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# Culture in Service Quality Management at the Ibis hotels

Are cultural backgrounds being considered when working with service quality management in large hotel chains?

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to find out whether or not a guest's cultural background is being considered when working with service quality management in the Ibis hotels. By doing qualitative interviews with both managers and front-office staff at three different Ibis hotels in the Stockholm area, the thesis analyzes the hotel chain's way of working with service quality management on several levels of hierarchy within the company. The academic world is just starting to acknowledge the effect of culture on customer's perceptions on service quality, while the tourism industry is still not paying attention. Our research has shown that the Ibis hotels do not consider the cultural background of their guests when working with service quality management, although they do seem to understand that doing so could help them avoid cultural shocks and lower the risks of service failures.

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

A cultural encounter is explained by Stier (2009) as the meeting between people whose cultures differ in a specific way. He also writes that culture is not a visible thing, and therefore during such encounters the involved people might not always be aware of the existing difference.

Cultural encounters have been a part of human social existence for a very long time. Stier (2009) mentions the Greeks, Romans and Arabs as a few examples, but also later on Marco Polo, Columbus and James Cook. All of them travelled and in this way encountered people from other cultures. Such encounters could, and can today, result in misunderstandings and conflicts, as well as friendships and the exchange of both ideas and material things (Stier, 2009, p. 18).

The globalized society, in which we live today, involves cultural encounters on a daily basis. Technology has made the physical distance between people smaller, and as Stier (2009) mentions, the "flow" of people, goods, education et cetera is constant. People tend to travel a lot, either going to a destination as a tourist for a considered amount of time, or moving permanently to a new place. Therefore, even those who do not travel, encounter more and more people from other cultures (Stier, 2009, p. 19). This fact puts demands on people working in any business (and particularly in tourism businesses) in the form of intercultural skills and higher competence in matters such as culture and diversity (Stier, 2009, p. 20-21).

Information about the Ibis hotels can be found on their website. Refer to the Online Sources section for full internet addresses. The Ibis hotels are located in around 800 places all over the world and 16 of them are located in Sweden (Webpage 1). The hotels are part of a budget hotel chain and offer comfortable rooms and services, like restaurants, available 24 hours a day, for the convenience of their guests (Webpage 2). The international Ibis website (Webpage 2) is translated into 11 different languages, making it available for a broad range of potential guests. They advertise the high quality service at their hotels, emphasizing the friendly staffs that are available around the clock, in case any guests should need anything (Webpage 3).

We are curious to which extent the Ibis hotels are giving consideration to the cultural backgrounds of their potential guests, as part of their service quality management. The reason why we have chosen to work with Ibis hotels is because of their focus on giving high quality service. We find these hotels especially interesting for our study since they are a budget chain, and use the high quality service as part of their advertisement to attract guests.

## **1.2 Aim and demarcation**

The aim of this thesis is to find out to what extent guests' cultural backgrounds are considered when working with service quality management in the Ibis hotels. Further, taking into account the company's current way of working with service quality management, we want to look at the possibility to implement new ideas into their service concept, such as a cultural aspect.

We have chosen to study one hotel chain, the Ibis hotels. To study more than one hotel chain and compare them with each other could be a good idea for further studies on the same subject. However for our work we wanted to dig deeper into one organization instead of scratching on the surface of several. We believe that by doing this we will get a better understanding of the studied organization, while at the same time creating a good base for others who might decide to study the same subject in a different organization or make a comparison.

First, we want to understand how the Ibis hotels work with service quality management. In order to do so, and to be able to answer the main question, the thesis will investigate three hotels in the Ibis chain; Ibis Hotel Kista, Ibis Hotel Spånga and Ibis Hotel Arlanda Airport, all currently owned by Norse Hotels. The idea is to include three levels of organizational hierarchy into our research:

- Norse Hotels, the owners of the Swedish Ibis Hotel chain
- The local hotel management
- The front-office staff

This is presented more clearly in Sections 1.3, Research Questions. We also want to include how well directions flow between higher and lower levels in this hierarchy in order to see whether they all work in the same way with service quality management, and possible new directions. Throughout the research of the three levels of hierarchy, the cultural aspect when working with service quality management will be our primary consideration.

The main scope of this thesis focuses on the management of services and service staff. Other aspects, such as management of food and beverage quality are beyond the scope of our work.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The main question we want to address in our work is:

- Are cultural backgrounds being considered when working with service quality management in the Ibis hotels?

As the question is rather abstract, we have chosen to divide it into three questions covering all three levels of hierarchy, and finally one focusing on conclusions;

- How does Norse Hotels work with service quality management in order to secure high quality service to each customer and also avoid cultural shocks in cultural encounters between staff and guests?
- How do the three Ibis Hotels work with service quality management, considering guidelines given by Norse Hotels, in order to ensure high quality service to each customer and also avoid cultural shocks in cultural encounters between staff and guests?
- How is the service quality management perceived by the front-office staff in each of the hotels, and do they experience any cultural shocks during cultural encounters?
- Can service quality management be improved in the Norse Hotels, and more specifically in the contacted Ibis Hotels?

## 2. Methodology

Our essay is built on a theoretical background and using a qualitative research method. We are using this method by looking at existing theories surrounding the chosen topic of quality service management and also by gathering empirical data by means of qualitative interviews. The aim of this research is not to confirm or dismiss the theories, but rather to see if and how the hotel chain in question works with service management.

The qualitative method is a method that goes deep into the chosen subject as opposed to the quantitative that touches upon a lot of facts but doing so only skims the surface. When choosing a research method, the qualitative or the quantitative, a writing standpoint of writing is also chosen. The qualitative structure uses an inductive way of writing by collecting empirical data and forming a theory from the conclusion of that data. However it must be stated that there are traces of a deductive method in our essay since there must exist some previous theories on a subject to come up with a research question to begin with. There are also traces of deductive method in qualitative method as the research can swing back and forth between collecting data and building new theories during the writing process. (Bryman 2011)

Furthermore, the qualitative method includes a constructivist approach on reality. This means that society and its rules are created by man, for example, what is a typical male or female role is the result of social evolution (Bryman 2011). In our work this means that we collect data from different sources and after merging them we interpret a new outcome. The objectivistic approach on the other hand, that follows the quantitative method, forms a new outcome from the data rather than interpreting. Jensen (1995) separates these two as: interpreting the meaning or creating the meaning.

The biggest issue with a qualitative research is the reliability, i.e. what information is closest to the truth and what is based on one person's normative view on that topic. It is much simpler with a quantitative research to make standardizations from the information. The current way to handle partial information in the qualitative method is to acknowledge it and address it throughout the research. The validity of the information is on the other hand higher in a qualitative research since the interviews are characterized as open. The interviewed are asked a number of questions surrounding the same topic and that enhances the directness of the answers on that specific topic. (Jensen 1995)

Jensen (1995) writes that the interview can be carried out in two main ways; the cautious and the creative. The cautious way minimizes the role of the interviewer by asking open questions without mentioning possible responses to ensure the least influence possible. The creative form of interview states that the interviewer's involvement is secondary to the ambition of finding new and exciting information. In order to find the answer to our research questions it is important that we understand the actuality of how the Ibis hotels work with service quality management. This is why our interviews are made with a cautious approach, ensuring that the interviewed people felt comfortable to speak freely and giving us as sincere answers as possible in the given situation.

