ASSESSMENT OF GUEST SATISFACTION OF SERVICE QUALITY
OF THE HOTEL

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Abstract

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The purpose of this study was to examine and describe hotel guests' perception of service quality in relation to service training in the hotel. This study investigated how to improve service quality through service satisfaction survey. The significance of this study was that the finding would encourage hotel management to develop their service-training program according to service quality dimensions. The three major objectives of this study were:

- To understand the relationship of service quality and training in hotel industry through the literature review.

- To assess the perception of service quality of selected hotel using SERVQUAL Scale from Berry, Parasuraman and Zeithaml (1990).

- To provide data that would be useful to management in designing and developing training program in the hotel through assessment of service quality of the hotel.

The review of literature discussed what service means to the hospitality industry. Also it discussed about the importance of training program in hospitality industry and recognition of training that increased a lot of benefits to the organization. In addition, the training motivates employees to have a better attitude toward guest service. Finally it looked into what would be better contents of service quality training program.

The purpose of this study was to assess and describe the perception of service quality of the hotel. So a researcher distributed 590 survey questionnaires to a selected hotel and 94 of usable survey questionnaires were collected. Data for this study were applied descriptive statistics (frequency, means, and standard deviations) to all the questions and crosstabulation and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) to gain an understanding of the nature of responses.

The finding indicated that where the training program should focus on and encouraged hotel management in determining whether to develop and improve their guest service training to their employees. Satisfied guests tend to be return customers; guest service training program may impact on that satisfaction.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The single largest trend in business in the US over the past 40 years has been the increased emphasis on service and service-related industries. (Davidoff, 1994) Service has not traditionally been viewed as being as important as manufacturing. But service is no longer merely a by-product of an industrial society. According to Davidoff, many companies start to be engaged in efforts to improve the quality of service to their customers. However, improving service quality has not received the same attention and favor as has improving manufacturing quality. This is probably true because it is much harder to quantify and judge service. Davidoff mentioned, "Service grows on its own strength, as more people require its products independent of manufacturing. The number of well-paying service jobs continues to grow. The numerous and high productivity service jobs require highly skilled and trained workers with a variety of opportunity for advancement."

The service-based lodging industry goal is 100 % guest satisfaction. In the U.S, there are more than 48,619 lodging facilities including hotels, suite, motel, resort, and inn. (1992 Census of Service Industries, 1992) Even in the Minneapolis area, there are more than 114 competitors, which guarantee 100 % guest satisfaction and which have higher average occupancy. (America's top-rated cities: a statistical handbook, 1998) Because the hospitality industry is a service-oriented industry, poor customer service will cause a low occupancy rate for not returning business. Generally, customers will remember negative experiences twice as often as positive ones. (1999, Feiertag) Therefore, to survive in this high competitive industry, hotels have to consider how to

give better customer service than other competitors. It will be training program that employees learn how to provide improved customer service.

Evans (1998) discussed about poor customer service and worst customer satisfaction in the hotel industry. She stated that the hotel industry scored 71 out of 100 points in the industry's best-known customer satisfaction survey, compared with drop from 75 points in 1994 when lodging companies were struggling to pull themselves out of a recession. The year of 1998's score was the lowest since Andersen began its American customer satisfaction index five years ago. The survey found that guests don't believe hotels are providing services that justify the rising room costs, giving the hotels a score of 73 in this category, the lowest in five years. Nearly one-quarter of the consumers surveyed said that hotel guests had voiced complaints over such things as sloppy housekeeping, time-consuming check-outs and tardy room service. As time progresses, hotel's room rate continued to increase but customer service is still more and more poor.

In this highly competitive lodging industry, each company must analyze and consider their training program. Good training will benefit the entire organization. Training reduces tensions, turnover, and cost and improves product and quality of service. (Shriver, 1988 & Tanke, 1990) Customer count is certainly going to improve the company image and the bottom line. Now many companies in the hospitality recognize training and have developed systematic training program. However not everyone in this industry sees training as an investment. Many managers of small operations consider training an exercise in futility because they believe it takes more time than it is worth, employee do not stay long enough for it to pay, people are not interested in being trained, and the like. Also people in entry-level service jobs tend to think, they should be able to

do these jobs without training. So in fact, it is hard to convince these people that training is worth investment. It is difficult to measure and prove the difference training makes because there are always many variables in every situation. One way to reassure whether training pays off is to compare individual operations where the training is good with those that do little or no training. The differences will be obvious in "atmosphere," in "smoothness of operation," in "customer's satisfaction in improved quality of service." (Miller, 1998)

Davidoff (1994) stated that once an educated person gets into the workforce, there is little training in service available. Even though service companies provide a training program, most of the training concentrates on the technical aspects of the job. They neglect the significant real intangible service training. What separates one hotel from another is the quality of service. It is what people remember. (Rowe, 1998)

Davidoff suggested one of the things it takes for service to succeed is training system and education. He said the major reason why service is so bad today involved the lack of proper education and training. To make matters worse, most of businesses are not well prepared to provide the necessary training when a potentially good employee comes out of the education system. American companies must remember that a few days and dollars of training will more than pay for itself in the long run. Education and training are an essential part of the modern organization's efforts to support customer-contact personnel in hospitality industry.

Without general education on customer service, employees can not possibly be equipped to handle the rigorous regular interchange with customers. Without specific training on the processes involved with a particular company and its products, even the

most talented service provider will sometimes fall flat on their face. As more and more organization realizes this, the service standard in the hospitality industry will rise. (Davidoff, 1994)

Quality customer service means different things to different people. We can not assume everyone of employee understands how to provide "quality" customer service the way trainer or executives or human resource intend it to be. It is their responsibility to teach front-line staffs and all customer service providers your company's quality customer service's standards. (Haneborg, 1998)

It is important to invest in continuous quality customer service training for everyone. Organization should provide all employees with continuous education on customer service. Don't stop with one session. If customer service is important to company in the market, company has to be sure staff members attend annual refresher or advance courses, whatever it takes to ensure consistency and quality.

In hospitality industry, achieving outstanding customer service requires much time, energy and money in the customer service training and call center performance and service enhancement areas. (Kelley, 1999) Professional and courteous customer service does not just happen. It requires a company commitment with training extended to all departments and all levels of the company. Training must be an ongoing commitment. Regular and comprehensive measurement of performance and customer attitudes is central to maintaining the commitment.

The significance of the study

This study was to assess guests' satisfaction of service quality of hotel. This study was significant because it would impact on future training for service quality, and

delivery of services to guests. There was lack of sufficient data to design and develop training program for the hotel that responds to service perceptions of guests so far. So, in behalf of this study, hotel management would develop and improve their training program.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to assess and examine hotel guests' perception of service quality in relation to hospitality training program. This study investigated how to improve service quality through the perception of hotel guests who stay at the hotel and determined what a trainer has to train hotel employees to improve service quality in the hotel. A questionnaire was given to hotel guest staying at particular hotel. The questionnaire focused on five dimensions which were reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy according to SERVQUAL scale of Berry, Parasuraman, (1990) and attitude of employees.

The Objectives of Study

The three major objectives of this study were:

1. To understand the relationship of service quality and training in hotel industry through the literature review.

2. To assess the perception of service quality of selected hotel using SERVQUAL Scale from Berry, Parasuraman and Zeithaml (1990)

3. To provide data that would be useful to management in designing and developing training program in the hotel through assessment of service quality of the hotel

Definition of Term

The following key terms would be used throughout this research. These were obtained by Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1971).

Customer   One that purchases some commodity or service.

Guest   A person, who lodges, boards or receives refreshment for pay whether permanently or transiently.

Guarantee   An expressed or implied assurance of the quality of goods offered for sale or the length of satisfactory use to be expected from a product.

Hospitality   The cordial and generous reception and entertainment of guests or strangers socially or commercially.

Manufacturing   To make from raw materials by hand or by machinery.

Quality   Degree or grade of excellence.

Satisfaction   Complete fulfillment of a need or want.

Service   Useful labor that does not produce a tangible commodity.

Training   The teaching, drill or discipline by which powers of mind or body are developed.

CHAPTER II

Review of literature

Introduction

In strongly service-based hospitality industry, human resource management plays important role to hire and train its employees because company's success will depend on its employees' service-based attitude. Dealing with people is what hospitality business is all about. When providing services to guests, primary resource is employees. Successful hospitality managers need the ability to work with those people who will contribute success.

When we think about turnover rate, which is from 60 percent to 300 percent in hospitality industry, (Worcester, 1999) they can not overlook why it happen any more. There are so many reasons employees left their job such as management skill, money or better benefits or ignorance of employee training. Now managers or human resource management function have to turn to how to reduce its turnover rate and provide better service to their customer; training is one tool.

This review of literature will discuss, first of all, how service is different from manufacturing. Moreover, it will support hospitality industry started to recognize the importance of service training program. In addition, it will give an explanation why people do not want to be trained and why managers do not want to provide a training program to their employees. In contrast, it will definitely show evidences of the benefits of a training program in both employer and employee. Furthermore, the researcher will introduce service quality dimension for training program from SERVQUAL from

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1990) and staff support area from Kennedy and Young (1988).

What is Service?

Two decades ago, people defined service as "Anything useful, such as maintenance, supplies installation, repairs, etc, provided by a dealer or manufacturer for people who have bought things from him" according to Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary (second edition). But today we believe this definition is not sufficient to cover what service means. Today it is more appropriate to define service as "useful labor that does not produce a tangible commodity" in a customer-oriented point of view. (Davidoff, 1994)

Harris (2000) noted customer service is anything we do for the customer that enhances the customer experience. Customers have varying ideas of what they expect from customer interaction. No matter how accurately we see our definition of customer service, we still have to live up to what our customer thinks that customer service is. The customer's satisfaction is the goal to attain in service industry.

How Service Differs from Manufacturing

Davidoff (1994) mentioned manufacturing companies have a strong financial orientation. From a manufacturing standpoint money is the most important capital, a means of expansion and growth. From a service standpoint, people are the most important capital. They represent not only a company's major investment, but also its chief asset. Employees and their professional growth are more important than financial capital in determining the extent of company growth. People are the biggest competitive edge that a service company has. No matter how much money the company invests or

how well a facility is built, the employees will ultimately determine success because quality, productivity and consistency are determined by factors like sensitivity, responsiveness, helpfulness, friendliness, good instincts, courtesy, teamwork, risk-taking, initiative, flair, self-confidence, innovation and creativity. So in service industry, the approach to human resource management must be designed to create an environment that will allow these factors to grow and develop.

Also Stamatis (1996) illustrated a difference of production-centered service operations and customer-centered service operation.

Table 1. The difference of production-centered service operation and customer-centered service operation

Goods and Production-Centered Service Operations	*Customer-Centered Service Operations*
Customer involved in very few production processes	Customer involved in many production processes
Production and delivery processes are separate	Production and deliver processes overlap to : varying degrees and Might even be identical
Production is independent of consumption	Production is frequently simultaneous with consumption
Product design is centered on the customer, and process design is centered on the employee	Both product design and process design are centered on the customer
Production results show less variability	Production results show more variability
More amenable to standards, measurements, inspection, and control	Less amenable to standards, measurements, inspection and control
Employee-customer relationships are generally not complex	Employee-customer relationship are generally very complex
Technically more complex	Technically less complex

Technical skills dominate operations	Interpersonal skills dominate operation
Training is heavily physical	Training is heavily psychological
Most producers do not deal directly with the customer	Most producers deal directly with customer
Economies of scale are generally readily attainable	Economies of scale are less readily attainable

From "Total Quality Service: Principles, Practices, and Implementation" (p 23-24), by Stamatis, D.H. 1996 Delray Beach, FL: St. Lucie Press.

Stamatis (1996) said the consequences of these characteristics are that involved customers can rush, slow down, disrupt, and alter production processes. Involved customers can influence the treatment of subsequent customers by the effect they have on service providers. Because of these major differences, in quality service we must become cognizant of what a process is and how variation affects the quality of service such as employees' attitude, knowledge and skill of decision making and problem-solving.

In addition, according to Davidoff (1994) we can find out what is different between a service and a retail product. For many years, business treated services about the same as they treated any retail goods. In the 1970s, however, a new view emerged-one that understands that service is distinctly different from manufacturing and retail. Here are five major characteristics of the service from several researchers as follows:

Relative intangibility of services.

