

A Study of Customers Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty of Sule Shangri-La, Yangon

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Abstract: Customer's satisfaction (CS) on service has obsessed in mind for long time. Today's service industry strategy to win CS through hotel service is very important that focuses upon succeeding though service product. Many service companies, especially, five stars hotel chains have high competition with foreign hotel chain and this is the major motivation for the research. This research therefore has been focused on CRM; by using the measurement method of expectation disconfirmation theory and the zone of tolerance.

Common perception by practitioners in the hotel industry today that a satisfied guest would become a repeat customer was considered as a major subject of this research. It determined the extent to which satisfaction fostered loyalty. Interviewing guests and demonstrating the expression of visual experience through photography illustrated the guests' propensity for recommending and returning to the hotel as a repeat customer.

The research analysis is based on 171 samples, which had been randomly drawn from the people who used services of Sule Shangri-La Yangon. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the data: i.e. percentage, frequency, means and standard deviation had been used to describe the data. The hypotheses were tested by One-way ANOVA. And the model of relationships between independent and dependent variables was constructed by the use of Multiple Linear Regression.

As the results, the research found that in general the customers' satisfaction of every aspect was billed as "Excellence". However, these were accepted in aspect of the Spa service and recreation. In these two aspects the CS fell in only "Fair". It meant that there were some problems in the services of the Spa service and recreation. Especially in the Spa service, the test of hypotheses had been found that the differences in age significantly affected the differences in CS on the Spa service. It indicated that the younger customers had lower CS than the older ones, Moreover, the differences were found in the aspect of Food and Beverage. In this aspect, the differences in CS were significantly affected by age of customers. It also indicated that the younger had lower CS than the older.

CRM initiatives can be a good solution to overcome low service performance especially responsiveness and empathy the following recommendation can be given: Focus on true customer expectations, but CRM can be implemented and customers' satisfaction achieved. Management should consider CRM as a competitive in the hotel market, and not just think of cost management as the only factor of business profit. Creating long-term relationship with customers so that they come back in the future.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, illustrate, loyalty, relationship.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of delivering quality service for ensuring guests satisfaction to achieve guests' loyalty and subsequent repeat business has always been a normal assumption on the part of many theorists and practitioners (Bowen and Chen, 2001). What value does a satisfied guest really return to the hotel industry? Further, is guest loyalty really critical to a successful business in the hotel industry?

The main discussion is whether high quality service actually encourages to satisfied guests to return for repeat visits to the same hotel, and conversely, whether low quality service leads to low satisfaction, discouraging guests from returning. This assumption is a widely held belief, provided the hotel offers quality service to gain guest satisfaction and, in return guest loyalty.

Due to increasing global market competition, many hotel companies are facing challenges in retaining customers. Some market researches have proven that most hotel companies in Europe and in the U.S. will lose half their customers over a span of five years (Ganesh, Arnold and Reynolds, 2000). By raising satisfaction or quality standards, companies gradually raise guests' expectation level, which then makes it more difficult and more costly to please them. Holding onto a returning guest is important to a hotel because over time they reduce the cost of service. A returning guest knows the product; requires less information; purchases more services; is will to pay higher prices for those services; and willingly offers word-of-mouth recommendations to others (Ganesh, Arnold, and Reynolds, 2000).

This research therefore aimed at studying customer satisfaction on hotel services, which used Sule Shangri-la, Yangon, Myanmar as a case study for being the fundamental notion of CRM.

