CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY OF

FRONT OFFICE STAFF AT THE HOTEL

A MASTER'S PROJECT

BY

ALIN SRIYAM

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication

at Srinakharinwirot University

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Due to the increasing competition of service business and the high demand of the customers, service quality is the fundamental factor to measure customers' satisfaction at the Mercure Hotel Pattaya. The objectives of the study are (1) to assess customers' expectation and perception level towards service quality of front office staff at the hotel, and (2) to analyze the discrepancy between customers' expectation and perception level towards service quality of front office staff at the hotel. Based on the SERVQUAL instrument (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1991), the service quality was consisted of five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The questionnaire of this study was designed by Parasuraman et al. Sixty respondents, who stayed at the hotel from 1st – 15th September 2009, were randomly selected. The findings of this study showed the highest level of customers' expectation was 'assurance' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.05); meanwhile, the highest level of customers' perception was 'tangibility' ($\bar{x}$ = 4.45). The finding also showed that the SERVQUAL gap was analyzed as the positive disconfirmation meaning that the hotel customers perceived service performance which exceeded customers' expectation towards service quality of front office staff at the Mercure Hotel Pattaya.

ความพึงพอใจของลูกค้าที่มีต่อคุณภาพการบริการของพนักงานส่วนหน้าของโรงแรม

บทคัดย่อ

ของ

อลิน ศรีแย้ม

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การขยายตัวด้านการแข่งขันของธุรกิจการบริการ และความต้องการของลูกค้าที่เพิ่มสูงขึ้น คุณภาพการบริการจึงเป็นองค์ประกอบสำคัญในการชี้วัดความพึงพอใจของลูกค้าที่เข้ามาใช้บริการ ของโรงแรมเมอร์เคียวพัทยา วัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษาครั้งนี้ คือ 1) เพื่อประเมินระดับของความ คาดหวังของลูกค้าและระดับของการรับรู้ต่อการบริการของลูกค้าที่มีต่อคุณภาพการบริการของ พนักงานส่วนหน้าของโรงแรม และ 2) เพื่อวิเคราะห์ระดับของความแตกต่าง ระหว่างความคาดหวัง ของลูกค้ากับการรับรู้ต่อคุณภาพการบริการของพนักงานส่วนหน้าของโรงแรม เครื่องมือที่ใช้วัด คุณภาพของการบริการ (SERVQUAL) ซึ่งประกอบด้วย 5 ด้าน คือ 1. ด้านรูปธรรม 2. ด้านความ เชื่อถือได้ 3. ด้านการตอบสนอง 4. ด้านความเชื่อมั่น และ 5. ด้านการเข้าถึงจิตใจ การวิจัยฉบับนี้ ผู้วิจัยใช้แบบสอบถามกับกลุ่มลูกค้าชาวต่างชาติแบบสุ่ม จำนวน 60 คน ในช่วงการเข้าพักของลูกค้าที่ โรงแรมระหว่างวันที่ 1-15 กันยายน 2552 งานวิจัยครั้งนี้พบว่าลูกค้ามีความคาดหวังต่อการบริการ ของลูกค้าในด้านความเชื่อถือสูงที่สุด และ มีการรับรู้ต่อการบริการในด้านของรูปธรรมสูงที่สุด ผลของการวิจัยยังพบอีกว่าค่าความแตกต่างของคุณภาพการบริการระหว่างความคาดหวังและการ รับรู้เป็นบวก โดยมีระดับค่าเฉลี่ยของการรับรู้สูงกว่าค่าเฉลี่ยของความคาดหวังของลูกค้าต่อคุณภาพ การบริการ ซึ่งหมายถึงลูกค้าส่วนใหญ่มีการรับรู้เกินความคาดหวังต่อการบริการของพนักงานส่วน หน้าของโรงแรมเมอร์เคียวพัทยา

The master's project advisor, chair of Business English for International

Communication and oral defense committee have approved this master's project, *Customer*

Satisfaction towards service quality of front office staff at the hotel, by Ms. Alin Sriyam as

partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Business English for

International Communication of Srinakharinwirot University.

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Srinakharinwirot University.

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May….., 2010

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Alin Sriyam

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The trend of world markets has changed noticeably from agricultural to service markets (Asian Development Outlook, 2007). All of the service businesses are trying their best to improve their service quality in order to make customers satisfied with their services, especially the hotel industry. Hotel operators now focus more on the quality standards in order to meet the basic needs and expectations of the customers. Once customers' requirements are clearly identified and understood, hotel operators are more likely to anticipate and fulfill their customers' needs and wants (Juwaheer & Ross, 2003). The more satisfied the customers are, the more likely they are to return or prolong their hotel stay (Choi & Chu, 2001).

At present, hotel visitors in Thailand seem to have high standards and demands for excellent service. The hotels have increased their competition and now instead of having only a nice room to draw customers in, they offer "high quality staff" as an amenity as well. Guest satisfaction is the highest priority for owners and managers competing with hundreds of others, and personal service is at the top of the travelers' list of the most important things when considering a hotel to stay in (Wipoosattaya, 2001). In the hotel industry, hotel staff are ranging from top management staff to front line staff (i.e. housekeepers, receptionists, front cashiers). Front office staff are considered a supporting factor in determining customer satisfaction when deciding to return, to recommend the hotel, or in demonstrating loyalty to a particular hotel (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000).

In addition, Watt (2007) stated that the front office is an important function because customers deal with front office staff as the center of the hotel. They provide assistance to guests, fulfill their needs, and meet their wants. Hogan (2006) presented that front office staff are the nerve center of all hotels, and the front office is essential to keep up with what is happening at all areas of the hotels.

As mentioned above, service quality was determined as the subjective comparison that customers make between their expectations about a service and the perception of the way the service has been run. Parasuraman et al. (1985) defined service quality as 'a function of the differences between expectation and performance along ten major dimensions. In later research, Parasuraman et al. (1988) revised and defined the service quality in terms of five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. For example, Min and Min (1997) presented the idea that front office services have the attributes that are considered most important, particularly in forming the following impressions of service quality; tangibility (how well the hotel staff are dressed); reliability (ability to resolve problems encountered by guests); responsiveness (convenience of making the reservation, promptness of check-in/check-out process, hotel/tour guide information); assurance (security and safety of guests); & empathy (caring and individualized attention). In the Mauritian hotel (Juwaheer & Ross, 2003), 'assurance factors' such as security and safety of guests determined by firstly, and secondly 'reliability factors' such as hotels perform task that have been promised to guests on resolving problems encountered by guests. Juwaheer & Ross found that by focusing on these factors, hotel in Mauritius would be able to achieve high levels of satisfaction.

In the hotel industry, most researchers are interested in maximizing customer satisfaction; satisfied customers tend to return and make the profit to hotel. Hernon & Whitwan (2001) defined customer satisfaction as a measure of how the customer perceives service delivery. Liu (2000) stated, for example, that customer satisfaction is a function of service performance relative to the customer expectation. For this reason, it is important to understand how customer expectation is formed in order to identify the factors of service satisfaction. As Reisig & Chandek (2001) discussed the fact that different customers have different expectations, based on their knowledge of a product or service. This can be implied that a customer may estimate what the service performance will be or may think what the performance ought to be. If the service performance meets or exceeds customers' expectation, the customers will be satisfied. On the other hand, customers are more likely to be dissatisfied if the service performance is less than what they have expected. As mentioned earlier, a greater number of satisfied customers will make the hotel business more successful and more profitable.