According to Davidoff (1994), intangibility refers to the fact that the consumer rarely gets something touchable as the result of a service. Service is a "product" that, in many ways, is intangible and unmeasureable. For example, one receptionist can help twenty people and drive ten of them away, while another can service twenty so that all

return again and again. If an employee's attitude is poor, guests can't express their dissatisfaction by returning a product for exchange. Most of them don't even complain-they just don't come back

Also, Davidoff (1994) mentions the outcome is more often an experience than a possession. For example, even though an airline passenger gets a ticket, the real product is the transportation from one city to another. It is difficult for people to show off their air tickets to friends the way they might show off a new car. Even in service businesses where possessions can be gained, such as a stock brokerage, the real product is intangible. The real product that brokers give is advice. Customers may be able to get tangible goods as a result of the broker's product, but the product itself is still relatively intangible. Also in hotel industry, customer may get tangible things such as clean room, soap, shampoo, and food but hotel staffs' kindliness, recognition, problem-solving are intangible.

Simultaneous production and consumption of service.

Davidoff (1994) notes simultaneity refers the time lapse between the production and consumption of services versus retail products. Unlike the manufacture and sales of a toaster oven, service are usually produced and consumed at the same time. Therefore, service products are highly perishable. Once a hotel room goes unused for the night, it cannot be sold again. Similarly, a travel agent's hour can not be "saved" in inventory for use during peak periods. Furthermore, there is no time between production and consumption to inspect the product to ensure that there are no defects. Once a customer gets bad experience from a front desk clerk in hotel with a surly attitude, there is no way

to recall that encounter and replace it in inventory with a friendly front desk clerk's service.

Customer participation in the production of service.

In addition, according to Davidoff (1994) customer participation refers to the fact that customers of service companies participate actively in the production of their service. In fact, service organizations could not possibly create their product without substantial input from the consumer. Whether the input is an order to a waiter or the description of symptoms to a doctor, the service does not really begin without the assistance of the customer. No one could imagine themselves going into the Ford or GM plant and watching over every detail of the production of their car, yet many service customers expect that kind of insight and control when they receive products from service companies. Rust, Zahorik, & Keiningham (1996) note service production often requires the presence and active participation of the customer. Depending upon the skill, attitude, cooperation, and so on that customers bring to the service encounter, the results can be good or bad, but in any event are hard to standardize.

Labor intensiveness.

Fitzsimmons (1994) noted the interaction between customer and employee in service creates the possibility of a more complete human work experience. The personal nature of service is in stark contrast to the depersonalization of work found in manufacturing. In services work activity is oriented toward people rather than toward things. For example, the chef hidden in the kitchen must prepare a meal that satisfies a diner in taste as well as appearance. Even the introduction of automation may strengthen personalization by eliminating the relatively routine impersonal tasks, thereby permitting

increased personal attention to the remaining work. At the same time, however, personal attention creates opportunities for variability in the service provided. This is not inherently bad unless customers perceive significant quality variation. A customer expects to be treated fairly and given the same service others receive. The development of standards and employee training in proper procedures is the key to ensuring consistency in the service provided. It is rather impractical to monitor the output of each employee except via customer complaints.

In addition, the direct customer-employee contact has implications for industrial service relations as well. For example, auto-workers with grievances against the firm have been know to sabotage the product on the assembly line. Presumably, the final inspection will ensure that any such cars are corrected before delivery. However, in service-based company, a disgruntled service employee can do irreparable harm to the organization because the employee is the firm's sole contact with customers. The service manager must be concerned about the employees' attitudes as well as their performance. J. Willard Marriott, founder of the Marriott Hotel chain, has said, "In the service business you can't make happy guests with unhappy employees." (Cited in Fitzsimmons, 1994, p 30) Through training and genuine concern for employee welfare, the organizational goals can be internalized.

Difficulty in measuring output.

Fitzsimmons (1994) discussed measuring the output of a service organization is a frustrating task for several reasons. For example, counting the number of customers served is seldom useful because it does not account for the quality of service performed. The problem of measurement is further complicated by the fact that not-for-profit service

systems (hospitals, universities, and governments) do not have a single criterion, such as maximizing profit, on which to base an evaluation of their performance. More importantly, can a system's performance be evaluated on the basis of output alone when this assumes a homogeneous input? A more definitive evaluation of service performance is a measure of the change in each customer from input to output state, a process known as transactional analysis.

The Importance of Customer Service

As characteristics of service, service can not be separate from customer in service industry. The best service means returning business. Harris (2000) mentions one of the most effective and least expensive ways to market a business is through excellent customer service. Customers and service are an obvious requirement for doing business. The importance of customer service is at an all-time high. Many services require personal interactions between customers and the firm's employees, and these interactions strongly influence the customers' perception of service quality (Rust, Zahorik, & Keiningham, 1996) For instance, a person's stay at hotel can be greatly affected by the friendliness, knowledgeability, and helpfulness of the hotel staff. One's impression of the hotel and willingness to return are determined to a large extent by the brief encounters with the front desk staff, bellperson, housekeeping staff, restaurant waitstaff.

Businesses realize that providing a service alone is not enough in today's competitive economic environment. Customer service is the positive element that keeps current business coming back. Today, customers are much more sophisticated than they were five years ago. They are informed about how products should perform and know that if they are dissatisfied with the service that they receive, someone else probably sells

the product and will provide better service. Even they may also expect that expressing their unhappiness with a situation will elicit a positive result to other place. (Harris, 2000) In high competitive industry, customer who is not satisfied with staying at hotel, they simply won't return and change their hotel next time.

Therefore, management faces a tremendous challenge in selecting and training all of these employees to do their jobs well, and perhaps even more important in motivating them to provide good service to customers.

The Reason Customer Service Failed

Gitomer (1998) discussed that why customer service goes wrong. What happen to unsatisfied customer? We can find out it from a variety of reliable research.

- 91% customers who leave with angry feeling will never return to your business
- 96% won't tell you the real reason they left
- 80% will do business with you again if their problem is handled quickly, and to their complete satisfaction.
- When the incident is real bad and they leave, stories about what happened will be retold for year.

Also, here are the several basic reasons service is bad, which Gitomer (1998) mentioned,

- Failure to start friendly- Give what you want to receive. The first few words set the tone for the entire dialog. The single most important brick in the foundation of customer service is "Friendly." It is also the least consistent element of the experience.

- Failure to say it in a way that the customer wants to hear it - The first tendency of the front-line person is to make an excuse or tell why something occurred. But that's the

last thing the customer wants to hear. Customers want answers started in terms of them and their needs. And that is rare or missing from front-line communication.

- Companies allow employees to be rude to customers and tell customers "No."- When you deny a customer, their need still exists and they are mad. Then you add to the fire by saying, "Don't talk to me like that, sir." Or "I don't have to take this." A complaining customer is seen as a "hassle" rather than an opportunity.

- We are living in an era of responsibility shirkers and blamers – People do not want to take responsibility. "It is not my job" is their credo. Responsibility takers are so rare that they often receive awards.

- Low training budget priority. – Big companies spend more money producing and airing one sixty-second commercial than they will spend on a customer service program in a year. They spend more money on "lip" service than "customer" service.

- Companies make the fatal mistake of only providing "company training" and "policy training."- They may provide some "customer" training, but very few offer any "personal development" training such as positive attitude, goals, listening, responsibility, pride, or communication skills. This is especially fatal for front-line people.

- Companies only train once in a while instead of every day. - Fifteen to thirty minutes of training a day will make any employee a world-class expert in five years.

Concepts of Customer Perception and Expectation

Harris (2000) noted a perception is the way that we see something based on our experience. Everyone's perception of a situation will be, at least slightly, different. The question persists, "Is the glass half full or is it half empty?"

Perceptions are frequently developed over a period of time and reflect the ways that we have been treated, our values, priorities, prejudices and sensitivity to others. Two people could share with same experience and then describe it differently. Unfortunately, perceptions are not necessarily based on rational ideas and may be influenced by momentary frustration and anger. It is important for the customer service staffs to anticipate customer resistance based on the customers' prior interactions and always to work at providing customers with excellent service, so that their most current perception is a positive one. Customers may not remember every detail of an experience, but they will retain an overall feeling about it. That "feeling," in combination with other experiences, will create their perception of company. It is hard to erase customers' negative perceptions that are based on their prior interactions, but what customer service staffs can do is to show them, through their genuine action, that their perception is not accurate.

Also Harris (2000) explained expectations are our personal vision of the result that will come from our experience. Expectations may be positive or negative. Expectations are usually based on our perceptions. If customer' last experience with a company was negative, he may approach a new situation with the expectation that he will again be dissatisfied.

Expectations can be divided into two distinct categories: primary expectations and secondary expectations. Primary expectations are the customers' most basic requirements of an interaction. For example, when staying at the hotel, customers' primary expectations are to clean room, excise room and amenities, to someone else clean the room, and pay a reasonable price. Secondary expectations are expectations based on customers' previous experiences and represent enhancements to their primary expectations. That is to say, when staying at the hotel, their secondary expectations include good service, courtesy, prompt service and good, tasty food. Consequently, guest experienced bad customer service in hotel, he will not expect to get good service again and may not return to same hotel.

Factors influencing expectations from Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry's (1990) focus group result are:

First, what customers hear from other customers-word-of-mouth communications-is a potential determinant of expectations. For instance from focus-group findings, several respondents in product-repair focus groups indicated that the high quality of service they expected from the repair firms they chose stemmed from the recommendations of their friends, neighbors and associates. Also Gitomer (1998) said it is estimated that more than 50% of American business is based on this word-of-mouth ad form. If the experience was good, the customer may not proactively say something, but if the experience was bad, she or he will bring up the story in the first 5 minutes of a conversation. For instance, if a friend who will go to business trip asked which hotel is good for staying, how will we recommend it? Here is example:

A referral – "Radission Hotel is the greatest"

Nothing – "Well, I do not know, they are all about the same" or,

A reverse referral – "Anyplace but Radission hotel"

If we had really bad experience, we might talk about all of bad experience over and over again.

Second, personal needs of customers might moderate their expectations to a certain degree. For example, in the credit card focus groups, while some customers expected credit card companies to provide them with the maximum possible credit limits, other customers wished that their credit card companies were more stringent than they were.

Third, the extent of past experience with using a service could also influence customers' expectation levels. Their research findings told us that more experienced participants in the securities-brokerage focus groups seemed to have somewhat lower expectations regarding brokers' behavioral attributes such as friendliness and politeness; however, they appeared to be more demanding with respect to brokers' technical competence and effectiveness.

Fourth, external communications from service providers play a key role in shaping customers' expectations. Under external communications we include a variety of direct and indirect messages conveyed by service firms to customers: a bank's print advertisement promising the friendliest tellers in town, a television commercial for a credit card touting its acceptability around the world, a repair firms' receptionist guaranteeing the arrival of a service representative at an appointed time, advertising from pizza place delivering within 30 minutes and money back guarantee, hotel's 100% guest satisfaction guarantee advertising.

Financial Impact of A Satisfaction Guarantee

Satisfaction guarantees are a powerful tool for ensuring quality service. They provide assurance to customers and quality standards for service providers. Profits are boosted because of the quality image projected by advertising the guarantee, repeat business from those who invoke the guarantee, and business referred by those who have invoked the guarantee. But to make success of guarantee, it is important that training employee to fit in their service quality as well as making them understanding their service culture. According to Rust, Zahorik, & Keiningham (1996), when hotel guarantee guest satisfaction, one of the amazing facts about it is the direct financial impact is large, and that a guarantee can be very profitable. (p204)

Figure 1. Direct financial impact of a satisfaction guarantee
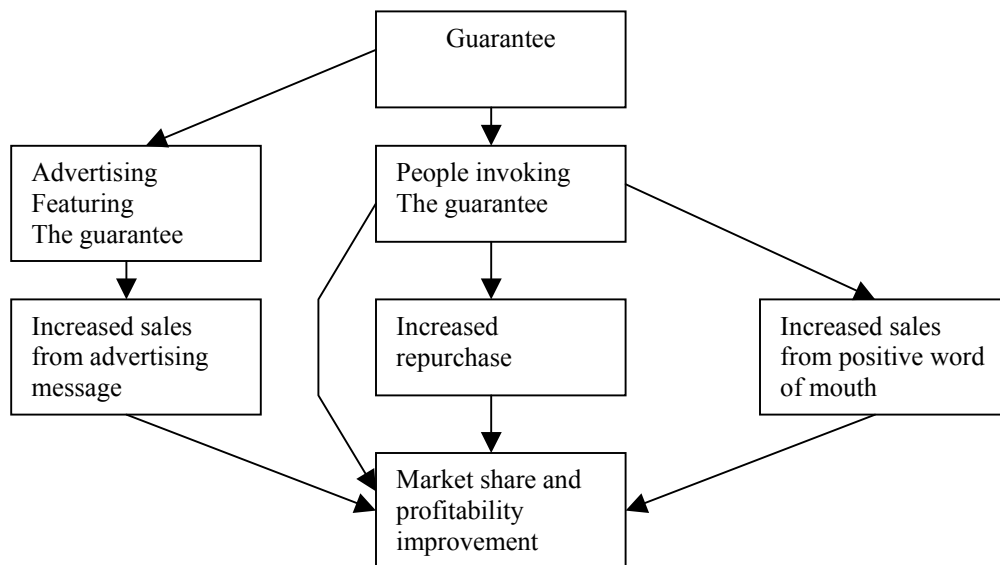
From Service Marketing (p. 224) by Rust, R.T., Zahorik, A.J. & Keiningham, T.L 1996, New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.

