Determining Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction of Tour Guide's Service Quality Using SERVQUAL Model at Historic City of Babylon

Muthana Faaeq Almasoodi[1,] Suraiyati Rahman[2]

Abstract

The growth of tourism in Iraq is significant, and the tour guide service is essential in ensuring the tourists' satisfaction; however, the tour guide service is associated with poor service quality in Iraq, inadequate attention and assistance, and training through the development and testing of the SERVQUAL Model and tour guide qualities based on the disconfirmation theory. This study tries to measure the discrepancy between domestic tourists' expectations and experiences of tangibles. This research aims to investigate tourist satisfaction with the quality of tour guide services in Babylon City by focusing on the nine criteria contributing to tourist satisfaction and employing the SERVQUAL Model and Theory of Disconfirmation. The research approach employed is a quantitative method. The survey with a total of 394 respondents (tourists in Babylon). Which was then processed and analyzed using the data analysis using first-generation (SPSS) was adopted. Findings of the studySERVQUAL dimensions of reliability, empathy, tangibility, Safety and Security, responsiveness, tour guide attributes of Personal integrity, Professional skills, Professional attitude and ability, and Professional Knowledge were found to be significant. Tourist perceptions considerably outperformed their expectations, with a positive gap for all factors. The implication of the research contributed to this study's overarching goal is to significantly contribute to our understanding of tourism generally and domestic tourism in Babylon in particular. The findings offer valuable and specific confirmations for further studies. Specific and useful confirmations for academic studies on tour guide service quality are provided. However, this would close a gap in the existing amount of literature. Future research is expected to investigate additional factors that can influence the quality service of tour guides and the impact on tourists' satisfaction in the historic city of Babylon, as tourism policy is also required to examine Babylon city. It also requires examination of international tourists to acquire a more thorough understanding of tour guide service quality.

Introduction

Global tourism has undergone a fundamental transition in recent years, boosting the economic growth of nations that care about local and international tourism. Tourism is classified as a typical service industry that relies heavily on service components. The tourist industry's fundamental goals are to serve and satisfy clients (Williams & Soutar, 2000; Campbell et al., 2020). Service providers are considered integral to the product (Jin-Young & See-Won, 2016). The tourism industry's development and diversification have elevated it to the fastest-growing sector of the global economy (Tkachev et al., 2018). In addition, academics and researchers focus their efforts on tour guides and tourist growth.

[1] School of Housing Building and Planning, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang 11800, Malaysia. Email:
muthanaalmasaoudi1975@gmail.com
[2] School of Housing Building and Planning, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang 11800, Malaysia.
Corresponding Author Email: suraiyati@usm.my

Tour guides are prominent members of the tourism sector who contribute to forming travelers' initial perceptions of destinations and their experiences (Kuo et al., 2018). As a result, tourism experts frequently view tour guides as vital components of tourism services, goods, and experiences (Khalifah & Mustafa, 2019). Researchers have noted tour guides' value in several contexts, including experience providers, cultural mediators, advocates for sustainability, protectors of cultural heritage, behavior modifiers, gatekeepers, and on-the-ground interpreters (Black & Weiler, 2005; Kori et al., 2007; Randall & Rollins, 2009; Huang et al., 2010; Yavuz Çetinkaya & Öter, 2015; Lin et al., 2017a; Li et al., 2021). Tour guides show visitors around a site and provide information about its historical sites and natural attractions (K. C. Chang, 2014a).

In addition, they make a considerable difference in protecting cultural and natural assets by inspiring responsible traveler behavior (Alazaizeh et al., 2019; Jamaliah et al., 2021). Tour guides are also respected for their invaluable educational role for their clients (Orden-Mejía, 2022). Essentially, the function of the tour guide is essential in heritage tourism. (Frenzel et al., 2022). Accordingly, tour guides of all tourism occupations have the most direct contact with tourists. Recent studies have investigated how guests feel and how well their tour guides perform (K. C. Chang, 2014; Min, 2016; Anantamongkolkul & Butcher, 2021). Therefore, ensuring every guest has a fantastic time is the most excellent approach to guarantee the tourism industry's long-term growth. Recent research demonstrates that a tour guide's job description typically includes introducing and promoting shopping and dining establishments (Hansen & Mossberg, 2017; Ghaderi et al., 2017; Li et al., 2021).

However, this is done for business reasons since any sales generated provide tour guides and their travel firms with frequently significant commissions (Dabidian et al., 2013; Cetin & Yarcan, 2017; Marlinda et al., 2021). Thus, the quality service of tourism is a critical component of a destination's image or offering (Hu et al., 2009); (Khalifah & Mustafa, 2019). Therefore, tour guides' role in the tourism industry is critical.

Many have been researching ways to enhance the quality of service and the field of tour guiding, two variables usually viewed as crucial in impacting tour guide performance. Emerging markets' rapid economic development and increased profitability increase tourist businesses' competitiveness in domestic and international markets (Anggara et al., 2023).

Furthermore, a solid tourism sector is essential for developing economies and has been increasingly recognized as a significant contribution to economic growth in many countries. In developed economies, for example, Malaysia, tourism contributed over 13.7% to its GNP in 2016, the annual GDP of the country (Serdar, 2019). However, for policymakers, economists, and stakeholders, knowing how tourism affects the Balance of Payments is essential for making well-informed decisions and planning for long-term economic growth.

In addition, a study published in the Journal of Administration and Economics in Iraq by Shubbar and Kathem (2019) confirmed no association for tour guides in Iraq. Tour guide legislation in Iraq was first enacted in 1966 and changed in 1991 to incorporate more directions and limits, as reported in the Iraqi newspaper (No. 3389 on January 20, 2018).

Unfortunately, there are no updated laws; however, these restrictions were arbitrary concerning the tour guide. Official practitioners and tour guides are in short supply, with approximately 500 tour guides available (Uber, 2018). Not only that but they are not documented anywhere. As for businesses, they employ. people as tour guides despite their lacking qualifications and licenses to work in the field. As far as we can tell, there has been no archaeological, tourist, or religious review of expansion activity in that part of Iraq.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

Tour guide service quality

Researchers examined how much of an impact tour guides have on the emotional experiences of their tourists (Min, 2016; Alrawadieh et al., 2020; Magano et al., 2021). Remarkably, one of the tour guide's responsibilities was to assist visitors to tourist locations, even though they typically made special trips with tourists to show them major Babylon sites.

Therefore, as tourism proprietors, tour guides ensure the tourists' satisfaction and enjoyment throughout their journey (Ande et al., 2023). According to previous research, the tour guide service has a beneficial effect on visitor satisfaction (Bowie & Chang, 2005; Huang, 2010; Chan et al., 2015; Kuo et al., 2018; Li et al., 2021; Anđelković et al., 2022).

Therefore, numerous studies demonstrate increased satisfaction in returning visitors' loyalty to the Babylon site (Klenjánszky, 2017; Chabuk et al., 2017; Al-ADDAL, 2020; Rahmiati et al., 2020; Nema, 2022; Wahhab Ajeena, 2022).

In the study of Lin et al. (2017), the essential qualities of tour guides' professional knowledge and attitude have been described. The tour guide's professionalism and demeanor benefitted the guide's relationship with the tourists. This results in happier tourists who have a good time on their tours and spread the good word.

In this regard, credibility, typically influenced by cognitive assessment such as structural assurances and contracts, is also usually linked with economic rationale. In addition, The Iraqi government has been advised to take the necessary steps to make its security more appealing to foreign tour guides. Because without these considerations, it cannot attract foreign tourists (Eyuboglu & Eyuboglu, 2020). Whenever a country's security issues cannot be handled, it results in a negative image, and no foreign direct investment will be part of the country.

