry have examined customer satisfaction. The subsectors include agro-tourism, rural tourism, sports tourism, alternative tourism, cruise tourism, air travel, and hotel operations. Additional investigation is necessary regarding customer satisfaction and service quality in diverse tourism contexts. This is because, among all published research on customer satisfaction in the travel sector, limited studies focus specifically on restaurants and hotels (Sanchez et al., 2018).

A positive emotional state arising from the evaluation of all facets of a party's professional relationship with another describes customer satisfaction. It relates to the emotional responses of joy or discontent experienced when individuals compare the actual performance of a product or service to their prior expectations. When the perceived performance of managers fails to meet these expectations, frustration and dissatisfaction may ensue. Notably, the long-term financial implications for organizations are a vital aspect of customer satisfaction, as emphasized by (Khan et al., 2017).

Mukhles (2013) elaborates on customer satisfaction as both a process and an outcome. As a process, it involves perceptual, evaluative, and psychological elements that develop throughout the service delivery. As an outcome, it signifies the ultimate emotional state resulting from the consumption experience. This dual perspective highlights the dynamic nature of satisfaction, where ongoing evaluation influences the final perception. Oliver (1997) complements this understanding by defining satisfaction as the consumer experience following a transaction. The alignment or misalignment between actual and anticipated performance shapes the customer's feelings, where unmet expectations lead to disappointment or dissatisfaction (Kotler, 2011).

In addition to the given assistance, customer satisfaction is the paramount indicator of the quality of goods or services rendered to clients. It serves as a cornerstone for corporate sustainability, emphasizing the critical importance of retaining existing clients (Pizam et al., 2016). This underscores the significant role of customer satisfaction in ensuring business continuity and growth.

In marketing terms, customer satisfaction is a fundamental objective that enables us to establish a consistent approach to consumption and purchasing, and to the results of the transaction. The primary goal of addressing customer needs is to enhance

profitability through various avenues, such as organizational growth, market share expansion, and fostering recurring and referral business (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2003). Achieving satisfaction means surpassing customer expectations, where the overall experience leaves clients content.

Tourism research defines customer satisfaction as the emotional state of a tourist after their tour experience. Customer satisfaction is a critical factor in several tourism studies as it influences the industry's profitability and sustainability. Customer satisfaction during a trip reflects the total amount of enjoyment experienced by the traveller. The degree of satisfaction is contingent upon the extent to which the travel experience fulfils their requirements, expectations, goals, and aspirations (Mukhles 2013). When actual performance falls short of expectations, the consumer encounters disappointment or dissatisfaction (Kotler, 2008). Zhou et al. (2014) delineated three principal techniques utilised in the literature for evaluating customer satisfaction in the travel sector: A performance evaluation that includes direct examination, benchmarking, and the assessment of expectations. The expectation approach assesses performance by measuring the extent to which guest expectations are satisfied, resulting in satisfaction ratings that fluctuate from high to low when expectations are mostly fulfilled (Sanchez et al., 2018).

### 2.3.1 Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction

A combination of psychological, technological and experiential factors influences customer satisfaction. Service quality remains a primary determinant, with studies indicating that high-quality digital services significantly elevate user satisfaction in e-commerce platforms (Mamakou et al., 2023). Customer trust and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) also play essential roles, enhancing satisfaction and fostering repurchase intentions (Ginting et al., 2023). Additionally, user experience and engagement shaped by intuitive interfaces and personalized interactions contribute to a positive customer journey (Felix & Rembulan, 2023). Chatbot service quality further enhances satisfaction by improving perceived competence and emotional connection with brands (Chen et al., 2018). Lastly, customer orientation and brand image solidify loyalty through perceived value alignment (Jay et al., 2007). The concept of servicescape, as defined by Bitner (1992), provides a framework for understanding how non-tangible (such as hospitality or interpersonal interaction) and tangible (such

as location or architectural design) elements shape customer experiences. This study explores two critical dimensions of service scape ambience and hospitality as drivers of customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

### 2.3.2 Ambience

Ambience, a key environmental attribute, significantly influences customer satisfaction, loyalty, and consumer choice in the hospitality sector. For example, Babin & Griffin (1998) noted that small hospitality businesses in San Jose, Costa Rica, relied heavily on creating a welcoming atmosphere to attract customers. This observation is also confirmed by (Sim et al., 2006), which have demonstrated how the ambience of a hotel has a strong impact on the decision-making of customers. Link (1989) expanded on this by suggesting that a well-crafted atmosphere aligns with the expectations of the target market and increases the likelihood of repeat visits.

Bitner (1992) emphasized the role of the physical environment in creating settings that enhance interpersonal interactions and promote employee productivity. Furthermore, Skogland and Siguaw (2004) highlighted that visitors' satisfaction with a hotel's atmosphere is pivotal in fostering word-of-mouth loyalty. These findings align with earlier studies, such as Siguaw and Enz (1999), which highlighted the influence of hotel design and facilities on customer satisfaction levels. Similar insights are echoed by Sulek and Hensley (2004), who identified the restaurant atmosphere as a critical factor shaping customer satisfaction, reinforcing the broader significance of ambience in the hospitality industry.

In contemporary times, ambience have played significant role in the interpretation of the services offered by tourism outfits like restaurants, helping them gain large recommendations from customers and repeat patronage from these customers. For example, (Agbenyegah et al., 2022) demonstrated that ambient situations are often associated with high levels of customers' satisfaction because the customers have a flair for calm and relaxing environment where they can wine and dine and interact with their friends and relatives. Ultimately, an understanding of the role of ambiance has ensured that restaurants upgrade their environment to provide an ambient environment for the customers. In one of such studies, (Aziz et al., 2025) found positive relationship between ambience, food prices, cleanliness and customer satisfaction. Specifically, the ambience and cleanliness yielded a positive customers' satisfaction outcome in the

research showing the significance of ambience in tourism when discussing customers satisfaction. These findings also outline the extent to which the surrounding conditions or scenarios, including the physical arrangement of the restaurant, are believed to positively affect customer enjoyment. Moreover, (Nahjan et al., 2022) noted that environmental conditions also play a role in customer satisfaction, with three key factors spatial layout, atmosphere, and facility aesthetics being significant components of the restaurant environment that impact customer satisfaction. The connection between ambience and hospitality highlights the multifaceted nature of customer satisfaction. A well-designed physical environment complements personalized service delivery, creating a holistic experience that aligns with customer expectations and fosters loyalty.