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

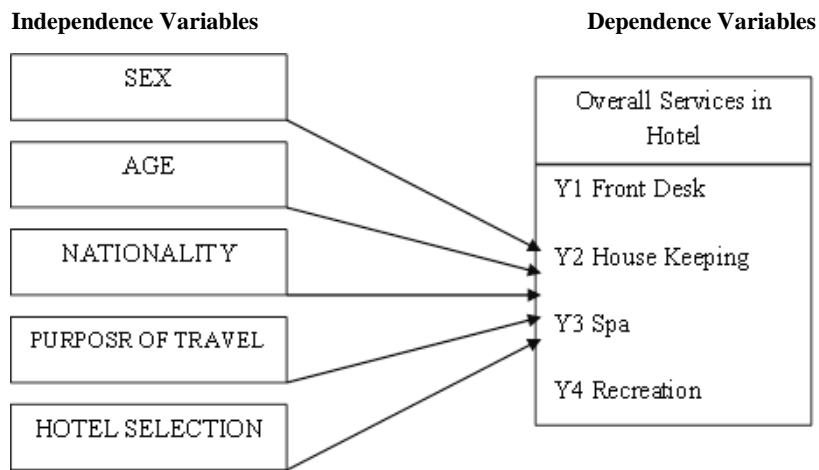
Improving customer satisfaction is a critical component of the hospitality industry's value proposition to the guests (Siguaw a. Enz, 1999). Consequently, the hospitality industry spends millions of dollars per year to better assess guest satisfaction and understand the elements of loyalty. With an understanding of what causes guests to stay and to return, hoteliers can act to increase loyalty.

Hotel industries are one of the most critical service companies. Focusing at Sule Shangri-la, Yangon, the research is conducted because the hotel is suffering from very intense competition on its international market. This hotel is not only enduring from low market share on most routes which other hotels are having five star hotel chain operations but also face a problem.

Competitor hotels in Yangon such as Sedona Hotel Yangon, Chatrium Hotel Royal Lake Yangon, Savoy Hotel, PARKROYAL Yangon, The Stand Yangon, and Anantara (being constructed) are strongly competing with five star hotel chains.

2. RESEARCH AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The research models studied in this research are based on the customer expectation and expectation disconfirmation theory. The research model consists of Independent Variables and Dependent Variables.



HYPOTHESIS DEFINITION:

Based on the expectation disconfirmation theory, six hypotheses for this research are defined as follow:

H1: The differences in sex, age, nationality, purpose of travel, and hotel selection affect the differences in customers' satisfaction on overall services in Sule Shangri-la, Yangon.

H2: The differences in sex, age, nationality, purpose of travel, and hotel selection affect the differences in customers' satisfaction on Front Desk.

H3: The differences in sex, age, nationality, purpose of travel, and hotel selection affect the differences in customers' satisfaction on Housekeeping.

H4: The differences in sex, age, nationality, purpose of travel, and hotel selection affect the differences in customers' satisfaction on The Shangri-la, Yangon.

H5: The differences in sex, age, nationality, purpose of travel, and hotel selection affect the differences in customers' satisfaction on Recreation.

H6: The differences in sex, age, nationality, purpose of travel, and hotel selection affect the differences in customers' satisfaction on Food and Beverage.

BENEFIT OF STUDY:

The general objective of this research is to study the customers' satisfaction on hotel services of Sule Shangri-la, Yangon is the fundamental notion of CRM. The specific objectives are as followings:

1. To study the levels of customers' satisfaction and customer loyalty on hotel services, such as Overall services in Sule Shangri-la, Yangon, Front Desk, Housekeeping, Recreation, and Food and Beverage.
2. To test hypotheses on the differences in demographic characteristics such as sex, age, nationality, and purpose of travel and hotel selection affect the differences in customers' satisfaction.
3. To suggest the guidelines in improving the hotel services of Shangri-la, Yangon

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature on loyalty and customer satisfaction. Although the major focus is on customer satisfaction in service organizations, this chapter begins with a brief review of the importance of customer loyalty in the hotel industry. This is followed by a review of loyalty literature, which results in the construction of a definition of service loyalty for use in this study. Next, factors thought to influence the development of loyalty are discussed. In particular, emphasis is on customer satisfaction as the most important determinant for loyalty. Afterwards, the photo-elicitation approach is explained as a method for collecting guest feedback. This chapter concludes with a discussion of how services differ from each other and how customer satisfaction may differ across services.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION:

The global service marketplace continues to be very competitive. Lodging business have been challenged to increase their levels of quality and service, improve their product design, and decrease their product development cycle times. Significant progress has been made in these areas, but one of the most important objectives in the hotel marketplace today is providing total customer satisfaction (Skogland a. Siguaw, 2004).