Li et al. (2021) have also made a similar assertion; they have contended that when tour guides perform their work by providing high-quality services to the tourists, such as by giving them information about the tourist attraction, interpreting the natural and cultural heritage of the location, addressing the problems of the tourists, and insulating the tourists from potential difficulties throughout their journeys, they can increase their chances dramatically to gain the trust of the tourists.

In addition, it also helps the tour guides strengthen their confidence and decrease the risk perceptions that tourists have when they travel to an unfamiliar destination (Abewickrama, 2018). Tour guide is one of the main aspects of tourism known as one of compelling zeal and passion as they have been localized in guiding their areas. In that sense, it was essential to explore the knowledge so that guests would be facilitated.

First perceptions often last. Tour guides may play the most pivotal role as the industry's first point of contact (Ap & Wong, 2001). According to K. C. Chang (2014b), a tour guide " takes visitors on tours of a city or region's landmarks and attractions while providing information about those places in the visitor's preferred language."

Similarly, a tour guide is essential to a trip's success because it ensures visitors leave with a favorable first impression of the destination or tour operator (Hansen & Mossberg, 2017). To ensure the continued success of a tourist attraction, providing quality tour guides is essential (Simanihuruk, 2019). However, various methods have been proposed to evaluate the quality of tour guides.

Factor analysis and focus groups with tourism administrators, tour guides, and visitors are the final dimensions and items used to quantify (Huang, 2010). Nine factors were identified via factor analysis of the tour guide service quality (reliability, empathy, tangibility, security, responsiveness, professional knowledge, professional skills, professional attitude, and personal integrity).

The term "professional knowledge" refers to "the understanding necessary for tour guides to lead tour groups" (Lin et al., 2017a). Because of their essential role in informing visitors, tour guides are expected to be well-versed in their field (Tsaur & Teng, 2017). Travelers can learn more about the geography, history, and culture of a place thanks to the expertise of local guides (Gao et al., 2020). Tourists, for instance, will not have a good time if their guide knows nothing about the area they are visiting. A tour guide's professional expertise exceptionally affects a traveler's happiness toward a given destination (March 2022).

Tour guides need professional skills to carry out their duties effectively (Bhatia, 2012; Anđelković et al., 2022; Kapa et al., 2022). Tour guides' professional abilities are measured by how well they adapt their services to the specific requirements of each group of visitors (Lin et al., 2017a). Package travelers may expect a high standard of service because of the professionals that provide it (Heung, 2008). Tour guides must understand what their clients desire before embarking on a trip (Yachin, 2018). Moreover, professional skills have been shown to improve rapport in empirical studies. Kapa et al. (2022a) argued that tour guides' professional qualities (such as meeting the requirements of tour members and fulfilling communicative duties) lead to positive interactions with tourists. In addition, as shown by MICHELE & BOLOG (2023), the professional abilities of tour guides play a significant role in developing a solid bond with visitors. Employees' technical abilities were found to impact the development of rapport significantly.

The term "professional attitude" refers to a theoretical notion used to evaluate a tour guide's emotional state as perceived by their tourists (Akgunduz & Eser, 2022; Lin, Lin, and Chen, 2017). The guide's professional demeanor should reflect his or her qualities, such as candor, optimism, and wit. Guides' demeanor in the field should always be one of professionalism (BALIKOŠLU & DİNÇ, n.d.). Professional tour guides do exceptionally well since their efforts to put tourists at ease result in high satisfaction levels (Ulrich, n.d.). Previous studies have highlighted the need to maintain a professional attitude in the hospitality sector. For instance, Lin, Lin, and Chen (2017) found that clients were more satisfied with their trips because their guides-maintained professionalism. Tsaur and Teng (2017) added that having a professional demeanor, such as being amusing and empathic, is essential when acting in a guiding capacity.

Expectation Disconfirmation Theory, Tourist Satisfaction

First, before the concept of satisfaction was widely understood, customer satisfaction models were developed and studied. Consumer satisfaction theory is grounded in social and applied psychology (Oliver, 1980). In order to develop a theoretical framework for the concept of customer satisfaction in the 1970s, several authors drew on theoretical frameworks and empirical data from a wide range of fields (Olshavsky & Miller, 1972; Day, 1977; Locker & Dunt, 1978; Olson & Dover, 1979; Oliver, 1980). In the tourism literature, numerous theoretical models have been proposed to measure customer happiness. One such model is Oliver's (1980) expectation/confirmation framework for analyzing customer satisfaction. Performance that goes above and beyond expectations leads to feelings of contentment, while falling short of expectations leads to discontentment. Traveler happiness depends on the

degree to which their preconceived notions of a destination are borne out by their actual experiences (Hannigan, 1980). According to Hannigan, a visitor's level of satisfaction depends on how well their preconceived notions of the place align with their actual experiences there.

Tourists' emotional reaction to their cognitive evaluation of the tour operator's services is called "tour satisfaction" (Chan et al., 2015; Xavier et al., 2019). Expectancy-disconfirmation theory, or Oliver's expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, provides theoretical backing for the definition (Oliver et al., 1994). The notion states that when visitors pay for a service, they do so with certain expectations. Their expectations greatly influence the degree to which one is satisfied or dissatisfied. Dissatisfaction can emerge, for instance, if a service provider's performance falls short of expectations (a phenomenon known as "negative disconfirmation"). Satisfaction, in contrast to disappointment, can arise in two scenarios. In other words, when a client is satisfied, the service provider has either confirmed (or exceeded) their expectations (also known as positive Disconfirmation) and given contentment's key role in shaping plans for future conduct (Fisk, 1980; Supitchayangkool, 2012; Xu, 2018; Azhar et al., 2019; D. Hwang & Park, 2023).

Table 1: Oliver's Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory

Expectation	Performance
Low High	High Low
Expectation Low	Positive Disconfirmation(High)Zero Disconfirmation (confirmation)
Expectation High	Negative Disconfirmation(Low)Zero Disconfirmation (confirmation)

Source: Author's Compilation

Researchers have focused mainly on expectations, performance, and Disconfirmation. It entails establishing standards, evaluating those standards, and comparing expectations with actual performance to determine where they fall short. Studies on customer satisfaction, such as (Jr & Surprenant, 1982), show that satisfaction levels correlate with customer expectations. When creating a judgment on the expected performance of a product, customers may employ various forms of expectations (J. Min, 2014). There are four categories of expectations: ideal (which can be), the bare minimum bearable level (which must) (will be).

The disconfirmation performance has been compared to the expected performance as a benchmark. There is a more substantial influence on performance evaluations from expectations than satisfaction changes caused by performance level changes (Olshavsky & Miller, 1972; Olson & Dover, 1973). Increased performance should enhance pleasure, but the magnitude of the performance and disconfirmation effects was unclear until recently. If expectations are kept constant, it is thought that performance improvements will not affect customer satisfaction (Omondi, Mbogo, & Luboobi, 2018; N. F. Silva et al., 2018).

Servqual Model

The SERVQUAL is considered a comprehensive measure to assess the expected and perceived quality of services. SERVQUAL's Model (Parasuraman et al., 1988) viewed service quality across industries as the discrepancy between what customers expect and what they experience. They believed that the SERVQUAL Model validates various services in different fields. Some previous studies relied heavily on this Model in assessing the quality of services. Researchers have used SERVQUAL in its original format or modified it to be more suitable for use in different contexts/sectors, for example, in banks, transport services, business-to-business services, Campus Career Services Centers, restaurants, historic houses, lodging, and tourism services (Khornjamnong, 2017; Wichianrat, 2018).