Previous research explored customer satisfaction regarding the service quality of all areas in the hotel so that the hotel can assess the customer perception. This study identified five factors of service quality by focusing on the front office staff only, and explored the customers' expectations and perception levels of these services at the Mercure Hotel Pattaya. The results of this quantitative assessment of service quality might provide some insights into how customers rate the service quality and assessed customers' satisfactions at the Mercure Hotel Pattaya.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To assess customers' expectation and perception level towards service quality of the front office staff in five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al. 1988).

2. To analyze the discrepancy gap between customers' expectation and perception towards service quality of the front office staff.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of customers' expectation and perception towards service quality of the front office staff?

2. What is the discrepancy gap between customers' expectation and perception towards service quality of the front office staff?

Significance of the Study

This study will be as a practical guideline for the hotel management, especially the front office department. The outcome of this study will develop the service quality of the front office staff in order to meet with the customers' needs and their satisfaction. If the result showed the high score, the hotel owner would be happy with the service. In contrast, if the result showed the low score, the hotel owner would improve the service and arrange training program.

Scope of the study

Customer satisfaction relied on customer expectation and customer perception towards 5 service quality dimensions of front office staff. The sampling group was 60 customers who stayed at the Mercure Hotel in Pattaya between September 1-15, 2009.

Definition of Terms

Service quality means the difference between the customer's expectation of service and their perceived service. In this study, the assessment standards of Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry (1990) will be used, which consist of five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

SERVQUAL is an instrument for measuring service quality, in terms of the discrepancy between customers' expectation regarding service offered and the perception of the service received; Respondents are required to answer questions about both their expectation and their perception.

Customer expectation means uncontrollable factors including past experience, personal needs, word of mouth, and external communication about hotel service.

Customer perception means customer's feelings of pleasure / displeasure or the reaction of the customers in relation to the performance of the hotel staff in satisfying / dissatisfying the services.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature in six main areas: (1) hotel information, (2) the roles and qualifications of front office staff, (3) service quality: SERVQUAL system, (4) customer satisfactions (5) customer expectations and (6) previous studies.

Hotel information

1. General information of the hotel

The hotel (a 3-star hotel) is a part of Accor hotels chain under the hotel's slogan "Mercure, the best of the region". The researcher selects this hotel as a sample of studying service quality of front office staff. The hotel has just opened only 3 years and international brand in Thailand and Worldwide.

2. Hotel services

This hotel offers a variety of services which consist of various types of room such as Superior room, Deluxe room, Family suite, and Grande suite. Four restaurants offers many different dining experiences which are The Bistro (Western style), The Cappuccino Terrace (Italian cuisine), The M Café (Thai and Chinese cuisine), and Ray's Place (a nightly jazz club). Moreover, the hotel provides many recreation facilities such as an outdoor swimming pool, spa, fitness center and sport.

The roles and qualifications of front office staff

The front staff play an important role in the hotel. They are the first group who greet and welcome the guests on arrival. They have to contact with the guests more than staff in other departments and provide the service in meeting the needs and expectations of the guests (Kunakitkumjorn, 2003). Front office personnel include front office manager, reservationists, receptionists, front cashiers, telephone operators, night auditor, guest relation officers, and bellboys.

According to Long (2007), front staff are the center of hotel operations, and their main functions are as follows:

1. Front office manager supervises and control everything in the department. He/she observes the policy of the management department and is responsible for the training of newly-employed staff. Also, he/she plays a role in the staff development in order to work efficiently.

2. Reservationists are responsible for advanced hotel reservation and room booking through telephone, facsimile as well as the personal information of the hotel guests.

3. Front desk representative welcome the guests upon their arrival. They are also responsible for the rooms that are not reserved in advance, the registrations, the room number, the room key, and the guests' luggage by coordinating with the bellboy or other staff. Besides, they provide information, mail the letters, take message, take notes, and report the check-in and check-out statistics of the guests.

4. Front cashiers record guests' payment by producing receipts or daily notices. They also receive money from the guests and take care of the money from all sections of the hotel.

5. Telephone operators are responsible for the telephone contact, the Supervision of the hotel sound system, and the morning call.

6. Night auditor examines the record of guests' payment and offers services to the guests upon their check-in and check-out at night.

7. Guest relation officers always stand by at the desk near the lobby to offer help and advice and solve the guests' problems. They need to have good knowledge of the hotel and the major tourist sites in the city where the hotel is located. They also need to be fluent in at least one foreign language.

8. Bellboys are mainly responsible for the guests' luggage. They take the hotel guests to their room after they are informed about the room number and are given the room key. Sometimes, they need to answer or inform the guests about other hotel services.

In addition, front staff also are a base of operations during an emergency situation such as a fire, bomb threat, medical emergencies. A capable, courteous and professional front office staff can make each guest stay a pleasant experience and ensure the guests' willingness to return.

As mentioned above, the front office is the most visible department in the hotel. Front staff must be able to get along with many different types of people, even in stressful situations. These people require following qualifications:

Firstly, the front office staff should have a good personality, well dressed and neat. Individuals who well dress suggest power and status; therefore, the first impression is only part of creating a positive relationship between the hotel and the customers. According to Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (1998 & 1994) presented that the front office staff must present an impeccable outward appearance to customers.

Secondly, the staff should be competent. They should know basic product knowledge, type of rooms and hotel facilities in the hotel. As Binham; Lampola; & Murray (1982: 17) suggested that front office staff should know many types of rooms and explain each type of rooms which are single rooms, double rooms, twin rooms, suites, connecting rooms and adjoining rooms.

Thirdly, the guests may have different accents in English and some words are difficult for front office staff to understand due to the different countries, particularly, for the reservations or the operators who deal with customers by phone. White and Beckley (1988) mentioned that front office staff should use alphabetic system which is similar to the system that used by travel agents and airlines. Tanpipat (1994) suggested an alphabet to be used, for example, M for Mike, N for Nancy, P for Peter. Moreover, White and Beckley (1988: 51) pointed out that when telephone operators answer the telephone, they should identify themselves, announce the name of the hotel, with the addition of "Good morning" or "Good evening" with the appropriate intonation. The additional words, "May I help you?" will give the impression of willingness to serve, which is all important in hotel.

Moreover, front office staff should be able to handle some problems, deal with complaints or certain difficulties in the hotel, when the guests confront the problems in the

hotel. As Harrington, and Akehurst, (1996) stated that good communication skills are required in dealing with customers, and strive to resolve the problems when they arise.

In conclusion, front office staff should make their guests happy and satisfied. As keys to the guest satisfaction driver, the front office staff are critical to the continued success of the hotel. They offer constant guest interaction, with the most diverse operating exposure in the hotel. The important thing, the front office staff will also reflect the image of the hotel to the customers and they have a keen sense to anticipate the guests' needs and exceed their expectations.

Service Quality

Service quality is the result of the comparison that customers make between their expectations about a service and their perception of the way the service has been performed (Gronroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988). A number of experts define service quality differently. Parasuraman et al. (1985) define it as the differences between customers' expectation of services and their perceived service. If the expectation is greater than the service performance, perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence, customer dissatisfaction occurs. Lewis and Mitchell (1990), Dotchin and Oakland (1994), and Asubonteng et al. (1996) define service quality as the extent to which a service meets customers' need and expectation.