Lim et al. (2020) argued that the need for ambience in enhancing the experiences of customers stem from the intense competitions that tourism outfits like coffeehouses face. Hence, an organization wants to provide ambience and a room for social interactions to enhance these experiences. Findings from the research indicated that two ambience conditions including cleanliness and furnishings were pivotal to the implementation of ambience in enhancing customers' experiences. Not only does this finding adds to the body of research on the relevance of ambience in the promotion of customers' satisfaction, it explored dimensions of ambience and how they may contribute to customers' satisfaction. In a similar study, Vilnai-Yavetz & Gilboa (2010) had discovered that customers may respond differently to different servicescape in multiple contexts. Specifically, feelings of pleasure, trust, and attributed prestige were exhibited by customers when exposed to clean environments compared to their contemporaries in environments that had dirt or disorder confirming the idea that cleanliness contributes to the satisfaction of customers. Additionally, Tastan & Soylu (2023) demonstrated that 42% of the customers' satisfaction to a restaurant was explained by the cleanliness of the environment of the restaurant. Furthermore, the satisfaction derived from the cleanliness of the environment impacted the intention of customers to want to revisit but does not affect the intention to provide complaints.

Regarding the role of furnishings as an aspect of ambience on customers' satisfaction, Papadopoulos & Mamalis (2023) discovered that customers' satisfaction in a hotel resort in Greece was influenced by bot the hotel's decoration and configuration of the rooms showing that customers appreciate beautiful aesthetics that

including the use of beautiful furnishings which adds to a positive customer's experience.

### 2.3.3 Hospitality

In the hospitality sector, the concept of hospitality transcends the tangible assets of a hotel and focuses on service excellence. Walker (2006) defines hospitality as a human-centric service that includes intrinsic motivation to warmly greet, assist, and serve guests. This personal touch significantly enhances customer satisfaction by fostering meaningful service encounters. Dissatisfaction arising from poor service interactions can lead consumers to seek alternatives, underscoring the critical role of interpersonal dynamics in retaining customers (Sim et al., 2006). Moreover, the relationship between these variables have been discussed in literature especially within the tourism context. For example, (Agustinawati et al., 2021) discovered that aspects of hospitality including customer solution and costs all improved the satisfaction of customers demonstrating the relevance of providing customer-centric strategy in driving tourist satisfaction. However, cost and solutions that is based on the needs of customers may not be sufficient in ensuring that customers are adequately provided with the services that they require especially when these businesses have to handle several customers request. Hence, the availability of modern technologies has allowed tourism outfits like hotels to provide automated and personalized services to their customers which may improve the satisfaction of customers. In one instance, (Mandic et al. 2023) discovered that most of the customers are not affected by prompt response to request. Instead, they place high regard for friendliness and courtesy representing 54.39% of the participants in this study. A possible reason is the growing availability of automations that allows customers to get prompt answers to their request.

Hospitality encompasses more than merely commercial service activities; it embodies the assurance of enjoyment, emotion, and experience. Firstly, in the realm of culture, hospitality considers the social environment, which is anticipated to provide customers with cultural value and the intended significance of religion that the host ought to present (Ariffin and Maghzi 2012). These cultural values must be effectively communicated to customers through food, beverages, entertainment, and the accommodation environment (Lashley 2015). In this context, the key aspect is not

merely the impression of appealing physical elements, but rather the experience, emotions, and cultural essence that should be adequately conveyed to customers (Slattery 2002). Secondly, the private domain pertains to the sense of home that customers can experience, and the service must be priced reasonably. In other terms, customers anticipate the value of the service provided through food, beverages, accommodation, and leisure activities to meet the highest standards of hospitality, surpassing the cost (Slattery 2002). Furthermore, in the private sector, the relationship between service providers and recipients is highlighted as a vital factor in business management (Slattery 2002; Ottenbacher and Gnoth 2005; Lashley 2015). Conversely, the commercial domain focuses more on the profitability and financial success of service operations rather than prioritizing customer satisfaction (Slattery 2002; Lashley 2015).

Lashley (2015) highlighted that the majority of studies conducted in the hospitality sector tend to concentrate on the commercial aspect, utilizing advanced technology to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty for profit maximization (Ottenbacher et al. 2006; Ottenbacher 2007). However, there is a lack of research on how the private and social domains affect customers' actual experiences. In general, the definition of hospitality suggests that pure hospitality operations should provide a welcoming and memorable experience, characterized by entertainment and specialized service quality through effective service delivery, as well as service products and facilities equipped with high-tech features to meet customer expectations (Slattery 2002; Lashley 2008; Ottenbacher et al. 2009; Rogerson 2010; Lynch et al. 2011; Lashley 2015).

In light of the highly competitive market, both hoteliers and researchers have explored the significance of service innovation as a means to differentiate from competitors. Such innovation must align with customer needs and preferences to gain acceptance (Rogers 2010). Tourists represent a potential customer base for hotels situated in historical or tourist destinations, where meeting their expectations for a novel experience through innovative hotel operations can promote repeat visits (Assaker et al. 2011). It is essential to craft a memorable experience by optimizing innovations in interior design, food and beverage offerings, and the overall ambiance for customers (Ottenbacher and Gnoth 2005).

### 2.3.4 Satisfaction and Service Quality

According to several research findings, customer satisfaction and service quality may sometimes be viewed as equivalent concepts within certain organizational contexts (Alvarez, 2018). However, many researchers, including Bansal and Taylor (2004), argue that while these concepts are distinct, they are closely interrelated. This distinction underscores the complexity of understanding how service quality influences customer satisfaction. Patterson and Johnson (1993) highlight that improvements in service quality over time contribute to a more consistent evaluation by customers. Their findings suggest that both emotional and cognitive factors play a significant role in shaping customer satisfaction. Supporting this, Bitner and Hubert (1994) emphasized that while quality is a critical factor, it does not solely determine satisfaction. Instead, service quality serves as a foundational element that shapes client perceptions and feedback, particularly in service industry.