Figure 1 shows that a guarantee may directly impact profits. It shows that advertising is more effective, which attracts more customers, people invoking the

guarantee come back when they might not have, and positive word of mouth from the customers who invoke the guarantee attract still more customers.

According to example from Rust, Zahorik & Keiningham, (1996) when we suppose that 1% of all customers were attracted by the guarantee, and that there were 10 million paid room nights in a year, at an average contribution of $20 per room, on a $50 average room rate. This yields an additional contribution of 1% × 10 million × $20 = $200,000 per year. If one person in 200(.5%) invokes the guarantee, the lost revenue is .5% × 10 million × $50 = $2.5 million. So far this deal looks like a bad one, because we are down $2.3 million.

In addition, when we suppose that without a guarantee 20% of those who are dissatisfied would not return. This 20% is lured back by successfully invoking the guarantee, at an average lifetime contribution of $150. The gain to the hotel is .5% ×10 million × 20% × $150= $1.5 million. Suppose also that each person who invokes the guarantee has a 20% chance of persuading a new customer to visit the hotel chain, again at an average lifetime value of $150. The benefit is .5% × 10 million × 20% × $150 = $1.5 million. Adding up the positive effects, we have $200,000 from advertising + $1.5 million from returning customers + $1.5 million from customers attracted by word of mouth = $3.2 million. This is much better than the $2.5 million outlay, and does not even include the indirect effects, including the heightened quality culture and its resulting benefits.

Recognition of Importance of Training

According to American Society for training and development, the bulk of training dollar is targeted to professional and managerial worker over decade. Only one third spent on the noncollege-educated work force compared with two thirds of training dollars are spent on upgrading the skills and knowledge of college-educated workers. (Cinted in Meister, 1994)

Figure 2 Two Thirds of Company Training Dollars Go to the College Educated

Distribution of $30 billion formal training expenditures
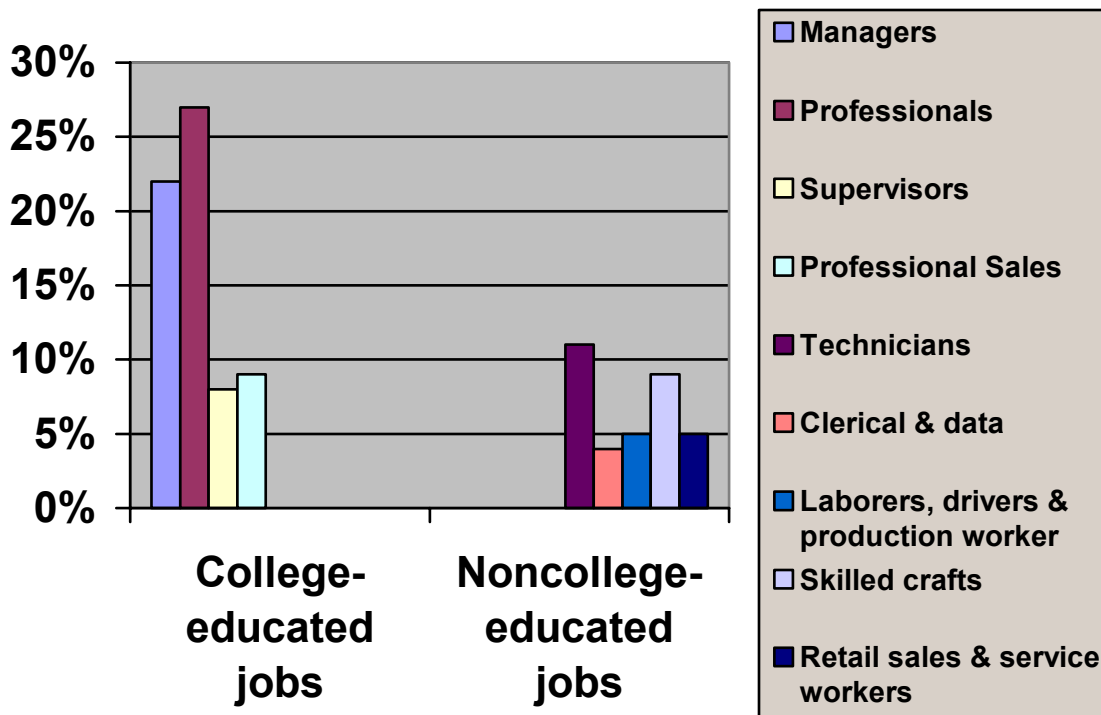
Adapted and modified from Corporate quality universities: lessons in building a world-class work force (p. 14) by Meister, J. C. 1994, Richard D. Irwin, Inc.

As shown in figure 2, while professional and managerial ranks received abundant opportunities for training, the frontline workers who make a lasting impression with customers and determine a company's competitive advantage such as front-line workers-the clerical workers, the receptionist, and the customer service representatives have

traditionally received the least amount of formal training and retraining. In fact, growing number of companies are now recognizing the need for excellence across the work force, not only in the professional managerial ranks. A growing number of companies have begun to perceive a need to shift their training efforts from simply training one segment of their worker to training everyone in the organization and then going one step further by making every employee accountable for continuously learning new skills in the workplace.

In hospitality industry, with competitive in marketplace, to pursue customer satisfaction has become increasingly prevalent in a growing number of hotels and many hotels have realized that they focus on the employee as the critical link in delivering customer satisfaction and ultimately profitability. So to remain competitive market, companies must think of their employees as their most valuable assets and provide them with opportunities for continuous learning.

Joy Talbot (1999), vice president of planning and development for Orlando-based Island One Resort said "Training is critical to remain competitive and leading edge. We consider ourselves to be very innovative. It's an enhancement our credibility. We want to assure our customers that our staff has the right credentials" He thought that a strong training program helps the company recruit and retain talented employees. He said " We encourage our staff to participate and become educated about the industry" And "We try to help grow our employees professionally and personally"(Cited in Baumann, 1999)

Another example of endeavor of training program is Minneapolis-Carlson Vacation Ownership. Neal Rubin, regional director said all its employees attend Radission University for a comprehensive training program. Brand Orientation and the

"100 percent Guest Satisfaction" motto strongly are communicated to all participants. He said " We're unique in the timeshare industry. We are utilizing some to the same training programs used in our hotels and adapting them to the timeshare environment. We want them to learn the benefits of effective service and best practices of the Radisson properties and how it helps them prosper." (Cited in Baunmann, 1999) The company has invested a tremendous amount of resources and technology to better targetmarket its potential customers based on lifestyle and preferences.

To retain employees, John Griswold, president of New York-based Tishman Hotel Corp., said the industry needs to realize that even in poor economic times, money needs to be set aside in the budget for training, mentoring and leadership development. He said Tishman Hotel Corp. has put money in place to provide training in larger hotels, and leadership training for smaller hotels, on a case-by-case basis. He also said "It costs money to train people and You can't just training off the budget. You will pay for it years later. If you plan properly and invest in your employees, you can avoid some of the replacement costs we've had to incur over the last year or so." (Cited in Worcester, 1999)

Calvacca (1999) noted that across industries, training budgets are rising. Training, a 65,000-circulation trade monthly published by Minneapolis based Lakewood Publications, Inc., estimates that U.S. companies with 100 or more employees budgeted $58.6 billion for training in 1997, a 5 percent increase over 1996 and an all-time high in the last 15 years. In the past year, the report notes the market for training-related goods and services rose 322 percent, to $13.6 billion.

Companies that have good relationship with customers spend a lot on finding and training employees, according to Zemke, senior editor at training magazine. Some

companies report that equivalent of up to 5 percent of employee salaries is put aside from training. According to statistics completed by Training Magazine, $62.5 billion is expected to be spent on training US workers in 1999 compared to $39.6 billion in 1988. In one decade, the approximate training budget has increased $22.9 billion, a meager amount considering that this is the best job market in 30 years, Zemke said. (Cited in Weinstein, 1999)

<u>Benefits and Barriers of A Training Program</u>

In Glossary of Training Term of Department of Employment, a succinct definition of the scope of the training is the systematic development of the attitude, knowledge and skill behavior pattern required by an individual in order to perform adequately a given task or job. Training is work or task-based and it deals with a short time frame geared to the mastery of specific tasks in work environment. (Cited in Anderson, 1994)

Cini (1998) mentioned that companies with a greater commitment to training in general reported better performance vs. comparable organizations when it comes to productivity, customer satisfaction, sales, employee satisfaction and retention. These last two measures are critical. Without satisfied employees, success on the other measure is impossible. As growth demands more employees, specifically employees with broader skills, a satisfied employee base is critical. This is nothing new. Other studies report lines between training and employee satisfaction and retention. But as we look ahead to 2000, this issue deserves renewed attention.

In addition, training is a tremendous recruiting tool. As candidates job hunt, they size up potential employers against each other. Very often, the balance is tipped in favor of the organization that offers the greatest opportunity for skill and career development.

<u>Benefits of Training Employees</u>

The following is training benefits identified by Tanke (1990).

Table 2. Benefits of training

❖ Improves quality of guest services

❖ Increase comradely and sense of teamwork

❖ Improved quality

❖ Reduces work conflicts

❖ Relieves stress and tension

❖ Reduces high turnover and absenteeism

❖ Improves performance resulting in cost savings

❖ Prepares employee for promotion

❖ Improves self-esteem of our human resources

❖ Instills sense of professionalism

❖ Improves relationships between management and staffs

❖ Reduction in accidents

❖ Increased productivity

❖ Improved sanitation and cleanliness

❖ Decreases fatigue

❖ Reduction in amount of supervision required

❖ Happier work environment

From Human resources management for the hospitality industry by Mary T. L., 1990, Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers Inc.

According to Shriver (1988), training programs benefit the guests, manager, supervisors, and employees. An organization that develops and trains its staff is constantly growing. There is an excitement about the personal growth of everyone involved, and that excitement raises morale and motivates everyone to succeed in accomplishing the organization's objectives. Training program may reduce labor costs by increasing productivity and decreasing turnover.

<u>Training and turnover.</u>

Without employee training program, employees may face stress and frustrated because they do not know exactly how to do their job performance and how to meet unsatisfied guests. Regardless of that situation, if there is not any training session, frustrations on the job increase and create high level of stress, which may threaten the stability of the organization. Most of them who have experienced stress leave their work and find another job. Or because they are not doing their job adequately, they can be terminated by company. However, good training can put an end to this frustration, stress and high turnover. After training, the employees know how to handle an angry guest and give better service that guest. The end result is that company becomes more productive.

The industry is now beginning to face the fact that it needs to be more attractive to employees in the long term. There is research providing that training helps reduce turnover. The more company train, the longer employees are willing to stay. Many large and mid-size companies issue training mandates. The Educational Institute of the American Hotel & Motel Assn. estimated that turnover in hotels ranges from 60 percent to more than 300 percent annually. According to the American Hotel Foundation's 1998 "Turnover and Diversity in the Loding Industry" report, national turnover in 1997 for line-level employees was 91.7 percent, 13.5 percent for property managers and 11.9 percent for supervisor. (Cited in Worcester, 1999)

Hinkin (2000) was telling the story about three similar stores when he studied turnover cost. In a large city in upstate New York, there are three large building supply and home improvement stores, all of them well-known national franchises that offer virtually the same products at similar prices. Two of them focus on holding down labor

costs by minimizing staffing levels and the hourly wages paid to employees. They also provide little training because it is expensive and tasks are simple and easy to learn. Employees are given little discretion in decision-making and jobs consist primarily of restocking shelves since the store's emphasis is on self-service for the "do-if-yourselfer." Often it is difficult for customers to find someone to assist them. And their questions are frequently answered with the response " I don't know." Employee turnover is high at both of these stores.