## 2.1 Approach

In order to be able to answer our research questions concerning the first level of hierarchy within the organization, we would need an interview with a representative at the Norse Hotels. Unfortunately neither Norse Hotels nor the previous owners Accor Hotels have been interviewed because of miscommunication between the two about who is responsible for what. We were redirected on several occasions from one to the other, and denied interviews from both with the explanation that they were not responsible for the Swedish Ibis Hotels.

Interviews at the management level have been made with the following people:

- Birgitta Manér, assistant manager at Ibis Hotel Arlanda Airport
- Maria Lundqvist, assistant manager at Ibis Hotel Stockholm Kista
- Anna Turpeinen, general manager at Ibis Hotel Spånga.

Further on, interviews at the third level has been made with two receptionists, one at Ibis Hotel Arlanda Airport and one at Ibis Hotel Spånga. A matter of accessibility prevented us from interviewing any receptionist at the Ibis Hotel Kista.

The managers we interviewed received a draft of the questions in advance via e-mail. This allowed them to better prepare and give more informative answers. The interviewed receptionists did not receive our questions before the interview since we had no previous information about who would be available to us during our visits to the hotels. Some of the questions required spontaneous answers, and therefore we did not consider this a problem. The interviews with the managers are 20-40 minutes long. The length of the interviews depended on the time available and the accessibility since they were carried out during working hours. The interviews with the receptionist were shorter due to the smaller amount of questions asked. All interviews were carried out at the hotels' premises. This made it easier for them to meet with us and also permitted us to get an impression of the hotels.

Each interview was made in Swedish and then translated into English and interpreted by us. Each interview has been recorded to simplify the writing process, and reduce the risk of misinterpretation.

## 2.2 Source criticism

Some of the articles used in this thesis, especially the ones concerning quality are dated back to the 1980's. We chose to use them anyway due to their relevance and high acknowledgement in the field of study.

For higher validation and credibility the thesis could use more interviews from all levels of hierarchy in the studied hotels. Due to inaccessibility and disinterest we have not been able to reach some of the people who could have contributed to our work, and therefore the empirical data in this thesis is not of as high credibility as it could be. Due to the lack of interviews at the highest level of the hotel chain hierarchy, we have tried to answer the research question concerning this level by collecting information from the remaining interviews, although it gives us very limited information. As previously mentioned we have received interviews from managers in each of the three hotels and two receptionists. Unfortunately this gives us a rather thin

view of the general perceptions of service quality management at higher level, which was part of our initial aim.

We have also used books in our research and there are both positive and negative aspects of doing that. On the positive side, books can be reliable sources, though there is always the problem of subjectivity. The way a book is written is often depending on the personal views of the author and those views can be reflected in the content. In order to raise the credibility of the books used, we have tried to compare them with other texts and authors.

The essay has been read by a person with English as a first language to ensure and improve the grammar and sentence structure since both authors have Swedish as a first language. However, this person has no education in the studied field and therefore some phrases and terms have been thoroughly examined for the correct translation.

### 3. Theory

While trying to find the answers to our research questions we found many interesting theories in the field of service quality. We have selected a few of these carefully in order to build up a relevant and interesting theoretical base for this thesis.

Since we want to include all levels of hierarchy in the Ibis hotels in our thesis, we found it important to take a look at how organizational forms and strategies can affect the final service outcome in large businesses.

Further on we discuss theories on the relation between service providers and receivers. These include the importance of gathering knowledge about customers' expectations, as well as how potential customers' expectations can be affected by the organization. We find these theories closely related to a company's capability of clearly establishing their concept, and therefore we also discuss the service concept and its positive and negative outcomes. As a part of this section we also go through service recovery and how it can help change dissatisfied customers into satisfied ones. We chose to include this since we think it can influence guest's final judgment of service quality.

Finally we finish the theoretical part of the thesis by mentioning a few studies on how culture can affect customer perceptions of service quality.

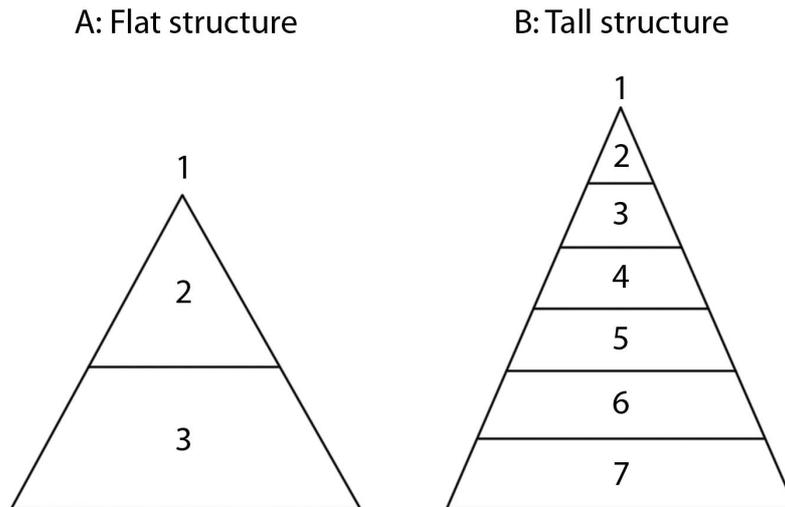
Our idea is that a hotel with a sound and solid inner organization will be able to thoroughly follow a well established service concept and therefore also understand customer expectations. We believe that these things are vital for a company in order to have satisfied customers and ultimately to be successful.

Johnston and Clark (2008, p. 109) explains that service quality is often described as perceived service quality, or in other words, satisfaction. Lee-Ross (2001, p. 93) writes that "Service quality stands or falls by the outcome of the service encounter". This is the definition we are working with when writing about service quality.

#### 3.1 Organization strategies

According to Jones (2001) the design of an organization, its hierarchy and the number of management levels it should have greatly affects how complicated or simple the decision-making process is going to be. He argues that the larger the company is, the greater the importance that the structure is clear, so that no information is lost between the upper and the lower levels.

Jones (2001) presents two types of organization designs for large companies, the *flat design* and the *tall design*. In the flat organization design, the organizations have few levels of management in their hierarchy meaning that one manager have responsibility for a larger number of employees. In the tall design, on the other hand, there are more levels of management in the hierarchy and every manager have responsibility over a smaller number of employees and therefore have a more direct and personal contact within the company (Jones, 2001, p. 64). These different designs are represented in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1: The Flat and Tall Organization Design**

Source: Jones, 2001, p. 65

Jones (2001) states that, in order to have a successful organization, the owners must see that the connection between the number of employees and the number of managers is of importance. He argues that the manager- employee ratio must be balanced right. If there are 1000 employees, there should be, according to Jones (2001) about four levels of management. If the company expands to 3000 employees, the number of levels should grow to about seven. However, if the organization has 10.000 employees or more, the number of levels should be around nine or ten. Jones (2001) emphasizes that after the 10<sup>th</sup> level of management, the number of levels should not increase any further as the risk of establishing miscommunication becomes particularly high. Also motivation and profitability can decrease if the number of management levels increases too much. (Jones, 2001, pp. 65-66)

Jones (2001) states that communication problems can appear as an organization grows larger and it takes more time for information to travel from the CEO to employees. Since the information must travel through all the levels, there is a risk that the message becomes modified along the way, like in the game of Chinese whispers (Jones, 2001, p. 67). This communicational control-loss is not a newly found fact. Evans (1975) discussed the risk of miscommunication between levels over 35 years ago. He pointed out that information can stop at a level as its managers might not agree with upper-level decisions. The information then never reaches the lower levels, for example the front-office staff (Evans, 1975).

