

THE INVESTIGATION OF HOTELS IN THE NORTHERN PARTS OF THAILAND FOR FOREIGN TOURISTS TO THE QUALITY OF SERVICES

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ABSTRACT: *The research aimed 1) to study the investigation of a hotel in the northern areas of Thailand for Foreign Tourists to the quality of services; and 2) to compare the happiness of foreign tourists toward service quality of hotels in the Northern Areas of Thailand by demographic profiles. A questionnaire was used as a research tool for collecting data from a sample of 450. The data were analyzed for descriptive statistics: percentiles, means and standard deviations (S.D.) while inferential statistics used were Independent-Sample t-test, One-Way ANOVA (F-test), and using Least Significant Difference (LSD) test to compare each pair at the significance level of 0.05.*

The results in this study revealed that the overall happiness of foreign tourists toward service quality in the Northern Areas of Thailand was high ($\bar{x} = 3.98$). When looking at each item, the results demonstrated that responsiveness was ($\bar{x} = 4.03$), assurance ($\bar{x} = 4.01$), reliability ($\bar{x} = 3.98$), empathy ($\bar{x} = 3.98$), and tangibility ($\bar{x} = 3.90$) respectively. The levels of happiness results in comparison in this study showed that different demographic factors of foreign tourists in terms of age, education, domicile, career, and monthly income affected the levels of happiness at the significance level of 0.05; meanwhile, the demographic factors in terms of gender and marital status did not differently affect the levels of happiness at the significance level of 0.05.

Keywords: *Quality of Service, SERVQUAL, Hotel, Happiness*

INTRODUCTION

Thailand is a small but amazing country; it has an area of 513,120 kilometers and an estimated population of 68.2 million persons according to data from the 2016 census. Thailand has rich resources for travelling: mysterious temples, beautiful islands, nice beaches, delicious foods, marvelous cultural attractions. All those elements deeply attract people from all over the world (Thaiways, 2002; Sompong & Rampai, 2015). In 2016,

around 32 million visitors go there. Tourism is becoming the pillar industry in Thailand and has a profound effect on the Thai economy. Tourism brings a lot of foreign exchange to Thailand and this money is the foundation of development of country. In addition, tourism solves a lot of social problems in Thailand, and a stable social order is good for economic development. First of all, tourism promotes development of related industries. Tourism is not just people coming to Thailand, going sightseeing to those historical places and enjoying the natural landscape; people need restaurants to eat, hotels to live in, vehicles to drive, stores in which to shop. For example, according to the data from Thai Hotels Association (THA), during July to August 2016, the average hotel occupancy rates were at 75% and there are 457,029 hotels and guesthouses in Thailand (from the 2014 hotels and guest houses survey). These hotels and guest houses bring

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great benefits to Thai economy (Economic and Social Statistics Bureau, 2015).

Tourism is usually described as having three major types of impacts on many of the places which tourists visit (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, & Wanhill, 1993; Simoni & Mihai, 2012; Zaei & Zaei, 2013). These effects are economic, environmental, and socio-cultural in nature. Contrasting some of its environmental and socio-cultural effects, tourism's economic impacts are mainly considered to be beneficial. These are: 1) the generation of foreign exchange, 2) the creation of new jobs and employment opportunities, 3) the stimulation of trade, income and entrepreneurship, especially in the service and small business sectors, 4) the provision of new infrastructure which is available for non-tourism uses, 5) increased regional development, particularly in isolated areas, 6) greater tax revenues permitting greater government spending or reduced taxes on

other activities, and 7) the operation of the multiplier effect.

Developers in most property sectors link what they anticipate is the positive impact of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to their market. Tourism is viewed as being another hot growth sector for Thailand. With a record high of 32 million foreign-tourist arrivals in 2016, the country is demonstrating lasting strength in tourism. This is good news for hotels and serviced apartments, which can expect higher occupancies and the opportunity to push for higher room rates. While, there are some concerns over the strengthening baht, the cost of accommodation, food and beverages in Thailand is still low by international standards and the country is well positioned in the range of tourist destinations. Information on Table 1 presented foreign-tourist arrivals between 2015 and 2016 (Department of Tourism, 2017).

