

Title: The moderating impacts of COVID-19 fear on hotel service quality and tourist satisfaction: Evidence from a developing country

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Abstract: This study delves into the interconnectedness service quality (SQ) and tourist satisfaction (TS) within the tourism sector of a developing country such as Bangladesh. It takes into account the fluctuating levels of COVID-19 fear as a contributing factor to this dynamic. The research illuminates the critical role of COVID-19 fear in shaping guest satisfaction and how differing fear levels influence guest expectations and experiences. In this study, MGA and PLS-SEM was employed to assess 420 sets of tourist data collected from various hotels and restaurants in Bangladesh. Through this, the study identifies distinct service quality (SQ) dimensions that significantly impact tourist satisfaction (TS) across various COVID-19 fear categories. The findings underline the need for accommodation providers to tailor their services and safety measures to match guests' specific fear levels, emphasizing the importance of empathetic staff behavior and effective communication of safety measures. The framework suggested in this study holds substantial significance, and it is recommended that policymakers in Bangladesh integrate this model into their considerations when devising strategies for the tourism industry. The research provides insights that are relevant for the hospitality sector in Bangladesh, suggesting strategies to enhance guest satisfaction based on accommodation category and COVID-19 fear levels. Finally, future research directions are outlined, emphasizing the evolving dynamic of COVID-19's impact, the role of technology, and the integration of diverse service evaluation constructs to enhance explanatory models.

Keywords: COVID-19 service quality ecotourism tourist satisfaction sustainable tourism

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