Plakoyiannaki et al. (2008) writes about the term Employee Orientation used to describe the direction that companies have been taking to improve their customer relationships. The idea is to ensure the loyalty of customers by focusing on having satisfied employees. If the manager has a good relationship with his staff it can inspire them to develop the same reciprocal relationship with the customer. The article written by Plakoyiannaki et al. (2008) focuses on customer relationship management and states that the employee oriented management can “[...]enhance employee commitment, loyalty and motivation in the organization” (p. 271).

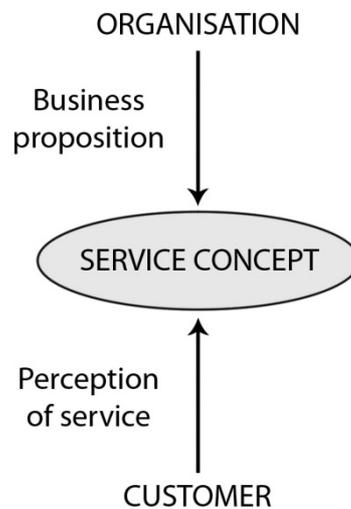
### 3.2 The service concept

Johnston and Clark (2008, p. 42, 50) discuss the service concept and describe it as a shared understanding of an organizations business idea. According to them, the service concept should be constructed based on the organizations visions, service ideas, brand and brand values, and include the following:

- The organizations idea: what is the customer actually buying or using?
- The service experience: what experience does the customer take away from this?
- The service outcome: what are the results for the customer after this experience? For example, what emotions does the experience result in?

A detailed service concept, including all of the above mentioned points, can be used as an alignment tool, making it easier for everyone in the organization to work towards the same goal. By clarifying what the organization is meant to sell, what the customer is supposed to experience and what outcomes this experience should result in, all levels of employees in an organization will have a better understanding of what to deliver and how to deliver it. (Johnston and Clark, 2008, p. 42)

Johnston and Clark (2008, p. 45) state that the service concept should be a shared understanding, not only within the company, but outside of it. Figure 3.2 shows the two perspectives from which the service concept can be perceived.



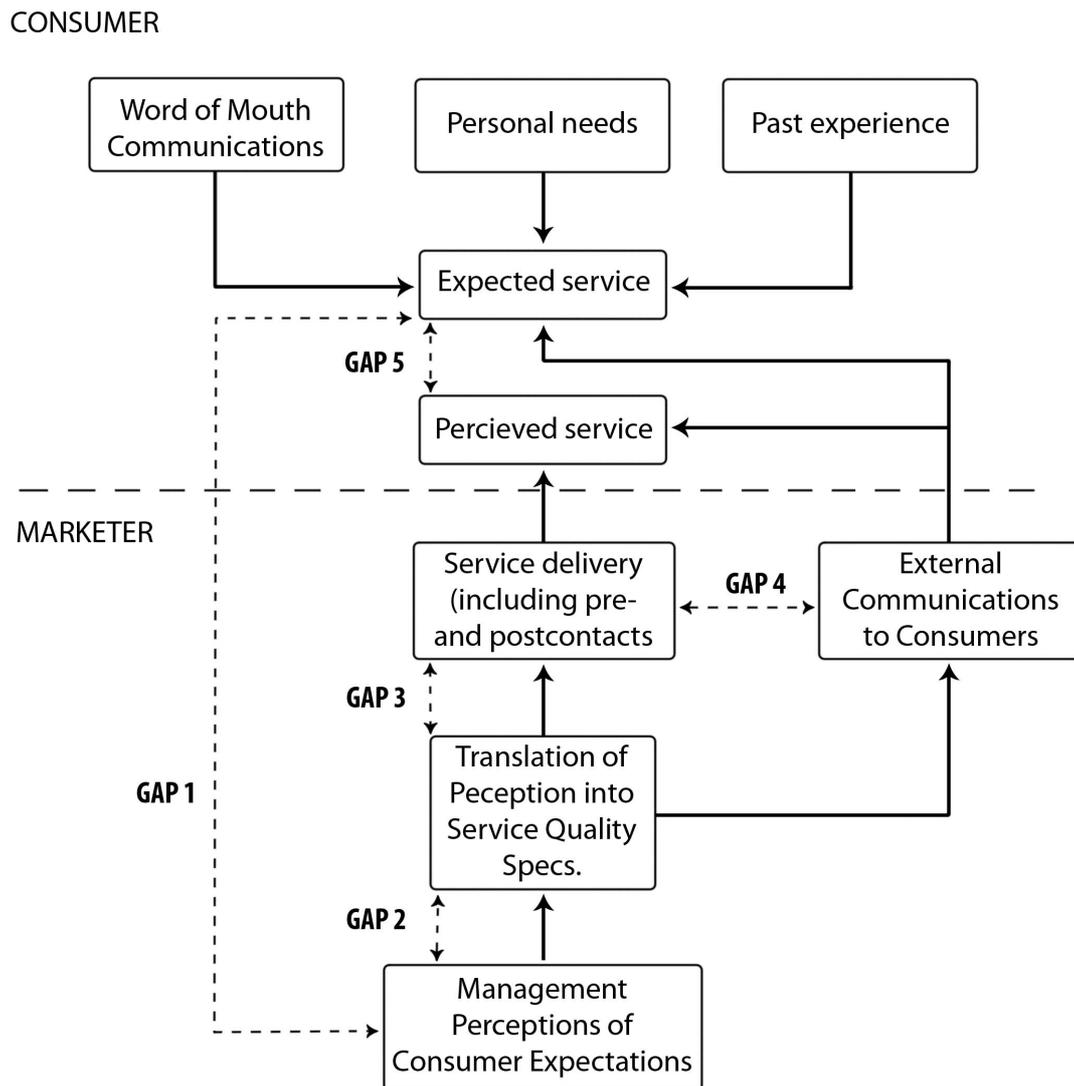
**Figure 3.2: The Service Concept**

Source: Johnston and Clark, 2008, p. 26

Johnston and Clark (2008, p. 42) mean that the service concept is an important part of marketing since a well articulated service concept will allow customers to know what to expect from the organization. Also Grönroos (2001) mentions that it is not the product, but the service concept that is the starting point in marketing. According to Johnston and Clark (2008, p. 42) it is not a surprise that customer expectations are difficult to meet in an organization where a detailed service concept is not established.