Table 1. The number of foreign-tourist arrivals in 2015 and 2016

Continent	2015 (Million arrivals)	2016 (Million arrivals)
East Asia	19.9	21.6
Europe	5.6	6.1
America	1.2	1.4
South Asia	1.4	1.5
Oceania	0.9	0.9
Middle East	0.6	0.7
Africa	0.1	0.1
Total	29.9	32.5

Source: Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand 2015 - 2016

According to the Professional Tourist Guide Association of Thailand, along with the College of Innovation Thammasart University and Department of Tourism (2012), Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand (2017) revealed that the effects of the AEC and globalization on Thai tourism and how they will create changes affecting Thai tourism, as follows: **1) An increasing number of tourists:** Globalization will lead to tourism expansion, and the AEC will reduce its tourist movement limitations.

Examples of AEC reductions are seen in the granting of visas, where one visa is granted for entry to all ASEAN countries; in changed regulations and procedures with regard to entry permits and in adopting the same standards for inspecting immigrants in the region. More than 600 million more people will come to Thailand, and if there is a bridge connecting Singapore and Indonesia, especially tourists from Indonesia whose population is 240 million. As Thailand is the center of the region and bordered by

neighboring countries the most, there is still an opportunity for Thailand to welcome more tourists from outside the ASEAN region. **2) More competitors in tourism:** Nevertheless, Thailand must still compete with neighboring countries in order to attract tourists, especially Singapore and Malaysia, their strategic attempt to develop man-made sightseeing attractions, such as Universal Studios, Garden by the Bay, Formula One events, organizing conferences, seminars, expositions and high end medical tourism. Singapore and Malaysia have the advantage of having regionally central air and marine transportation and they are also the center of finance for this region. There are many international offices and international high-quality educational institutions in their countries. So, a free flow of service and investment will force Thai business to compete more with international business and will also make the tourism business belong to other countries more too. **3) More connectivity of tourism in the region:** Tourism in the ASEAN region has tended to become more connected, especially since the AEC's regional tourist promotion has improved communication infrastructure connecting every country in ASEAN, and also with the reduction of limits to tourist movements. These agreements will render tourism services in ASEAN as more regional services. In the future, Thailand's tourism business will network with foreign businesses, investment or founding offices in neighboring countries to enable complete services for tourists and for those desiring to travel in many countries more effectively. **4) The objectives and styles of tourism will vary more:** Tourists will have more diverse objectives in traveling across countries: whether to participate in an exposition, make a study trip, travel for business and pursue a sales offer, travel to study the market (business tourism), travel to buy goods or receive services and so on. Moreover, when communication and transportation across countries becomes more convenient and low cost, more people will go across countries in order to receive services, such as medical services, surgery, short term study or training,

further education and elderly care, and other services. **5) Personal tourism will continue to increase:** The development of information technology gives people worldwide more accessibility to tourist information, and social networking helps to broadcast tourist information still further. People share their travel experiences in many places, and can even view overseas maps or street pictures from the comfort of their own home. The development of trans-national transportation routes with convenient border crossings will lead to more international public transportation services. This will increase the opportunity for personal travel, and also for trans-national travel by car and railway, as similarly experienced by people in countries in which tourism by group tour is not popular. **6) Developing routes and new sightseeing attractions:** The creation of trans-national transportation routes will also create new sightseeing attractions, such as the development of the three-way Pan-Asia railway, which is a railway system between Kunming city in China and other countries in ASEAN, connecting Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. This railway will link with the railway system in Thailand, and connect with Malaysia and Singapore; in other words, with an area that will develop the economy, known as the Economic Corridor Project. The East-West Economic Corridor, North-South Economic Corridor and the Southern Economic Corridor are areas that will be developed to be new sightseeing attractions, especially on a frontier that has the strong potential to be a new transformation sightseeing attraction. **7) Developing international standards for tourism service in this region:** It is important that the AEC has international standards for every section of its tourism services, through objectives that facilitate and protect foreign investors in the tourism business so that the rights of tourists and customers are also guaranteed and protected. Moreover, the AEC should facilitate the running of tourism businesses and give service across boundaries. For this reason, tourism business entrepreneurs must meet the cost of