In organizational settings where service quality is paramount, research consistently shows a strong correlation between service quality and customer satisfaction. In the hospitality sector, Jay and Hsin (2007) have shown that the quality of service has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. Similarly, Alvarez (2018) highlights that service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction, especially in businesses that integrate tangible goods with customer support or service provisions. In the context of the Jordanian tourism sector, Abu Ali and Howaidee (2012) demonstrated that service quality played a pivotal role in determining tourist satisfaction with destinations. To further understand this relationship, several models have been developed to analyze the interplay between service quality and customer satisfaction. Bitner (1990) posits that consumer satisfaction is a key outcome of achieving service excellence. This involves a comparative assessment where the service provided is measured against customer expectations. Alvarez (2018) extends this argument, asserting that service experiences designed with a focus on customer satisfaction are crucial for fostering a favorable perception of service quality.

The influential work of Cronin and Taylor (1992) adds to this discussion by proposing that service quality serves as a precursor to customer satisfaction. Their research indicates that the quality of service delivered is a primary determinant of satisfaction levels. Consequently, organizations aiming for high customer satisfaction must prioritize service quality as a core component of their strategy. Similarly,

(Kurniawan et al., 2024) distributed an online survey to 112 respondents and showed that while neither food quality and ambiance condition had no significant influence on customers' satisfaction, the service quality improved customer satisfaction showing a significance association between service quality and customer satisfaction when compared with other possible factors.

In summary, while customer satisfaction and service quality are distinct constructs, their interdependence is evident across various industries. Prioritizing service quality not only enhances satisfaction but also strengthens overall customer perceptions and loyalty.

### 2.4 The Relationship Between Customer Experience and Customer Satisfaction

Understanding the relationship between customer satisfaction and experience is essential to comprehending the loyalty and behavior of tourists. High-quality experiences defined by enjoyment, meaningfulness, and active engagement—significantly boost customer satisfaction levels. Research has shown that the dimensions of customer experience, including entertainment and emotional connection, positively influence customer satisfaction outcomes and subsequent behaviors such as loyalty and recommendation intentions (Bagheri et al., 2024). Moreover, experience quality enhances perceived value, which is a key driver of satisfaction among heritage tourists (Chen & Chen, 2010). Studies also confirm that customer satisfaction serves as a mediator between experiential quality and loyalty behaviors, illustrating the importance of delivering memorable and emotionally resonant customer experiences to ensure visitor contentment and long-term destination engagement (Osman & Sentosa, 2013).

Thanikkad and Kumar (2022) found that tourists' perceptions of a destination, along with their experiences at Kerala's cultural tourism hotspots, play a crucial role in shaping their post-visit satisfaction. This finding aligns with broader research emphasizing that how tourists perceive a region significantly influences their overall satisfaction. Pre-travel expectation and post-travel experiences with pleasure in cultural tourism particularly with regard to visits to cultural places are correlated, according to Sukanthasirikul and Trongpanich (2016). Chen and Rahman (2018) indicate that visitors' interactions with local life and customs can result in either satisfaction or

dissatisfaction, contingent upon their engagement with residents and their culture. Unfavorable circumstances may lead to misery, but strong relationships can foster satisfaction.

In online interactions and transactions, customers generally acquire product information from peers or media sources, establishing expectations before purchasing. This expectation functions as a pre-acceptance procedure rather than being pertinent to the customer experience. In contrast, firsthand knowledge, which varies according to the level of customer experience, affects perceived performance following a purchase. Researching the relationship between customer experience and perceived performance is pertinent for durable commodities used regularly over extended periods (Wang et al., 2018). (Ahrholdt et al., 2019) observe that customer satisfaction tends to decline as the level of experience intensifies, aligning with theoretical frameworks that conceptualize the experience process. This perspective is supported by Schmitt and Zarantonello's (2013) comprehensive analysis of customer experience in management literature, which highlights how marketing-related interactions shape and define the overall experience. Consequently, the following hypothesis was put forth:

**Hypothesis 1:** Customer satisfaction positively influences customer experience in Djibouti's tourism industry.

### 2.5 Customer Expectations

Expectation refers to the anticipation of future outcomes based on previous experiences, current situations, or various information sources (Curtin, 2022). As noted by Mudie and Pirrie (2006), expectations are typically established before utilizing a service, although they can also arise when a customer is actively engaged in the service delivery process. Some scholars argue that expectations act as a benchmark for evaluating service performance. A significant insight provided by (Chen et al., 2022) in understanding the types of standards utilized is that expectations are crucial for consumers in forming beliefs about disconfirmation and feelings of satisfaction. Nevertheless, the authors contend that this is not the sole standard employed by consumers. Consequently, customers have multiple information sources (including word of mouth, advertising, expert opinions, communications, and previous experiences with competing services) that shape their expectations regarding future

service interactions with a specific company (Bartschat et al., 2022). (Schiebler et al., 2025) emphasized that both expectations and perceptions of performance levels directly affect customer satisfaction, as well as indirectly through disconfirmation. Almsalam (2014) further validated that both customer expectations and perceived service quality significantly influence customer satisfaction. (Brogowicz et al., 1990) reinforced the notion that customer satisfaction is believed to occur when perceived service quality meets or surpasses the expectations of service quality.

Expectation refers to the anticipation of future outcomes based on previous experiences, current situations, or various information sources (Oliver, 2010). Mudie and Pirrie (2006) state that expectations are typically established before utilizing a service, although they can also arise when a customer is actively engaged in the service delivery process. Some scholars argue that expectations act as a benchmark for evaluating service delivery performance (e.g., Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988; Nicolaides & Grobler, 2017).

A significant contribution by Cadotte et al. (1987) to the understanding of the types of standards utilized is that expectations are crucial for consumers in forming disconfirmation beliefs and feelings of satisfaction. Nevertheless, the authors contend that this is not the sole standard employed by consumers. Consequently, customers have numerous information sources (including word of mouth, advertising, expert opinions, communications, and previous experiences with competing services) that shape their expectations regarding future service interactions with a specific company (Boulding et al., 1993).

Bolton and Drew (1991) emphasized that both expectations and perceptions of performance levels directly affect customer satisfaction, as well as indirectly through disconfirmation. Almsalam (2014) further validated that both customer expectations and perceived service quality significantly influence customer satisfaction. Brogowicz et al. (1990) supported the notion that customer satisfaction is believed to occur when perceived service quality meets or surpasses the expectations of service quality.