### 3.3 Understanding customer expectations

According to Levitt (1981) the main difference between products and services is that products are tangible while services are not. He argues that this greatly affects the quality control of services, because the intangibility makes it more difficult for the customer to evaluate the service. The difficulty in measuring service quality led Parasuraman, et al. (1985) to develop a service quality model known as the Gap Model. The Gap Model presents five gaps, or miscommunications, that can occur in the processes of a service delivery.



**Figure 3.3: The Gap Model**  
Source: Parasuraman et al., 1985

1. Consumer expectation – Manager perception gap
2. Management perception – Service quality specification gap
3. Service quality specification – Service delivery gap
4. Service delivery – External communication gap
5. Expected service – Perceived service gap

The first gap (Gap 1) indicates the difference between what customers expect from an organization, and how the organization perceives these expectations. Parasuraman et al. (1985) give an example where customers explain that they feel uncomfortable and insecure about internet payments, while the management of the organizations in question seldom considered this. The misperception of customer expectations leads to difficulty in matching or exceeding these expectations, creating the second gap (Gap 2). If an organization does not have a good understanding of customer expectations it is likely that their service specification will not be matching them. The third gap (Gap 3) shows the difference between an organizations service specification and its actual delivery. Parasuraman, et al. (1985) argues that employees have a strong impact on the service quality perceived by customers, and that employee performance may differ. Therefore, a service specification does not necessarily make high quality deliveries a standard. Gap 4 shows the importance of correct marketing of an organization's services. An incorrect marketing, the offering of more than the organization is able to deliver, raises customer expectations and lowers the perception of quality. Finally, the fifth gap (Gap 5) indicates that a customer's perception of quality depends on his or hers initial expectations.

Seth, Deshmukh and Vrat (2005) criticizes the Gap Model by pointing out that it can assist management in identifying factors for service quality, but it does not give an explanation as to how to measure the different gaps.

Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1993) state that customer expectations are based on controllable factors such as service promises made by the company, and uncontrollable factors such as personal needs, word-of-mouth communication and past experiences. They also mention that culture creates different patterns of behavior and different attitudes, and therefore, the possibility of culture being a factor affecting customer expectations should be considered in international businesses.

Donthu and Yoo (1998) find it critical to understand customers' levels of expectations, explaining that for cultures with high levels of expectations, a low level of quality is not tolerable. They go as far as to state that it makes no sense to attend to all customers in the same way, since their expectations of service quality differs.

However, a study made by Armstrong et al. (1997) shows that expectations do differ from culture to culture, but the overall evaluation of service quality is rather a function of service performance than customer expectations. They elaborate this by stating that expectations do not need to be measured in a cross-cultural context.

### **3.4 Service recovery**

Miller, Craighead and Karwan (2000) state that in order to have satisfied customers the company and the front-office staff need to meet or even exceed their expectations. When the expected service is not met, a service failure occurs, which can affect a customer's loyalty to the company in question. By applying service recovery techniques, Miller, Craighead and Karwan (2000) argue that this can be prevented.

Services are often delivered immediately and spontaneously. For front-office staff that continuously has to provide high quality service to a broad variety of customers, it can be difficult to each time create a successful service delivery. Therefore, inevitably, service failures sometimes occur. (Sparks, 2010)

Another reason which we believe motivates the use of service recovery techniques is that there is a connection between customer satisfaction and the future success of the company (O'Neill, 2010). He argues that it is the customer who determines whether the service quality is high or not based on his or her expectations and perceptions of the service. If the expectations are not met, the service quality will be perceived as bad and it is therefore important to understand customer expectations and try to prevent service failure.

Reisinger (2010) states that potential tourists often rely on word-of-mouth communication, such as advice from friends and family. A study showed that dissatisfied customers tell their experience to more than twice the amount of people, than satisfied customers (Payne, 1993 cited in Reisinger, 2010). We believe that by working with service recovery techniques, a company has a chance to change dissatisfied customers into satisfied ones, ultimately resulting in positive word-of-mouth, and more importantly, not resulting in the telling of bad experiences.

### **3.5 Recovery Methods**

Sparks (2010) argues that there are several ways to respond to a service failure. She states that it is first of all necessary that the company acknowledges that a service failure has occurred. In many cases the service failure is undetected unless a customer complains. Once the service failure is recognized, the company has to choose how to respond, and even *if* to respond. (Sparks, 2010)

There are several ways to respond to a service failure, some of which do not lead to recovery, such as denial and avoidance. These will not be discussed any further. The rest of them are as follows;

#### *Fixing the problem*

Fixing the problem is very effective and should be done whenever possible. Unfortunately there are cases in which it is not possible, for instance if a tour bus breaks down. In these cases the service provider needs to look at other possibilities to recover from the service failure. (Sparks, 2010)

#### *Apology*

Apologizing to the customer can be seen as the minimum of what is expected after a service failure, but it can also be sufficient enough to recover. It is relevant how the apology is delivered. If the apology is expressed in a sincere manner, it can make the recovery process easier. (Sparks, 2010)

#### *Explanations*

Sometimes explaining why the service failure has occurred can lead the customer to become less angry. There are two ways in which a company can explain the occurrence. When the company takes the blame by explaining that the service failure was their fault, they use predominant internal explanations. Predominant external explanations, on the other hand, mean that the company explains that they had no control over factors that led to the service failure, for example bad weather. (Sparks, 2010)

#### *Customer input*

One way to recover can be to involve the displeased customer in the recovery process and ask their opinion on how the company could satisfy the customer. By doing this

the customer can experience a fairness in the situation. Sometimes this method is more effective when a tangible compensation is added. (Sparks, 2010)

#### Compensation

Finally, a financial compensation can be given to the customer in the form of a discount or full refund (Sparks 2010). Johnston and Clark (2008) on the other hand argue that most customers simply want the problem solved and therefore before choosing to compensate the customer the company should consider the seriousness of the failure.

### **3.6 Proactive Service Recovery**

Miller, Craighead and Karwan (2000) discuss three approaches which can be useful when implementing a service recovery process in a company to make sure that the employees are prepared for service failures.

#### Listening to customers

The use of customer criticism can help a company both develop and improve their services. Unfortunately dissatisfied customers do not always complain and therefore the company sometimes need to encourage customers in order to get feedback. (Miller, Craighead and Karwan, 2000)

#### Empowerment of employees

It is far more likely that front-office staff detects dissatisfaction than the management (Miller, Craighead and Karwan, 2000). Giving the front-office staff some authority to solve problems immediately can increase the speed of the recovery process (Hart, Heskett and Sasser (1990).

#### Provision of information to customers

The likelihood of a customer discovering a service failure is high, and therefore a company should rather inform the customer than try to hide the failure (Miller, Craighead and Karwan, 2000). As Hart, Heskett and Sasser (1990) mentioned, the speed of the recovery process can have an effect on the final outcome of it. Therefore, predicting a service failure can give a company the possibility to completely avoid it, or at least decrease its impact.