1. The SERVQUAL approach

The SERVQUAL approach has been applied in service and retailing organizations (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Parasuraman et al., 1991). Service quality is a function of pre-purchase customers' expectation, perceived process quality, and perceived output quality. Parasuraman et al. (1988) define service quality as the gap between customers' expectation of service and their perception of the service experience.

Based on Parasuraman et al. (1988) conceptualization of service quality, the original SERVQUAL instrument included 22 items. The data on the 22 attributes were grouped into five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Numerous studies have attempted to apply the SERVQUAL. This is because it has a generic service application and is a practical approach to the area. This instrument has been made to measure service quality in a variety of services such as hospitals (Babakus & Glynn 1992), hotels (Saleh & Rylan 1991), travel and tourism (Fick & Ritchie 1991), a telephone company, two insurance companies and two banks (Parasuraman et al. 1991). In this study, the researcher uses SERVQUAL approach as an instrument to explore customers expectations and perceptions levels of service quality towards the front office staff at the hotel.

2. SERVQUAL dimensions

Previously, Parasuraman et al. (1985) identify ten determinants for measuring service quality which are tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, communication, access, competence, courtesy, credibility, security, and understanding/knowledge of customers. Later these ten dimensions were further purified and developed into five dimensions i.e.

tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy to measure service quality, SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988). These five dimensions identified as follows:

(1) Tangibility

The physical evidence of front office staff is including a personality and appearance of personnel, tools, and equipment used to provide the service. For example, some hotel chains (e.g. Hilton, Mandarin, Sheraton, and Hyatt) consciously ensure that their properties are conformed to global standards of facilities wherever they are located (Nankervis, 1995). However, the researcher, in this study, is focusing on how well-dressed the front office staff are.

(2) Reliability

The ability involves to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. It includes "Doing it right the first time", which is one of the most important service components for customers. Reliability also extends to provide services when promised and maintain error-free records. The following examples present the reliability factor.

Example 1: The staff perform tasks that have been promised to guests and resolve problems encountered by guests.

Example 2: The customers are sensitive to issue such as the telephone being picked up within five rings and their reservations being correct.

(3) Responsiveness

The front office staff are willing to help customers and provide prompt service to customers such as quick service, professionalism in handling and recovering from mistakes. It has been said that "Today luxury is time". Consequently, service providers'

ability to provide services in a timely manner is a critical component of service quality for many guests. The examples of responsiveness are as follows:

Example 1: The staff is asking for customers' name, address, post code and telephone number during the telephone booking.

Example 2: The customers are asked to guarantee their booking, the different rates that they are offered and which ones they accept.

Example 3: The customers are offered alternative accommodation at a sister hotel and how efficiently that is arranged and reservation cards being ready to sign upon arrival.

(4) Assurance

Assurance refers to the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence including competence, courtesy, credibility and security.

A. <u>Competence</u> means possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the services. It involves knowledge and skill of the contact personnel, knowledge and skill of operational support personnel, research capability of the organization.

B. <u>Courtesy</u> involves politeness, respect, consideration, and friendliness of contact personnel.

C. <u>Credibility</u> involves trust worthiness, believability, honesty; it involves having the customer's best interest at heart. Contributing to credibility is company reputation, personal characteristics of the contact personnel. The degree of hard sell involved in interaction with the customer.

D. <u>Security</u> refers to the freedom from danger, risk or doubt. It involves physical safety, financial security and confidentiality. Below are some examples:

Example 1: The guests expect to feel safe during their stay at hotel from the staff.

Example 2: The staff can handle effectively complaints and problems from the guests.

(5) Empathy

Empathy refers to the provision of caring and individualized attention to customers including access, communication and understanding the customers.

A. <u>Access</u> involves approach, ability and ease of contact. It means the service is easily accessible by telephone, waiting time to receive service is not extensive, hours of operation are convenient and location of service facility is convenient.

B. <u>Communication</u> means keeping customers informed in language they can understand. It means listening to customers, adjusting its language for different consumers and speaking simply and plainly with a novice. It also involves explaining the service itself, explaining how much the service will cost, and assuring the customer that a problem will be handled.

C. <u>Understanding the customers</u> means making the effort to understand the customer's need. It includes learning the customer's specific requirements, providing individualized attention, recognizing the regular custom. For example:

Example 1: The staff acknowledge the presence of customers at the reception and with a verbal greeting.

Example 2: The staff are keeping eye contact, using customers' names and asking customers to return their key upon departure.

It is clear from the above results that customers like to be given enough individualized attention and treated with care. It thus allows the customers to easily

approach and spell out their needs regarding the service being provided. The importance

of empathy may be the root of the statement, "If one looks at who is winning, it tends to

be companies that see the guest as an individual". Due to guests' desires that staff see

things from their point of view, the hotel staff are piloting an empathy training program

intended to help employees relate to their guests in a more empathic manner.

In conclusion, SERVQUAL instrument is an invaluable tool for organizations to

better understand what customers value and how well their current organizations are

meeting the needs and expectations of customers. SERVQUAL provides a benchmark

based on customer opinions of an excellent company, on your company, on the

importance ranking of key attributes, and on a comparison to what your employees

believe customers feel. The SERVQUAL instrument can also be applied to the front office

staff of a hotel, and in this case, other major gaps could be closed in the service quality

gaps model.

Customers' Satisfaction

For this part, to understand satisfaction, the researcher needs to have a clear

understanding of what is meant by customer satisfaction.

Definition of Customers' Satisfaction

Most researchers agree that satisfaction is an attitude or evaluation that is formed

by the customer comparing their pre-purchase expectations of what they would receive

from the product to their subjective perceptions of the performance they actually did

receive (Oliver, 1980). As Kotler (2000, p.36) defined that satisfaction is a person's

feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived

performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectation. Additionally, Yi (1990) also stated that customer satisfaction is a collective outcome of perception, evaluation and psychological reactions to the consumption experience with a product/service.

In conclusion, customer satisfaction is defined as a result of customer's evaluation to the consumption experience with the services. However, the customers have different levels of satisfaction as they have different attitudes and perceived performance from the product/service.

Customers' Expectation

In this part, the definition of customer's expectation and Disconfirmation theory are revealed. In addition, the significance of customer's expectation which has influenced customer's satisfaction is discussed.

Definition of Customers' Expectation

Davidow and Uttal (1989) proposed that customers' expectation is formed by many uncontrollable factors which include previous experience with other companies, and their advertising, customers' psychological condition at the time of service delivery, customer background and values and the images of the purchased product.

In addition, Zeithaml et al. (1990) stated that customer service expectation is built on complex considerations, including their own pre-purchase beliefs and other people's opinions. Similarly, Miller also stated that customers' expectation related to different levels of satisfaction. It may be based on previous product experiences, learning from advertisements and word-of-mouth communication. Santos added that expectation can be seen as a pre-consumption attitude before the next purchase, it may involve experience.

'Customers' expectation' is what the customers wish to receive from the services. The diversity of expectation definitions can be concluded that expectation is uncontrollable factors which including past experience, advertising, customers' perception at the time of purchase, background, attitude and product's image. Furthermore, the influences of customers' expectation is pre-purchase beliefs, word of mouth communications, individual needs, customers experiences, and other personal attitudes. Different customers have different expectation based on the customers knowledge of a product or service.

