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INFLUENCED FACTORS RELATES TO FOREIGN GUEST SATISFACTION ON MALAYSIAN SMEs HOTEL

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Abstract

Academically and in practical, there are thousands of definition of service quality. Different practitioners and scholars have specified diverse descriptions of service quality. Some authors have defined service quality as a contrast of what buyers assume a service provider should deliver (what to expect) with in what manner the service provider should executes. There are also a definition of service quality describing about the discrepancy between buyers' service perceptions and expectations. Some define service quality as the difference between technical quality, functional quality, process quality and output quality. As service quality is an utmost important element to success, the argument always lead into the understanding towards practical implications into service delivery to meet customers' expectations. The designed survey was simple which to look upon the response of foreign guest towards the performance elements in SMEs hotel after the services have been delivered and experienced by them. All features in the selected tested Performance Factors are important criteria to meet the research objective. In addition, a wide coverage of foreign guests have been participated as our samples to represent and generalize the study as a future reference. All respondents have successfully given their cooperation to this research and made the set of survey questions usable. A simple descriptive analysis was run for the purpose of result presentation to discover the factors that need to be taken care of and validated by respective agencies and society.

Keywords: Influenced factors, service quality, SMEs hotels, Malaysia

1. Introduction

Service quality is an attentive evaluation that mirrors the customer's perception towards elements of service like interaction quality, physical environment quality and outcome quality (Brady & Cronin, 2001) whereas satisfaction is more comprehensive; it is resulted by the perceptions of service quality, product quality and price as well as situational factors and personal factors. It is important to recognize that satisfaction is a dynamic, moving target that may evolve over time, influenced by a variety of factors (Fournier & Mick, 1999). Customer satisfaction is greater influenced by product or service features and the perceptions of delivered quality standard. It is also subjected to customers' emotional responses, their attributions and their perceptions of quality (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003).

2. Problem Statement

It is broadly recognised that the subsistence of hotel service providers in the competition arena depends on their competiveness and ability to completely deliver service quality in delighting the hotel guests. Pallet et al. (2003) argue that quality has to be initiated, visioned, planned, monitored, delivered and sustained.

> They suggested that quality problems and key human resource issues in hotels can often be solved with a common people and quality strategy which involves placing guest needs in the heart of the whole process; seeking suggestions from staff; developing corporate quality and people philosophy; training and empowering staff; benchmarking and reviewing. (Pallet et al., 2003, pp. 349-351)

Al-alak and Al-taie (2006) debated that service quality has to be well-defined from the hotel guest's viewpoint, and this means that perceptions of these hotel guests are all vital and should be taken into account. Therefore, the study of hotel's guest perceptions is strictly significant. Hence, it is important to indicate the contributing performance factor in determining company success, zero-error services offered and customer satisfaction.

3. Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. Which contributing influenced factor is the most central to be highlighted by SMEs Hotel in Malaysia when delivering their services to foreign tourists?
2. What are the performance service features need to be highlighted by SMEs Hotel in Malaysia when delivering their services to foreign tourists?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study are outlined as follows:

1. To explore the most contributing influenced factor to the success of delivering services to foreign guests by SMEs hotel in Malaysia.
2. To discuss the performance service features that should be emphasized by SMEs hotel in providing services to foreign guests.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Data Collection and Scale

The primary data is gathered through the development and distribution of self-administered questionnaire, which was initially constructed to meet the objective of this study. Thus, a survey method is chosen to channel correct response to the service provider and send an affirmative signal to hotel guests that the service provider is interested in them. Moreover, customer satisfaction is believed to be the most significantly to be measured through surveys (Hair et al., 1995; Malhotra, 2002; Peters & Wilson, 1992). A total of fifty five surveys were allocated to be distributed for the purpose of pre-testing the survey's content. A completed survey form was developed based on the feedback gathered during the pre-testing process. Selected SMEs hotels around Kuala Lumpur are approached and the management of the SMEs hotels are clarified to the purpose of this survey in order to get their approval to participate. Desk (front) office, room service and hotel restaurant were selected for the study since these elements are being the most typical elements to reach hotel guest interaction and service delivery process since they representing maximum moment of truth situation where hotel service provider comes in direct contact with the hotel guest (Mohsin & Lockyer, 2009). Varies type of SMEs hotels have undertaken to participate by giving consent to join this survey. The survey is distributed to all respondent by using a drop-off method since the reasoning of this method is acceptable and practical. The enumerator led by the researchers hand delivered the survey to the hotel guests in the hotel lobby or other appropriate locations within the hotel area. Throughout the process, any remarks made by the hotel guests will be taken seriously and further description is explained while participating hotel guests filled up the survey form. In order to increase the usable rate of the feedback and understanding of the purpose of the study, participants of this survey are explained to the concepts of hotel guest satisfaction and perceived quality prior to answer the survey. This study use previous research that derived from the literature and existing knowledge in this area.

5.2. Questionnaire Design

The survey's questionnaire comprised three sections as it is structurally adapted from studies under Lockyer (2000), Mohsin and Ryan (2005), and Mohsin and Lockyer (2009). Section 1, collected data on importance attributed to different features of desk (front) office, room service and in-house café/restaurant by hotel guests. Section 2, gathered an evaluation on how the service performance is completed in the opinion of the hotel guests based on the listed elements; desk (front) office, room service and in-house café/restaurant. Section 3 sought the demographic particulars of the participants; education level and employment status. All participants are asked to rate their degree of importance or agreement by using a 5-point likert scale; 5 represents the highest importance or agreement and 1 represents lowest importance or disagreement towards services offered.