Olson and Dover (1979) assert that customer expectations represent the prior beliefs customers hold about the product or service they anticipate receiving. Without relevant information, customer expectations of prior services remain unclear, making it difficult to form precise predictions. In real-world scenarios, customers encounter multiple information sources that significantly influence their expectations for future service interactions with an organization (Zeithaml et al., 1993). Understanding these

expectations is essential to surpassing them effectively. Most researchers regard customer expectations regarding a product or service attribute as the benchmark or reference point for justifying customer purchasing decisions and assessments. Consequently, customer expectations serve as a functional measure of the anticipated or predicted quality performance of a product or service before consumption. Earlier studies have further defined customer expectations as consumers' perceptions of what should happen, the realism and feasibility of a product or service, and the minimum level of tolerance that should ideally be achieved by the performance of a product or service.

Prior investigations into expectations have demonstrated that consumption expectations can influence the assessment of customer experiences. This assertion is grounded in the expectancy disconfirmation theory, which posits that the performance of a product or service experienced is either superior or inferior to what was expected. The disparity between actual perceived performance and expected performance encapsulates the cognitive aspect of experience evaluation. The cognitive experience elucidates how the perceived performance of a product or service aligns with customers' needs and expectations for well-being and satisfaction.

One critical concept in this context is the "provider gap," which highlights the disparity between customer expectations and an organization’s understanding of those expectations. Recognizing and addressing the provider gap involves acknowledging the diversity among customers, as no two consumers share identical needs or perspectives. Market segmentation becomes an essential tool in this endeavor, grouping clients based on shared demands, expectations, and demographic or psychographic traits. However, many firms struggle with client retention and relationship enhancement, indicating a significant area for improvement (Alvarez, 2018).

According to (Lucescu et al., 2023), the dynamics of expectations are crucial to comprehend in order to manage them effectively, transforming them into achievable goals that lead to a high level of customer satisfaction. When a customer has limited prior experience with a service, their expectations tend to be vague. This indicates that the customer recognizes a need for change but struggles to articulate what that change entails. Additionally, the customer may not clearly understand the type of solution they seek or even the specific problem they are facing, only that they have a problem. Consequently, even if the customer cannot specify what they are looking for, they still

anticipate receiving it. Therefore, managing customer expectations involves uncovering the underlying issue within these ambiguous expectations (Roberts et al., 2023).

Since a customer will likely feel dissatisfied unless their vague expectations are met, it is essential for the supplier to provide clarity regarding the issue, even if the customer cannot do so themselves. To achieve a successful problem-solving phase, it is imperative that it is preceded by an effective problem formulation stage. Implicit expectations are regarded as self-evident by the customer and pertain to quality at a level that does not require explicit mention (Bonfanti et al., 2023). These types of expectations typically arise either from services that are well-established, where a standard quality level has been recognized, or in relationships where the parties involved become familiar enough that certain needs do not need to be articulated. Implicit expectations often become problematic when the customer has prior experience with other service providers or when the service provider alters the employees who interact with the customer. Therefore, when entering a new relationship, it is vital to clarify all implicit expectations by being explicit in discussions about requirements. Furthermore, when making employee changes, it necessitates a thorough transfer of knowledge between employees.

### 2.6 Relationship Between Customer Experience and Customer Expectation

Sharma & Chaubey (2014) tried to examine how customer experience was related with customer satisfaction by considering the banking sector. The findings in the research pointed that positive customer experience were positively related to dimensions of satisfaction including a positive general feeling, trust, and satisfaction. This means that the better the customers' experience, the higher the trust, feeling, and satisfaction towards the product or services offered by the company. Regarding the research subject matter relating to the relationship between research variables in the context of tourism, Nobar & Rostamzadeh (2018) found that customer expectation had the most impact on customer satisfaction while customer loyalty was also an influential factor.

Kim (2008) conducted an empirical study demonstrating that experiences which are memorable are more likely to influence an individual's future behavior. He also developed a scale to assess memorable experiences, proving that these experiences have a significant and positive effect on future behavioral intentions. Yeng and Mat (2013)

carried out an empirical investigation into the factors that contribute to loyalty in Malaysian retail. Their findings revealed that while promotional activities, store atmosphere, product quality, and service quality have a strong impact on attitudinal/cognitive loyalty, affective (attitudinal) loyalty is directly affected by retailer brand equity, loyalty programs, and customer satisfaction.

Cong (2016) highlights how crucial the assessment of perceived quality is in improving visitor experience. This approach involves comparing customer expectations with actual performance to determine satisfaction levels. Favorable visitor experiences occur when customer experience meets or exceeds expectations. On the other hand, divergences from customers' expectations and real experience have an adverse impact on their overall satisfaction and reduce the probability of future visits. Customer satisfaction and loyalty are significantly impacted by the gap between customer experience and expectations in the service sector (Cong, 2016). Feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction can be attributed to the way in which a product meets an individual's expectations. Visitors demonstrate pleasure when their pre-travel expectations correspond with pleasant emotions, but they encounter negative emotions in their post-travel experiences. (Cong, 2016). Consequently, the following hypothesis was put forth:

**Hypothesis 2:** Customer expectations positively influence customer experience in Djibouti's tourism industry.

The model for the research is shown below in Figure 1. The framework of the variables to be examined is visualised by this research model.

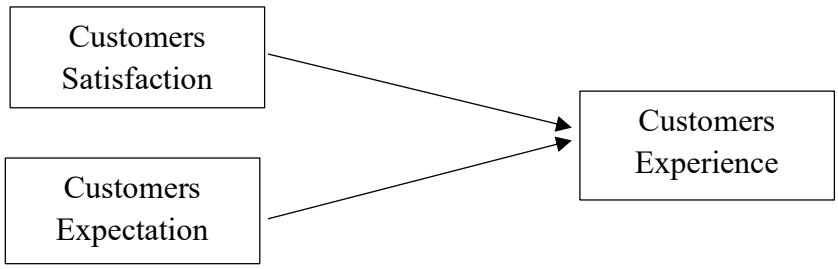



**Figure 1.** Theoretical Model

## 3. Methodology and Finding

### 3.1 Djibouti

Djibouti, located in the Horn of Africa, shares borders with Eritrea to the north, Ethiopia to the west and south, and Somalia to the southeast. Its eastern coastline along the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden positions it as a pivotal maritime hub. The national currency of Djibouti is the Djiboutian franc (FDJ) and the economy is predominantly service-oriented, leveraging its strategic location to function as a transit port and international transshipment center. Despite limited natural resources and a harsh climate, Djibouti has experienced stable economic growth, with its GDP improving at an average of over 6 % since 2023 (World Bank, 2024). The population is approximately one million, primarily comprising Somali and Afar ethnic groups.