Disconfirmation Theory

In marketing literature (Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Oliver,1980) as well as in recent information system studies (McKinney et al., 2002), the disconfirmation theory emerges as the primary foundation for satisfaction models. According to this theory, satisfaction is determined by the discrepancy between perceived performance and cognitive standards such as expectation and desires (Khalifa and Liu, 2003).

Customers' expectation can be defined as customer's partrial beliefs about a product (McKinney, Yoon and Zahedi, 2002). Expectations are viewed as predictions made by consumers about what is likely to happen during impending transaction or exchange (Zeithmal and Berry,1988). Perceived performance is defined as customer's perception of how product performance fulfills their needs, wants and desire (Cadotte et al., 1987). Perceived quality is the consumer's judgment about an entity's overall excellence or superiority (Zeithmal,1988). Disconfirmation is defined as consumer subjective judgments resulting from comparing their expectations and their perceptions of performance received (McKinney et al., 2002, Spreng et al., 1996).

Disconfirmation theory was declared that satisfaction is mainly defined by the gap between perceived performance, expectations and desires which is a promising approach to explain satisfaction. This theory was proposed that satisfaction is affected by the intensity (or size) and direction (positive or negative) of the gap (disconfirmation) between expectations and perceived performance (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Expectation disconfirmation theory

Khalifa and Liu (2003)

Expectation disconfirmation occurs in three forms:

1) Positive disconfirmation: occurs when perceived performance exceeds expectations.

2) Confirmation: occurs when perceived performance meets expectations.

3) Negative disconfirmation: occurs when perceived performance does not meet and is less than the expectations.

It is more probable for customers to be satisfied if the service performance meets (confirmation) or exceeds (positive disconfirmation) their expectations. On the contrary,

customers are more likely to be dissatisfied if the service performance is less than what

they expected (negative disconfirmation). Khalifa & Liu (2003) discussed that taking

expectation disconfirmation as the only determinant of satisfaction; this theory does not

cause the fact that if high expectations are confirmed, it would much more lead to

satisfaction than confirmation of low expectations. To resolve this drawback perceived

performance is included as an additional determinant of satisfaction. In other words the

only way to ensure satisfaction is to empirically create disconfirmation by manipulating

expectations and performance.

Previous Studies

Many previous researchers have studied customer satisfaction towards service

quality in service businesses such as spa, tourism, and hotel.

Kitisuda (2006) studied a survey of customer satisfaction with spa services at

Sivalai Spa. Both first-time and repeated customers were satisfied with the spa services

on a high level. They were satisfied with the following service dimensions:

responsiveness, empathy, reliability, assurance, and tangibility of the service quality at

Sivalai Spa. Most customers agreed that the location of the spa was the most important

factor for the spa. They suggested that the food and beverage facilities should be

improved. Moreover, the study showed that there were four demographic factors that

influenced the service quality at Sivalai Spa which were gender, age, nationality, and

income.

Markovic (2004) studied service quality measurement in the Croatian Hotel

Industry. She showed that a SERVQUAL instrument is a useful and reliable method to

measure service quality of Croations hotels, for managers to identify differences in terms of expectations and perceptions. This method will lead to a better allocation of resources and a more effective design of marketing strategies, such as communications mix and pricing components, to ensure a proper level of service quality in hotels.

Phenphun (2003) studied International tourist' satisfaction with the quality of service in accommodation in Thailand and the factors related to satisfaction, problems and the requirements of international tourists. The research revealed the satisfaction of international tourists towards quality of service was at a high level. However, the most common problems were lack of employee's knowledge and English skill, therefore, tourists suggested language and convenient facility improvement. Therefore, Government Policy suggests that the TAT and related organizations should create and develop a curriculum and training. Accordingly, they also have to focus on language skills.

In the 2001 study tour of Taiwan, Yu (2001) indicated that it might be possible to create service quality evaluations that are more accurate instruments for measuring the quality of service in the various service sectors, as Crompton et al.,(1991) suggested. For the best indicators of service quality in the tourism sector, the tourist's experience might be the key indicator for evaluating tourism quality because the tourism industry is essential people serving people. Therefore, Otto and Ritchie (1996) stated that future studies of tourism quality should evaluate the tourist's experience, instead of the five dimensions used in previous evaluation tools.

All of these previous studies used the "SERVQUAL" approach to measure service quality in hotel and other service industries. This study will explore customers' expectation

and perception levels towards service quality which is focusing on the front office staff at

the hotel.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodology of the study consisted of four sections which were participants, research instrument, procedures and data analysis.

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 60 customers who stayed at the hotel from 1st-15th September 2009. The researcher selected the respondents by randomly sampling method.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire instrument consisted of 5 parts as follows;

The first part contained general background which included gender, age, nationality, occupation, purpose of traveling, and frequency of visits.

The second and third parts included 5 factors according to service quality dimensions of the SERVQUAL system: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy based on Parasuraman et al. (1988). The researcher explored customers' expectation and perception levels towards service quality of the front office staff at the Mercure Hotel Pattaya. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 customers on their arrival at the reception desk of the hotel. These customers were requested to complete

the second part (customer expectation) of the questionnaire at the commencement of

their stay. Before the guests departure, they were requested to complete the third part

(customer perception). In the section, the degree of satisfaction towards service quality of

front office staff is set from 1 to 5 (5 is from the highest expectation/satisfaction, whereas,

1 is the lowest expectation/satisfaction).

In addition, the translation of level ranking were analyzed follow criteria of

customers' satisfaction designed by Best (1977: 174)

The score among   1.00-1.80   mean   lowest satisfaction

The score among   1.81-2.61   mean   low satisfaction

The score among   2.62-3.41   mean   average satisfaction

The score among   3.42-4.21   mean   good satisfaction

The score among   4.22-5.00   mean   very good satisfaction

The fourth part of the questionnaire is generated to ask the customers'

suggestions about the service quality of the front office staff.

Finally, the fifth part was a question to ask whether or not the customers will

return to the hotel next time. Completed questionnaires were collected upon their

departure by the receptionists.

Procedures

Prior to the survey, the questionnaire was piloted with the front office manager

and the night manager of Mercure Hotel Pattaya to examine the first draft of the

questionnaire and any misunderstanding over terms and questions in March 2009. The

results of the pilot test showed that some sentences in the questions were unclear and

ambiguous. The management also suggested that the researcher should give an example

in each questions in order to make the questions easy to understand. The results of the

pilot study provided the correct information and the suitable design of questionnaire.

Data were collected from the customers who stay at the hotel between September

1-15, 2009. The receptionists asked 100 customers to do the questionnaire upon their

arrival to explore the customers' expectation. 60 customers returned the completed

questionnaire upon their departure. The customers informed that their participation was

on a voluntary basis and all information provided would be kept private and confidential.

The questionnaires were distributed to the customers who agree to participate in the

study. Then, the receptionists briefly explained the requirement of the survey before the

customers fill up the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

After the questionnaires were collected, the researcher explored the level of

customers' expectation and perception towards service quality of the front office staff in

five areas: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The

frequencies and percentages are used for calculating and analyzing the data to the

personal data in part 1.