### **3.7 Culture in service management**

Winsted (1997) and Mattila (1999) have both made studies to investigate the cultural influence on customer perceptions on service quality. Winsted (1997) identified differences in service evaluation where culture might have been a key factor affecting the final outcome. These findings conclude that culture is an important factor that needs to be taken into consideration when examining service encounters. Mattila (1999) compared the values of Western and Asian visitors in luxury hotels and found that the Western visitors were more likely to evaluate the total experience based on tangible things, such as the environment in the hotels, while the Asian visitors were more interested in personalized service. These findings led Mattila (1999) to conclude that understanding customer expectations, based on cultural background, need to be a part of service management. As examples, she mentions that although services are intangible, it might be a good idea to focus on pleasant surrounding and other material

things in order to make the services more appealing to Western visitors, while for example butlers, or other personalized services, might appeal more to Asian visitors.

Sparks (2010) discuss different contextual factors that can affect customers' perceptions of service failures. For example there are the organizational factors, i.e. how well the recovery process is organized. Physical factors can also play a part with the surrounding environment and how it can make the customer either feel anxious or at ease. Further, she states that there can be cultural factors affecting customers' perception of service quality, explaining that cultural background can have an impact on both the perception of a service failure as well as the acceptance of the recovery strategy used. Sparks (2010) also argues that customers might not feel socially comfortable complaining in a different cultural setting than their own. She provides the example of a customer who did not express his or her complaint straight away but waited until the return home. The company finally received the complaints from the travel agency that the customer had used.

## **4. Empirical Data**

### **4.1 Business Idea**

The business idea of the Ibis hotels has been expressed in many ways throughout the different interviews, although the expressions seem to be quite similar.

At Ibis Hotel Arlanda the assistant manager said that Ibis should offer the best combination of affordable prices, high standard and most importantly a high service quality. The fact that the hotel is part of a budget hotel chain means that the tangible equipment, such as beds and bathrooms, are kept simple and the accommodations only include what is necessary. The standard should be high non-the-less, and so the hotels make sure that facilities like internet and food are available but not included, allowing the price to stay low. The assistant manager of Ibis Hotel Arlanda emphasized that although the tangible items are kept simple, there are no tangible aspects in working with service, and therefore the Ibis hotels can present a high service quality. (Interview A).

At the Ibis hotel Kista, the assistant manager shortly explained the business idea as a high service quality hotel aiming towards the economic segment, where the customers only pay for what they actually use. (Interview B)

Finally, the general manager at Ibis Hotel Spånga presented the business idea as a combination of three things; cheap rooms, high standard and availability on locations where the demand is the highest. (Interview C)

All three managers agree that other hotels often offer complete packages that already include services like breakfast and internet. However, they believe that it can be a good idea to let the customer decide what they want to pay for, since not everyone finds all services necessary. By this customizing attitude it is even more obvious that the hotels aim towards the economic segment. (Interview A, B and C)

### **4.2 Organization**

In 2010 the Swedish Ibis hotels were sold to the German company, Norse Hotels, and the transitional phase is still ongoing. All Swedish Ibis hotels are or are becoming franchised under Norse Hotels (Interview A). Fourteen out of the sixteen Ibis hotels in Sweden are today franchised and they are working along the same main guidelines, though developing their individual way of working with service management. At Ibis Hotel Kista for example they have hired Cat of Sweden, an external company providing courses on service, to improve the service quality. They also have a booklet which functions as a guideline on how to behave and what to do in different situations, which each employee should memorize. (Interview B)

Every Ibis hotel has a service manager who ensures that the standard of the service is of high quality (Interview B). The service managers are continuously updated and educated within the field of service, and then pass their new knowledge on to the staff at each of the Ibis hotels (Interview A).

At Ibis Hotel Arlanda there is one general manager and the interviewed assistant manager at top level. The general manager controls the real estate and the

administrative parts while the assistant manager handles the staff and schedules et cetera. The two are always in contact. On the next level there is the rest of the staff, such as receptionists and cooks. Out of these, there is one person responsible for the reception and one for the restaurant, who have slightly more responsibility than the rest of the staff. In total there are 20 people in the permanent staff plus 17 who are temporary employees, and everyone has areas of responsibility. (Interview A)

In comparison Ibis Hotel Kista is a smaller hotel with 13 employees including temporary and seasonal. The staff at Ibis Hotel Kista sees each other almost every day, helping the cohesion of the group, and ensuring that there is an open dialogue. (Interview B)

Ibis Hotel Spånga has a deciding structure built with one hotel owner at the top-level responsible for the hotel as a whole. Under him there is the hotel manager who is responsible for all the employees, the schedule and the communication. The rest of the staff consists of about 10 employees, three of which are permanent and the rest are temporary. All the staff is trained to be able to handle every assignment, with exception of group bookings which are handled by the manager. The group bookings require consistent contact and it is easier if a manager, who works all weekdays, handle it than a person from the temporary staff. (Interview C)

With the ongoing ownership change the information has stopped completely between the top-level and the Ibis Hotel Spånga. The manager has not received any direction or information since the overtaking in November of 2010 and is now continuing with previous directions until further notice (Interview C). The assistant manager of Ibis Hotel Arlanda has also expressed that there is some difficulty in information flow within the hotel chain due to the recent change of ownership (Interview A). Currently, the Swedish Ibis hotels are still listed on Accor Hotel's website despite the ownership change (Interview C).

### **4.3 The Service Concept & understanding expectations**

According to the assistant manager at Ibis Hotel Arlanda, guests at any Ibis hotel should recognize the concept no matter which Ibis hotel they are staying at. The hotels should also offer the same add-ons, so that the guests always know what they can expect when staying at an Ibis hotel. As mentioned earlier, the hotels all focus on having a high service quality, and the idea is to make the guests want to come back mainly because of its hospitality. (Interview A)

At Ibis Hotel in Kista, the assistant manager explained the service concept simply as "Sweden's nicest hotel"\* (Interview B). She emphasizes that this is their ambition, even if they cannot claim it to be true. (Interview B)

Both of the receptionists interviewed articulated that the service concept includes having the guests feel that the hotel staff is attentive and helpful and that the hotels are pleasant to stay at. (Interviews D and E)

The manager at Ibis Hotel Kista mentions that the slogan "Sweden's nicest hotel" is a part of each marketing campaign so that they try to reach out to potential customers

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\* "Sveriges trevligaste hotell" – (Cited from Interview B)

with it. She means that by doing this, the guests know what to expect, but also the hotels know what customers are expecting. (Interview B).

An evaluation on how the service concept seems to be established in the three interviewed Ibis hotels will follow in Chapter 5.

#### **4.4 Service recovery**

The Ibis hotels work with something they call the “15 minute rule”. It implies that if a guest has any problem, for instance, if something is wrong with the room, the staff must try to solve it within 15 minutes. If the problem has not been solved within this period of time, the guest receives one complimentary night at the hotel. According to all interviewed managers and receptionists, the front staff has the responsibility to try to satisfy the guest and ensure their comfort. This means that they are allowed to do whatever they think is necessary to solve all possible problems. The only time a manager needs to be contacted or consulted is if the guest’s problem involves the need of purchasing something by the hotel. (Interview A, B, C, D and E).