The third store, he explained, invested considerable time in the recruitment and selection process, often hiring skilled trades people who are able to provide the do-it-yourselfer with helpful advice. All new employees are given substantial training and taught the physical layout of the store so that they can direct customers to the products they seek. Employees are encouraged to be creative in displaying products and are allowed to offer instructional workshops and to take their time with individual customers. Often it seems as though the store is overstaffed, for there is always an employee available to assist a customer. This store has low employee turnover. It also has higher labor rates than the other two stores, but much lower labor costs because the third store provide a high level of service that attracts and retains the customers who provide a greater sales volume, which results in reduced labor costs as a percentage of revenues.

Robert Woods, professor of Purdue University said turnover costs for managers can be average $50,000 or more, and many companies associate the cost of losing one trained manager with approximately one year's annual salary because that is how long it takes for a new manager to become fully productive. (Worcester, 1999) Cornell University studies a cost of turnover from interview with hotels and found out the cost of

$6,000 equates to about $3.00 per hour in annual wages for an hourly position. If the total number of front desk personnel is 30 and the turnover rate is 50% percent, then the overall cost of turnover for this position alone is $95,000. By reducing that rate to 25% the hotel would save almost $50,000 and improve service quality. (Hinkin, 2000)

Cini (1998) explained his article about reducing turnover rate. Orientation and basic job skills training have been shown to reduce turnover within the first four months. More advance skills and cross-training can reduce turnover during the balance of the first year (not to mention that this training will improve productivity and customer satisfaction). Training tied to career development plans will have the same effects over longer periods of time.

Training and guest satisfaction.

A competent staff produces satisfied guests; satisfied guests often mean repeat business and increased revenue. Guests recognize when a staff is well trained. They will comment to friends and associates about the competence of trained staff. And few marketing plans can match the power of this word-of-mouth advertising. In the hospitality industry, it has been proven that most unsatisfied guests tell more than five people about their complaints, while satisfied guests tell only two people about their enjoyable experience. Customer retention is at the heart of profitable companies in all service industry. Kessler (1995) noted that Reichheld figured the 20-year customer is worth 85 percent more in profits than the 10-year customer. Reichheld has also found that boosting customer retention 2 percent can have the same effect on profits as cutting costs by 10 percent. (Cited in Kessler, 1995) A similar study revealed that a 5 percent increase in retention leads to significant boosts in profits, as shown in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. Impact of retention on profits: What a 5 percent increase in customer retention does to profits

Industry	Boost in profit
Automotive Service	81%
Auto/home Insurance	84%
Bank Branch Deposit	85%
Professional Publishing	85%
Credit Cards	89%
Life Insurance	90%
Corporate Insurance Brokers	93%
Advertising Agencies	95%

From Total quality service: A simplified Approach to using the baldrige award criteria (p. 4) by Kessler, S., 1995, Milwaukee, WI: ASQC Quality Press.

The sales cost of recruiting a new customer is five to ten times than of retaining a repeat customer. Thus, with higher satisfaction company achieves a higher return rate.

Training and employees' attitude.

According to Kelley (1999), studies show that nearly two-thirds of customers leaves a business because they feel the company's attitude is indifferent to its customers.

For the guest's point of view, employees are the "ambassadors" (Shriver, 1988 & Falbo, 1998) for the hospitality operation; they represent the organization and all that it stands for and is trying to accomplish. Therefore, employee attitudes and performances are critical to the success of a hospitality property. Shriver (1988) noticed it is ironic that newly hired employees who occupy high guest-contact position such as housekeeping

room attendants, front desk agents, and dining room servers are often put on the job with minimal training.

According to Anderson, training is a process to change employees' behavior at work through the application of learning principles. This behavioral change usually has a focus on knowledge or information, skills or activities, and attitudes or belief and value systems.

Strauss (1999) mentioned in her article that Elliott, a panel of Luby's Inc. said it was important to create a service culture in hospitality industry that was adaptable because which through employee training is crucial, there is no way any operation can train for every situation. In training she recommended "Creating a attitude, then training for skill." So, service training will help people to have positive attitude.

Making customer service the heart of a hotel's culture makes each employee an ambassador of good public relations. Starting with a staff that genuinely likes people and enjoys being attentive to their needs helps enormously. Taking care of these passionate employees and providing specialized guest relations training makes customer service and public relations-second-nature. (Falbo, 1998)

As we knew, friendliness, courtesy, and helpfulness are key attributes to make front line employees and customer service employee to succeed their jobs. Therefore service training provide them new attitude such as positive, courteous, and friendly.

Training and team work.

According to Petal (1998), in a service-based business like hospitality industry, the difference between a good property and a great property is not just the abilities but the attitudes of employees. Members of staff must know the basics of their respective jobs

but they must also be able to work together as a team. Harris (2000) mentioned employees prefer working in teams to handling projects and solving problem. Teamwork is working together to improve the efficiency of the whole. The ideal of teamwork for many employees is appealing because employees can experience a unified approach to situation or work that does not exist when all responsibility rests with one individual. Some of the reasons that employee prefer teamwork according to a survey conducted for Dale Carnegie & Associates are:

- Indicated lower stress - 72 %

- Increased work quality – 74%

- Improved attitude – 67%

- Increased profitability – 67 %

- Increased productivity – 66%

Teamwork can improve morale and result in a more positive and motivational work experience. (p98-99)

A service-oriented person can be a crucial ingredient of a team, but one person can not make a team. If some of employee said, "it is not my job" and avoid solving a difficult problem, it would take a long time to solve guest needs. A service-training program such as interpersonal skill enforces how to be a team member and teach how to contribute on their service success in hospitality industry. Also it will create better work environment because good teamwork relates to good communication skill and listening skill.

Training and motivation.

Services in hotel industry are provided primarily by what is called unskilled labor, such as housekeeper, banquet server, food and beverage, roughly 60-80% of which fall into this category. People are most important asset and service is core product in hospitality industry. Training and education plays a principal role in developing skills and motivating employees in their work. By working through the company's training and development program, an employee can gain skills and status, which are recognized within the company and on the open market. In addition, by training employees are trained how to handle customer complaints and what to do in uncomfortable situations with the customer. It makes them feel professional and confident and give an opportunity to advancement.

Confidence and competence go hand in hand. Confident employees are that way because they know their job and they are prepared to handle any situation that might be presented to them. Confident employees mean reassured customers. That is important because customers want to be reassured. Contact with a confident and seemingly competent employee reduces the insecurity of what they are buying.

Motivated employees increase the pleasure of the purchase. The positive energy which they generate can make a purchase become an adventure or novelty for the customer. Such employees are the initiators of the emotional attachment which customers develop for certain companies and which keeps them loyal.

Horovitz and Panak (1994) mentioned motivated employees are also more ready to respond to customers and will make greater efforts to ensure that they are truly satisfied. The competent but non-motivated employee may be perfectly able to resolve

the customer's problem, but will not execute it with the same enthusiasm as will a motivated employee. The motivated employee often responds with such alacrity that customers feel grateful to the company, despite the company being the source of the problem.

In addition, motivated employees mean employees who are prepared to take special initiatives to give customers a service plus. Taking initiatives on behalf of customers comes down to thoughtfulness. For example, it is a motivated employee who will think to offer a walking stick to an elderly tourist trailing behind the rest of the group and to offer a drinking coupon to guest who is waiting for room to be cleaned. Today, a company that can demonstrate that it thinks about individual needs of its customers has a considerable advantage over its competitors.

Benefits of Training Program to Manager

Furthermore, Miller and his fellows (1998) explained how a training program would help the manager on the jobs.

First of all, it would give the manager more time to manage system in organization. The manager would not have to spend so much time on supervising the employees' performance, their burdens and checking up and filing in and putting out fires and providing solutions to unexpected problems because employees who are learned from service training know how to handle problem and difficult situation.

The manager has less turnover and absenteeism in his department. Because his staff would know what to do and how to do it, they would feel more comfortable and confident in their jobs, and even they are motivated.

It would reduce tension between the manager and employees. The manager would not be constantly correcting them and would have more reason to praise them, which would improve morale. It would also reduce tension between the manager and his boss if everything were running more smoothly.

It would be much easier to maintain consistency of product and services. When the manager has set standards and has taught his staff how to meet these standards, the products and the service are standard too. Customers can depend on the same comfort, the same service, the same excellence of food, and the same pleasant experience they had the last time.

The manager has lower costs-less breakage, less waste, fewer accidents, less spoilage, better cost control. New workers would be productive sooner. The manager might be able to get along with fewer employees, as everyone would work more efficiently.

Trained personnel from service training with developing positive attitude would create more and happier customers. The way employees treat the customers is the single most important factor in repeat business. Happy and motivated employees make happy customers too. But one worker untrained in customer relations can make several guests per day swear they will never come back.

Training employees can help the manager's own career because his performance depends on their performance. Good training will benefit workers by eliminating the five reasons why people do poor work: not knowing what to do, how to do it, how well they are doing, not getting any help from the supervisor, and not getting along with supervisor at all.

Barriers of Training

Even though many companies in relation to the hospitality recognize an importance of the training program and develop systematic training program, many managers of small operations consider the training program an exercise in futility because they suppose it takes more time than it is worth. They think employees do not stay, and people are not interested in being trained. Also, people in entry-level service jobs in hospitality tend to think they should be able to do these jobs without training because it is repetitive and simple job. So in fact, it is not easy to convince theses people that the training program is worth investment.

Regardless of benefits of training program, Shriver (1988) found out why people avoid training program. The first reason is that they think training is easy. A common myth about training is that it is so simple that no preparation is required. Managers or supervisors who have been promoted from the same job of which they are now training others, may feel that they know everything about the job and that they can teach others spontaneously or as the need arises. This attitude produces a hit-and-miss training program which results are almost always unsatisfactory. Training requires logical organization to be effective. The process of analyzing the tasks and skills of a position and arranging the training in a logical sequence demands careful thought and preparation.

The second is that training does not pay. Some managers argue that it dose not pay to train. They contend that trained employees are more difficult to manage because they expect higher wages than the operation can afford, they think they know more than management, and they will be recruited away by competitors, thus, increasing turnover.

The third is that training is a waste of time. Some managers do not train because their egos get in the way. They think that their own skills are perfect, that no one will ever meet their standards of excellence, and that any attempt at training is a waste of their time. Or they feel threatened that an employee will develop to a level of performance that surpasses their own. Also they wonder if a manager is needed in that organization if their staffs can solve guest complaint as much as the manager does.

Even though it is difficult to measure and prove the difference training makes because there are always many variable in every situation, the best way to be convinced that the training pays off is to compare individual operations where the training is good with those that do little or no training. The differences will be obvious in atmosphere, in smoothness of operation, in customer's satisfaction in improved quality of service. (Miller, 1998)

The Six Approaches to Succeed Customer Service Training

Egert (1994) wrote how we approach customer service training will have a profound impact on how we stay ahead of our competition, how you respond to our rapidly changing environment and how we reduce our training cost. And he mentioned about that hotels and restaurants realized about a decade ago that customer service focus on contributing to long-term business success.

Egert suggests six approaches to achieve customer service training success. The first key he found out is hiring customer-service oriented employees. Use behavioral interviewing techniques to discover which new candidates are customer-oriented. Ask them job-related customer-oriented questions such as what is your approach to providing excellent customer service? What would you do in a situation where a customer

expresses dissatisfaction? How would you handle an angry customer? How would your fellow co-workers in your past jobs rate your customer-service attitude toward them and others?

The second key is the importance of establishing baseline customer service skills program. He said that hospitality companies should train all management and employees in what company defined as excellent customer-service techniques. Also they should establish top to bottom programs. Then management can model and coach customer-service skill usage by employees. In addition, they should train all employees in proper service techniques: how to handle complaints, how to handle the difficult customer, and how to handle customers on the telephone.

The third key is following up with specific job-related applications: Allocate a smaller amount of training time where specific departments such as in a hotel setting, housekeeping, the wait staff, the front desk staff or accounting can apply the skills specifically to their real-time job situations.