Besides using descriptive statistics of means and standard deviations, gap

analysis was used in comparing means between expectation score and perception score

of the respondents and the data were analyzed using SPSS program (Statistical software

package). Moreover, the results were discussed and summarized with some suggestions

for further studies.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of this study consisting of the personal data of the respondents, level of customers' expectation and perception, and their suggestions concerning the service quality of front office staff at the Mercure Hotel in Pattaya.

Personal data of Respondents

This section presents the personal data of 60 customers who stayed at the hotel between September 1 and 15, 2009. The profile covers the gender, age, nationality, occupation, purpose of trip and duration of stay the hotel (see Table 1). The findings showed that there were more females customers (57%) than male (43%). The largest age group was between 25 and 35 years of age (26%). The majority (44%) of the respondents were Asians and 54% were employees. The main purpose of their visits included vacation (69%), business (20%), honeymoon (8%), and seminar/conference (3%). 36% of the respondents had stayed at the hotel on two occasions while only 3% had stayed there 4 times.

Table 1 Personal data of Respondents (60 persons)

Personal data	Number of respondents	Percentage
Sex:		
Male	26	43%
Female	34	57%
Age:		
Below 25 years old	10	17%
25-35 years old	26	43%
36-45 years old	7	12%
46-55 years old	14	23%
Over 55 years old	3	5%
Nationality:		
Asian	27	44%
European	12	20%
American	7	12%
Scandinavian	10	17%
Other	4	7%
Occupation:		
Government officer	2	3%
Employee	32	54%
Owner / Private business	14	23%
Student	12	20%
Other	0	0%
Purpose of trip:		
Vacation	41	69%
Honeymoon	5	8%
Seminar / Conference	2	3%
Business	12	20%
Other	0	0%
Number of previous visits:		
1 time	16	27%
2 times	22	36%
3 times	10	17%
4 times	2	3%
More than 4 times	10	17%

Level of customers' expectation and perception towards service quality of

front office staff

This section presents the customers' expectation and perception towards service quality of front office staff at the Mercure Hotel in Pattaya. Service quality is composed of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The 60 respondents were asked to rate each statement concerning their expectation and perception of service quality of front office staff (see Appendix A) at the Mercure Hotel in Pattaya between September 1– 15, 2009. The findings of the service quality of each dimension were as follows:

Tangibility

The 'tangibility' dimension includes physical aspects such as the physical appearance of hotel services including the neatness of front office staff and professionalism of employees (Dabholkar et al., 1996).

Table 2 Customer satisfaction concerning tangibility

Tangibility dimension	Customers' expectation			Customers' perception		
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
1. The staff dresses appropriately.	3.85	0.68	High	4.43	0.53	Highest
2. The staff uniforms are clean.	3.97 *	0.68	High	4.53 *	0.56	Highest
3. The staff provide you service with a smile.	3.92	0.82	High	4.45	0.56	Highest
4. The staff have attractive appearance e.g. elegant, smart.	3.97 *	0.78	High	4.40	0.64	Highest
Overall mean score	3.92	0.52	High	4.45	0.41	Highest

Table 2 shows that overall satisfaction of expectation towards 'tangibility' is at a high level (3.92). Cleanliness of uniform and appearance of staff both received high ranking at 3.97. When front office staff are well dressed and wear smart uniforms, their appearance impresses customers who feel more confident with hotel services. In addition, the front office staff of the Mercure Hotel are well trained in terms of the hotel slogan "The best service & cleanliness in the region."

Customer perception of 'tangibility' dimension was also ranked at the highest level (4.45). The findings are supported by Wong et al. (1999), who studied SERVQUAL dimensions in the hospitality industry in Malaysia. They found that service quality was related to the tangible behaviour and appearance of employees. The best predictor of overall service quality was the 'tangibility' dimension.

Reliability

The 'reliability' dimension refers to the ability of the front office hotel staff to provide services dependably and accurately (Dabholkar et al., 1996). Reliable service performance has to meet customers' expectation. Service must be accomplished on time, every time, in the same manner and without errors.

Table 3 Customer satisfaction concerning reliability

Reliability dimension	Customers' expectation			Customers' perception		
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
5. The staff provide service as promised.	3.95	0.685	High	**4.38** *	0.533	Highest
6. The staff provide you accurate information.	3.88	0.688	High	4.33	0.566	Highest
7. The staff perform service for you correctly the first time.	3.88	0.829	High	4.25	0.565	Highest
8. The staff tell you exactly when service will be provided.	**4.02** *	0.780	High	4.25	0.643	Highest
Overall mean score	**3.93**	**0.554**	**High**	**4.30**	**0.451**	**Highest**

Table 3 shows that overall satisfaction of expectation concerning 'reliability' dimension is high (3.93). This rating is supported by comments by a frequent guest at the hotel who wrote "The room is ready on time upon check in and I get the late check out until 2 p.m. every time of my stay at this hotel."

Overall satisfaction of perception towards 'reliability' dimension is also at the highest level (4.30), with "The staff provide service as promised" receiving the highest score (4.38). This may be because the front office staff provide service correctly the first time and keep their promises to customers. Consequently, customers feel satisfied with the reliability of service. This result is consistent with Juwaheer and Ross (2003), who studied service quality in Mauritian hotels. They found that 'reliability' was the most important factor for ensuring customer satisfaction on service. For example, the hotel staff performed tasks as

promised and resolved problems promptly. By focusing on this dimension, hotels in Mauritius achieved high levels of satisfaction.

Responsiveness

The 'responsiveness' dimension involves willingness to help customers and provide prompt services (Zeithaml et al., 1988). It is essential that front office hotel staff are willing and able to help customers provide prompt service and meet customers' expectation.

Table 4 Customer satisfaction concerning responsiveness

Responsiveness dimension	Customers' expectation			Customers' perception		
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
9. The staff respond to your requests quickly.	4.12*	0.761	High	4.38*	0.533	Highest
10. The staff give you prompt service.	3.83	0.827	High	4.23	0.566	Highest
11. The staff are willing to help you.	4.02	0.770	High	4.38*	0.565	Highest
Overall mean score	**3.98**	**0.604**	**High**	**4.33**	**0.545**	**Highest**

Table 4 shows that overall expectation towards 'responsiveness' dimension was at the high level (3.98). "The staff respond to your request quickly" received the highest ranking of expectation at 4.12. It is highly possible that customers are satisfied when they receive a quick response from the hotel staff. This is supported by a first time customer at the hotel who commented that, "The front office staff are willing to help me when I am looking for the hotel direction. It makes me feel that she is full of service mind in heart".

This shows that this customer received good help when needed. The ability to respond to customers' requests reflected to customer satisfaction.

Table 4 also shows that overall satisfaction of perception towards 'responsiveness' dimension was at a high level (3.98). The two highest ranking points concerned quick response and willingness to help. These findings are consistent with Parasuraman et al. (1998), who measured consumer perceptions of service quality. They found that 'responsiveness' was the most important factor in determining customer satisfaction with service.

Assurance

The 'assurance' dimension refers to the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence including competence, courtesy, credibility and security (Parasuraman et al., 1991).