Some tourism scholars have suggested that service quality is significant for investigating the problems and issues of tourist destinations and when securing or trying to revisit intentions. Furthermore, tourism experts have identified that by providing premium services, the aspects of success in tourism can be increased manifold. According to (Park & Jeong, 2019), service quality in the tourism industry has received growing deliberation, and SERVQUAL instruments are utilized in most tourism studies to evaluate service quality. For example, Parasuraman et al. (1985) offered ten categories for the original SERVQUAL instrument that they believed captured the aspects through which consumers access service quality.
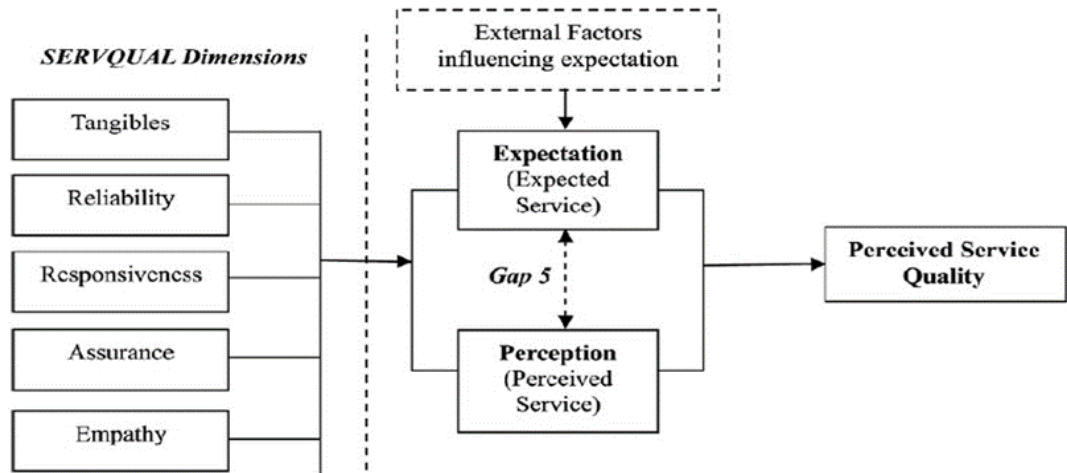

Figure 1: Measuring Service Quality Using SERVQUAL Model
Source: Kumar et al. (2009)

The fundamental hypotheses for this study, which utilize the SERVQUAL Model and characteristics of tour guides, are presented and clarified in the following sections of the literature review. In this study, these hypotheses were also developed to measure the potential impact of (reliability, empathy, tangibility, security, responsiveness, professional knowledge, professional skills, professional attitude, and personal integrity) on tourist satisfaction in Babylon. The impact of the tour guide's level of service quality in Babylon on the extent to which visitors leave places like Babylon with a positive impression of their experience there. However, to construct these hypotheses, analyses of preexisting theories on the essential characteristics of the tour guide and the SERVQUAL Model have been conducted. In addition, the following provides access to these studies, which have served as a basis for conducting analyses on the essential constructs of this study's research:

H01- There are no statistically significant differences between the answers of the study sample about tourists' expectations of the quality of service of tour guides in the historical city of Babylon.

H02- There are no statistically significant differences between the answers of the study sample about tourists' perceptions of the quality of service of tour guides in the historical city of Babylon.

H03- There is no significant difference between tourists' expectations of quality and their perceptions of tour guides' service quality in the historical city of Babylon.

H04- No statistically significant impact exists between tourists' expectations of tour guides' service quality and Disconfirmation.

H05- There is no statistically significant effect of the elements of tourists' perceptions of the quality of tour guides' service on the tourist's satisfaction in the historical city of Babylon.

Using the hypotheses above as a starting point, Fig. 1 presents a conceptual framework that demonstrates how the quality of the service provided by tour guides significantly contributes to the level of satisfaction felt by visitors. Based on the literature reviewed and suggestions made by several studies regarding tour guide service quality, this study has developed a framework to investigate dimensions like reliability, empathy, tangibility, security, and responsiveness; besides, tour guide attributes, namely professional knowledge, professional skills, professional attitude, and personal integrity, are considered quality indicators. It will help reduce tour guides' challenges in providing quality service (Yoon & Cha, 2020; Lian, 2020; Surahman et al., 2020; Nguya et al., 2021; Han et al., 2022; Arabacıoğlu & Dedeoglu, 2023; Almasoodi & Rahman, 2023; S.-H. Liu & Tsai, 2023) (Girdwichai, 2023).

SERVQUAL: An appropriate tourist satisfaction measurement model
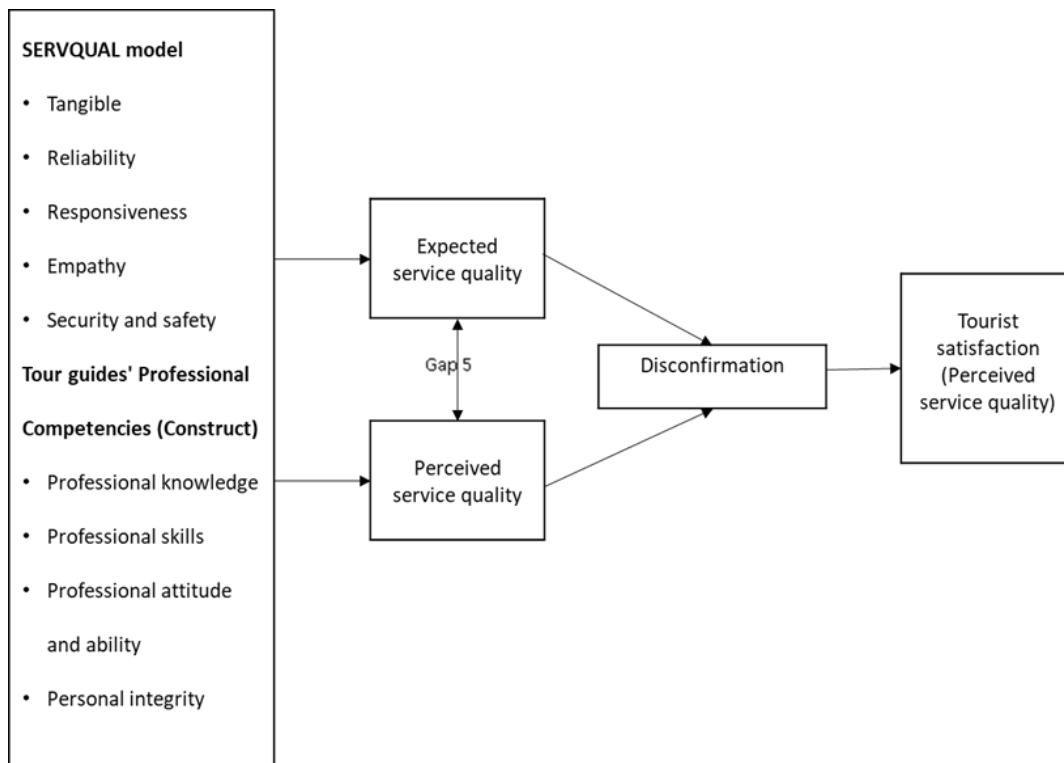
Figure 2: Tour Guide Service Quality Evaluating Model

Method

Instruments

Data on the study's population, sample, and the statistical methods used to conclude are included here. SPSS 18 was the version of choice for us. The research's primary objective is to explain and analyze a problem, related factors, and the influence among the variables so the study can provide a complete picture of the problem and its significance, according to Kurtulus (1996). Developed by drawing inspiration from the work of earlier authors, the questionnaire was composed of four parts. Part 1 Expectation included 35 items, and Part 2 Perception included 35 items using a Seven-point Likert from; 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree) for measurements: three items for tangibility, three items for reliability, five items for

responsiveness, (Kamaleswar Boro, 2022; Tongkaw, 2021; Maria Helena Alemany Soares et al.,2017; Jennifer C.H. Min 2016; J.-C. Chang, 2009), four items for Safety and Security (Noha Ahmed Kamel, 2021; Chang, 2014; Xie et al., 2021; Bindu Narayan et al., 2009)., four items for empathy (Kamaleswar Boro, 2022; Zhang Minyang & Fuangfa Amponstira2020; Nguyen & Cam, 2020; Maria Helena Alemany Soares et al.,2017; Jennifer C.H. Min 2016), four items for Personal integrity (KAPA et al., 2022; Chang, 2014; Clemetsen et al., 2021; Heung, 2008; Chang, Kuo-Chien2012; Vincent C.S. Heung, 2007), and five items for Professional Skills, four items for professional attitude and ability, three items for Professional Knowledge (Yi-Chien Lin et al, 2017; Jinsoo Hwang & Jung Hoon 2018; Akhmedova, 2021; Suschenko & Akhmedova, 2019). Part three (Disconfirmation of expectations) included two items (Cempena & Brahmayanti, 2021; Ariya et al., 2020); part four, tourist satisfaction, included three items (Alazaizeh et al., 2019; Syakier & Hanafiah, 2022).