The forth key is constructing standards: Have managers and employees developed customer service standards and objectives for their specific area. For example, if a customer gets overly abusive, do not talk back. Sometimes it makes worse situation. Get the manager. Or "Here's our parameters on how you can compensate a dissatisfied customer"

The fifth key is establishing a measurement system: Start measuring customer satisfaction. Use surveys, comment cards, focus groups, face-to-face interview or telephone interviews to monitor customer satisfaction over time. Involve your employees

in the measuring process by having them share with you what is working and what is generating customer dissatisfaction.

The last key is reinforcing its training. Actively share your measurement results with your employees. Recognize and reward successes, and constructively correct and seek solutions where customer service problems remain.

Service Quality Dimension for Training

It is important to understand the quality elements so that we will know how customers define the quality of service. According to Stamatis (1996), the delivery of the service must by timely, accurate, with concern and with courtesy. Why these elements are important are that all services are intangible and are a function of perception. Also, according to Kennedy & Young (1989), quality dimensions applicable to many service organizations include availability, responsiveness, convenience, and timeliness. (Cited in Stamatis, 1996) It is important to take a look what service training will include before starting program according to service quality elements.

The first step to design service training program is identifying the dimensions that define the quality of the service in hospitality industry. As an example of information found in scientific journals regarding the quality of the service, researchers (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985) have concluded that service quality can be described on the basis of 10 dimensions. And later they suggested five dimensions that overlap the original 10 dimensions. The five dimensions of service quality are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. (Hayes, 1992)

Table 3. The five dimensions of service quality

Tangibles: The physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel.

Reliability: The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Never overpromise and always keep your promises.

Responsiveness: The willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Always get the definition of prompt from the customer.

Assurance: The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust

and confidence. Employees need to be empowered to carry out this assurance of both power and knowledge.

Empathy: The degree of caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.

The authors tested the model for one service firm in each of the following industries: banking, credit card, repair and maintenance, and long-distance telephone service. Customers use the five dimensions described above to form their judgments of service quality, which are based on a comparison of expected service and perceived service. The gap between expected service and perceived service is a measure of service quality.

As well as Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), Kennedy and Young (1989) presented quality dimensions, which were identified as important characteristics of staff support area. These quality dimensions of staff support and their definitions are as Table 4.

Table 4. Some quality dimensions for staff support areas and their definitions & examples

1. Availability of support: The degree to which the customer can contact the provider

   Ex. The staff was always available to help/Never busy responded my question

2. Responsiveness of support: The degree to which the provider reacts promptly to the customer

   Ex. They were quick to respond when I asked for help

3. Timeliness of support: The degree to which the job is accomplished within the

customer's stated time frame and/or within the negotiated time frame

Ex. They completed the job when expected.

4. Completeness of support: The degree to which the total job is finished

    Ex. They completed everything they said they would do

5. Pleasantness of support: The degree to which the provider uses suitable professional behavior and manners while working with the customer.

    Ex. The staff was courteous

From.Measuring Customer Satisfaction (p. 8) Hayes, B. E., 1992, Milwaukee, WI: ASQC Quality Press.

Both of these examples demonstrate the usefulness of examining journals to obtain information for establishing a list of quality dimension. Some dimensions might include those found or the dimensions might be specific to a particular industry or organization.

Attitude Training

Attitude training means employees have to be trained how to treat their hotel guest basically such as politeness, respectfulness, friendliness, willingness and positive. Haneborg (1998) notes friendliness, courtesy, helpfulness are key attributes of successful front office staff and customer service employees. She says "It is true that a smile goes a long way with a customer."

Gitomer (1998) emphasized how "friendly" is important in the business. He said a medium-sized hotel gets hundreds of calls a day. If only two people a day make a "friendly decision" at $100 a day each that would represent an annual revenue gain or loss of $73,000.

He also mentioned things that go wrong in any business are measured by the quality of the relationship that exists at the time that they go wrong. If the relationship is great, it is no big deal. But if the relationship is non-existent, it becomes a huge deal. For example, every staff in hotel is courtesy, friendly and willing to help. It means great to guest. So, even though heating system is broken in guest room, the guest think that is no big deal. In opposite situation, the guest gets impression, which means people is not happy and never friendly and have "don't care attitude" when he or she enter hotel, broken heating system is matter to the guest. Everyone makes mistakes: every business has its problems. If employees give great service, hotel will be forgiven for a mistake, or even a series of mistake. If service is bad to begin with, hotel just has bigger problem with angry guest.

He said friendly makes sales and friendly generates repeat business so, the corporation has to create a friendly environment and to train people to be friendly, and to be friendly all the time. As mentioned earlier, most employers train about their own stuff and their own policies and rules, but neglect the person carrying out the tasks.

Positive attitude is important in both worker and customer. It creates work environment friendly and team work and happy and motivated employees. Also happy employees who have always positive attitude give better service to customer. If quoted by Gitomer (1998) "a positive attitude is our ability to think, listen, speak, and react in a purely positive way."

- To see the good in thins not the bad; to see how to make bad things good.
- To see the opportunity when an obstacle faces us
- To see things from the what is right side, not the what is wrong side

- To treat others the way you want to be treated

- To encourage others when they need support

- To forgive others who have hurt or offended us

- To never let the negative things of the world effect/affect us for more than 5 minutes

- To never have a bad day

- To have something nice or humorous to say

- To be internally happy

- To work at maintaining your attitude every day.

If employees are trained to think, speak and react positive attitude, their work environment will be much better as well as the customer treat well. A positive attitude helps employees to solve guest problem because they consider the problem of their own problem.

<u>Problem Solving Training</u>

Employees must be able to think creatively to offer suggestions to improve their work environments and to solve problem that rise with co-workers and customers.

Problem-solving training in hospitality industry means employees have to be trained to respond guest' requests promptly and immediately and the time they promise to solve it. Problem-solving training is composed of understanding people, taking a responsibility, effective listening and effective communication and making effective decisions.

According to Harris (2000), to actively confront the challenge of problem solving, company must prepare employees with training in possible approaches to problem solving. "They must create a safe environment, which encourages employees to develop

solutions that are positive for both the customer and the company." Training deals with specific aspects of serving customers. Problem solving and decision making are individualized processes. Every employee may have his or her own method of determining an appropriate course of action. In customer's point of view, what is important is the end result, not the process of determining the solution. As long as the solution is timely, the customer will be happy. (Harris, 2000)

One significant challenge to problem solving when interacting with customer is the speed with which decisions must be made. A customer may call with a question or problems and the customer service provider may only have a few seconds to a few minutes to provide the customer with an answer. Unfortunately, this does not allow for mush time to examine possible solutions. So, customer service staffs or representative must become highly proficient in listening to a customer's explanation of a situation or problem, in asking questions to clarify the information, and in providing the customer with an appropriate solution. (Harris, 2000)

Training starts to deal with how to answer angry customer complaints. The company's policy is gone over in detail and exact situations are discussed. Also most common complaints are presented and the right responses to those questions are given, with the reasons why. It trains employees to solve complaints how to communicate with each department and take responsibility.

Interpersonal Skill Training

This include not only the traditional interpersonal skills of listening and communication effectively with co-workers, but also such skills as knowing how to work in groups, successfully resolving conflicts, using influence to gain cooperation from

peers, and networking within the organization. Increasingly, listening and effective communications programs are being customized to give employees practice in effectively handling day-to-day interactions with customers and co-workers. For example, according to Meister (1994) one program offered at American Express, "communicating with Success" allows American Express employees to create their own role-play situations in which they practice solving customer problems they frequently experience in their jobs. In practice sessions, these employees have the opportunity to try out their listening skills while the other members in the class are the official observers. The purpose is that employees and coworkers get an opportunity to observe how they interact with customers and co-workers, and then pinpoint the barriers to communicating effectively.

Another company that has made a major commitment to training its frontline staff in interpersonal skill, active listening skills and team-building skill is Target Stores, a Minneapolis-based and customer service-based discount retailer. Target Stores has focused on training as an important way to transform a hierarchical culture into one that invests employees with the power to please the customer. It helps frontline employees deliver superior customer service. It designs to build teams, teach customer contact workers to actively listen and help them devise ways to please the customer. All this training, conducted on-site in a mobile classroom, has had a dramatic effect on employee turnover. Traditionally Target's turnover has average about 120 percent per year. But in staring the training, turnover dropped to about 75 percent. (Meister, 1994)

Example of Company Using Training Program : Ritz-Carlton Hotel

In an industry plagued by low wages and a turnover rate estimated between 51 and 300 percent and where the difference between four stars and five stars can turn on be

linen and turndown service, the Atlanta-based Ritz-Carlton hotel company attribute the success of its 35 hotels from Boston to Bali on a rigorous customer service training program. (Hays, 1999)

The Ritz-Carlton serves the top echelon of the traveling market. For that reason, the company throws a lot of money and energy at training its 16,000 employees on concentrated dosages of the Ritz credo to "fulfill event the unexpected wishes and needs of our guests." Maintaining such standards is no easy challenge. We can not be expected to provide extraordinary service with an ordinary approach to customer service.

Ritz-Carlton entire training system is a combination of two key elements that is technical skills and the Ritz-Carlton customer service philosophy. Technical training is task based. By technical training, it means how to serve in fine-dining restaurant or how to make a bed according to their standards. Learning how to perform a task may last an hour, or a week, and then it is reviewed. Ultimately, employees are assigned a trainer who is with them all the time for the next four weeks. The trainer has the responsibility to explain the tasks, make you do those tasks and review their performance and each employee is certified by the trainer.

Customer service training is a little more complicated. Ritz-Carton trains their people how to resolve guest challenges. After all, it is an imperfect business they are in, and a lot of things that can go wrong will go wrong. A toilet might get clogged. A television at a certain point will break down. Front-staff have to be trained to instantly pacify our guests. They give employees endless hours of resolution techniques for guest problems.

The Ritz-Carlton Company has authorized each hotel employee to spend up to $2000 to satisfy a dissatisfied guest, a policy that could obviously bankrupt the company if invoked too often. Nevertheless, the policy is important to guarantee satisfied customers, and it is essential that employees feel empowered to use it, rather that feel fear of being chastised by supervisors for occasionally being too free with the firm's funds. (Rust, Zahorik, & Keiningham, 1996)

Empowering employees requires that the firm absorbs such mistakes as learning experience, rather than use them as grounds to "punish the guilty." It is the role of training to reduce the occurrence of such errors of judgment in the future. For this reason Ritz-Carlton employees receive extensive training in doing their jobs, in teamwork, and in the corporate culture, as well as in quality and quality control techniques. (Rust, Zahorik & Keiningham, 1996)

From the training, they become professionals in the hospitality industry. In this industry, employees are either professional or a servant. Making beds and cleaning toilets and serving meals are professions if they are done with pride. Ritz-Carton creates professional employees who have the desire to provide exceptional customer service and who want to be part of their company.

Turnover is the single biggest problem of an employer in this industry. But Ritz-Carton feels that a successful company is one that is both learning and a teaching company. It has to learn from its customers, employees and the changes in society. At the same time, as a teaching organization, it provides its people with new skills, thereby enriching their life both personally and professionally. (Hays, 1999)

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This methodology included how to select subject, design instrumentation, and procedure and conduct data analysis. Limitations are also discussed. The purpose of this study was to examine hotel guests' perception of service quality in relation to hospitality training program. This study investigated levels of service quality through the perception of hotel guests who stay at the hotel and encouraged hotel to improve service quality in the hotel. A questionnaire was given to hotel guest staying at particular hotel. The questionnaire focused on five dimensions which were reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy according to modified SERVQUAL scale of Berry, Parasuraman, (1990) and attitude of employees.

Subject

The purpose of this study was to assess service quality through guest satisfaction of hotel guests who stay in the hotel. A random sample of 100 guests who stayed at hotel during the selected months of year were selected. Data analysis for this study were applied descriptive statistics (frequency, means, and standard deviations) to all the questions and crosstabulation and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) to gain an understanding of the nature of responses.

Instrumentation

The researcher used questionnaire for the hotel guests to assess service quality of the hotel: there were divided into three sections. In first section, the researcher asked guest's satisfaction in staying at particular hotel throughout their own service experiences such as employees' knowledge of hotel directories and surrounding area, how promptly

employees give a service and how friendly employees were during the stay. In the second section, subjects were asked to indicate the level of their overall satisfaction. To determine levels of satisfaction, the researcher used a scale of 1 to 7 of the level of agreement. In the third section, they were asked demographic information including gender, age, occupation, income, how long they have stayed in particular hotel and the purpose of their stay and the reason to choose the hotel.