Customer satisfaction is considered to be one of the most important outcomes of all marketing activities in a market-oriented firm. The obvious need for satisfying the firm's customer is to expand the business, to gain a higher market share, and to acquire repeat and referral business - all of which lead to improved profitability (Barsky, 1992).

CUSTOMER LOYALTY:

Customers display varying degrees of loyalty, commitment, or allegiance in various aspects of their daily interactions. Loyalty also occurs in consumption situations, and has received much attention in the marketing literature (Kandampully et al., 2000). Generally, the term, customer loyalty, has been described as occurring when customers:

1. Repeatedly purchase a good service over time, and
2. Hold favorable attitudes towards a good service. Customer loyalty consists of three separate dimensions: behavioral, attitudinal, and composite. Behavioral loyalty considers measurements of consistent, repetitious purchase behavior as an indicator of loyalty. In particular, it interprets a form of customer behavior directed towards a particular brand over time (Bowen and Shoemaker, 1998).

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT:

The term customer relationship management (CRM) began to grow in 1990s (Ngai 2005) although the concepts of customer relationship management have existed ever since the cavemen age, which had a choice of buying an arrowhead if there were more than one seller.

In this section CRM definitions are explained and argued from different outlooks. Although CRM has become a widely known as an important business approach however, there is no comprehensively accepted definition of CRM (Ngai 2005). Customer relationship management means different things to different people, even the three letter abbreviation CRM has not a unique clarification and understanding, most know CRM as the abbreviation for customer relationship management, come as customer relationship marketing, and others believe that all customers don't want a relationship management,

while another group might use the term relationship management marketing. Based on their opinion whatever the CRM abbreviation is expressed it is a clear customer focus business practice (Buttle 2004; Park & Kim 2003).

THE IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY:

The hotel industry today has been recognized as a global industry, with producers and consumers spread around the world (Kandampully et al., 2000). The use of hotel facilities such as: guestroom, restaurant, bar, spa or wellness services, is no longer considered a luxury. For many people, these services have become an integral component of their lifestyle. Moreover, in the last two decades, demand for supply of hospitality services beyond that of traditional services intended for travelers have escalated the growth of the hospitality industry globally, leading to intense competition in the marketplace (Kandampully et al., 2000).

To gain a competitive advantage, hotel operators are using two commonly known strategies. They are:

1. Providing low-cost leadership through price discounting, and
2. Developing customer loyalty by providing unique benefits to customers.

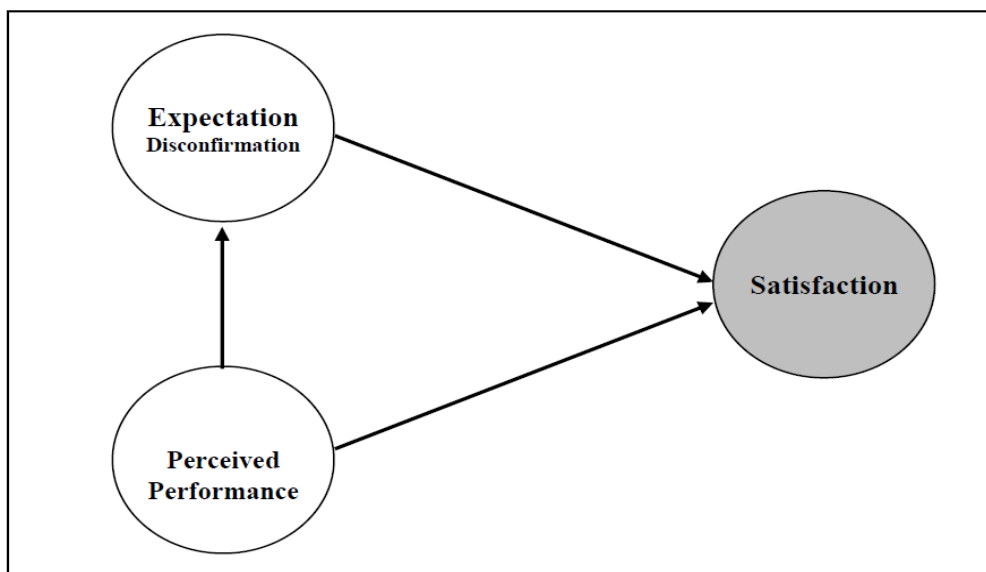


Figure 1: Expectation Disconfirmation Theory

4. METHODOLOGY

This research is a quantitative research that will be done by the survey of customer satisfaction on hotel services of Sule Shangri-la, Yangon.