These scale items were chosen because they met the following criteria: they are sufficiently developed and widely used in the existing literature, are amenable to the research strategy employed in this study, and have passed statistical tests of reliability and validity. Tourists' expectations, perceptions of the destination's tour guide performance, and satisfaction levels concerning its cultural and heritage Babylon are all explored through a series of statements in this study. Both English and Arabic versions of the questionnaires are included; sections A (Profile of Respondent), B (The Expectation tour guide service attributes), and C (Tourists' perceived performance of tour guide service) are all included (Tourist satisfaction of the performance of tour guide service attributes). The development of our application system was evaluated using a questionnaire. Minor adjustments were made to ensure consistency with the tourism industry framework. First, the authenticity scale of our study was adjusted. Second, connectivity scores were examined using the seven-point scale. The scale showed satisfactory error-lessness both during the pilot test and after the pilot testing as well. Third, the second-order constructs were adapted from the scale (Magano, Silvius, et al., 2021). This usually and closely follows everything in this travel industry, and the experience gained by the visitors was determined using the seven-item scale from the tourism industry (Magano, Vidal, et al., 2021). In the pre-test, the values of Alpha ranged from 0.957 to 0.990 for statements in expectation and 0.960 to 0.986 for the perceptions. The Cronbach's Alpha of all groups of statements in expectation was 0.996, and in perceptions was 0.997, so all variables in the questionnaire were used for the data analysis steps. The Alpha values were above 0.6, widely accepted for social science studies (Nunnally, 1978; Yoshioka et al., 2019).

Population and Sampling

This study has been conducted to measure the service that tour guides provide in the city of Babylon. Its effect on the tourist's satisfaction: the population of this study mainly comprises tourists, especially those visiting the city of Babylon, respectively. The population can be defined as all constituents in any research subject (Kothari, 2004). For this purpose, the sample size will be 450 from the selected local tourists to know the impact of tour guides and tourist satisfaction. Moreover, 412 were returned for analysis, and 394 valid questionnaires were analyzed. Cochran (1963) proposed the following equation to calculate a sufficient sample size from a sizable population to ensure statistical validity.

Cochran's formula

$$n_0 = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

n = Required sample size

Z = Confidence level of 95%, standard value of 1.96

p = Estimation percentage of the target population
Q = Estimation proportion attribute that is present in the population
E2 = Desired level of precision

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2\,(.5)(.5)}{(.5)^2} = 385$$

Results

Sample profiles

As presented in Table 1, shows displays the demographic breakdown of the sample in terms of frequencies and percentages. The total population of the study consisted of 245 (62.2%) males and 149 (37.8%) females; the male number accounted for the more significant proportion of respondents.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics Analysis

Demographic characteristics		Freq.	%	Mean	Std.Dev.
Gender	• Male	245	62.2	1.37	0.485
	• Female	149	37.8		
Age	• From 18 to 24 years	26	6.6	3.47	1.325
	• From 25 to 34 years	65	16.5		
	• From 34 to 44 years	115	29.2		
	• From 44 to 54 years	105	26.6		
	• From 54 to 64 years	48	12.2		
	• 65 – and above	35	8.9		
Marital status	• Single	140	35.5	1.79	0.741
	• Married	210	53.3		
	• Divorced	28	7.1		
	• Widowed	16	4.1		
Educational Level	• Intermediate School	3	0.8		
	• Secondary School	22	5.6		
	• Certificate	5	1.3		
	• Diploma	20	5.1		
	• Bachelor's degree	300	76.1		
	• Master's degree	18	4.6		
	• Ph.D	26	6.6		
Occupation	• Student	44	11.2	3.58	1.529
	• Unemployed/Housewife	80	20.3		
	• Semi-skilled worker	30	7.6		
	• Skilled worker	120	30.5		
	• Professional	80	20.3		
	• Pensioner	40	10.2		
Times have you visited Babylon.	• Once	180	45.7	1.93	1.020
	• Twice	100	25.4		
	• Three times	75	19.0		
	• More than three times	39	9.9		

Concerning age, in terms of age, most respondents were 34 to 54. Overall, respondents in the age group 34-44 had the highest percentage at 29.2%, followed by the 44-54 age group at 26.6%, 25-34 years old at 16.5%, and 54-64 years old at 12.2%. The older groups of 65 – and above made up 8.9%, and 18-24-year-olds occupied 6.6%. Hence, concerning respondents' marital status, the highest percentage of 53.3% were married, 35.5% of all respondents were single, 7.1% were divorced, and 4.1% were widowed. In terms of educational level, a bachelor's degree was the highest percentage (76.1%), followed by a Ph.D. (6.6%), a secondary school (5.6%), a diploma 5.1%, and a master's degree (4.6%). While Std. Deviation 1.014, suggesting dispersion answers to the mean values, which stood at 5.90. Regarding occupation, (30.5%) of all the respondents are skilled workers, while (20.3%) are unemployed / homemakers and professionals. On the other hand, (11.2%) of them are Students, and (10.2%) of them are pensioners. The semi-skilled worker had (7.6%). While Std. Deviation 1.529, suggesting dispersion answers to the mean values, which stood at 3.58. In terms of times visited Babylon, once was the highest percentage (45.7%), followed by twice (25.4%), three times (19%), and more than three times 9.9%, during Std. Deviation 1.020, suggesting dispersion answers to the mean values, which stood at 1.93.

Statistical analysis of the gap between tourist expectations and perceptions

Gap analysis has been used to measure how satisfied tourists are with the service quality they receive at Babylon. Notably, tourists will evaluate a service or product based on how closely it matches their expectations. According to disconfirmation theory, positive Disconfirmation occurs when the experience meets or exceeds the individual's expectations, and negative Disconfirmation occurs when an experience does not live up to the tourist's high hopes (Oliver, 1980). Table 5.23 displays tourists' experience and expectations of tour guide service quality, gap means, and standard deviations for each dimension and attribute.

The results in Table 1 statistical analysis regarding tangibility, tourist perceptions considerably outperformed their expectations, with a positive gap of 1.754 indicating that tour guides met or exceeded their appearance expectations. The responses were neutral for all questions related to the tourist expectation. The mean for the question was (1) at 4.063, (2) at 3.926, and (3) at 4.264; at the same time, the responses came in the agreed category for all questions related to tourist perceptions, where the mean for the question was 5.817, 5.629, 5.857 for (1), (2), and (3).