Tourism in Djibouti is a growing sector, attracting an increasing number of visitors each year. The country's distinctive landscapes, such as Lake Assal — the lowest point in Africa and the limestone formations at Lake Abbé, position it as a key destination for ecotourism and adventure tourism. Activities such as scuba diving, fishing, trekking, and bird watching are particularly popular among tourists. However, challenges including limited infrastructure and high travel costs hinder the full potential of the industry. Recent reports underscore Djibouti’s appeal as an emerging beach destination, offering unique landscapes that have earned it the moniker of the "Iceland of Africa," with its volcanic terrain and saline lakes.

### 3.2 Method

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a quantitative, cross-sectional survey was carried out. This research approach enables the statistical analysis of associations between variables at a single point in time, offering a snapshot of current tourist perceptions and behaviors. In the tourism context, where visitor experiences are dynamic and influenced by multiple real-time factors, this method is particularly appropriate for assessing satisfaction and expectations during the actual travel experience.

An elaborate self-administered questionnaire was used as the main tool for data collection. The instrument had two sections: the first gathered demographic data such

as age, gender, nationality, employment status, and purpose of visit while the second utilized Likert-scale items to assess tourist's expectation of service quality, customer satisfaction, and overall experience. This design enabled a systematic analysis of both personal characteristics and subjective judgments, providing a comprehensive overview of visitor responses, (Koç et al., 2019).

A non-probability convenience sampling method was employed to select respondents for this study. This approach was deemed suitable due to its efficiency and practicality, especially in accessing tourists with limited availability at busy locations. Although convenience sampling limits the generalizability of findings and may introduce selection bias, these limitations were addressed by selecting a variety of sample sites including hotels, airports, recreational centers, and cultural landmarks that attract a diverse tourist population. This strategy helped capture a broad range of visitor experiences and expectations, consistent with sampling techniques used in previous tourism behavior studies (Koç & Kozak, 2019).

Data was collected in 4-star hotels in relation to the quality of services they offer by (Raspor, 2010), between December 2024 and March 2025, covering the peak and transition seasons for tourism in Djibouti. This time frame was intentionally selected to account for potential variations in tourist behavior due to seasonality, which is a critical factor in tourism research. Collecting data across this period provided an opportunity to include a wide demographic of tourists—ranging from holiday travelers to business visitors—enhancing the richness and applicability of the data. While the survey included both demographic and perceptual dimensions, it is important to clarify that the study followed a strictly quantitative research design.

### 3.3 Questionnaire Design

A meticulously designed questionnaire enhances the collection of dependable and valid data by explicitly and accurately addressing critical subjects (Brace, 2004). A questionnaire was created with essential factors in mind, such as clarity, logical coherence, and relevance to customer satisfaction, expectations, and experience. The enquiries employ a structured Likert scale, a well-established technique for assessing attitudes and perceptions. To guarantee construct validity, each inquiry corresponds with the pertinent constructs: satisfaction, expectations, and experience. The customer journey advances sequentially, from satisfaction to anticipation to experience. The

design enhances understanding and enables analytical data gathering. The questionnaire consisted of four primary sections: demographic information, customer satisfaction, customer expectations, and customer experience. Following the collection of demographic data, participants evaluated 23 items on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 representing extreme dissatisfaction to 7 denoting extreme satisfaction.

A structured questionnaire as the main data collection tool is used as the quantitative approach in this research. Measurement tools from three academic studies in the field of tourism and hospitality were used to create the questionnaire. Measuring customer satisfaction includes nine items adopted from the study by Sim et al., (2006). The customer expectations scale, composed of seven items adopted from the study by (Pizam et al., 2016). To assess customer experience, the study uses seven items adopted from the study by (Ren et al., 2016).

All the items were integrated into a single questionnaire, which was distributed through the Google Forms platform. This method facilitated immediate data collection and efficient management of responses. A 7-point Likert scale was employed for all questions, ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 7 (very satisfied), to capture the nuances of respondents' perceptions and attitudes. This choice of scale also aimed to simplify the response process, ensuring clarity and reducing the time burden for participants, in line with the recommendations of (Brace, 2018). The questionnaire used in this study is provided in Appendix 1.

### 3.4 Analytical Approach

The data analysis used both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics were used, including frequency distributions, means and standard deviations, to underscore crucial elements like satisfaction levels, experience evaluations, and demographic patterns. This demographic analysis aided in identifying trends and forming a basic understanding of the data. Inferential statistics techniques were employed to analyze the connections between the variables. Correlation analysis provides insights into the linkages between factors such as consumer expectations and satisfaction, clarifying the extent and direction of these correlations. Regression modeling is an advanced technique for assessing association hypotheses. This study assessed the influence of consumer experiences on overall satisfaction, taking demographic aspects into account. This technique ensures the precision and

applicability of the outcomes. The analysis was done with SPSS 22. This comprehensive strategy will discern critical trends and provide data-informed suggestions to improve consumer experiences. The study uses sophisticated statistical techniques to correlate raw data with meaningful conclusions.

### 3.5 Sample size

A sample of 153 tourists in Djibouti provides a basis for analysing the impact of customer satisfaction and expectations on customer experience in the Djibouti tourism industry. Based on an a priori power analysis using G Power with an assumed mean effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), $\alpha = 0.05$, and power = 0.80, the minimum sample size required for a multiple regression with two predictors is 107. With 153 respondents, the current study exceeds this threshold and guarantees sufficient statistical power. The literature shows that previous research in African and developing countries has found a range of 150 to 200 respondents to their questionnaire, such as the study by (Ahadzie et al., 2008) who used a structured questionnaire with 153 respondents in their survey of real estate project studies in Ghana, as well as other research such as the work of Agyei (2018) with 155 participants in Ghana, (Tsegaye et al., 2018) who also used a structured questionnaire with 198 respondents in their study in Ethiopia. These studies consolidate our research, showing that this type of sample size has been used before and is accepted by the literature.