Instrumentation Reliability

The instrumentation employed for this research was modeled after the SERVQUAL scale developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1990) because it has been supported with sufficient empirical research. In most cases, SERVQUAL has been found to be a relatively simple and inexpensive instrument that provides valuable information on organization's service quality. Moreover a number of research finding support the SERVQUAL instrument as a valid measure of service quality.

The SERVQUAL model employs a multiple-item scale that measures service quality as perceived by customers along five distinct dimensions that comprise 22 specific operating statements. The dimensions are: assurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, and tangibles.

Modifying SERVQUAL scale

This research focused on assessment of guest's satisfaction of service quality to develop and improve service training program. Service training program will comprise developing employee's attitude, improving skill of problem-solving and increasing knowledge of hotel area. So, the researcher did not consider tangible service area such as modern–looking equipment and facilities that are not related in service training. The

researcher adapted the survey instrument from SERVQUAL scale and eliminated five items (physical facilities are visually appealing, materials associated with the service are visually appealing, modern-looking equipment and error-fee records and operating hours) from original items and added several items from DINESERV modified by Vincent C. S. Heung, M.Y. Wong & Hailin Qu (2000). And the researcher modified it to suit the service training content in hotel industry situation. In addition, the researcher added one more dimension named attitude that means happy, eager, willing, positive, enthusiasm and prepared to meet guest's needs to the list.

Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed during the selected months of year to subjects through the co-operation with the management team of the hotel. The researcher randomly distributed the questionnaire to the hotel guests when they checked in and asked them to return it during the stay or at the end of their stay at the hotel. Also because there was low return rate of the questionnaires, the questionnaire were distributed to guests day before they would check out. The questionnaires included a cover letter on the first page, which advised the importance of this study, support of management team of the hotel, the participants of their anonymous response. Three weeks later, 94 of the useful questionnaires were collected.

Limitations

This study had its limitation in terms of methodology and application. This study was limited by the use of a volunteer sample. At first, the intention of this study was to assess service quality in the hotel. So the questionnaires were distributed in real hotel and hotel guests when they check in and before they checked out. But when survey

questionnaires were distributed, whoever agreed or were willing to fill out the questionnaires were those who had good experiences, either had extremely bad experience and those who the researcher already knew because it was easy to ask them to fill out. In other cases, whomever had bad experience with hotel rejected to fill out the questionnaire. Consequently, it was difficult to measure satisfaction level for nonvolunteers.

CHAPTER IV

Finding

The purpose of this study was to assess guests' satisfaction of service quality of the hotel in relation to service training. This chapter will present the results of survey questionnaires, followed by demographic information using frequencies and percentages. The results were examined and analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Program for the Social Sciences).

Total 590 survey questionnaires were given to hotel guests when they checked in or before they checked out. The return rate was 20.50% out of 590 surveys and out of returned 121 surveys, 27 survey questionnaires were omitted because some of them marked only one levels of satisfaction so, it was hard to measure whether they thought hotel service were really bad or excellent. Some of them returned incompletely. Only 94 questionnaires were useful for this study.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 5. Service quality – Reliability

Item	Mean	1 SD	2	3	4 A	5	6	7 SA	Missing
1. Keep Promises	4.94	2.1%	3.2%	5.3%	29.8%	12.8%	25.5%	13.8%	7.4%
2. Interest in solving problem	5.07	3.2%	4.3%	2.1%	24.5%	11.7%	28.7%	16.0%	9.6%
3. Dependable in handling	4.78	5.3%	4.3%	2.1%	28.7%	14.9%	23.4%	11.7%	9.6%
4. Providing service at the time they promise	4.85	3.2%	7.4%	7.4%	21.3%	12.8%	25.5%	16.0%	6.4%

Note: SD: strongly Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree

These items were to assess reliability of service quality of the hotel. In overview, the mean score of item 2 was higher than the other three items. There were 28.7% and

16% of the respondents who were close to "strongly agree" in item 2. In item 1, the mean score was 4.94 on a scale from 1 to 7, so it meant most respondents thought they agreed hotel staff did what they promise to do by certain time. 81.9 percent of the respondents indicated between agree (4) and strongly agree (7). In item 2, the mean score was 5.07 and most respondents (80.9%) thought hotel staffs showed a sincere interest in solving their problem when they indicated it. According to result of item 3, its mean score was 4.78. So, the respondents (78.7%) thought hotel staffs agreed they were dependable in handling service problem, but did not think they were strongly dependable. There were only 11.7% of the respondents who agreed strongly that they were dependable. Also, in item 4, according to its mean score, 4.85, the respondents did not strongly agree hotel staffs provided service at the time they promised to do, but still 75.6% of the respondents agreed it compared with 18% of the respondents' disagreement. The following indicated the results of the reliability dimension.

Figure 2. Keep promises

Keep Promises
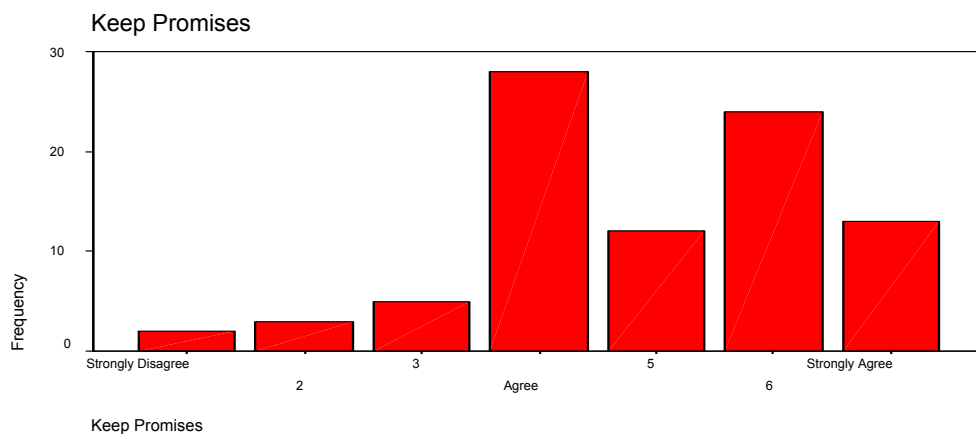
Figure 3. Dependable in handling

problem

Dependable in handling

Dependable in handling
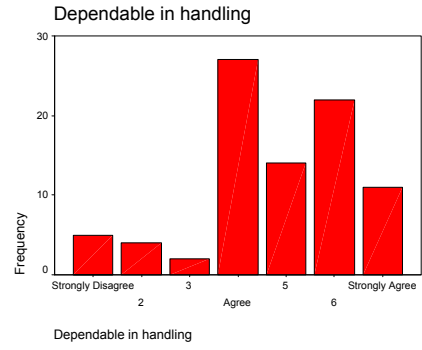
Figure 4. Interest in problem

Interest in My Problems

Interest in My Problems
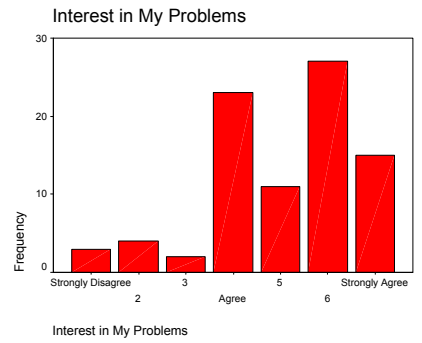
Figure 4. Provide service at the time they promise

Provide service at the time they promise

Provide service at the time they promise
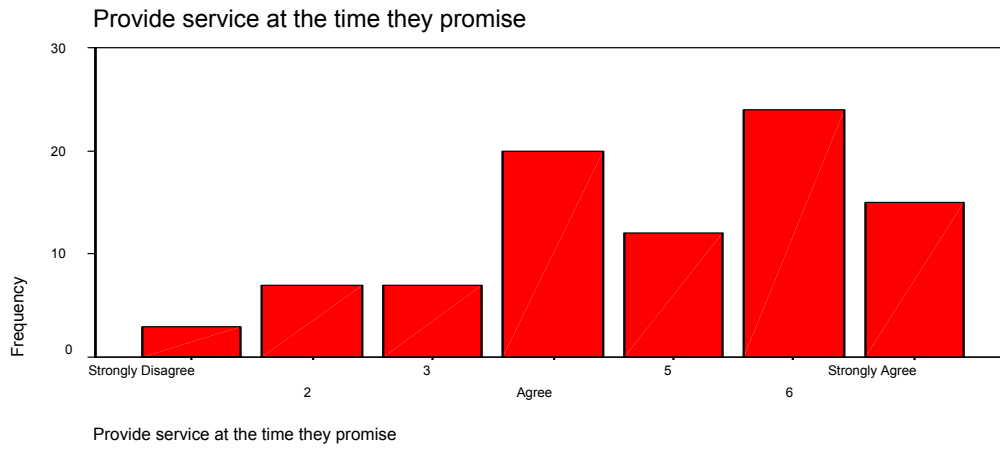
Table 6. Service quality - Responsiveness

Item	Mean	1 SD	2	3	4 A	5	6	7 SA	Missing
5. Tell when service are performed	4.75	5.3	5.3	6.4	22.3	14.9	22.3	13.8	9.6
6. Prompt service	4.98	4.3	5.3	5.3	22.3	13.8	23.4	20.2	5.3
7. Quickly correct mistakes	4.94	3.2	5.3	4.3	24.5	13.8	20.2	18.1	10.6
8. Never busy to respond	4.98	5.3	1.1	4.3	22.3	19.1	21.3	16	10.6

Note: SD: strongly Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree

These items were related to responsiveness of service quality. As shown in table 6, all means scored less than 5. In item 5, 73.3% of the respondents agreed hotel staffs told them when services would be performed and only 17% of them thought they did not tell them when services would be performed. According to item 6, about 80% of the respondents thought staffs gave them prompt service and about 15% of them did not think they got prompt service from hotel staffs. When they were asked if hotel staffs quickly corrected mistakes or not, 76.6 percent of them indicated they quickly corrected them and only 12.8% of hotel guests did not get quick correction of mistake. In item 8, only 10.7 % of the respondents thought they were too busy to respond to their requests in contrast of 78.7% of the respondents who agreed staffs were not busy to respond their requests. Critically, in responsiveness of hotel service the percentages of satisfaction level between 4 and 7 were less than 80% than any other items.

Table 7. Service quality – Assurance

Item	Mean	1 SD	2	3	4 A	5	6	7 SA	Missing
9. Trust them	4.96	2.1	3.2	5.3	25.5	22.3	24.5	12.8	4.3
10. Feel safe during the stay	5.54	3.2	3.2	3.2	11.7	14.9	28.7	31.9	3.2
11.Consistently courteous	5.61	5.3	2.1	2.1	12.8	12.8	21.3	41.5	2.1
12. Knowledge about hotel	5.27	3.2	2.1	2.1	19.1	19.1	24.6	21.3	8.5
13. Trained and experienced	5.16	3.2	2.1	4.3	21.3	19.1	21.3	21.3	7.4
14. Answer question completely	5.10	0	4.3	9.6	18.1	20.2	23.4	18.1	6.4

Note: SD: strongly Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree

These items were in association with assurance of service quality. As noted in table 7, the mean scores were high compared with any other dimensions. In item 9, 25% of the respondents agreed hotel staffs were confident. 22.3%, 24.5% and 12.8 % of them were close to "strongly agree" so that they could trust hotel staffs. In item 10, 31.9% of the respondent strongly agreed they felt safe when they stayed at the hotel, so total 87.2% of them agreed to feel safe. Only 9.6% of them indicated they did not feel safe. 3.2% were omits. Also surprisingly in item 11, 41.5% of the respondents strongly indicated hotel staffs were consistently courteous with them during the stay. So, 88.4% of them agreed that staffs were consistently courteous with hotel guests. Only 2.1% were omits. In addition, in item, 12,13 and 14, most of respondents tended to agree strongly that hotel staffs were well trained and experienced, and had knowledge about hotel to answer their requests completely. Their degrees of agreements were 83%, 84.1% and 79.8% respectively in comparison with less than 10% of disagreement of the respondents.