In order to obtain data for the calculation of explicit and implicit importance, as well as the level of customer satisfaction, this study used questionnaires as a tool to get responses from the subjects. The questionnaires were sent to their rooms upon arrivals, to rate the performance of the proposed quality attributes after there make use of the services in hotel, and also rating, in multiple items.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE:

Both primary and secondary data sources were used to ask research questions. In order to prepare the questionnaire, first, supervisor's views were elicited and then the research questionnaire was finally revised. Data were collected from foreigners who have stayed at the hotel. It was estimated that Sule Shangri-la, Yangon had about 300 persons of monthly customers. Therefore, this amount of customer was considered as population of the research. Therefore only 171 questionnaires were randomly as sample of this research.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT:

This research used the questionnaires as an instrument in studying the customers' satisfaction. These questionnaires comprised three parts of questions: part 1 question on demographic characteristics of samples, part 2 questions on customers' satisfaction and part 3 open-end questions on suggestion given by the customers who answered the questionnaire.

MESUREMENT:

Level of customers’ satisfaction had been measured by rating scale of 1 – 5 level:

Averages mean score 5 Excellent

Averages mean score 4 Good

Averages mean score 3 Fair

Averages mean score 2 Poor

Averages mean score 1 Not use

Whereas, average of rating score had given meaning as following:

Averages mean score between 5.00 – 4.20 Excellent

Averages mean score between 4.19 – 3.40 Good

Averages mean score between 3.39 – 2.60 Fair

Averages mean score between 2.59 - 1.80 Poor

Averages mean score between 1.79 – 1.00 Not use

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Explains and discusses about the analysis of the data, results, hypothesis testing and the confirmation of the expectation disconfirmation theory.

In this chapter, detailed information acquired from the questionnaire survey was presented and discussed in order to answer the research objectives. The chapter consists of 3 sections as follows:

Section 1: Analysis of demographic characteristics such as sex, age, nationality, purpose of travel and hotel selection by using descriptive statistic.

Section 2: Analysis of level of customers’ satisfactions on mode of front desk, housekeeping, the Shangri-la, Yangon, recreation and food and beverage.

Section 3: Hypothesis Testing.

Section 1: Analysis of demographic characteristics of sample

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
✓ Sex		
Male	103	60.2%
Female	68	39.8%
Total	171	100
✓ Age		
Under 30 years	26	15.2%
31 – 40 years	33	19.3%
41 – 50 years	31	18.1%
51 years and over	81	47.4%
Total	171	100%
✓ Nationality		
ASEAN	23	13.5
Asian	7	4.1
European	9	5.3
German	48	28.1
Scandinavian	53	31.0
Others	31	18.1
Total	171	100%
✓ Purpose of Travel		
Tourist	155	90.6%
Business	3	1.8%
Visiting Friends/Relatives	3	1.8%
Others	10	5.8%

Total	171	100%
✓ Hotel Selection		
Yourself	34	19.9%
Travel Agents	48	28.1%
Internet	49	28.7%
Groups	35	20.5%
Others	5	2.9%
Total	171	100%

Sex: Among all of 171 samples, there were 103 persons or 60.2% being male and 68 persons or 39.8% being female. It means member of male larger than the female at about 1.5 times. Age: The ages of sample were classified into 4 categories; under 30 yrs, 31-40 yrs, 41-50 yrs and 51 yrs and over. The biggest group was 51 yrs and over that were 81 persons or 47.4%. The smallest one was under 30 yrs that was only 26 persons or 15.2%. The others were in 31-40 yrs and 41-50 yrs group that were 33 persons or 19.3% and 31 persons or 18.1% respectively.

