



Hotel suggestion box and its influence on the upgrading of hotel services

Maznah Wan Omar¹, Azfahane Zakaria², Mohd Noor Mohd Ali³ and Syed Mohammed AlHady Syed Ahmad AlHady⁴

¹Universiti Teknologi Mara, Kedah Campus, Faculty of Business Management, Peti Surat 187, 08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia

²Universiti Teknologi Mara, Kedah Campus, Faculty of Business Management, Peti Surat 187, 08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia

³Universiti Teknologi Mara, Penang Campus, Department of Physics, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

⁴Universiti Teknologi Mara, Kedah Campus, Faculty of Information Management, Peti Surat 187, 08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia.

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ABSTRACT

Hotel industry is a people oriented service industry which rely on the abilities, behavior and the attitudes of the employees to stay and lead the game. However customers suggestion and feedback is one of the most key factor which would ensure the sustainability of the guest flow to the hotel itself remains. This study aims to examine the differences in consumer behavior among guest of hotels in Malaysians in terms of culture dimension, demographic factors and consumer feedback towards using suggestion box after and during their stay as a guest in the hotel. The findings of the study will provide evidence for hotel management to look into the importance of suggestion box and how it could upgrade the services rendered by the hotel to its guest. Survey method will be employed in this study. Questionnaires will be distributed to two hundred quest who stayed at three different hotels which is categorized as a "four star hotel" located in Pulau Pinang, Kedah, and Perlis during the period of November 2010 till January 2011. Respondents will be randomly selected based on the interval of every five customers that check-in to the selected hotels. Samples will be controlled to eliminate inappropriate elements contained in the sampling frame.

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Introduction

The quality of services in the hotel industry is a very important factor to indicate its success. The existing trend of a complete quality management in hotel industry ensures the achievement of competitive advantage of hotel companies. The hotel industry which is a people-oriented service – the abilities, behavior, and attitudes of employees have become the very cornerstone of the business, especially in these competitive times. However feedback by guest during and after their stay at the hotel itself would be an important indicator in order to sustain and increase the flow of guest to the hotel. This can be obtained by enforcing and encouraging the usage of suggestion box among guest of the hotel.

Many of us associate feedback with unhappy or unsatisfactory performance but many misunderstood the concept where positive feedback would motivate both management and employees to increase their work performance and also would lead to creative ideas for the improvement of the hotel itself.

Suggestion Box

Suggestion box is a device which is being used to obtained comments, information and a mean to forward request. Suggestion box comes in various methods either the traditional box where slip of papers are used to convey the message or the advance method where the IT is in place.

Nature of customer complaint or feedback

Feedbacks or complaints by guest should be treated as an opportunity to obtained information on the service rendered to the guest. Feedbacks will assist the hotel to rectify the hiccups which was made known to them.

Complaint behavior is defined as an action taken by individual that involves in communicating something negative regarding the product or services (Jacoby and Jaccard, 1981)

and as a result of unperceived dissatisfaction by a customer (Mowen , 1998)

Culture Dimensions

Culture has been identified as one of the factors which influence a person's complaint behaviour (Heung & Lam, 2003) and culture also may effect a customer's complaint motive.

Customer retention

Customer retention is driven by customer satisfaction and different business sectors or industries would faced different kind of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among guest (Roland and Zahorik, 1993 and Fisher et al., 1999). It has also documented that retaining a customer is an important issue as losing a customer can be very costly (Ndubis 2003a; 2003b).

Demographic Factors

Demographic factors are perceived to be good predictors of certain complaining behaviours (Boote, 1998, Heung and Lam , 2003 and Volkov et al', 2002). Among the many variables are age, income and education levels. However it has been discovered that complaint behavior is related to age and linked to income and education of a customer (Heung and Lam, 2003).

Methodology

A survey method is use in this study where 200 questionnaires were distributed to guests in 3 hotels (3-star hotels) located in the northern states of the Peninsular Malaysia, with the help of the hotel staff itself. The customer service staff of the hotel would identify the respondents based on their nationality as the study aim to study the differences in consumer behavior among guest in Malaysias in terms of culture dimension, demographic factors and consumer feedback towards using suggestion box. The questionnaires were place in the hotel room itself and guest are free to answer the questionnaire with the help of the hotel staff during their stay. Questionnaires were then

collected after the stay of the guest itself.

Objectives

The objectives of the study focuses on:

- a) To determine whether culture does influence hotel guest to use Suggestion Box as a medium of feedback.
- b) To determine whether demographic variables does influence hotel guest to use Suggestion Box as a medium of feedback.
- c) To study the correlation between Suggestion Box and Service improvement of the hotel itself.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will provide evidence to the management that the hotel guest's feedback could be an important element Hotel management could work on and it should be the basis for service improvement through suggestions, criticisms and comments given by hotel guest. With that, Hotel management could create new strategies as well as upgrade services from time to time in order to fulfil the need of their guest.

Scope of the Study

This study only focuses on the usage of Suggestion Box by Hotel guest as a medium of feedback. The elements of Culture and nationality of the guest will be research on, in order to identify whether these variables could have an impact towards the usage of suggestion box as a mean to provide feedback during their stay in the hotel.

Other elements which could also have an impact towards the improvement of the service upgrading will not be taken into consideration.

Furthermore, this study attempts to present a snapshot of what is in the mind of the guest general view without any specific identification of the hotel itself. The target population of guest are those whose age are 18 years and above and have stayed as guest in the hotel.

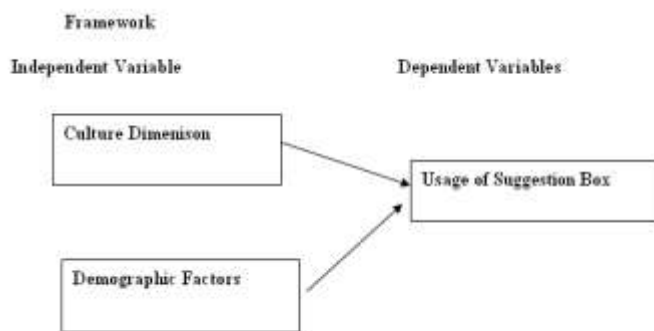


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The diagram above shows the relationship between Independent Variable which are Culture Dimension and Demographic Factors of the hotel guest itself and dependent variable which is Usage of Suggestion Box.

Conclusion

With the increase growth of hotel in Malaysia, each hotel need to ensure that the services rendered to its guest is to the best of its quality. Should the hotel fail to respond to the feedback or complaints of the hotel guest, chances for repeat visits by hotel guest are very slim. Past studies have indicate that retention of customers is important issue as losing a customer can be very costly. Therefore hotel management need to find creative ways as how to encourage guest to voice out their comments and feedback to the hotel as a mean for service improvement.

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