### 3.6 Demographic Information

From Table 1, the educational attainment revealed that the majority of participants (76.5%, n= 117) had completed an undergraduate degree, while 23.5% (n=36) reported holding a master's degree. Employment status was also examined, showing that 59.5% (n=91) of the participants were employed, whereas 40.5% (n=62) were unemployed. The participants reported an average income of 114,598 FDJ and standard deviation of 89,958 FDJ, the average age for the participants is 28 years with standard deviation of 6.60.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 74 | 48.4 |
| Female | 79 | 51.6 |
| Level of Education | | |
| Bachelor's degree | 117 | 76.5 |
| Master's degree | 36 | 23.5 |
| Occupation | | |
| Unemployed | 62 | 40.5 |
| Employed | 91 | 59.5 |
| | Mean | SD |
| Income Djiboutian franc (FDJ) | | |
| | 114598 FDJ | 89958 FDJ |
| Age | | |
| | 27.47 | 6.60 |

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Reliability

**Table 2.** Customer Satisfaction Reliability Statistics

| Variable | Cronbach's Alpha | Number of items |
|---|---|---|
| Customer satisfaction | 0.914 | 9 |
| Customers expectation | 0.902 | 7 |
| Customers experience | 0.912 | 7 |

A statistical measure of internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, for the reliability of the customer satisfaction measure in Table 2. The results indicate a high level of reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.914 across 9 items. This suggests that the items used to measure customer satisfaction are highly consistent and provide a reliable assessment of tourists' satisfaction levels in Djibouti's tourism industry.

The reliability analysis of customer expectation shows a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.902 across 7 items, indicating strong internal consistency. This high reliability score confirms that the instrument used effectively captures the various dimensions of customer expectations, ensuring the validity of the study's findings.

The reliability analysis for customer experience resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.912 across 7 items, signifying excellent internal consistency from the table 4 above. This suggests that the measurement tool used is highly reliable and effectively captures tourists' experiences in Djibouti.

The high Cronbach's Alpha values for customer satisfaction (0.914), customer expectation (0.902), and customer experience (0.912) demonstrate the robustness and reliability of the measurement scales used in this study. Furthermore, the high degree of internal consistency ensures that the tools used are valid, and that they provide an accurate measure of the target concepts.

### 4.2 Validity

The results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity confirm that the dataset is highly appropriate for factor analysis.

**Table 3.** KMO Bartlett's Test

| KMO and Bartlett's test | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Okin measure of sampling adequacy | | 0.946 |
| Bartlett's test of sphericity | Approx.Chi-square | 2731.438 |
| | df | 253 |
| | Sig. | 0.000 |

The KMO value is 0.946, which falls into the category of "marvelous" according to Kaiser's scale, indicating that the correlations among the variables are compact and well-suited for revealing underlying structures through factor analysis. This high value suggests that the sample used in the study is more than adequate and that the items share a substantial amount of common variance. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yields a chi-square value of 2731.438 with 253 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.000. This significant result implies that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, meaning there are significant relationships among the variables in the dataset. Therefore, both the high KMO value and the significant result of Bartlett's Test provide strong statistical justification for proceeding with factor analysis, as the data meets the essential assumptions for such multivariate techniques.

### 4.3 Descriptive Statistics

A descriptive analysis was carried out on the different variables in the questionnaire, to gain a better understanding of the general trends in the responses obtained: customer satisfaction, customer experience, and customer expectations. The sample consists of 153 valid observations.

**Table 4.** Descriptive Statistics

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewenes | Kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Customer Satisfaction | 153 | 1 | 7 | 5.3962 | 1.30155 | -1.242 | 1.480 |
| Customer Experience | 153 | 1 | 7 | 5.2521 | 1.27531 | -0.856 | 0.449 |
| Customer Expectation | 153 | 1 | 7 | 5.4827 | 1.24162 | -1.109 | 1.098 |

The "customer satisfaction" variable shows a mean of 5.39 on a scale from 1 to 7, indicating that, overall, participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the services received. The standard deviation of 1.30 suggests a moderate dispersion of responses around the mean. The distribution is slightly negatively skewed (skewness = -1.242), reflecting a tendency for respondents to report higher satisfaction levels. The kurtosis value of 1.480 indicates a distribution that is slightly flatter than the normal distribution.

Regarding "customer experience", the mean is 5.25. This result suggests that participants generally evaluated their experience positively. The standard deviation of 1.27 indicates a variability similar to that observed for customer satisfaction. The skewness value of -0.856 confirms a slight negative asymmetry, although less pronounced than for satisfaction, suggesting a concentration of responses toward higher experience ratings. The kurtosis is relatively low (0.449), close to the level we normally observe for a distribution in the normal range.

Finally, "customer expectations" recorded a mean score of 5.48, revealing that participants had relatively high expectations prior to their experience. A moderate variability is indicated between responses with a standard deviation of 1.24. The skewness value of -1.109 again points to a slight asymmetry toward higher values, while the kurtosis of 1.098 suggests a relatively flat distribution.

Overall, these results highlight that the respondents generally had high expectations, experienced a positive service interaction, and expressed a high degree of satisfaction. The slight negative skewness across all three variables reflects a consistent tendency for favorable evaluations, while the kurtosis values suggest that the response distributions are close to normal but slightly flatter.

**Collinearity Diagnostics**

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for both predictors are 3.251, which is below the commonly accepted threshold of 5 (or 10, in some contexts), indicating no severe multicollinearity between customer satisfaction and customer expectations. Although both VIFs are moderately high, they do not compromise the integrity of the regression model.

### 4.4 Correlation Analysis

**Table 5.** Correlations Between Customer Satisfaction, Customer Experience and Customer Expectation

| | | Customer Satisfaction | Customer Experience | Customer Expectation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Customer Satisfaction | Pearson correlation | | 0.812 | 0.848 |
| | Sig.(2-tailed) | | < 0.001 | < 0.001 |
| | N | 153 | 153 | 153 |
| Customer Experience | Pearson correlation | 0.812 | | 0.881 |
| | Sig.(2-tailed) | < 0.001 | | < 0.001 |
| | N | 153 | 153 | 153 |
| Customer Expectation | Pearson correlation | 0.848 | 0.881 | |
| | Sig.(2-tailed) | < 0.001 | < 0.001 | |
| | N | 153 | 153 | 153 |

The analysis of Pearson correlation coefficients reveals strong and statistically significant association among customer satisfaction, customer experience, and customer expectations. All underlying assumptions for the validity of Pearson correlation were thoroughly tested: normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test and Q-Q plots; linearity was confirmed through scatterplots; and multicollinearity was examined. The results indicated that all assumptions were satisfied, thereby strengthening the reliability of the findings.