As for the reliability variable, tourists expected " I expect the guiding services to be delivered on time, " According to the visitors, the guiding services were delivered on time. This resulted in a positive gap of 1.439, showing that tourists' opinions of tour guides' reliability greatly surpassed their expectations. Regarding the responsiveness element of expectations, the positive gap explains why. The responses were neutral for all questions related to the tourist expectation. The mean for the question was (7) at 3.829, (8) at 3.911, (9) at 3.941, (10) at 4.025, and (11) at 4.068. The professional attitude and ability for (Expectation and Perception), results demonstrated that tourists' perceptions vastly exceeded their expectations, a testament to tour guides' exemplary levels of professionalism in attitude and skill. The professional knowledge dimension for (Expectation and Perception) The findings demonstrated that tourists' perceptions greatly exceed their anticipations, which indicates tour guides' superior competence.

However, in the statistical analysis regarding Safety and Security dimension, the responses were neutral for all questions related to tourist expectations, where the mean for the question was (12) at 4.175, (13) at 4.058, (14) at 4.043, and (15) at 4.093. The responses came in the agreed category for all questions about tourist perceptions, where the mean for the question was 5.543, 5.474, 5.695, and 5.789 for (12), (13), (14), and (15). Moreover, the statistical analysis regarding the empathy

dimension showed a positive gap of 1.931 between tourists' perceptions and expectations, indicating that their tour guides were very empathetic. The responses were neutral for all questions related to the tourist expectation, except in the statistical analysis regarding the personal Integrity dimension. In the personal Integrity dimension for tour guides (Expectation, Perception), the findings confirmed that tourists' experiences were consistent with their expectations, demonstrating that tour guides lived up to their reputations for honesty and reliability.

The professional Skills dimension (Expectation and Perception) showed that tourists' perceptions were vastly beyond their anticipations, a testament to the guides' superior competence as professionals. Gap analysis has been used to measure how satisfied tourists are with the service quality they receive at Babylon. Notably, tourists will evaluate a service or product based on how closely it matches their expectations. According to disconfirmation theory, positive Disconfirmation occurs when the experience meets or exceeds the individual's expectations, and negative Disconfirmation occurs when an experience does not live up to the tourist's high hopes (Oliver, 1980). Table 1 displays tourists' experience and expectations of tour guide service quality, gap means, and standard deviations for each dimension and attribute. Tangibility dimension, according to the result of the t-test, all statements, including (1), (2), and (3), showed significant statistical differences with their t values respectively at 47.953, 64.409, 52.445, and p = 0.000, which is < 0.001. As a result, confirming statements (1), (2), and (3) gained a higher level of satisfaction. While Safety and Security dimension according to the result of the t-test, all statements, including (12), (13), (14), and (15), showed the significant statistical difference with their t values respectively at 29.650, 41.569, 50.257, 49.257, and p = 0.000 which is < 0.001. As a result, confirming statements (12), (13), (14), and (15) gained a higher level of satisfaction.

Table 3: Statistical analysis of tourist Expectations and Perceptions

No.	DIMENSION/ITEM	Mean	SD	ITEM	Mean	SD	expectation – perceptions	N[b]	t[c]	Sig.[d]
	Tangibility									
1	Item 1	4.063	1.193	Item1	5.817	1.042	1.754	394	-47.953	0.000
2	Item 2	3.926	1.230	Item 2	5.629	1.233	1.703	394	-64.409	0.000
3	Item 3	4.264	1.185	Item 3	5.857	1.041	1.593	394	-52.445	0.000
	Reliability									
4	Item 1	4.281	1.079	Item 1	5.720	1.245	1.439	394	-40.970	0.000
5	Item 2	4.177	1.045	Item 2	5.588	1.343	1.411	394	-36.348	0.000
6	Item 3	4.086	1.186	Item 3	5.723	1.137	1.637	394	-59.529	0.000
	Responsiveness									
7	Item 1	3.829	1.107	Item 1	5.535	1.270	1.706	394	-60.801	0.000
8	Item 2	3.911	1.008	Item 2	5.847	0.917	1.936	394	-72.851	0.000
9	Item 3	3.941	1.000	Item 3	5.807	1.002	1.866	394	-66.495	0.000
10	Item 4	4.025	1.090	Item 4	5.593	1.345	1.568	394	-45.670	0.000
11	Item 5	4.068	0.815	Item 5	5.710	1.020	1.642	394	-55.300	0.000
	Safety and Security									
12	Item 1	4.175	0.932	Item 1	5.543	1.184	1.368	394	-29.650	0.000
13	Item 2	4.058	0.932	Item 2	5.474	1.183	1.416	394	-41.569	0.000
14	Item 3	4.043	0.856	Item 3	5.695	1.207	1.652	394	-50.257	0.000
15	Item 4	4.093	0.701	Item 4	5.789	1.040	1.696	394	-49.257	0.000
	Empathy									
16	Item 1	3.901	1.015	Item 1	5.832	1.164	1.931	394	-75.570	0.000
17	Item 2	3.923	1.013	Item 2	5.992	1034	2.069	394	-78.634	0.000

No.	DIMENSION/ITEM	Expectation Mean	SD	ITEM	perceptions Mean	SD	expectation – perceptions	N[b]	t[c]	Sig.[d]
18	Item 3	4.050	1.078	Item 3	5.888	0.989	1.838	394	-77.255	0.000
19	Item 4	4.154	1.083	Item 4	5.941	1.100	1.787	394	-60.271	0.000
				Personal integrity						
20	Item 1	4.083	1.014	Item 1	6.241	.957	2.158	394	-67.062	0.000
21	Item 2	3.969	0.935	Item 2	6.109	.847	2.14	394	-79.797	0.000
22	Item 3	4.086	0.942	Item 3	6.281	0.803	2.195	394	-68.308	0.000
23	Item 4	4.154	0.998	Item 4	6.192	1.028	2.038	394	-54.767	0.000
				Professional skills						
24	Item 1	4.055	0.971	Item 1	6.066	1.077	2.011	394	-65.925	0.000
25	Item 2	3.969	1.018	Item 2	5.817	1.270	1.848	394	-58.807	0.000
26	Item 3	4.020	0.910	Item 3	6.177	0.977	2.157	394	-66.647	0.000
27	Item 4	3.987	0.729	Item 4	6.119	0.940	2.132	394	-65.683	0.000
28	Item 5	3.954	0.722	Item 5	5.837	1.173	1.883	394	-55.760	0.000
				Professional attitude and ability						
29	Item 1	4.050	1.099	Item 1	6.071	1.013	2.021	394	-62.492	0.000
30	Item 2	4.045	1.061	Item 2	6.073	0.925	2.028	394	-72.636	0.000
31	Item 3	3.982	0.958	Item 3	6.104	0.952	2.122	394	-76.171	0.000
32	Item 4	4.033	0.965	Item 4	6.022	0.827	1.989	394	-83.488	0.000
				Professional Knowledge						
33	Item 1	3.934	0.734	Item 1	6.266	1.083	2.332	394	-66.684	0.000
34	Item 2	3.977	0.749	Item 2	6.332	1.127	2.355	394	-61.079	0.000
35	Item 3	4.165	0.738	Item 3	6.647	.764	2.482	394	-73.134	0.000

Note: [a] Mean of difference.

[b] number of pairs of scores.

[c] t value of t.

[d] Sig. Level of significance at 0.001 level

However, Empathy dimension, according to the result of the t-test, all statements, including (16), (17), (18), and (19), showed significant statistical differences with their t values respectively at 75.570, 78.634, 77.255, 60.271, and p = 0.000 which is < 0.001. As a result, confirming statements (16), (17), (18), and (19) gained a higher level of satisfaction. Moreover, Personal integrity dimension, according to the result of the t-test, all statements, including (20), (21), (22), and (23), showed significant statistical differences with their t values respectively at 67.062, 79.797, 68.308, 54.767, and p = 0.000 which is < 0.001. As a result, confirming statements (20), (21), (22) and (23) gained a higher level of satisfaction. Professional skills dimension according to the result of the t-test, there were all statements, including (24), (25), (26), (27), and (28), showed a significant statistical difference with their t values respectively at 65.925, 58.807, 66.647, 65.683, 55.760 and p = 0.000 which is < 0.001. As a result, among confirming statements, (24), (25), (26), (27) and (28) gained higher level of satisfaction.