improving tourism services to international standards. Small businesses may therefore face obstacles to meet improved standards due to their lack of human resources, investment and business network (The College of Innovation Thammasart University & Department of Tourism, 2012). Northern parts of Thailand have the advantages of tourist destinations such as natural sightseeing, historical, cultural, and specifically historic city sightseeing. The tourist industry in the northern part of Thailand has developed furthered tourist destinations in such areas as adventure tourism, ecotourism, spiritual tourism, sport tourism and health tourism. The strategy to develop the tourist industry in the Thailand Act of Economic and Social Development of 2012-2016 concerns sustainable development in all sectors (Department of Tourism, 2016; National Economic and Social Development Board, 2012). Value added tourist products, through the idea of creative economic and innovation tourist destination development, became obligatory, to chair community responsibility to serve sustainable tourism, such as the promotion activities for local tourist attractions; home stay by community's management, accommodation (hotels) and local products development, in order to serve lifelong learning and sustainable development, according to King Bhumibol Adulyadej's expression of "Blow up from inside, an idea to develop human and community as sustainable development" (The Chaipattana Foundation, 2003). Thus, the research into "The Happiness of Foreign Tourists to the Quality of Service of a Hotel in the Northern Areas of Thailand" is necessary, in order to introduce a high quality of service in a hotel in the northern areas of Thailand.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the investigation of a hotel in the northern areas of Thailand for Foreign Tourists to the quality of services.
2. To compare the happiness of foreign tourists with the quality of services of a hotel in northern part of Thailand by demographic profiles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the United Nation's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), (2012), tourism is defined as 'a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/ professional purposes'. The tourism industry is one of the most dynamic and fast growing economic sectors in the world (World Tourism Organization UNWTO, 2012). As a result of intense competition and the hostility of environmental factors, service quality has become a foundation stone marketing strategy for companies. This highlights how important improving service quality is to organizations for their survival and growth since it could help them grab these challenges they face in the competitive markets. However, there is a need for these organizations to understand what service quality is in order to attain their objectives. According to Eshghi, A., Roy, S. K., & Ganguli, S. (2008) in service marketing areas, service quality is generally defined as the overall assessment of a service by the customers which a service meets customer's needs or expectations (Eshghi et al., 2008). Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L., (1985) define service quality as "*The discrepancy between consumers' perceptions of services offered by a particular firm and their expectations about firms offering such services*". Therefore, service quality is an important area to academicians because of its relevancy to service companies. In 1985, the SERVQUAL model was developed by Parasuraman and his researcher group which represents service quality as the discrepancy between a customer's expectations of service offering and the customer's perceptions of the service received. This model strives to measure exactly is the consumer perception of the service quality which depends on the size of the gap between expected service and perceived service which in turn, depends on the gaps under the control of the service provider such as delivery of service marketing areas (Parasuraman et al., 1985). The first SERVQUAL model was made of ten

dimensions of service quality when created; tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding the customer, and access. Then, later on these dimensions were reduced to five because some dimensions were overlapping (communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding customers and access) and they included Tangibles- physical facilities, equipment, and staff appearance. Reliability-ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately; Responsiveness- willingness to help customers and provide prompt service; Assurance-knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence; Empathy- caring, individual attention the firm provides its customers

(Parasuraman et al., 1988). These dimensions mainly emphasis on the human aspects of service delivery (responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and empathy) and the tangibles of service. According to study carried out by Ladhari (2009), it is recommended that the SERVQUAL model is a good scale to use when measuring service quality in various specific industries but that it is appropriate to choose the most important dimensions of this model that fit to that particular service being measured in order to assure reliable and valid results.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The target population in this research was foreign tourists (3,739,224 foreigners) who stayed at hotels in the northern part of Thailand as shown on table 2.