All the reported correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.001$), reinforcing the reliability of the findings.

### 4.5 Regression Analysis

A strong and positive linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was found with a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.908. According to Cohen (2013), the R-squared value ($R^2$) is 0,825 which reveals that customer satisfaction and expectations together explain 82.5% of the variance in customer experience. This is a considerable impact size. The strength of the model is confirmed by an adjusted $R^2$ value of 0.825, which takes into account the number of predictors in the model. The standard error of the estimate is 0.52345, suggesting that the model's predictions are generally close to the actual values. Importantly, the Durbin-Watson statistic is 2.162, which lies comfortably within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5. This indicates that autocorrelation is not present in the residuals, satisfying the assumption of independent errors.

**Table 6.** Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized Coeffients | | Standardized Coeffients Beta | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | | | |
| (Constant) | 0.573 | 0.191 | | 3.009 | 0.003 |
| Customer Satisfaction | 0.396 | 0.61 | 0.400 | 6.490 | 0.000 |
| Customer Expectation | 0.533 | 0.060 | 0.549 | 8.880 | 0.000 |
| $R^2$= 0,825; F(2, 150) = 352.598 | | | | | |

a. Dependent variable : Customer Experience

The unstandardized coefficient for customer satisfaction is 0.396 ($p < 0.001$), meaning that for each unit increase in customer satisfaction, customer experience is expected to increase by 0.396 units, assuming customer expectations remain constant. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.400 shows that satisfaction has a moderately strong impact on experience. Therefore H1 supported. Customer satisfaction positively influence customer experience in Djibouti's tourism industry.

The coefficient for customer expectations is 0.533 ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that each additional unit in customer expectations leads to an increase of 0.533 units in customer experience, all else being equal. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.549 reveals that expectations have an even stronger influence on customer experience

compared to satisfaction. Therefore H2 supported. Customer expectations positively inflence customer experience in Djibouti's tourism industry.

In summary, the regression results clearly highlight the critical roles that both customer satisfaction and customer expectations play in shaping the overall customer experience. Expectations, in particular, appear to have a slightly greater impact. These findings emphasize the importance for companies, especially in the hotel and tourism sectors, to not only meet but also manage customer expectations effectively while ensuring high levels of satisfaction to deliver superior customer experiences.

**Table 7.** Hypothesis results

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| H1 | Customer satisfaction positively influence customer experience in Djibouti's tourism industry. | Supported |
| H2 | Customer expectations positively inflence customer experience in Djibouti's tourism industry. | Supported |

## 5. Discussion

This research examined the relationship between satisfaction, customer expectations and customer experience in Djibouti tourism industry, and supported previous studies that had highlighted the influence of customer satisfaction and customer expectations on customer experience. It has been shown that when a service meets or exceeds customer expectations, the customer is satisfied, which creates a positive experience. On the other hand, when the service does not meet the customer's expectations, this creates a feeling of dissatisfaction and a poor experience of the service received. Negative customer experiences will have an impact on the reputation of the destination (Martin & Simmons, 2014).

The results of this study provide insight into the influence of customer satisfaction and customer expectations on the customer experience in the tourism industry in emerging countries such as Djibouti. This reinforces other studies carried out in the same context, highlighting the importance of customer satisfaction in the tourism sector, where the perception of services plays a central role (Chen & Chen, 2010).

According to this research, customer satisfaction is derived through a process that involves perceptual, evaluative and psychological elements that develop throughout the service delivery, which is in line with the research of Mukhles (2013) who explains customer satisfaction is a positive emotional state resulting from the evaluation of all facets of one party's professional relationship with another. It is related to the emotional reactions of joy or dissatisfaction experienced when individuals compare the actual performance of a product or service with their prior expectations. The study also highlights two main factors that interact on customer satisfaction, ambience and hospitality, which are key environmental service attributes, significantly influencing consumer satisfaction, loyalty and choice in the hotel and restaurant sector.

It should be noted that our results suggest that the level of education and income of the individual influences service expectations. The more purchasing power a person has, the higher their service expectations will be in terms of service quality. This supports studies by Zeithaml and Gremler, (2018) who point out that a customer with high purchasing power is more frequently exposed to quality services and therefore has higher access expectations.

According to Johnson and Fornell, (1991) their research which suggests that age difference has an impact on expectations, experience and satisfaction, we can see in our results that this has an influence on our variables, a 55 year old will not have the same expectations or satisfaction as a 25 year old. A young person will have more of a tendency towards fast, measured services in terms of expectations, whereas an older person will have expectations of a friendlier service with more human contact. Age-focused service can be used to better manage customer experiences in hotels in Djibouti.

In conclusion, mastering the relationship between customer satisfaction, customer expectations and the customer experience in tourist hotels remains a key preoccupation for managers of hospitality establishments in Djibouti. They can improve their services according to the gender or age of their customers, live up to customer expectations and create exceptional experiences. The results revealed in the study allowed us to confirm our hypotheses H1 and H2 that customer experience is significantly influenced by customer expectations, and by customer satisfaction. Ultimately, a relationship of this type could enhance the country's competitiveness and strengthen its objectives for sustainable tourism development. However, these results should be taken with caution, as the results of the study are limited in scope and design.

## 6. Conclusion

This study offers insights into the factors influencing customer experience, with a focus on customer satisfaction and expectation. Research indicates that both customer satisfaction and expectation significantly contribute to the perception of customer experience. The strong correlation between customer satisfaction and customer experience underscores the importance of meeting and exceeding customer needs to foster favorable interactions (Bi-yan, 2006). Together, these correlations affirm that customer experience is a multifaceted construct influenced by the dynamic interplay of customer satisfaction and customer expectation. Matching and exceeding customer expectations would enable hotels in Djibouti to deliver customer satisfaction and guarantee a positive experience.

The regression analysis further substantiates these relationships, demonstrating that customer satisfaction and expectation together explain a substantial proportion of variance in customer experience (82.5%). Customer expectation emerged as a slightly stronger predictor, suggesting its critical role in shaping perceptions. This emphasizes the necessity for hotels in Djibouti to not only deliver quality services or products but also proactively manage and exceed customer expectations (Mill, 2011). In the tourism industry, these findings have profound implications. Satisfying tourists' needs while anticipating and exceeding their expectations is crucial for enhancing the overall tourist experience. This can lead to increased customer loyalty, positive reviews, and a stronger competitive edge for hotels in Djibouti, (Della Corte et al., 2015).