Table 5 Customer satisfactions concerning assurance

Assurance dimension	Customers' expectation			Customers' perception		
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
12. The staff have product Knowledge of the hotel.	4.10	0.706	High	*4.62	0.640	Highest
13. The staff have the skills required to perform service.	3.95	0.746	High	4.37	0.610	Highest
14. The staff speak with you by using appropriate forms.	3.95	0.832	High	4.35	0.606	Highest
15. The staff are trustworthy.	*4.17	0.806	High	4.30	0.671	Highest
16. The staff make you feel safe when staying at the hotel.	4.10	0.752	High	4.22	0.640	Highest
Overall mean score	**4.05**	**0.561**	**High**	**4.37**	**0.440**	**Highest**

Table 5 shows that overall expectation towards 'assurance' dimension was at a high level (4.05), with trustworthiness ranking most important (4.17). Most customers expect front office staff to make them feel safe when staying at the hotel. In addition, cashiers should be credible and responsible when handling expenses or money from guests.

Perception of 'assurance' dimension ranked at the highest level (4.37), with product knowledge being the most important factor (4.62). Front office staff must have broad and deep knowledge, skills, capacity and experience. They must also be well versed in using advanced technology to improve their performance such as when making room reservations by computer.

Empathy

The 'empathy' dimension represents the provision of caring and individualized attention to customers including access or approachability and ease of contact, effective communication, and understanding the customers (Parasuraman et al., 1991).

Table 6 Customer satisfaction concerning empathy

Empathy dimension	Customers' expectation			Customers' perception		
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
17. The staff are able to communicate with you in English.	4.00	0.736	High	4.28	0.524	Highest
18. The staff are able to communicate effectively.	**4.17***	0.693	High	4.22	0.739	Highest
19. The staff show personal attention to you.	4.05	0.790	High	**4.37***	0.663	Highest
20. The staff know your specific needs.	3.88	0.825	High	4.28	0.783	Highest
Overall mean score	**4.02**	**0.563**	**High**	**4.28**	**0.530**	**Highest**

Table 6 showed that overall expectation concerning 'assurance' dimension was at a high level (4.02). Effective communication was considered the most important (4.17) expectation. The front office staff represent the hotel and communication is vitally important. The success of hotel work is based on effective communication (Paige, 1977). The front office deals with reservations, serves as the information centre and as the cashier. They must notify the housekeeping and kitchen divisions of guest information, and also receive feedback. For example, more rooms can be sold by the front office division as long as

housekeeping notifies them of any damage in rooms has been repaired and is ready to be returned to service. Effective communication among divisions in the hotel is one of the main factors that contribute to customer satisfaction.

Table 6 also shows that overall perception of the 'assurance' dimension was at the highest level (4.28). Perception of the personal attention of the staff was ranked highest at 4.37. The results indicated that the front office staff were enthusiastic to help hotel guests. One first time customer commented, "The bell boy brought my baggage immediately to the shuttle bus upon my check out". According to Crompton et al. (1991), staff should make customers feel like they belong. This statement is consistent with the definition of 'empathy'.

Overall customer satisfaction towards service quality

Table 7 Overall mean score of customer satisfaction towards service quality

Five dimensions	Customers' expectation			Customers' perception		
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Tangibility	3.92	0.52	High	**4.45***	0.415	Highest
Reliability	3.93	0.55	High	4.30	0.451	Highest
Responsiveness	3.98	0.60	High	4.33	0.545	Highest
Assurance	**4.05***	0.56	High	4.37	0.440	Highest
Empathy	4.02	0.56	High	4.28	0.530	Highest
Overall mean score	**3.98**	**0.38**	**High**	**4.35**	**0.355**	**Highest**

Table 7 shows that overall satisfaction of expectation towards the five dimensions was at a high level (3.98). The result of customers' expectation showed that 'assurance' dimension was at the high level (4.05), followed by empathy (4.02), responsiveness (3.98),

reliability (3.93), and tangibility (3.92). Most customers expected the front office staff
(especially the cashier) to be trustworthy because they are responsible for the hotel
expenses or collecting money from hotel guests.

Overall satisfaction of perception towards the five dimensions was at the highest
level (4.35). Most customers perceived tangibility as the most important dimension at (4.45),
followed by assurance (4.37), responsiveness (4.33), reliability (4.30), and empathy (4.28). In
this study, 'tangibility' dimension was the most vital factor. Most customers identified the
importance of the appearance and cleanliness of the front office staff.

SERVQUAL gap between customers' expectation and perception level towards service quality of front office staff at the hotel

The SERVQUAL gap is calculated between the mean score of expectation and
perception. The findings of the study showed the difference between expectation and
perception as shown in the table below.

Table 8 SERVQUAL gap of customers' expectation and perception towards the service
quality of front office staff at the hotel

Attributes	Customers' Expectation	Customers' Perception	SERVQUAL Gap
Pair 1) Tangibility	3.92	4.45	**0.53**
Pair 2) Reliability	3.93	4.30	**0.37**
Pair 3) Responsiveness	3.98	4.33	**0.35**
Pair 4) Assurance	4.05	4.37	**0.32**
Pair 5) Empathy	4.02	4.28	**0.26**
Overall mean score	**3.98**	**4.35**	0.37

Table 8 demonstrates the gap between customers' expectation and perception. The study shows that the overall level of perception of all dimensions was higher than level of expectation. This positive gap indicates that customers are satisfied with the services. 'Tangibility' was the most important dimension with the highest positive gap (0.53). The study revealed that physical evidence such as uniforms, appearance and behavior of front office staff yield customer satisfaction. Similarly, Ramchurrun (2008) suggested that customers attached importance to the dimension of tangibility because services are intangible. Hence, customers place great importance on the appearance neatness of the staff.

In summary, the results showed a positive gap between perception and expectation. Tangibility was determined to be the most important dimension. The front office staff also understood and exceeded customers' expectation of service quality in all dimensions.

Potential for repeat customers to the hotel

Table 9 Potential for customers to return to the hotel

Potential for repeat visit	Number	Percentage
Yes	48	80%
No	0	0%
Not sure	12	20%
Total	60	100%

Table 9 shows most customers (80%) would return to the Mercure Hotel in Pattaya. This finding may result from their appreciation of service of front office staff who paid individual attention to them. Part IV of the questionnaire showed that the front office manager contacted dissatisfied customers immediately to understand problems and perhaps offer compensation by providing a free dinner voucher or an free additional night at the hotel. This affirmed that the front office manager was professional in solving problems immediately. The result of this study conforms with Juwaheer and Ross (2003), who found that when customers' requirements are clearly identified and understood, hotel managers are more likely to be able to anticipate and fulfil their customers' needs and wants, rather than merely reacting to their dissatisfaction.

Customers' suggestions towards service quality of front office staff

Table 10 Customers' suggestions

Customers' suggestions	Number of respondents	Percentage
Compliments	57	95%
Complaints	3	5%
Total	60	100%

Table 10 shows that the majority of customers (95%) complimented the hotel services. Customers reported that the front office staff were very nice and provided a quick and smooth check in. Thereafter, they felt very comfortable during their stay. The receptionists were willing to help customers by guiding them to nearby attractions. On the

other hand, only 5% of respondents made complaints that the staff should improve their English skill and should have more knowledge about the types of room and hotel facilities.

In conclusion, the result showed a positive gap between customers' expectation and perception towards service quality of front office staff. Customers' perception level was higher than their expectation. It is obvious that most customers felt satisfied with the service quality of the front office staff at the Mercure Hotel in Pattaya.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusion, implications of the study, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further studies.