Nationality: The samples were from several nationalities such as ASEAN, Asian, Scandinavian, European, German and others. The biggest group was Scandinavian that was 53 persons or 31.0%. The second one was German that was 48 persons or 28.1%. The third one was ASEAN that were 23 persons or 13.5% being third. And the least was Asian that was only 7 persons or 4.1%. Therefore, it was able to conclude that the bigger group were Scandinavian and German, whereas, ASEAN was very small comparing to the two group.

Another result would come from section two of level of customers' satisfaction in six aspect such as front desk in Sule Shangri-la the mean score of reservation handle was 4.65, baggage handling services was 4.66, good welcome and check-in service was 4.50, efficiency GRO answer questions was 4.51, prompt service was 4.43, and employees always willing to help was 4.51 that all aspects were considered as the excellent level. And the total of mean score of front desk was 4.54 that also were considered as the excellent level. It can be concluded that levels of customers' satisfaction of both total and every aspect were in "Excellent" that there was nothing to be improved. The housekeeping service shows that the means score providing room clean at promised time was 4.82, room clean and comfortable was 4.84, quality of amenities in room was 4.82 and enough room facilities was 4.80 that total of mean score of housekeeping was 4.82 that would consider as the excellent level. Another survey from The Spa service shows the mean score of availability and efficiency of spa receptionist to answer questions was 3.32, spa treatment handling services was 3.18 and spa price was 3.20 and the total of mean score of the spa service was 3.23 that also were considered as the fair level. The mean score from recreation of Sule Shangri-la was 2.76 of providing enough tools in fitness center and kid's club was 2.05, the mean score of pool lifeguard give prompt service was 4.16 and pool lifeguard willing to help was 4.14 the total mean score on mode of recreation was 3.28 that were considered as the fair level. The mean score from F&B survey was 4.47 give prompt service, F&B understand a specific need was 4.46 and quality of F&B was 4.30 while good taste of F&B was 4.32 and the mean score of providing immediate of room service was 3.84 so the total of mean score on mode of food and beverage was 4.28 that were consider as the excellent level. The overall service shows the mean score of good services was 4.46, good place was 4.88, good price was 4.70 and good promotion was 4.71 and total mean score were 4.69 and would consider as excellent level.

The section three will focus on hypothesis testing, it was found that Null Hypothesis has been accepted in all aspects of demographic characteristics, such as sex, age, nationality, purposes of travel and hotel selection because every sig value was greater that $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, it was able to conclude that the differences in demographic characteristics did not affect the level of customers' satisfaction on Overall service, Front Desk, Housekeeping, and Recreation, but for it was found that there were significantly different at $\alpha = 0.05$. in nationality and purpose of travel affecting levels of customers' satisfaction and Food and Beverage. It was able to conclude that ASEAN nationalities were having least satisfaction (mean=3.22) on Food and Beverage. And in purpose of travel there were others purpose had least satisfaction (mean=2.50) on Food and Beverage. We also found that there were significantly different at $\alpha = 0.05$. in age, nationality, purpose of travel and hotel selection affecting of customers' satisfaction on the Spa service. So it was able to concluded that the older were having more satisfaction on the Spa service that the younger. The European and German had more satisfaction on Spa service that ASEAN and Scandinavian. The customers who came to visit friends or relatives were having more satisfaction on Spa service than tourists and the customers who came to do their business had least satisfaction on the Spa service that might mean that the businessman did not want to use the Spa service.

6. CONCLUSION

This research was attempted to 1) study the levels of customers' satisfaction on the services of Sule Shangri-la Yangon. 2) Compare the differences in demographic characteristics of the customers such as sex, age, nationality, purpose of travel and hotel selection affect the level of customers' satisfaction on services of Sule Shangri-la Yangon as a whole and an aspect of Front Desk, Housekeeping, The Spa service, Recreation, and Food and Beverage 3) give the guideline for improving the services of Sule Shangri-la Yangon for more efficiency and effectiveness in service management.

1. Level of customers' satisfaction:

The results of data analysis on level of customers' satisfaction on services of Sule Shangri-la Yangon as a whole and aspect of Front Desk, Housekeeping, Food and Beverage were excellent level. Whereas, the spa service and recreation were in fair level, it was needed to improve in every aspect on the spa service.