Descriptive Statistics of Disconfirmation

Tourists' positive impressions of Babylon's generic characteristics are summarized in Table 2 below. The "disconfirmation" refers to how an individual's experiences differ from their preconceived notions. Positive Disconfirmation occurs when the experience is better than expected, while negative Disconfirmation occurs when the experience is worse than expected (Westbrook & Reilly, 1983). The level of Disconfirmation indicates how far tourist' expectations are from their actual experiences. In the first statement, " Overall, the tour guide's

service quality attributes exceeded my prior trip's expectations, "the mean is 6.109, suggesting an agreeing response, the Std. In the second element, " My experience with the tour guide's service quality attributes was better than what I expected, "the mean is 6.144, suggesting a strongly agreeing response. However, this points to a positive disconfirmation, suggesting a positive result. This is another positive disconfirmation that points to a successful conclusion. Therefore, this suggests that most tourists had a favorable impression, with only a tiny percentage expressing negative Disconfirmation. The deviation is 1.23 and 1.34, respectively, suggesting dispersion answers.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of tourists (Disconfirmation)

Dimension/Item disconfirmation	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat Disagree	4 Neutra	5 Somewhat Agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Overall, the tour guide's service quality attributes exceeded my prior trip's expectations.	2	10	17	22	40	75	228	6.109	1.34
	0.5%	2.5%	4.3%	5.6%	10.2%	19.0%	57.9%		
My experience with the tour guide's service quality attributes was better than what I expected	1	8	15	18	35	107	210	6.144	1.23
	0.3%	2.0%	3.8%	4.6%	8.9%	27.2%	53.3%		
Mean of Disconfirmation								6.126	

Descriptive statistics of tourist satisfaction

Table 3 outlines the results of tourist satisfaction. The first item, " The tour guide in Babylon City, exceeded my expectations. " Respondents with a mean score of 6.225 appear to be mostly satisfied, leaning toward the "Agree" end of the satisfaction scale. While most respondents had a pleasant experience, the standard deviation of 1.03 suggests considerable variation in replies. The second item, " I believe I made the right decision in choosing to visit the historical city of Babylon, ". The mean level of satisfaction is 6.375, which is slightly higher than the previous aspect. The narrower range of replies (standard deviation = 0.88) shows that most visitors were satisfied to a comparable extent. "The third item: Overall, I am satisfied with the service provided by the tour guide in Babylon City". With a mean score of 6.479, respondents express a high level of pleasure. As with the second factor, the slight standard deviation of 0.87 indicates that the tourists' reported satisfaction levels were relatively stable.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of tourist satisfaction

Dimension/Item Tourist Satisfaction	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat Disagree	4 Neutra	5 Somewhat Agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly Agree	Mean	Sd
Item 1	0	3	10	15	40	125	201	6.225	1.03
	0.0%	0.8%	2.5%	3.8%	10.2%	31.7%	51.0%		
Item 2	0	0	8	12	24	130	220	6.375	0.88
	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	3.0%	6.1%	33.0%	55.9%		
Item 3	0	2	6	10	15	111	250	6.479	0.87
	0.0%	0.5	1.5%	2.5%	3.8%	28.2%	63.5%		
Mean of Tourist Satisfaction								6.359	

Tests of the Study Hypotheses

After presenting the descriptive statistical measures of the variable study, we must test the study model and its Hypotheses. Davis (1996) defined a hypothesis as a set of tentative statements about the connection between two or more independent variables that carry strong inferences about how to evaluate the hypothesized connections. Therefore, in order to verify or refute the assumptions, it will be necessary to develop a research hypothesis for this study.

The First Study Hypothesis Test

H01- There are no statistically significant differences between the tourists' responses in their expectations toward tour guide service quality in Babylon City.

Table 6: One-Sample Statistics t-test for H01

Mean	SD	Std. Error Mran	t	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
4.04	0.922	.046	87.018	393	0.000	3.95	4.13

Where that sig. < 0.05, we refute the (H1: βi = 0) hypothesis:

The Table 6 survey showed an average score of 4.04 out of 10. The data is pretty dispersed, as indicated by the SD value of 0.922. Average Variation: The average dispersion is 0.046 (SE Mean). t: T-test probability equals 87.018 percent. It is a statistical measure of how far the sample mean differs from the assumed population mean under the null hypothesis. Degrees of freedom (df): There are 393 degrees of freedom in a t-test—significant Variation: Sig. P value > 0.05 indicates statistical significance. Meaningful Difference: Sig. There is a statistically significant difference (p-value > 0.05). (commonly chosen significance level).

A p-value of less than 0.05 indicates statistical significance. Over 95% The difference between the two means, as indicated by the confidence interval, is between 3.95 and 4.13. We can reject H01 as the null hypothesis as Sig. is less than 0.05 (the conventional cutoff for significance). These results revealed support for hypothesis one to be an impact between tourists and expectations of tour guide service quality. Some support for this relationship can be found in the literature. In particular, research by (Tian-Cole et al., 2002) (Hui et al., 2007) (RAHMIATI et al., 2020)

H1.1: There are statistically significant differences between the tourists' responses in their expectations toward tour guide service quality in Babylon City.

The Second Study Hypothesis Test:

H02- There are no statistically significant differences between the tourists' responses in their perceptions of tour guide service quality in Babylon City.

Table 7: One-Sample Statistics t-test for H02

Mean	SD	Std. Error Mran	t	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
5.92	1.021	.051	115.167	393	0.000	5.82	6.03

Where that sig. < 0.05, we refute the (H2: βi = 0) hypothesis:

The average rating given by tourists based on the findings of this study was 5.92. As a measure of dispersion, the data's standard deviation (SD) is 1.021. Average Variation: The average variation from the mean is 0.51. This results in a t-value of 115.167. Indices of liberty (df): T-tests typically use 393 degrees of freedom. Differing Significantly: Sig. A p-value of 0.000 is much lower than the conventional threshold of 0.05. If the p-value is less than 0.05, the results are considered significant. More than 95% According to the difference's confidence interval, the actual mean of the population falls somewhere between 5.82 and 6.03. Because of the significant difference (Sig. Under 0.05, in other words (the conventional significance limit). The findings are consistent with those of prior research (HABINEZA et al., 2022; Prathyani & Maduwansha, 2020).

H1.2: There are statistically significant differences between the tourists' responses in their perceptions of tour guide service quality in Babylon City.

The third Study Hypothesis Test

H03- There are no significant differences between tourists' expectations and perceptions of tour guides' service quality in the historical city of Babylon.

Table 8: Paired Samples Test for H03

Mean	SD	Std. Error Mran	t	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
-1.88	.451	.023	-82.810	393	0.000	-1.028	-1.838

Where that sig. < 0.05, we refute the (H3: $\beta i = 0$) hypothesis:

The null hypothesis H03 is rejected due to a p-value (Sig.) of less than 0.05 (the conventional threshold for accepting or rejecting a hypothesis). Therefore, there is strong evidence to imply that tourists' expectations of quality and their impressions of the quality of service offered by tour guides in the ancient city of Babylon differ significantly.