##### Hiring

Nearly all Ibis hotels in Sweden are franchised and so they have their own policies when it comes to hiring new staff. The common denominator for the three hotels presented in this essay is the language requirement; all employees must know Swedish and English fluently. The knowledge of other languages is a positive attribute, but not a necessity. (Interviews A, B and C)

At Ibis Hotel Arlanda the main qualification skill is the motivation, both to learn and to not be intimidated by new and sometimes stressful situations. The manager adds that what is important is to find employees that work well together. (Interview A)

Similar to Ibis Hotel Arlanda the Ibis hotel Spånga has the same emphasis on the motivational aspect. There are no requirements on the employees to have previous experience or education within the hotel industry as long as the person has the enthusiasm to learn and the right attitude. (Interview C)

At Ibis Hotel Kista, a hotel located in a culturally diverse area, the staff is also diverse with backgrounds from different parts of the world such as England, Iran and parts of Africa. Here the requirements are, in addition to fluency in English and Swedish, two years of experience within the hotel or restaurant industry. The cultural diversity among the staff is not seen as a necessity, only a positive and often useful attribute. The different backgrounds of the staff members were not considered in the hiring process. Like the Ibis Hotel Arlanda, the main focus is that the staff is unified. (Interview B)

##### Training

Managers and staff from all of the Ibis hotels get together once a year to refresh and renew the knowledge of service. The staff gets to share experiences and learn new techniques by acting out different situations that can occur when there are new encounters, for example when guests are from different cultures. (Interview A)

Internal training that each employee has to go through in the Ibis hotels is fire drills and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), both with a theoretical and practical approach, and hygiene training. (Interview B)

## **4.5 Follow-up**

All three interviewed hotels are in favor of websites such as booking.com where guests can give praise and make complaints about their stay at the hotel. All the managers state that they continuously read the comments about their hotels. The manager at Ibis Hotel Spånga points out that they are a good source of information since most hotel guests do not give verbal feedback when leaving the hotel. The guest can comment in the comfort of their own home. (Interviews A, B and C)

At Ibis Hotel Arlanda once a year the employees hand out evaluation forms to guest upon arrival and collect them back at the end of the stay in order to find out what the guests liked, disliked and what aspects in the hotel could be improve. (Interview A)

Ibis Hotel Kista uses a follow-up system named Olakala. If the guest has volunteered an email address in the booking-information they receive a questionnaire after the stay. (Interview B)

## **4.6 Website**

The headquarters are in charge of the website which is currently translated into 11 languages. The previous owner, Accor, owns hotels all over the world, and so they can see where the market demands are the greatest, and it is into these languages that the website is translated. As the market constantly changes and expands, the website and its number of languages do too. It is uncertain how the ownership change will affect the development of the websites translations. (Interview A, C)

What both the managers at Ibis Hotel Arlanda and Ibis Hotel Kista think is the most vital aspect of the website is that it should be simple and user friendly (Interview A, B). Although most of the bookings only involve issuing the credit card number as an insurance, and then paying upon visit, some special offers need to be paid directly online. According to the manager at Ibis Hotel Arlanda, the headquarters work continuously with safety of paying online. (Interview A)

The bookings are made through different websites including their own and those are connected either straight to the hotel-calendar or the hotel e-mail. In the second case, it is important for the receptionists to do regular affirmations that the e-mail bookings get transferred into Ibis booking system. (Interview A)

## **4.7 Culture in service management**

In the opinion of all three interviewed managers, understanding the cultural background of their guests is not a necessary part of service quality management. According to all three managers, the cultural backgrounds of their guests does not change in what way service is provided to them. The Ibis hotels work towards giving a high service quality in all situations, to all guests. (Interview A, B and C)

One of the receptionists mentions that in the beginning of his time at Ibis he did not have any previous knowledge about Muslims eating habits, and that he now has learned which of the dishes available at the hotel's restaurant Muslims can eat, considering their religious views. He says that ever since he has been able to deliver a higher level of service to Muslim guests. (Interview E)

## **5. Analysis**

### **5.1 Business idea**

Ibis hotels business idea has been stated in a similar way by all three interviewed managers and both receptionists. In our opinion, just like with the service concept, it is important that all employees know what the business idea is in order to deliver the same product or service to their customers. We believe that, since the Ibis hotels are a budget chain oriented to the economic segment, their focus on high service quality is a good strategy, especially given that it adds no extra cost to the guests, while potentially raising their satisfaction with the service delivery.

### **5.2 Organization**

The first conclusion we made of what strategies companies should use is that they must have a clear organization structure. The easier it is for the reader (employee) to understand it, the easier it is to put it into practice. A simple structure also makes it easier for everyone within the organization to interpret it in the same way, ultimately leading to fewer misunderstandings.

Jones (2001) states that there is a connection between the number of managers and the number of employees in a company. All three of the interviewed hotels are small-scaled and franchised under Norse Hotels and can therefore not completely be compared with that theory. Yet, when looking at the organizational structure at the three hotels we realized that it was similar in all three of them. The manager-employee ratio seemed to depend on the hotel size, which agrees with Jones' theory. At the smallest of our interviewed hotels, Ibis Hotel Spånga, they only have one manager above the rest of the staff. That, in our opinion, is enough, since the number of employees is low. At Ibis Hotel Arlanda on the other hand they have, in addition to the assistant manager, two people in the staff that have more responsibility than the rest. Considering that they have about double the amount in staff at Arlanda than at Spånga this seems compatible with Jones' theory as well.

In all three of the hotels the employees are trained to handle all tasks, such as restaurant, reception or running errands, so that anyone can fill in wherever it is necessary. We believe that this creates a sense of responsibility throughout the staff.

Since the Ibis hotels are franchised, each hotel has developed their own way of working with service management in addition to following the guidelines given by Norse Hotels, or the previous owner, Accor Hotels. We believe it could be discussed whether this is a good idea or not, since part of the Ibis hotels service concept is to make sure that each hotel appears the same in the eyes of their guests. We find it possible that the hotels might differentiate themselves too much if the separate way of working with service quality management is not controlled. All the hotels do meet once every year to review the service concept together, but the question still stands when it comes to the service quality management: should the hotels be allowed to in any way differentiate their way of working with service quality management, or should it all be done collectively?

After trying to reach both the former owners Accor Hotels, and the new Norse Hotels, and being redirected on several occasions from one to the other, it is clear that there is

a problem with communication. It seems that no one has a full understanding of who is responsible for what, and so responsibility is being pushed back and forth between the two companies.

### 5.3 Service concept

The service concept, just like the business idea, seems well established within the Ibis hotel chain. Every interviewed person expressed the service concept to include high service quality, making the guests choose Ibis on their next trip because it is pleasant to stay with them. Although the recent change of ownership has led to a lack of communication between the Norse hotels and the Ibis hotels, it seems that the managers and employees are simply following the prior routines. The lack of communication problem can probably become more noticeable when the new information needs to be spread within the company. One manager expressed confusion of the division of the responsibilities on levels above her. That is in our opinion the consequence of poor information flow.