Table 8. Service quality - Empathy

Item	Mean	1 SD	2	3	4 A	5	6	7 SA	Missing
15. Willing to handle special requests	5.13	3.2	4.3	4.3	24.5	9.6	19.1	25.5	9.6
16. Personal attention	5.09	4.3	2.1	7.4	23.4	13.8	19.1	25.5	4.3
17. Best interest at heart	4.88	3.2	5.3	3.2	25.5	19.1	20.2	14.9	8.5
18. Understand specific needs	4.72	5.3	2.1	7.4	30.9	14.9	21.3	12.8	5.3

Note: SD: strongly Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree

These items were to evaluate empathy of service quality of hotel staffs. Generally speaking, in item 15 and 16, hotel staffs did better job compared with the other two items. Both 25.5% of the respondents thought hotel staffs were willing to handle special requests and gave them personal attention. But in item 17 and 18, the respondents agreed hotel staffs had the best interests at heart and understood guests' specific needs but did not think they strongly agreed in these items. Their mean scored lower than item 15 and 16. As shown in table 8, 25.5% and 30.9% of the respondents had marked in the middle. But still most respondents marked between agree (4) and strongly agree (7) in both items. These percentages were total 79.7% and 79.9%.

Table 9. Service quality - Attitude

Item	Mean	1 SD	2	3	4 A	5	6	7 SA	Missing
19. Talk in a pleasant way	5.57	4.3	3.2	1.1	17.0	10.6	23.4	39.4	1.1
20. Smile and greet	5.48	5.3	1.1	4.3	14.9	13.8	23.4	36.2	1.1
21. Willing to help	5.33	4.3	2.1	3.2	17.0	18.1	23.4	27.7	4.3
22. Answer is positive	5.42	3.2	1.1	3.2	19.1	13.8	25.5	27.7	6.4

Note: SD: strongly Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree

These items considered as attitude of service quality the researcher decided to add to evaluate. Generally, this dimension indicated higher mean scores than the other

dimensions. In item 19, its mean score was higher than other items. So, most respondents (90.4%) thought hotel staffs talked in a pleasant way. As noted in table 9, surprisingly about 40% of the respondents strongly agreed that hotel staffs talked to them in a pleasant way. In item 20, 36.2% of the respondents strongly thought whenever staffs saw them, they always smiled and greeted them. So, total 88.3% of them agreed staffs smiled and greeted. In addition, in item 21, more than half of the respondents (23.4% + 27.7%) seemed to strongly agree that hotel staffs were willing to help them and only less than 10% of the respondents thought they were not willing to help. Finally, in item 22, there were 27.7% of the respondents who strongly agreed that staff's answer was positive compared that only 3.2% of them strongly thought their answer was not positive.

Table 10. Overall Satisfaction

Item	Mean	1 SD	2	3	4 A	5	6	7 SA	Missing
23. Hotel service meets expectation	5.08	2.1	9.6	5.3	11.7	24.5	24.5	21.3	1.1
24. Satisfied with staying	5.03	5.3	8.5	4.3	10.6	22.3	28.7	20.2	0
25. Recommend to friends	4.95	5.3	9.6	5.3	14.9	17.0	25.5	22.3	0
26. Willing to stay again	5.04	6.4	7.4	7.4	11.7	14.9	25.5	26.6	0

Note: SD: strongly Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree

As shown in table 10, these items were to assess overall satisfaction of service quality of the hotel. As shown in table 8, the most respondents had marked between agree (4) and strongly agree (7). It meant they thought hotel service met their expectation (82%), were satisfied with staying at hotel (81.8%), were willing to stay at hotel again (78.7%), and would recommend to friends or associates (79.7%). However, to pursue 100 % of high quality service in hotel industry, overall satisfaction levels have to be end up level of satisfaction between 6 and 7. In this case, the means scored less than 5 or just

about 5. Therefore, the management has to consider improving its service and increasing overall satisfaction scores.

Table 11. Experience of problem

Item	Yes	No	Missing
27. I experienced problem	34.0%	64.9%	1.1%
28. Problem resolved satisfactorily	31.9%	22.3%	45.7%

They were asked to indicate whether they had experienced problem with hotel and whether the problem resolved satisfactorily. Only 34% of the respondents had experienced the problem during their stay and 64.9% of them indicated that there was no problem experienced during the stay and 1.1% were omits. Also, 31.9% of the respondents indicated the problem resolved satisfactorily. But 22.3% of them said the problem was not solved satisfactorily and about 45% of them did not answer this item. It meant 22.3% of customers left hotel unsatisfactorily, so that if they do not return and advertise word of mouth to their friend and associates, hotel would lose revenue possibly.
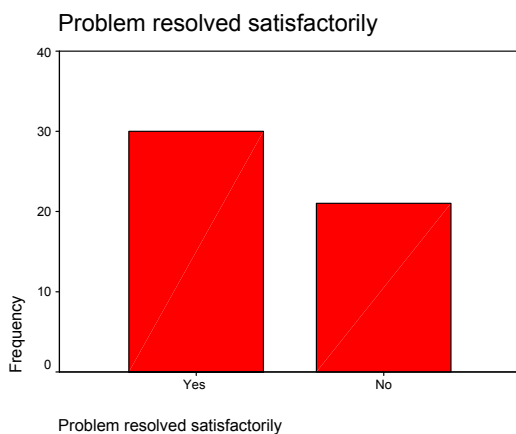
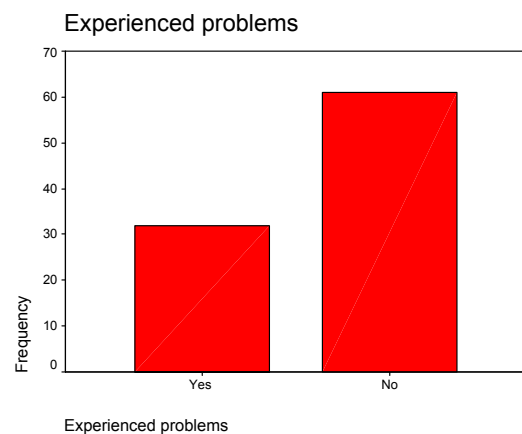Figure 6 Problem-Solving   Figure 7. Experience of problem

Problem resolved satisfactorily

Experienced problems

Table 12. Comparison of mean, median and mode scores between dimensions

Dimension	Items	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
Reliability	Keep promises	4.94	5.00	4	1.46
	Interest in solving problem	5.07	5.00	6	1.55
	Dependable in handling	4.78	5.00	4	1.59
	Provide service they promise	4.85	5.00	6	1.66
Responsiveness	Tell when service is performed	4.75	5.00	4	1.68
	Prompt service	4.98	5.00	4	1.68
	Quickly correct mistakes	4.94	5.00	4	1.62
	Never busy to respond	4.98	5.00	4	1.58
Assurance	Trust them	4.96	5.00	4	1.40
	Feel safe during the stay	5.54	6.00	7	1.56
	Consistently courteous	5.61	6.00	7	1.69
	Knowledge about hotel	5.27	5.50	6	1.49
	Well trained and experienced	5.16	5.00	4	1.52
	Answer questions completely	5.10	5.00	6	1.43
Empathy	Willing to handle special request	5.13	5.00	7	1.67
	Personal attention	5.09	5.00	7	1.66
	Best interests at heart	4.88	5.00	4	1.54
	Understand specific needs	4.72	5.00	4	1.57
Attitude	Talk in a pleasant way	5.57	6.00	7	1.65
	Smile and greet	5.48	6.00	7	1.67
	Willing to help	5.33	6.00	7	1.59
	Answer is positive	5.42	6.00	7	1.51

This table 12 explained the mean, median and mode of individual items. As shown in the table, the mean, median and mode of attitude dimension were generally high

(5.57, 5.48, 5.33 and 5.42 respectively) compared with the other dimensions. Also as we can see definitely in assurance dimension, the mean, median, and mode of assurance were high in general. The mean scores were over 5, medians were between 5 and 6, and modes were mostly 6 and 7 except for 4 (well-trained and experienced hotel staffs). However, in dimension of reliability and responsiveness, the mean, median and modes was lower score than any other dimension. For example, in dimension of responsiveness, the mean scores were 4.75, 4.98, 4.94 and 4.98 and mode were all four compared with dimension of attitude. In addition, the mean scores of reliability were not as good as responsiveness. Their mean scores were 4.94, 5.07, 4.78 and 4.85 respectively. In dimension of empathy, it indicated that the mean scores were 5.13, 5.09, 4.88 and 4.72 respectively. There were still the mean score of less than 5. It meant hotel staffs did better job in attitude and assurance than empathy, reliability and responsiveness. Therefore the management should focus on training employees to improve responsiveness, reliability as well as empathy.

Table 13. Demographic information

	Frequency (N=94)	Percentage
Gender		
Male	67	71.3%
Female	23	24.5%
Missing	4	4.3%
Age		
18-25	11	11.7%
26-35	22	23.4%
36-45	29	30.9%
46-55	18	19.1%
56-65	10	10.6%
Missing	4	4.3%
Occupation		
Professional	43	45.7%
Manager/Administrator	18	19.1%
Professor/Teacher/Researcher	5	5.3%
Self-employed	3	3.2%
Student	6	6.4%
Technician/Engineer	12	12.8%
Private Businessperson	1	1.1%
Other	2	2.1%
Missing	4	4.3%
Personal Income (Annually)		
Below $20,000	5	5.3%
$20,001 to $40,000	11	11.7%
$40,001 to $60,000	18	19.1%
$60,001 to $80,000	17	18.1%
$80,001 to $100,000	7	7.4%
$100,001 or higher	24	25.5%
Missing	12	12.8%
Frequency of the stay		
Once/Twice	54	57.4%
Three/Five	12	12.8%
Five/Ten	9	9.6%
More than 10 times	15	16%
Missing	4	4.3%
The purpose of this trip		
Business Travel	63	67%
Family Matters	6	6.4%
Game in town	5	5.3%
Entertainment	8	8.5%
Others	8	8.5%
Missing	4	4.3%
The reason to choose hotel		
Convenient Location	36	38.3%
Company contract	17	18.1%
Reasonable rate	13	13.8%
Excellent service	5	5.3%
Others	17	18.1%
Missing	6	6.4%

As shown in table 13, surprisingly out of the 94 respondents 71.3% were male, only 24.5% were females and 4.3% were omits. More than 30% of the respondents were aged between than 36 and 45. About 23.4 percent were aged between 26 and 35, and 19.1 percent were aged 46 and 55. 11.7 percent of them were aged between 18 and 25 following 10 percent of ages between 55 and 65 and there were 4.3 % were omits. With regard to the respondents' occupation, 45.7 percent have professional jobs, 19.1% have manager or administrator, and 12.8% have technician or engineer, following by 6.4% of student, 5.3% of professor, teacher or researcher, 3.2% of self-employed, and only 1.1% of private businessperson. Only 2.2% of the respondents indicated they have other job and there were 4.4% of missing data. Also, they were asked to indicate their personal income annually. Of the 94 respondents 25.5% indicated their income were $100,001 or higher. 19.1% of personal income was between $40,001 and $60,000, 18.1% of the respondents earn between $60,001 and $80,000 followed by $20,001 to $40,000 (11.7%), $80,001 to $100,000 (7.4%) and below $20,000 (5.3%). 12.8% of the respondents did not indicate their income.

The major reason for traveling was business travel (67%) as this hotel was known as business hotel. Also, the other reasons were entertainment (8.5%), other reasons, (8.5%), family matter (6.4%), game in town (5.3%) and there were 4.4% of missing data. More than 55 % of the respondents indicated they stayed at the hotel for the first time or second times.16% had stayed more than ten times, and 12.8% had stayed three/five times and 10% had stayed five/ten times. The major reasons to choose the hotel were convenient location (38.3%), company contract (17.8%), other reason such as relaxation and internet booking (18.1%) and reasonable room rate (13.8%). Only 5.3% of the

respondents indicated the reason to choose was excellent service and there were 6.7% of missing data.

Crosstabulation and ANOVA Statistics

Table 14. Experience of Problem and Problem Solving satisfactorily

		Experienced problems (N=51)		
		Yes	No	Total
Problem resolved Satisfactorily	Yes	13	17	30
	No	16	5	21
Total		29	22	51

Crosstabulation was used to indicate if problem was solved satisfactorily or not. In table 16, out of 29 of the respondents who had experienced problem during the stay, only 13 of them indicated their problem was solved satisfactorily and 16 of them thought their problem did not resolved satisfactorily. It implied that those who left hotel unsatisfactorily were not willing to return business again and would possibly talk to their friends and associates about bad experience over and over.