Evidence from the paired samples test strongly suggests that tourists in Babylon do not have significantly different expectations and impressions of the quality of the tour guide service they receive. With a standard deviation of 0.451, the mean difference of -1.88 considerably contradicts the null hypothesis assumption of a mean difference of 0. The extremely small p-value of 0.000 emphasizes the high level of statistical significance, showing that there is, in fact, a sizable discrepancy between tourists' expectations and their actual experiences. The literature provides some backing for this connection. In particular, studies by (Andelkovic et al., 2022). As a result, we accept the alternative hypothesis:

H1.3: There are significant significant differences between tourists' expectations and their perceptions of tour guides' service quality in the historical city of Babylon.

The fourth Study Hypothesis Test

H04- There are no statistically significant differences between tourists' expectations of tour guides' service quality and Disconfirmation.

Table (5.29) illustrates the Correlation coefficients between tourists' expectations and Disconfirmation. Overall, the correlation between satisfaction with different statements was high, positive, and significant at 0.01 (2-tailed). To be specific, the Pearson correlation between Disconfirmation with tangibility was 0.751 (p =0.000), safety and security were 0.697 (p

=0.000), empathy was 0.817 (p =0.000), personal integrity was 0.777 (p =0.000), professional skills were 0.813 (p =0.000)

There is a significant positive relationship between tourists' expectations and Disconfirmation. The results are consistent with those of (Mutinda, 2020)

H1.4. There are no statistically significant differences between tourists' expectations of tour guides' service quality and Disconfirmation

Table 9: Pearson Correlation Matrix for a relationship between tourists' expectations and Disconfirmation

DIMENSION		Tangibility	Reliability	Responsiveness	Safety and Security	Empathy	Personal integrity	Professional skills	attitude and ability	Professional knowledge	Disconfirmation
Tangibility	Pearson Correlation	1	.958**	.962**	.948**	.935**	.966**	.954**	.938**	.948**	.751**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Reliability	Pearson Correlation		1	.962**	.931**	.969**	.970**	.968**	.968**	.939**	.784**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation			1	.948**	.969**	.974**	.980**	.979**	.949**	.820**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Safety and Security	Pearson Correlation				1	.899**	.966**	.949**	.922**	.980**	.697**
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Empathy	Pearson Correlation					1	.953**	.963**	.981**	.900**	.817**
	Sig. (2-tailed)						.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Personal integrity	Pearson Correlation						1	.978**	.971**	.961**	.777**
	Sig. (2-tailed)							.000	.000	.000	.000
Professional skills	Pearson Correlation							1	.981**	.962**	.813**
	Sig. (2-tailed)								.000	.000	.000
attitude and ability	Pearson Correlation								1	.921**	.807**
	Sig. (2-tailed)									.000	.000
Professional knowledge	Pearson Correlation									1	.761**
	Sig. (2-tailed)										.000
Disconfirmation	Pearson Correlation										1
	Sig. (2-tailed)										

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The fifth Study Hypothesis Test

H0.5- There are no statistically significant differences among tour guides' service quality factors regarding perceptions and the tourists' satisfaction in Babylon City.

Table 10: Multiple Linear Regressions model for H5

		Coefficients[a]					
	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Model summary
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
Overall data	(Constant)	0.051	0.092		0.547	0.584	R=0.989R²=0.979 Adjusted R²=0.978F ratio=1970.305Sig. F=0.000
	Tangibility	0.110	0.048	-0.131	-2.304	0.022	
	Reliability	0.229	0.039	0.310	5.907	0.000	
	Responsiveness	0.068	0.066	0.081	1.021	0.308	
	Safety and Security	0.125	0.059	-0.155	-2.107	0.036	
	Empathy	0.031	0.041	0.035	0.746	0.456	
	Personal integrity	0.545	0.042	0.524	13.053	0.000	
	Professional skills	0.369	0.051	-0.432	-7.211	0.000	
	attitude and ability	0.002	0.049	0.002	0.036	0.971	
	Professional knowledge	0.717	0.031	0.763	23.424	0.000	
a. Dependent Variable: tourists' satisfaction							

This study develops a comprehensive model to build a framework to examine the connection between service quality factors based on the literature evaluated and suggestions given by numerous studies (tangibles, empathy, security and safety, professional skills, and personal integrity) on tourist satisfaction in Babylon.

After empirical examinations, this study concludes that factors significantly and positively affect tourist satisfaction, perceived service quality, and attachment to tour guides, showing positive relationships with tourist satisfaction. This research shows that a strategy to promote tourism as a supporting mechanism to improve tour guides service quality is in the best interests of decision-makers in the Iraqi government, tourist enterprises, travel agencies, and tour guides in general by backing the ideas, which would boost the tour guide's performance.

In order to increase tourism and boost the quality of tour guides in Iraq, understanding the factors that draw visitors there is essential. Businesses catering to tourists should reward their most loyal customers with discounts and special offers to increase the number of tourists visiting the country (Wang et al., 2022). Service quality, tour guides, and constant supervision are essential at many of the world's most visited historic sites (Ho, 2023). Expertise in the latest provided tools is essential for tour guides (Fadhilah, 2023). Get people with experience and training in tourist guiding to work for travel agencies so that the industry can benefit from their expertise and experience. Motivate employees by offering financial and emotional backing. The success of the tourism industry depends on expanding into untapped areas and revitalizing existing ones.

Finally, given the importance of doing so, it is crucial to focus on heritage tourism, provide adequate facilities for tourists, grow and develop the heritage city to boost its absorptive capacity, monitor the quality of services provided there, and meet tourists' needs by meeting their specific comfort requirements. However, efforts must be made to develop infrastructure projects and enhance services, such as developing new highways, extending city outlets, and building contemporary hotels, restaurants, playgrounds, public parks, and recreational spaces.

The Babylonian heritage authorities must take this goal seriously, consider the ages of these sites, and safeguard their cultural and spiritual significance. Table (5.30) for the findings of a multiple linear regression model testing the impact of tourist satisfaction on various tour guide service quality.

Key findings include the following: Model Overview: The summary statistics of the Model provide insight into the accuracy of the regression model. With an R-value of 0.989, there is a significant effect of the elements of tourists' perceptions of the quality of tour guides' service on the tourist's satisfaction. This indicates that travelers' expectations are crucial in determining their happiness. With an R2 of 0.978, the quality of service as perceived by tourists may account for about 98% of the variation in their overall satisfaction. The multiple linear regressions between tourists' perceptions and satisfaction were as follows:

$$Y = 0.051 + 0.110x_1 + 0.229x_2 + 0.068x_3 + 0.125x_4 + 0.031x_5 + 0.545x_6 + 0.369x_7 + 0.002x_8$$

$+ 0.717x_9$. Where the Y = tourists' satisfaction, x_1 = Tangibility, x_2 = Reliability, x_3 = Responsiveness, x_4 = Safety and Security, x_5 = Empathy, x_6 = Personal integrity, x_7 = Professional skills, x_8 = attitude and ability, x_9 = Professional knowledge. The results of the multiple linear regression model showed a positive correlation between independent variables (tourists' perceptions) and dependent variables (tourists' satisfaction), where the R-value (is 0.989), which indicates the tourists' perceptions affect tourists' satisfaction. Their R^2 value is (0.978) for tourists' perceptions, indicating that these variables explain 9.78% of tourist satisfaction changes. The F value is (1970.305) in the regressions model, and (sig. = 0.000 □ 0.01), indicating that there is a significant effect between independent variables (tourists' perceptions) and dependent variable (tourists' satisfaction), we refuse the (H5: □ i ≠ 0) hypothesis:

H1.5- There are statistically significant differences among tour guides' service quality factors regarding perceptions and the tourists' satisfaction in Babylon City.