The advertisement of Ibis business idea and service concept is clear on their website. It says that high quality service and around the clock availability is very important to everyone at the Ibis hotels. This is also what we heard from all three managers, and both of the receptionists. They all expressed that their service concept is well established, and we agree. By articulating the business idea and service concept visibly in their advertisement and on their website, we believe that they can affect potential customers' expectations, ultimately better understanding their expectations. Therefore it is easier for them to avoid unnecessary gaps between customer expectations and service specification (Gap 1), or between customer expectations and customer perceptions (Gap 5).

Parasuraman et al. (1985) explained Gap 3 as the gap between a service specification and its actual delivery, meaning that employee performance can differ, ultimately delivering a different service quality than specified. We believe that the Ibis hotels manage to meet the expectations of many of their guests. However, since the Ibis hotels express giving a high quality service, but do not actively train their employees in any intercultural understanding, we believe that this gap may occur in the form of cultural shocks. By either training the staff in intercultural understanding, or adding this sort of knowledge or experience to the requirements when hiring new staff, we think that the Ibis hotels could better avoid cultural shocks and possible service failures.

### 5.4 Service recovery

When it comes to service recovery, the Ibis hotels work with the 15-minute rule. Implementing Sparks (2010) theories, this rule means that they work with two different service recovery methods, the *fixing the problem* whenever possible and in other cases the *compensation*. Although it was never verbalized during the interviews, we can assume that the *apology* method is used if not by itself but as a compliment to the other methods. We believe that the *explanation* method, giving a reason as to why the service is lacking, is probably used when the service failure is more than imperfections like a broken lamp or no batteries in the remote control. We believe that the customer usually can figure out on whom or what the blame should be put

depending in the nature of the failure. By informing their guests of the 15-minute rule, they encourage them to verbalize complaints if they have any, which they otherwise might not have done. This also gives the hotels continuous feedback on what to improve.

As a part of the 15-minute rule, the front staff has been empowered by having responsibility to do whatever is possible to solve their guests' problems. This allows the front staff to take care of most problems without having to consult with any manager and ultimately making the service recovery process faster. A faster service recovery process can, as we mentioned earlier, have a positive effect on the final outcome (Hart, Heskett and Sasser, 1990).

We can see that the service recovery process in the Ibis hotels is the same no matter what nationality or cultural background the guest has. The idea is that every guest should be served with the same high quality service. We believe that, in this way, the hotels are neglecting the possibility that different guests might have different perceptions or definitions of what high quality service actually is.

## **5.6 Follow-up**

The Ibis hotels sometimes give out surveys to guests upon their arrivals, but as we have mentioned in the theory section, not all customers respond to the service providers directly. All the interviewed managers have agreed that websites, such as booking.com, where guests are able to comment and rate on the hotels, is of great value to them. They all follow the comments on this website in order to learn how their guests have experienced their stay, and what the hotels could improve for future guests. The receptionists also encourage their guests to give feedback by simply asking them how they experienced their stay, when they are checking out.

We find the Ibis hotels way of working with follow-ups is good since it includes several methods. We think that each method has positive and negative aspects, and therefore using several of them makes them complement each other and result in a good understanding of customer perceptions. We believe that a website such as booking.com can be an important tool in order to understand guests' perceptions of service quality depending on where they came from. Right now the Ibis hotels read and interpreted the comments in the same way. However, maybe it is possible to find any connections between guests that came from the same country and their perceptions.

## **5.7 Website**

As mentioned, Ibis international website is available in 11 different languages, chosen with the market demands in mind. The managers all agreed that the most important aspect on the website is keeping it simple, easy to use, and secure. The customer should be able to easily navigate through the booking process, without becoming confused on what their booking contains, what type of room they have chosen, et cetera. When it comes to security, paying for rooms online is intended. Most bookings are paid upon arrival and only require a credit card number to be registered when booking, but some offers need to be paid immediately, and therefore the managers at the Ibis hotels find it important to make customers feel safe when paying online.

We believe that having the website translated into 11 languages makes it available for a wider market, and we think that continuously adding new languages is always a good idea. We also believe that it is important for the website to be easy to use in case any customer does not find his or her language in the list, and needs to make a booking with only a basic knowledge of, for instance, English. Keeping it simple, Ibis not only manages to make it easier for those who do not have their language on the website, but also to those who might find making bookings online in general difficult. We are certain that not all potential customers have daily access to computers, and might therefore find them difficult to use.

## **5.1 Culture in service management**

Early in our study we came to understand that culture is not a big part of service quality management. The Ibis hotels aim to give good quality service to every guest, and it is of no importance where they come from or what cultural background they have. The ambition to give the best service has given the front staff the authority to help guests with special requests. Sometimes these can be originating from a guests culture, but that is not taken into consideration. The front staff will simply consider it as any special request, and do whatever is possible to satisfy their guest.

It is obvious, looking at the job requirements, that it is important for the Ibis hotels to hire staff that enjoys working with people and delivering high service quality. They find personality more important than previous work experience, assuring that new employees will fit well into the group dynamic, and that they will enjoy their job.

Several of the employees at the different Ibis hotels have different cultural backgrounds, and some of them know more languages than the compulsory Swedish and English. Hotel Ibis in Kista, which is located in a culturally diverse area, has many employees with other cultural backgrounds than Swedish. Although the managers expressed that the knowledge of additional languages and having a different cultural background is a positive attribute, they did not consider them when hiring. We believe that people who are raised with other cultural backgrounds than Swedish can have a better understanding of not only their culture, but also of cultural encounters in general. Therefore we find it interesting that the Ibis hotels do not acknowledge different cultural backgrounds of the employees to be an important asset to the staff.

As we mentioned earlier, we think that Ibis way of working with the same high service quality to all guests neglects the possibility that different guests might define and perceive service quality as something completely different than the Ibis hotels. Therefore we think that gaps, such as Gap 3, can occur when guests have come to understand that the Ibis hotels deliver a high quality service, but then finds that the high service quality was not what they themselves consider to be of high quality. As Donthu and Yoo (1998) the levels of expectations can also differ, and guests from countries where expectations are generally high, might find that the service quality that the Ibis hotels deliver does not live up to their expectations. In fact, the Ibis hotels way of delivering the same service quality to each customer has, according to Donthu and Yoo (1998), no sense.

We believe it is positive that the Ibis hotels have set up a service quality standard that is supposed to be followed in all of the hotels, and it seems to be well established.

This way they have a standard, and they do have staff available at all times making it possible to try to solve any problem, whether it is culturally induced or not. Although we find it important for the Ibis hotels to realize the effects that cultural backgrounds can have on customer perceptions and implement this understanding in their service quality management.

## 6. Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to detect if the Ibis hotels consider cultural backgrounds when working with service quality management in their hotels. Our study has brought us to the conclusion that the Ibis hotels do not in any significant way consider cultural backgrounds of their guests when working with service quality management. The hotels strongly emphasize service quality, and service quality management plays a large role within the chain. However, in none of the levels is any consideration being put into how cultural backgrounds of the guests can affect their expectations or perceptions of the service quality.