5.3. Sample

The sample population are composed from foreign guests of SMEs hotels around Kuala Lumpur. The reason why this research will be conducted covering Kuala Lumpur is because of the generalization purposes. A total of 398 respondents have been randomly selected by using convenient sampling method.

5.4. Analysis of Data

Data analysis for this study is focusing into descriptive statistic as elaborated in the findings,

6. Findings

6.1. Education Level

Table 01. Education Level

Education Level	Total Respondents	Total Percentage
Diploma	150	37.7
Degree	166	41.7
Masters	53	13.3
Ph.D	14	3.5
Others	15	3.8
Total	**398**	**100.0**

The findings in Table 01 showed that the distribution of education level for the studied sample of the foreign SMEs Hotel guests in Malaysia was higher to degree holders with a total of 166 respondents (41.7%). The combination of both categories for diploma and degree holders (undergraduate level) have shown a total number of 316 respondents (79%) and 16.8% representing post graduate level whilst 3.8% (15 respondents) were representing other category.

6.2. Employment Status

Table 02. Employment Status

Employment Status	Total Respondents	Total Percentage
Unemployed	12	3.0
Student	122	30.7
Low level / Supervisory / Operative / First-line Managers	90	22.6
Middle Level / Executory	117	29.4
Top Level / Administrative Level	51	12.8
Others	6	1.5
Total	**398**	**100.0**

The findings in Table 02 showed that the distribution of employment status was higher for Student with a total of 122 respondents (30.7%). Middle Level / Executory was second highest in rank as it has contributed 29.4% of total respondents. On the other hand, there were 90 respondents who were categorized under Low level / Supervisory / Operative / First-line Managers and respondents from Top Level/ Administrative Level category have contributed 12.8% participation to this study. The balance of 4.5% (18 respondents) were from category of unemployed and others. Therefore, a total of 258 respondents which is considered as a majority were employed during the study has been conducted. The unemployed category is the combination of those who are not interested in working, still looking for a job and those who are freelancer.

6.3. Contributing Performance Factors and the Service Features

Table 03. Performance Factors and Service Features

Contributing Factors	Total Respondents Performing	Total Percentage Performing	Total Respondents Not Performing	Total Respondents Not Performing
Front Office Factor & Features	259	65	75	19
Room Service Factor & Features	271	68	75	19
Restaurant Factor & Features	254	64	76	19

In Table 03, three contributing Performance Factors were tested to indicate the importance value in services provided by SMEs Hotels in Malaysia. First they were asked about the Front Office Factor and the features involved are as follows; process in making a reservation, receiving confirmation of reservation, first contact on arrival, helpful front-desk staff, physical environment of main entrance and lobby, assistance with luggage, check-in efficiency, friendliness of front-desk staff, appearance and comforts in room, proper functioning of room conveniences, cleanliness of room, checkout efficiency, complaint recognition, value for money and overall impression of the stay. Second contributing Performance Factor was testing about the Room Service Factor and contains 6 features namely; prompt response from order taker, variety in menu, prompt service, quality of food, quality of beverages and value to you money. Last contributing Performance Factor is pertaining to Restaurant Factor that looking in depth into 9 main features which is; flexibility to cater for large groups, ambience of the venue, staff presentation and manners, staff skills of food and beverage service, well timed service, staffs product knowledge, complaint recognition, variety and quality of the products available and value for money. This analysis under Performance Factors are about those rating after the foreign guests experiencing the services offered by the SMEs Hotel. Therefore, the rating is quite low comparing to the rating prior they experiencing the services in the other study under Contributing Importance Factor. As for this analysis, the study has found out that the three main factors are not achieving into performance level as the results for those three factors are all below 70%. The worst factor that the SMEs Hotel need to take into serious recovery action is under Restaurant Factor and followed by Front Office Factor as the researchers believed that the foreign guests have experiencing something bad "moment of truth" or service failure incident during the process of service delivery. As for Room Service Factor, the rating results is still acceptable but still need to take into serious consideration by all SMEs Hotel service provider as the foreign guests satisfactorily level towards room services factors and features is below 70% in saying the services provided is performing to their expectation. It is believed that the key to success for SMEs Hotel in Malaysia is to make immediate changes and upgrading every element in the service features under the three factor; Front Office Factor, Room Service Factor and Restaurant Factor. Thorough review and analysis need to be done and corrected for all features involved as it will help the SMEs Hotel in Malaysia to guarantee the experiences of foreign guests in patronizing their services is in correct procedures, lead to profit making and loyalty creation.

7. Conclusion

This study is important to any future research regarding SMEs Hotel as it has proven the importance factors that have contributed to the performance of services offered by the SMEs Hotel to foreign guests. The future research should indicate the important of the three main factors namely Front Office factor, Room Service Factor and Restaurant factor to be central indicator in satisfying the SMEs Hotel guests in their services offerings. The SMEs Hotel need to crucially design new policy, process and procedures pertaining to the three main factors as mentioned above in order to let their customers experiencing the best staying experience and lead them to become loyal customer in the future. Future research are encouraged to expand the number of sample and location for generalization purposes.

Acknowledgments

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