In addition, the hotels managers in Djibouti should adopt a strategy that targets the demographic profile of the sample - age, level of education and diversity - in order to respond effectively to the preferences of this demographic group. Overall, this study reinforces the importance of strategic customer relationship management. By understanding and addressing the dual dimensions of satisfaction and expectation, organizations in the tourism industry can effectively enhance customer experience, leading to improved loyalty, repeat visits, and positive word of mouth (Gnanapala, 2014). These findings offer practical guidance for tourism businesses and contribute to the broader literature on customer experience management.

### 6.1 Implications of the Findings

The findings highlight critical factors influencing Customer Experience, emphasizing the importance of managing both Customer Satisfaction and Customer Expectation effectively in hotels in Djibouti. The significant correlation between Customer Satisfaction and Customer Experience underscores the necessity of delivering high-quality products and services to foster positive experiences. Simultaneously, the strong association between Customer Expectation and Customer Experience suggests that hotels in Djibouti must address and align with customer anticipation to enhance their overall evaluation of the experience. In the context of the tourism industry, customer satisfaction and expectation are pivotal in shaping tourists' perceptions of destinations, accommodations, and services. Research indicates that service quality and the alignment of expectations play a significant role in determining customer satisfaction, with models like SERVQUAL providing effective tools to evaluate and enhance these outcomes (Augustyn & Ho, 1998), (Mill, 2011).

Tourists often have high expectations influenced by marketing, word of mouth, and personal needs, and exceeding these expectations can significantly enhance their overall experience. Positive experiences not only foster repeat visits but also drive favorable referrals, reinforcing the competitive advantage of destinations and service providers (Gnanapala et al., 2014). Furthermore, emotional and perceptual factors, such as the fairness of services and the emotional connection fostered during the service encounter, play critical roles in customer satisfaction (Bi-yan, 2006). Meeting and exceeding these expectations through thoughtful, quality-focused strategies can keep Djibouti's hotels attractive and competitive (Cristina & Roxana, 2012). Thus, study findings imply the need to ensure that tourist outfits in Djibouti expand on their offerings to accommodate the demands of customers to satisfy them. This could involve the inclusion of more personalized services or improvement in the existing structures that offers to serve customers that chose Djibouti as a tourism location.

### 6.2 Limitation and Recommendations

The limitation of the study is the subjective nature of customer satisfaction and experience, which is significantly shaped by individual perspectives, emotions, and cultural contexts. Due to the significant variability among passengers in these areas,

survey-based methods are inadequate for accurately capturing their complexity or mitigating potential biases, such as overreporting satisfaction levels. Furthermore, this study is limited by its geographical scope, which analyses only hotels in Djibouti. Consequently, the results obtained cannot be applied to other geographical regions or countries where different cultural norms, service standards and customer expectations exist. In addition, qualitative approach, including surveys and assessment interviews, could be used to attain a more profound comprehension about consumer experiences and viewpoints. Moreover, the mixed-method approach could provide a better understanding of the factors affecting expectations and satisfaction.

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## Questionnaire

# The relation between customer satisfaction, customer expectation and customer experience in tourism industry

**1. Demographic information:**

Sex:

Age:

Level of education:

Occupation :

Incomme :

**2. Customer satisfaction** (Sim et al.,2006).

- Does this hotel give me the impression of staying in a top-of-the-range luxury hotel ?
- Are you satisfied with the accommodation at this hotel ?
- Does the atmosphere in the hotel make you feel welcome, satisfied and comfortable?
- How do you feel about the employees here anticipating and meeting all of your needs without you having to ask them ?
- How do the employees here contribute to making you feel protected and secure ?
- Did you find the hotel staff courteous, attentive and professional in their interactions with you ?
- Did you find that the quality of the meals met or exceeded your expectations ?
- How did the quality of the food and drink influence your overall experience at the hotel and your level of satisfaction as a guest ?
- Did you find the prices of the drinks reasonable in relation to their quality and the experience offered ?

**3. Customer expectation** (Pizam et al., 2016)

- How do you assess the size of the hotel room to determine whether it meets your expectations in terms of comfort and space ?

- How would you rate the comfort level of the hotel room to ensure that it meets your expectations in terms of comfort and relaxation during your stay ?
- How would you rate the hotel's responsiveness to your requests as a guest and its ability to respond effectively to your needs during your stay ?
- How would you rate the hygiene and cleanliness of the hotel ? Does it meet your standards and expectations in terms of cleanliness ?
- How do you rate the safety and security of the hotel ? Are your security needs taken into account during your stay ?
- How do you determine the hotel's rates : are they affordable and do they correspond to your budget when you book a stay ?
- How do you assess the consistency of the hotel's service standards to ensure that your service expectations are always met throughout your stay?

**4. Customer experience** (Ren et al., 2016)

- How did the cleanliness of the room affect your overall experience of the hotel ?
- Did the cleanliness of the shower meet or fall short of your expectations during your stay ?
- How did the location of the hotel influence your overall experience and satisfaction during your stay ?
- Did you find the hotel environment calm and peaceful ?
- How would you rate the quality and functionality of the facilities in the room, such as appliances, bathroom equipment, etc. ?
- How has this experience influenced your overall perception of the hotel and your satisfaction as a guest ?
- How did the hotel staff help to make your stay enjoyable ?

# ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT UNIVERSITY (AYBU)
# SOCIAL AND HUMANITIES SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE
# RESEARCH PROJECT APPROVAL DOCUMENT

Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Faculty/Institute İŞLETME ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI Department Academic/Student NOURADIN MAHDI MOHAMED Research titled "The relation between customer satisfaction, customer expectation and customer experience in tourism industry" was reviewed

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☒ Ethically APPROPRIATE.
☐ Requires IMPROVEMENT in terms of ethics.
☐ Decision of REJECTION in terms of ethics.

| SOCIAL AND HUMANITIES SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE DECISION | |
|---|---|
| Application date | 10.12.2024 |
| Research Code (Year-Research Serial Number) | 2024-591 |
| Ethics Committee decision meeting date and decision number | 19.12.2024 - 10/591 |

## COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON, VICE CHAIRPERSON, AND MEMBERS:

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