Further on, we have tried to answer our research questions, concerning all three levels of hierarchy within the Ibis chain;

- How does Norse Hotels work with service quality management in order to secure high quality service to each customer and also avoid cultural shocks in cultural encounters between staff and guests?
- How do the three Ibis Hotels work with service quality management, considering guidelines given by Norse Hotels, in order to ensure high quality service to each customer and also avoid cultural shocks in cultural encounters between staff and guests?
- How is the service quality management perceived by the front-office staff in each of the hotels, and do they experience any cultural shocks during cultural encounters?

Unfortunately we have not been able to answer the first question due to issues of accessibility. Neither the current owner Norse Hotels, nor the former owner, Accor Hotels has given us interviews or any information. This leaves us unable to reach our goal of investigating all three levels of hierarchy. We are able to conclude that there is a lack of communication between the Swedish Ibis hotels and their new owner, and also within the Norse Hotels. Since we have been redirected several times from Norse Hotels to Accor, and vice versa, we feel that Norse Hotels need to take more responsibility for the Ibis hotels. It seems that the transition phase between the two owners has taken a long time, and there is some uncertainty about who is responsible for what. We think that this is a big problem since it leaves the rest of the hierarchy unstable, in the sense that managers at the different hotels are confused about who their superiors are.

On the management level, that is, how the Ibis hotels themselves work with service management, we have found that the hotels have a very well established service concept and work efficiently with service quality. However they do not consider cultural backgrounds in any part of the service quality management. It has no important role in the hiring or in the training of the staff. The Ibis hotels focus on giving high quality service to each of their guest, no matter where they come from. We believe that there is an issue here since the hotels have not considered the possibility that some guests might have a different view of what high quality service is.

What is interesting is that all managers agree that additional knowledge of languages is a positive attribute, which we believe is a sign that they do understand that it may

be of importance. They find it important to be able to understand their customers, and that language sometimes can be an unnecessary boundary.

Finally, the staff at the Ibis hotels seems to have experienced some cultural shocks when one receptionist, for example, had Muslim guests who have a special diet related to their religion. It became necessary for the receptionist to learn what foods guests with this diet could and could not eat.

The receptionists have also experienced the importance of knowing different languages when working in a hotel, and consider it absolutely necessary to know Swedish and English. We find it odd that more emphasis was not put on the positive outcomes of having colleagues who speak other languages than Swedish and English, which could be helpful with guests who do not speak these languages.

It seems that several academics (Winsted, 1997; Mattilla, 1999; Sparks, 2010) are aware of the effect cultural backgrounds can have on a person's expectations and perceptions on service quality, and yet little research has been done in this field. Sparks (2010) states that considering cultural backgrounds when trying to understand customer expectations, or when working with service recovery, could be a very important part of service quality management, however, unfortunately it seems that the tourism industry has not yet acknowledged this. Through our study we have reached similar conclusions.

We hope that this study can be of help to the management of Ibis hotels in their efforts towards further improvement in the quality of the service they provided. We also hope that the reading of this thesis may inspire more research on the topic.

## **6.1 Ideas for improvement**

Our final research question was:

- Can service quality management be improved in the Norse hotels, and more specifically, the contacted Ibis Hotels?

We have concluded that the Ibis hotels currently do not consider customers' cultural backgrounds when working with service quality management and studying customer expectations. However, we believe that since both the business idea and service concept are very well established throughout the company, adding cultural backgrounds as a new factor to their service management should not be difficult. The managers already use websites such as booking.com and work with several other follow-up methods. We think that one start could be to compare the feedback given from guests to each other based on where the guests come from. It is possible that the hotels could find similarities in the opinions of guests from the same cultural backgrounds, and differences in the opinions of guests from different cultures. We see this as a good start in order to understand the customers' expectations, and based on the findings, the hotels could train their staff to be flexible and deliver different variations of high service quality to different guests. Also, the fact that each hotel in the Ibis chain has a service manager, who is responsible for continuously gathering and spreading new knowledge within the field of service, makes us believe that the process of training staff in any cultural studies should be rather easy. As a conclusion, the hotels seem to have a good base for working with new concepts and ideas;

however, we fear that the recent lack of communication between Norse Hotels and the Ibis hotels could stand in the way of easily establishing a new concept.

## **6.2 Further studies**

We feel that our study has a great potential, applying existing theories to businesses working with tourism, and we would find it interesting to enlarge our study. But in order to fully understand how an organization could implement cultural studies into service quality management, we feel that a complete overview of the organizations current service quality management would be helpful. In future thesis, we would like to have a complete information base including interviews from the headquarters of Accor, or the Norse Hotels to find their opinion on considering the cultural aspect in service quality management.

Since the Ibis hotels is an international chain, it could be very interesting to see how other countries or cultures work with service quality management, and if anyone has started to consider culture within it. From this study we have learned that the Ibis hotels follow main guidelines from upper level, but then make many decisions locally on how to work with service. It might be possible that some hotels have had their staff trained with cultural encounters, or that some hotels consider cultural backgrounds when hiring.

## **6.3 Further reading**

As we stated at the beginning of Chapter 3, we found many interesting theories concerning service quality while working on this thesis. For those interested in learning more about the possibility of culture having an effect on customer expectations and service quality perception we recommend the articles by Winsted (1997), Mattilla (1999) and Sparks (2010), all of which have contributed to this thesis.

Further on, Hofstede (1980, 1991 cited in Furrer, Shaw-Ching Liu, Sudharshan, 2000) made a large cross-cultural study of 80,000 IBM employees, contributing to this field of study by identifying five cultural dimensions. These dimensions have been found to be "generalizable" (Furrer, Shaw-Ching Liu, Sudharshan, 2000) outside of IBM and therefore able to represent differences between cultures. The article by Furrer, Shaw-Ching Liu and Sudharshan (2000) explains the different dimensions and links them to service quality. We think it is an interesting article for anyone who wants to become familiarized with the link between cultural background and service quality management.

We also recommend the book *Service Quality Management in Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure* by Kandampully, Mok and Sparks (2010) as it is an introducing guide to, as the name states, service quality management. It has been helpful during our tourism studies, and in our opinion it is worth reading for anyone who is interested in working within any service oriented business.

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## **Interviews**

Interview A: Birgitta Manér, Ibis Hotel Arlanda, *Assistant Manager* (2011-04-06)

Interview B: Maria Lundqvist, Ibis Hotel Kista, *Assistant Manager* (2011-04-07)

Interview C: Anna Turpeinen, Ibis Hotel Spånga, *General Manager* (2011-04-26)

Interview D: Receptionist 1, Ibis Hotel Arlanda, *Staffmember* (2011-04-05)

Interview E: Recetionist 2, Ibis Hotel Kista, *Staffmember* (2011-04-26)

## **Online sources**

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Webpage 3: Ibis hotel: hotellet tar emot dig och ger dig service dygnet runt, 2011, *Bemötande och service*, [online] (Accessed: 2011-04-10) Available at: <http://www.ibishotel.com/sv/discovering-ibis-hotel/reception-service/index.shtml>