Conclusion

Service businesses have been growing rapidly in recent decades, while customer demand for high quality service is increasing. This is certainly the case at the Mercure Hotel in Pattaya. To remain competitive, the hotel needs to analyze customers' expectation and perception towards the service quality of its front office staff.

In this research, the SERVQUAL instrument, developed by Parasuraman (1985), has been applied in designing the questionnaire by using five dimensions of service quality: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Data collected from a questionnaire were distributed to 60 guests who stayed at the Mercure Hotel in Pattaya between September 1 – 15, 2009. The questionnaire aimed to determine the level of customers' expectation and perception towards the service quality of front office staff. The results revealed that the 'assurance' dimension raised the highest level of expectation, whereas the 'tangibility' dimension fulfilled the highest level of perception.

This study focused further on the gap between customers' expectation and their perception of front office service quality. The results showed that the overall mean score of

perception was higher than expectation in all dimensions, yielding a positive SERVQUAL

gap. Hence, customers were satisfied with all dimensions of service quality.

In this study, the findings showed that most respondents identified tangibility as the

most important factor in determining satisfaction. Moreover, their perception of service

exceeded their expectation. The findings of this study were in contrast with previous study

of Juwaheer and Ross (2003) who studied service quality in Mauritian hotels. They found

that by focusing on assurance and reliability, a hotel could achieve high levels of

satisfaction and service quality.

Implications of the Study

This study had the following implications:

1. Empathy was shown to be the weakest dimension of satisfaction. Therefore, hotel

management should arrange special courses to improve effective communication.

2. Tangibility was shown to be the strongest dimension of satisfaction. Therefore,

hotel management should maintain the attributes of tangible service quality at the hotel.

3. Human Resource management should arrange in-house training program to

improve the main work of front office staff and to promote them in their careers.

Limitations of the Study

Some limitations are found in this study as follows:

1. The respondents in this study included limitation 60 customers at the Mercure Hotel in Pattaya. If the subjects were drawn more than 60 respondents from other hotels in Pattaya, the result would be more generalized.

2. This study only focused on measuring customer satisfaction with front office service quality. Other departments (e.g. food & beverages, housekeeping, sport & recreational facilities) are essential departments that were not included in the scope of the present research.

3. When the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, it was difficult to collect the data in time. Some customers refused to participate in this survey. Moreover, some did not return the questionnaires to the front desk in time. If the respondents were more willing to offer feedback, the results would have been useful for improving hotel service.

Recommendations for further studies

Further study should be undertaken to apply the results of this study. First, research could be broadened to include other hotels in tourists locations such as Bangkok, Chiangmai, and Phuket. Second, it would be valuable to conduct further research concerning customers' attitudes towards the quality of other service businesses such as restaurants, travel agencies and airlines. Further research in these areas would contribute to overall improvement of service standards throughout Thailand.

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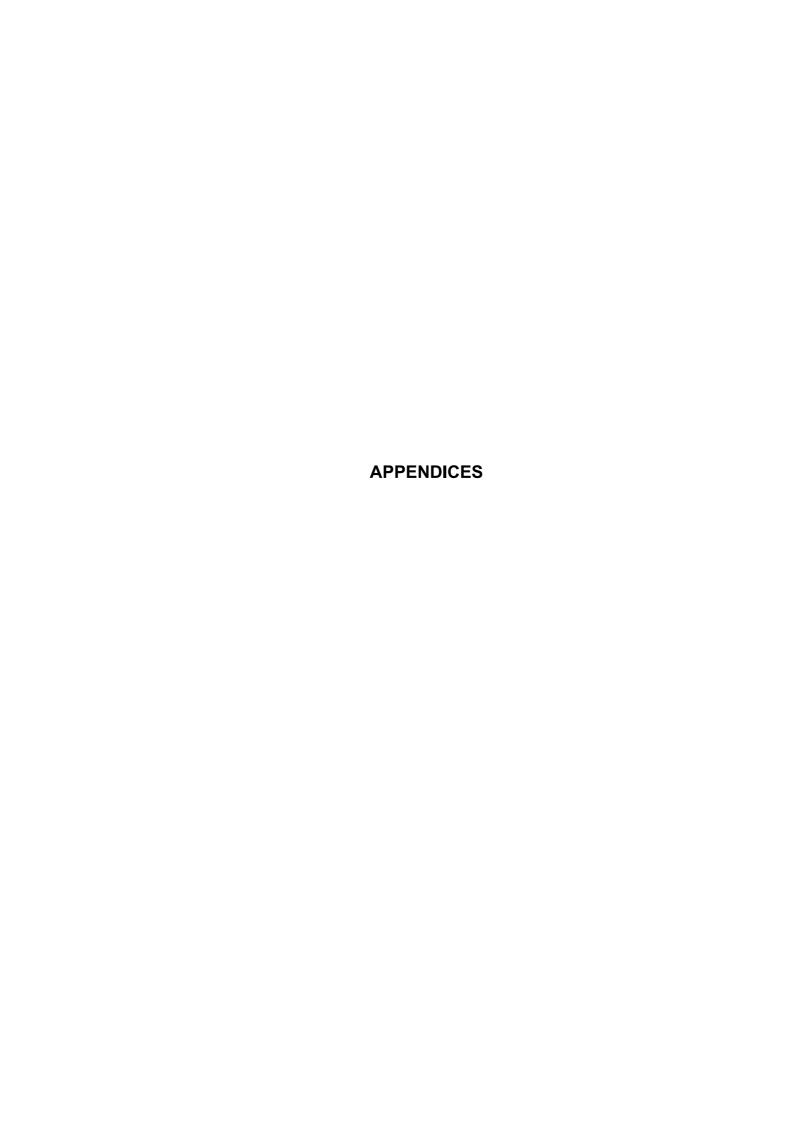
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a part of a study for a Master's Degree (Business English for International Communication) at Srinakharinwirot University. The objective of the research is to evaluate customer expectation and perception levels towards service quality of front office staff at the Mercure Hotel Pattaya in 2009.

Part I: Personal Data

1. Gender

☐ 1) Male   ☐ 2) Female

2. Age

☐ 1) Below 25 years old   ☐ 2) 25-35 years old   ☐ 3) 36-45 years old

☐ 4) 46-55 years old   ☐ 5) Over 55 years old

3. Nationality

☐ 1) Asian   ☐ 2) European   ☐ 3) UK

☐ 4) American   ☐ 5) Scandinavian   ☐ 6) Others (please specify………)

4. Occupation

☐ 1) Government official   ☐ 2) Employee   ☐ 3) Owner / Private business

☐ 4) Student   ☐ 5) Others (please specify………)

5. Purpose of trip

☐ 1) Vacation   ☐ 2) Honeymoon   ☐ 3) Seminar

☐ 4) Business   ☐ 5) Others (please specify………)

6. How many times have you previously stayed at the Mercure Hotel Pattaya?

☐ 1) 1 time   ☐ 2) 2 times   ☐ 3) 3 times

☐ 4) 4 times   ☐ more than 4 times

Part II: Survey of your expectations and perceptions towards service quality of front office staff

Based on your experiences as a customer of the Mercure Hotel Pattaya, please put a tick (/) in a box ☐,
which mostly explains your attitudes.