Conclusions and implications

Conclusions

This study develops a comprehensive model to build a framework to examine the connection between service quality factors based on the literature evaluated and suggestions given by numerous studies (reliability, empathy, tangibility, security, responsiveness, professional knowledge, professional skills, professional attitude, and personal integrity) on tourist satisfaction in Babylon. After empirical examinations, this study concludes that factors significantly and positively affect tourist satisfaction, perceived service quality, and attachment to tour guides, showing positive relationships with tourist satisfaction. This research shows that a strategy to promote tourism as a supporting mechanism to improve tour guides service quality is in the best interests of decision-makers in the Iraqi government, tourist enterprises, travel agencies, and tour guides in general by backing the ideas, which would boost the tour guide's performance. In order to increase tourism and boost the quality of tour guides in Iraq, understanding the factors that draw visitors there is essential.

Businesses catering to tourists should reward their most loyal customers with discounts and special offers to increase the number of tourists visiting the country (Wang et al., 2022). Service quality, tour guides, and constant supervision are essential at many of the world's most visited historic sites (Ho, 2023). Expertise in the latest provided tools is essential for tour guides (Fadhilah, 2023).

Get people with experience and training in tourist guiding to work for travel agencies so that the industry can benefit from their expertise and experience. Motivate employees by offering financial and emotional backing. The success of the tourism industry depends on expanding into untapped areas and revitalizing existing ones.

Finally, given the importance of doing so, it is crucial to focus on heritage tourism, provide adequate facilities for tourists, grow and develop the heritage city to boost its absorptive capacity, monitor the quality of services provided there, and meet tourists' needs by meeting their specific comfort requirements. However, efforts must be made to develop infrastructure projects and enhance services, such as developing new highways, extending city outlets, and building contemporary hotels, restaurants, playgrounds, public parks, and recreational spaces. The Babylonian heritage authorities must take this goal seriously, consider the ages of these sites, and safeguard their cultural and spiritual significance.

Theoretical implications

There were numerous theoretical ramifications from this study. Although the Expectation-Disconfirmation theory has come to dominate the field of assessing satisfaction, there is much dispute about using a standardized comparison of expectations and experiences (Adams et al., 2017; Wong & Dioko, 2013). Oliver's (1980) approach emphasizes anticipation but downplays experience when measuring happiness. Tse & Wilton (1988), Boo & Busser (2018), and Ye et al. (2019) all conduct empirical research that confirms the significant influence of experience on satisfaction but also reveals an independent association between expectation and satisfaction.

This provides data that supports the Model's theoretical conjectures about the interplay between variables (Koc & Yazici Ayyildiz, 2022). There has been scant research into Iraq on the impact of the performance of tour guides' service quality and tourist satisfaction. This study stands out from others in the field because it focuses on the impact of Servqual dimensions and tour guide attributes on the correlation between expectation and perception and tourist satisfaction in Babylon, such as reliability, empathy, tangibility, security, responsiveness, professional knowledge, professional skills, professional attitude, and personal integrity.

The study's primary importance is providing empirical evidence that tour guides' qualities—such as reliability, empathy, tangibility, security, responsiveness, professional knowledge, professional skills, professional attitude, and personal integrity to the quality of their services. This offers a fresh viewpoint for tour guides who want to improve their performance, which is often crucial to their development in a highly competitive market. According to the literature evaluation, this research would fill some significant gaps in studying service quality impact on tourist satisfaction.

The first void is research on how all the predictor variables are used in practice to support disconfirmation theory (swamidoss et al., 2023). Indeed, there is a dearth of such studies in Iraq, especially in Babylon. Second, there is a disconnect between the tour guide's service quality and the tourist. Finally, the finding contributes to the research by showing a positive link between tangible, empathy, security and safety, professional skills, personal integrity, and tourist satisfaction. The findings of this study may lay the groundwork for future studies on the tour guide service quality for a heritage city like Babylon. Thus, this study's results are consistent with those that have confirmed the insignificance of the link between expectation and Disconfirmation (Fadel et al., 2022). In contrast, this study adds to the existing literature by highlighting the significance of prior experience for gauging tourists' happiness.

Managerial Implications

The study design is one of few to use two related theories and a set of factors and criteria to assess tourist satisfaction with service quality in Babylon. The study findings revealed that the perceived factors affecting the tour guides' quality service impact the tourists' satisfaction in the historic city. Nimpacts affected the level of support for tourism. Thus, the study has many managerial implications that address planners and decision-makers in Babylon. The most noteworthy discovery was that every respondent was cognizant of both the positive and negative effects of the growing tourism industry in Babylon City. Some have suggested that decision-makers who experience unfavorable results from tourism are often unaware of the industry and do not interact with visitors (Chabuk & Alamiri, 2023).

Tourists with higher levels of education were more likely to see the benefits of tourism favorably, and the study showed— the significance of tourists realizing the financial and non-financial gains that tourism may provide to their community. However, it is not enough to inform decision-makers about tourism's benefits. As a result, the findings of this study have further implications for the local government regarding the advantages brought about by tourism.

Comprehensive community benefits are achieved when the local government prioritizes infrastructure and public service development as part of tourism development strategies (Azimovna et al., 2022). All tour guides should have access to as many personal benefits as feasible as part of this plan. Another corollary is that it is essential to think about how to prioritize hiring tour guides for tourism- related jobs. Employment is often seen as one of the most effective remedies in sector tourism when dealing with social repercussions (Tosun et al., 2023). Furthermore, attention to this issue is necessary because developing countries often hire foreign nationals for management and other high-skilled roles in the tourism industry.

Knowing what visitors are looking for and accurately gauging the significance of the various parts that make up the whole tourist experience is a significant hurdle that can be overcome with the help of informed management (He et al., 2023). Given the importance of customer satisfaction statistics in shaping management strategies and the dearth of previous research on this topic in Babylon, the findings of this study have a substantial bearing on the Babylon Tourism Office, which can be them to advise the various tourism industries. Given the complexity of the components that contribute to visitors' feelings of contentment, authorities should ensure that all of them operate in concert to guarantee the delivery of high-quality experiences.

Limitations of the Study

The study has both strengths and weaknesses, contributions and limits. Initially, the SERVQUAL Model and the Disconfirmation theory are used to evaluate tourist satisfaction in Babylon; other theories and models used to analyze tourist satisfaction are not included in this study. Because of time constraints and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, international visitors to Babylon are few, and domestic visitors make up a substantial market share. However, certain drawbacks to this study may make its conclusions less reliable despite its contribution to the tourist literature on tour guide performance.

Variables may be affected by a shift in management philosophy, administration, or economic conditions. This study was limited to just one major city in Iraq because of logistical and temporal considerations. Babylon was chosen as the city because of its reputation as a major tourist destination. Finally, there is a chance that the measures of the factors utilized in this investigation are also a limitation of this study. This study measured Disconfirmation with just these two items on a mediator scale.

Contrast this with the limited information gained via scale inquiries. Therefore, research on the relationship between Disconfirmation and expected performance on a larger scale and how it affects tourists' pleasure is fruitful.

Direction for Future Research

Correctly evaluating international expectations and experience requires more studies with a significantly greater number of international tourists. With the end of the Iraq conflicts and the devastating repercussions of the COVID-19 epidemic on tourism in Babylon, Iraq, tourism decision-makers need to adjust their focus to consider and emphasize the importance of the local market in sustainable tourism development and resilience. Moreover, to build more efficient and forward-thinking tactics for the tourism industry, Babylon needs an in-depth analysis of the items it offers and its customers' needs. Finally, although this study discovered some encouraging results, the research framework, reliability, empathy, tangibility, security, responsiveness, professional knowledge, professional skills, professional attitude, personal integrity, and tourist satisfaction need more studies. It is also possible for there to be mediating effects. Since it is unnecessary to establish a direct link between the independent and dependent constructs to do a mediation analysis, it would be beneficial to investigate the mediating effect further. More studies into the happiness of visitors to Babylon are warranted.

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