Table 15. Experience of problem and expectation of hotel service

		Hotel service meets expectation						
		1(SD)	2	3	4(A)	5	6	7(SA)
Experienced problem	Yes(31)	1	6	3	5	11	3	2
	No(61)	1	3	2	5	12	2	18
Chi. Sq.		18.828		Sig.		.004		

Note: An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical test.

The crosstabs proceeded to identify the differences between experience of problem during the stay and expectation of hotel service. The level of significance p is

.004 that was lower than α = .005. So there was statistically significant difference between experience of problem and expectation of hotel service. Consequently, the respondents who had experienced problem with hotel thought hotel service met expectation, but not stronger than the respondents did not have experience of problem. The respondents who indicated "No" tended to agree hotel service met expectation strongly.

Table 16. Experience of problem and recommendation

		Recommend to friends or associates						
		1(SD)	2	3	4(A)	5	6	7(SA)
Experienced problem	Yes(32)	4	4	2	7	10	4	1
	No(61)	1	5	3	6	6	20	20
Chi. Sq.		24.372		Sig.		.000		

Note: An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical test.

The second procedure was to identify the level of difference between experience of problem and recommendation of hotel. As shown in table 15, the level of significant p was .000 that was lower than α = .005. So, there was statistically significant difference between the respondents who had experienced and did not have experience of problem in level of hotel recommendation to friends or associates. Generally speaking, the respondents identified when they had experienced problem, they tended not to recommend hotel to their friends or associates.

In addition, Chi-Square tests were used to identify the relationship between experience of problem and level of satisfaction and willingness of the stay. But there were no statistically significant relationships between the respondents who have experienced problem and who had not in the level of satisfaction and willingness.

Furthermore, to test the overall satisfaction between male and female, the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was used. As shown in table 16, all level of significant p were higher than α = .005. So, in general, there were no statistically significant differences between male and female in the level of overall satisfaction. There were slightly differences in some items but it is not significantly different. Generally speaking, both male and female indicated similar opinion in level of their overall satisfaction.

Table 17. Gender and level of overall satisfaction

		Mean	F	Significance
Hotel service meets expectation	Female	5.13	.045	.833
	Male	5.05		
Recommend to friends or associates	Female	5.13	.325	.570
	Male	4.88		
Satisfied with staying	Female	5.17	.174	.677
	Male	5.00		
Willing to stay again	Female	5.26	.413	.522
	Male	4.97		

Note: An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical test

Finally, there was no significant relationship between the respondents' overall satisfaction levels and age, income, occupation, or frequency of stay.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

Summary

The purpose of this study was to assess and describe hotel guests' perception of service quality in relation to service training in the hotel. This study investigated how to develop and improve service quality through guest satisfaction survey. The significance of this study was that the finding would encourage hotel management to develop their service-training program according to service quality dimensions. The three major objectives of this study were:

1. To understand the relationship of service quality and training in hotel industry through the literature review.

2. To assess the perception of service quality of selected hotel using SERVQUAL Scale from Berry, Parasuraman and Zeithaml (1990).

3. To provide data that would be useful to management in designing and developing training program in the hotel through assessment of service quality of the hotel.

The review of literature discussed what service means to the hospitality industry. Also it discusses about the importance of training program in hospitality industry and recognition of training that increased a lot of benefits to the organization. In addition, the training motivates employees to have a better attitude toward guest service. Finally it looks into what would be better contents of service quality training program.

The purpose of this study was to assess and describe the perception of service quality of the hotel. So, a researcher distributed survey questionnaires to guests in a

selected hotel. Total 590 survey questionnaires were distributed randomly when guests checked in and before checking out and 94 usable survey questionnaires were collected.

The researcher used questionnaire for the hotel guests to assess service quality of the hotel: there were divided into three sections. In the first section, the researcher asked guest's satisfaction in staying at particular hotel throughout their own service experiences defined as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and attitude which were adapted and modified from SERVQUAL scale by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1990). In the second section, subjects were asked to indicate the level of their overall satisfaction. To determine levels of satisfaction, the researcher used a scale of 1 to 7 of the level of agreement. In the third section, they were asked demographic information including gender, age, occupation, income, how long they have stayed in particular hotel and the purpose of their stay and the reason to choose the hotel.

Data for this study was applied descriptive statistics (frequency, means, and standard deviations) to all the questions and crosstabulation and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) to gain an understanding of the nature of responses.

The finding would assist hotel management in determining whether to develop and improve their guest service training to their employees. Satisfied guests tend to be return customers; guest service training program may impact on that satisfaction.

Conclusion

First of all, through the review of literature, the management should recognize the relationship of service quality and training employee in their hotel. As long as they train employees, their employee would change their attitude toward service quality and would be motivated. Therefore, to keep up 100% of service quality, to reduce turnover rate, and

to increase revenue through returning business, hospitality industry should trains their employees effectively and continually.

Secondly, after assessment of service quality in the hotel, the following conclusions can be derived. Most of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to each of items even though there were little bit of differences between 'agree' and 'strongly agree.' It was found that the means of attitude dimension were generally high (5.57, 5.48, 5.33 and 5.42 respectively) as well as median and mode in comparison with the other dimensions. Also in assurance dimension, the mean, median, and mode of assurance were high in general. The mean scores were over 5 except for 4.96 (Trust them), medians were between 5 and 6, and modes were mostly 6 and 7 except for 4 (well-trained and experienced hotel staffs). However, in dimension of reliability and responsiveness, the mean, median and modes scored lower than any other dimensions. For example, in dimension of responsiveness, the mean scored 4.75, 4.98, 4.94 and 4.98 and mode were all four compared with dimension of attitude. In addition, the mean scores of reliability were not as good as responsiveness. Their mean scores were 4.94, 5.07, 4.78 and 4.85 respectively. In dimension of empathy, it indicated that the mean scores were 5.13, 5.09, 4.88 and 4.72 respectively. There were still the mean score of less than 5. Therefore this study found out that the management should focus on training employees to improve responsiveness, reliability as well as empathy.

After examination of the demographic data, the following conclusion can be derived. It was found that the majority of the respondents were male (71.3%) and 30.9% of the respondents were between the ages of 36 to 45 years old. 45.7%of the respondents indicated their job was professional and 25.5% of them earned income of between

$100,001 or higher annually. The majority of the respondent (57.4%) indicated they stayed at hotel for the first time or twice. It was found that the majority of the respondents (67%) indicated the purpose of the trip was for business. It was also learned that the reason to choose the hotel was convenient location (38.3%).

For further examination of the data, a chi-square statistic test was used to see if there were significant relationship between the respondents who have experienced problem and their level of overall satisfaction. It was learned that there were statistically significant differences between the respondents who have experienced problem and have not experienced in the level of expectation of hotel service and the level recommendation. The respondents who have experienced problem indicated hotel service met their expectation but not strongly agreed. Also it was found that the respondents who have experienced problem would recommend hotel to their friends or associates less than the respondents who have not had experience of problem would.

Thirdly, after examination of all data, following conclusions were derived. Generally speaking, the mean scores of all items were over 4 and less 5 and were not close to 6. If the hotel guaranteed 100% of service quality and trained all staffs effectively, theoretically, hotel guests should have be satisfied with staying and all the items should had scored 6 or 7 and overall satisfaction levels should be 6 or 7, but overall satisfaction scores were low apparently. Also the subjects were asked if they had experienced problem. Out of 94 respondents, 29 of the respondents have experienced problems and only 13 of the respondents said the problem resolved satisfactorily and 16 of them indicated the problem resolved unsatisfactorily. As mentioned in literature review, in the hospitality industry, it has been proven that most unsatisfied guests tell

more than five people about their bad experience, while satisfied guests tell only two people about their enjoyable experience. That is, 80 people hear bad experiences about hotel compared that only 26 people hear good experiences. Consequently, the researcher suggests that hotel management train their employees to keep up with 100% guest satisfaction guarantee and improve their guest satisfaction scores and overall scores. There were lack of sufficient data what they should train for their employees, but this study at least gave the management significant ideas how to assess guests' perception of service quality, and how to develop and improve their training program.

Recommendations

This study attempted to find out guests' perception of service quality though level of guest's satisfaction. The study focused on five different dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and attitude) that hospitality industry should train their employees in workplace to increase guest satisfaction score. So, this study found that this hotel did not do well regarding reliability, responsiveness and empathy compared with attitude and assurance.

It is strongly recommended that:

- Hospitality industry needs to evaluate the level of their service quality and to improve and develop training program as the result derived by the assessment to give better service to guests.

- The management team of this hotel needs to focus on training their employees for reliability, responsiveness and empathy as well as attitude and assurance to increase guest's satisfaction scores.

- Hospitality industry should invest time to train their employees in order to decrease turnover costs and motivate their employees.

In addition, future study should use non-volunteers random samples, so it will prevent someone doing the survey for favor. Also a large sample size will be recommended to get more accurate results and multiple location will be recommended so the researcher can compare with the levels of satisfaction of each location.

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Appendix

Service Quality Survey

Please help us to help you by completing this survey. The purpose of the survey is to improve the level of service in the hotel.

Section 1

- Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the service you received from the hotel staff during your stay at this hotel.
- If you strongly disagree, please circle the number 1.
- If you strongly agree, please circle the number 7.
- If your feelings are not strong, please circle one of the numbers in the middle numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6:

		Strongly Disagree				Agree		Strongly Agree
1.	When they promise to do something by certain time, they do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	When I have a problem, they show a sincere interest in solving it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	They are dependable in handling service problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	They provide their services at the time they promise to do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	They tell me exactly when services will be performed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	They give me prompt service.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	They quickly correct mistakes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	They are never too busy to respond to my requests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	They are confident, so I can trust them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	I feel safe during the stay	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	They are consistently courteous with me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	They have the knowledge about hotel area to answer my questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	They are well trained and experienced.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	They can answer my questions completely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	They are willing to handle special requests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	They give me personal attention	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	They have my best interests at heart	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	They understand my specific needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	They talk to me in a pleasant way	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	Whenever they see me, they smile and greet me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	They are willing to help me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	Their answer is positive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section II: Overall Satisfaction

23.	Hotel service meets my expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	I am satisfied with staying at this hotel.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.	I will recommend this hotel to my friends an/or associates	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26.	I am willing to stay at this hotel again.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

27. I experienced problems with this hotel .... ❒ Yes ❒ No

28. My problem resolved satisfactorily .... ❒ Yes ❒ No

Section III

Please circle the check ✓ the most appropriate answer.

29. Gender: ❒ Female   ❒ Male

30. Age Range: ❒ 18-25   ❒ 26-35   ❒ 36-45   ❒ 46-55   ❒ 55-65   ❒ 66 or older

31. Occupation:
- ❒ Professional
- ❒ Manager/Administrator
- ❒ Professor/Teacher/Researcher
- ❒ Proprietor
- ❒ Self-employed
- ❒ Student
- ❒ Technician/Engineer
- ❒ Private Businessperson
- ❒ Factory worker
- ❒ Other

32. Personal Income (US $ Annually)
- ❒ Below $20,000
- ❒ $20,001 to $40,000
- ❒ $40,001 to $60,000
- ❒ $60,001 to $80,000
- ❒ $80,001 to $100,000
- ❒ $100,001 or higher

33. How many times have you stayed at this hotel in the past year including this stay?
- ❒ Once/Twice
- ❒ Three/Five
- ❒ Five/Ten
- ❒ More than 10 times

34. What is the purpose of this trip during your current stay?
- ❒ Business Travel
- ❒ Family Matters— wedding, anniversary, etc.
- ❒ Game in town— football, baseball, basketball, etc.
- ❒ Entertainment— concert, theatre, etc.
- ❒ Other: _____

35. What is the reason to choose this hotel?
- ❒ Convenient location
- ❒ Company contract with hotel
- ❒ Reasonable room rate
- ❒ Excellent service
- ❒ Other: _____

Thank you for your cooperation!

I understand that by returning this questionnaire, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small. I also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. I am aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that no identifiers are needed and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. I realized that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice

NOTE: Questions or concerns about participation in the research or subsequent complaints should be addressed first to the researcher, Seonhwa Yun, 521 8th Ave, Minneapolis, MN, 55414, phone (612) 378-7813, or research advisor, Dr. Lynnette Brouwer (715) 232-2541 and second to Ted Knous, Chair, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 HH, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI 54751, Phone, (715) 232-1126.