Especially, spa prices had low satisfaction from ASEAN people. And recreation, also ASEAN people had low satisfaction that should be considered in providing enough tools in fitness center and kid's club.

2. Hypotheses testing:

From the research it was found that demographic characteristics; sex, age, nationality, purpose of travel and hotel selection did not affect the level of customers' satisfaction on services of Sule Shangri-la Yangon on front desk, housekeeping, and recreation. Whereas, the demographic characteristics in age affected the level of customers' satisfaction on services of Shangri-la hotel in Yangon on the spa service and food and beverage. Because some sig.value was less than $\alpha = 0.05$.

3. Model of relationship between age and level of customers' satisfaction:

From the research it were found that, significantly different in age, nationality, purpose of travel, and hotel selection affected the differences in customers' satisfaction on the spa services at $\alpha = 0.05$ whereas, on food and beverage services, there were significantly different in nationality and purpose of travel affected the customers' satisfaction. Therefore, both customers satisfaction on the spa service and food and beverage were needed to be seriously considered, at the mean (\bar{X}) of level of customers' satisfaction in each independent variable, as mentioned. In age, for example, it was observed that the higher aging had also higher level of customers' satisfaction on the spa service. The more attention, therefore, should be paid to the younger customers who used spa services. While, in food and beverage, the attention should be considered how to deal with ASEAN customers who had relatively low satisfaction. Finally, it was found that there was only age of customer that was able to use in estimating the level of customers' satisfaction by this Simple Linear Regression equation.

7. RECOMMENDATION

1. Recommendation on the improvement of Sule Shangri-la services:

In analyzing the level of customers' satisfaction, it was found that levels of customers' satisfaction as a whole was falling in "Excellent", but on spa and recreation were falling in "Fair". Sule Shangri-la Yangon, therefore, should be improved.

In testing hypotheses, it was found that the differences in demographic characteristics such as age, nationality, hotel selection, and purpose of travel affected the differences in customers' satisfaction on the Spa service. And the differences in demographic characteristics such as nationality, and purpose of travel affected the differences in customers' satisfaction on food and beverage. However, it was found that there was only age of customer was able to use in estimating the level of customers' satisfaction by this Simple Linear Regression.

From findings of this research it was found that the customers' satisfaction is the most important. There are influences toward customer feeling about overall quality of services in Shangri-la Hotel Yangon. There are mostly positive relationships from customers' satisfaction with hotel services of Shangri-la Yangon. Based on the finding that the customers' satisfaction on hotel services of Sule Shangri-la Yangon needs to improve customers' satisfaction. The objectives being to do which more emphasis on customer relationship management (CRM) are guidelines in improving the hotel services of Shangri-la Hotel Yangon.

(Reisig and Chandek 2001) suggested that expectations have been found to directly affect satisfaction. In situation with guest complain the staff has to ask questions to help and ask the guest to describe the problem in much detail necessary,

which revealed that nonverbal behavior then significantly associated with verbal interaction scores to increase satisfaction. Moreover, when speaking to guest staff should be eyes contact with the person they are speaking to show interest.

2. Recommendation on further research:

CRM initiatives can be a good solution to overcome low service performance especially responsiveness and empathy the following recommendation can be given:

Focus on true customer expectations, not that what management think customers expect.

An important it just one factor influencing customers' satisfaction but CRM can be implemented and customers' satisfaction achieved.

Management should consider CRM as a critical and essential aspect, as a competitive in the hotel market, and not just think of cost management as the only factor of business profit.

Creating long-term relationship with customer as hotel for they come back in the future.

Satisfaction and loyalty as well as to identify attributes increasing customer loyalty for guests visiting the City of Yangon and Hotels in there. The results from this study were drawn from a small sample size of 15. A larger sample size is desirable. The following studies can also examine the same connection in different tourist regions and cities with different backgrounds. Also, these studies can be focused on service quality of a hotel industry with permanent collection of information. It is important to emphasize that this study found service system design elements affected service delivery and quality of the service. In that regard, future research can also focus on commitment of employees to the organizations and job satisfaction as direct or indirect influences on service quality of hotel industry.

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