a) level of EXPECTATION towards service quality of front office staff

b) level of PERCEPTION towards service quality of front office staff

The score level are described as 5 = highest, 4 = high, 3 = moderate, 2 = low and 1 = lowest

Dimensions	Level of Expectation					Level of Perception				
Tangibility	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
1. The staff dress appropriately.										
2. The staff uniform is clean.										
3 The staff provide the services with smiling.										
4. The staff have attractive appearance i.e. elegant, smart, etc.										
Reliability	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5. The staff can provide you the services as promised e.g. upgrade room, early check in and late check out.										
6. The staff provide you accurate information e.g. hotel facilities, recreational facilities and tourists' attraction places.										
7. The staff perform the service right at the first time (for example, the receptionist has your correct record of your booking details).										
8. The staff offer you some help (for example, once you arrive at the front desk of hotel, the receptionists ask you if she can help you).										
Responsiveness	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
9. The staff tell you exactly when services will be provided (for example, the receptionist informs you about breakfast time during your check in).										
10. The staff give you prompt service (for example, the receptionists serve you a welcome drink immediately during your arrival).										
11. The staff are willing to help you e.g. guiding you a hotel direction.										

Dimensions	Level of Expectation					Level of Perception				
Assurance	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
12. The staff have product knowledge of hotel information e.g. describing all room types and the restaurants.										
13. The staff have required skill to perform service (for example, the receptionist can explain clearly about the hotel direction).										
14. The staff speak with you by using an appropriately address forms (for example, hello, may I help you, Sir/Madam?).										
15. The staff are trustworthy.										
16. The staff make you feel safe when staying at the hotel (for example, the doorman observes the persons who come in the hotel).										
Empathy	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
17. The staff are able to communicate with you in English.										
18. The staff are able to communicate effectively with you.										
19. The staff show personal attention to you (for example, the bell boy help you to carry your luggage during your check out).										
20. The staff know your specific needs (for example, the doorman opens the door while you are entering the hotel).										

Part III: Return to the hotel.

Are you planning to return to the Mercure Hotel Pattaya?

☐**Yes**…………………………………………………………………………………………

☐ **No**………………………………………………………………………………………….

☐ **Not sure**…………………………………………………………………………………...

Part IV: Customer suggestions towards service quality of the front office staff at the

Mercure Hotel Pattaya (e.g. compliment, complaint)

………

………

………

………

………

………

****

Thank you for your kind cooperation.

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER

ที่ ศธ 0519.12/   บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย
                                          มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ
                                          สุขุมวิท 23 กรุงเทพฯ 10110

                           มีนาคม 2552

เรื่อง ขอความอนุเคราะห์เพื่อการวิจัย

เรียน ผู้จัดการทั่วไป โรงแรมเมอร์เคียว พัทยา

         เนื่องด้วย นางสาวอลิน ศรีแย้ม นิสิตระดับปริญญาโท สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการ
สื่อสารนานาชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ ได้รับอนุมัติให้ทำสารนิพนธ์ เรื่อง "ความพึงพอใจของ
ลูกค้าที่มีต่อคุณภาพบริการของพนักงานส่วนหน้าของโรงแรม" โดยมี อาจารย์ ดร.อุมาพร คาดการณ์ไกล
เป็นอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาสารนิพนธ์ ในการนี้ นิสิตมีความจำเป็นต้องเก็บข้อมูลเพื่อการวิจัย โดยขอใช้สถานที่
บริเวณล็อบบี้ของโรงแรม เพื่อเก็บข้อมูลกับลูกค้าชาวไทยและชาวต่างชาติ จำนวน 60 คน ที่เข้าพักที่โรงแรม
เมอร์เคียว พัทยา ตอบแบบสอบถามความพึงพอใจของลูกค้าที่มีต่อคุณภาพบริการของพนักงานส่วนหน้าของ
โรงแรม ในระหว่างเดือนมีนาคม - เมษายน 2552

         จึงเรียนมาเพื่อขอความอนุเคราะห์ ได้โปรดพิจารณาให้ นางสาวอลิน ศรีแย้ม ได้เก็บข้อมูล
เพื่อการวิจัย และขอขอบพระคุณเป็นอย่างสูง ณ โอกาสนี้

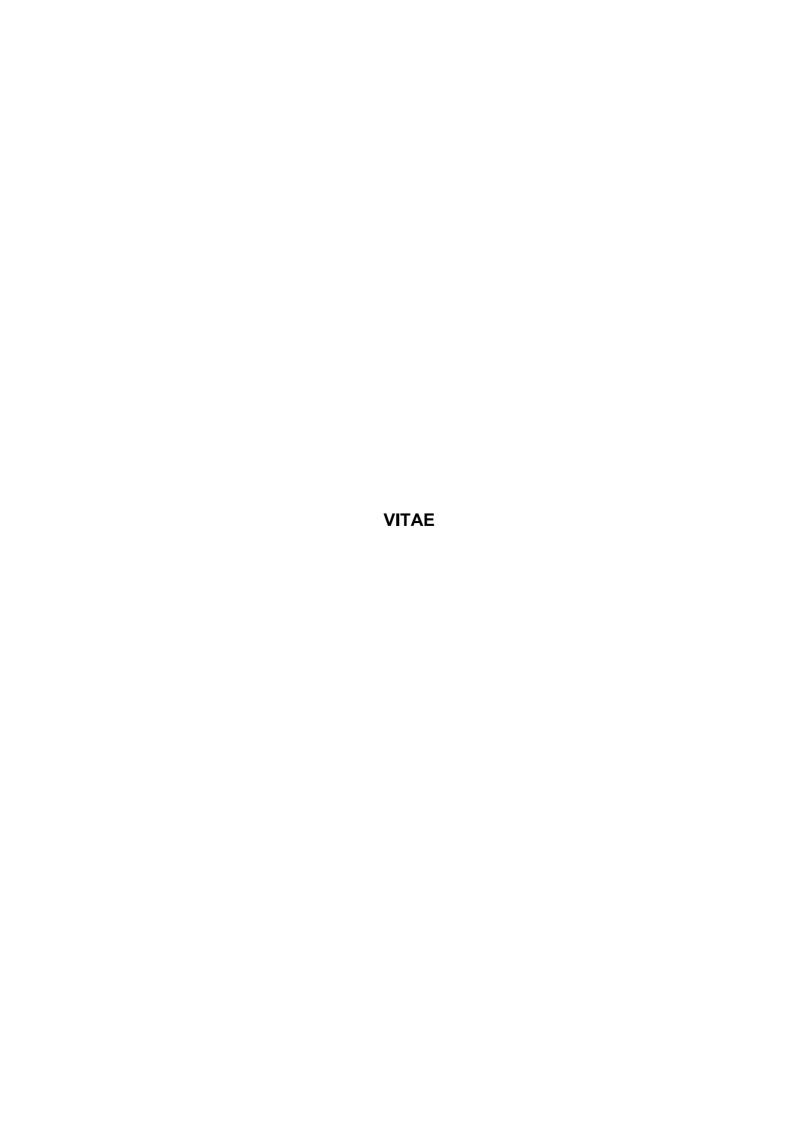   ขอแสดงความนับถือ

                                          (รองศาสตราจารย์ ดร.สมชาย สันติวัฒนกุล)
                                          คณบดีบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย

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VITAE

VITAE

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