Table 2. The number of Accommodation Establishments by foreigner arrivals

Provinces list in the northern part of Thailand (2013)	Accommodation Establishments (Number of guest arrivals)
1. Kamphaengphet province	6,750 foreigners
2. Chiangmai province	2,584,091 foreigners
3. Chiangrai province	484,132 foreigners
4. Phetchabun province	12,318 foreigners
5. Phitsanulok province	147,963 foreigners
6. Phrae province	29,317 foreigners
7. Lampang province	47,739 foreigners
8. Lamphun province	7,425 foreigners
9. Sukhothai province	176,483 foreigners
10. Uttaradit province	3,229 foreigners
11. Uthai Thani province	3,668 foreigners
12. Tak province	20,455 foreigners
13. Nakhon Sawan province	12,762 foreigners
14. Nan province	14,704 foreigners
15. Phayao province	2,188 foreigners
16. Phichit province	1,643 foreigners
17. Mae Hong Son province	184,357 foreigners
Total	3,739,224 foreigners

Compiled by: Statistical Forecasting Bureau, National Statistical Office

Source: Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2016)

(<http://service.nso.go.th/nso/web/statseries/statseries23.html>)

The sample of this research is calculated by using Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1973) formula with 95% confidence level. The calculation

formula of Taro Yamane is presented as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3,739,224}{1 + 3,739,224 (0.05)^2}$$

Where :

n = sample size required

N = number of people in the population

e = allowable error (%)

After calculated the sample size by substituting the numbers into the Yamane formula, the numbers of sample is 399.99

foreigners. In order to obtain reliable of data, researcher has increased sample size to 450 foreigners.

Provinces list in the northern part of Thailand (2017)	Accommodation Establishments (Number of guest arrivals)	Quota Sampling (%)	Number of questionn aire
1. Kamphaengphet province	6,750	0.18	1
2. Chiangmai province	2,584,091	69.11	317
3. Chiangrai province	484,132	12.95	69
4. Phetchabun province	12,318	0.33	2
5. Phitsanulok province	147,963	3.96	16
6. Phrae province	29,317	0.78	1
7. Lampang province	47,739	1.28	5
8. Lamphun province	7,425	0.2	1
9. Sukhothai province	176,483	4.72	15
10. Uttaradit province	3,229	0.09	0
11. Uthai Thani province	3,668	0.1	1
12. Tak province	20,455	0.55	2
13. Nakhon Sawan province	12,762	0.34	1
14. Nan province	14,704	0.39	1
15. Phayao province	2,188	0.06	0
16. Phichit province	1,643	0.04	0
17. Mae Hong Son province	184,357	4.93	19
Total	3,739,224	100.00	450.00

Noted: created by authors

The sample group in this research included 450 foreign tourists who stayed at hotels in the northern part of Thailand. A questionnaire was used as a research instrument for collecting the data. In the questionnaire, open-ended questions and the rating scale questions (1: very unpleasant, 2: somewhat unpleasant, 3: nethier pleasant nor unpleasant, 4:

somewhat pleasant, 5: pleasant) were used to measure the SERVQUAL direction and intensity of tourist attitudes. Statistics were used for data analysis namely frequencies, percentiles, means and standard deviations (S.D.). Inferential statistics used were the Independent Sample t-test, one-way ANOVA

(F-test) and differential each pair testing with the least significant difference (LSD).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this research, the conceptual research framework has been created through the theory SERVQUAL by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) as shown in Figure 1. SERVQUAL Theory is a multi-item scale developed to assess customer perceptions of service quality in service and retail businesses. The scale decomposes the notion of service quality into five constructs as follows: 1) Tangibles - physical facilities, equipment, staff appearance, etc., 2) Reliability - ability to perform service dependably and accurately, 3) Responsiveness - willingness to help and respond to customer need, 4) Assurance - ability of staff to inspire confidence and trust

5) Empathy - the extent to which caring individualized service is given. SERVQUAL represents service quality as the discrepancy between a customer's expectations for a service offering and the customer's perceptions of the service received, requiring respondents to answer questions about both their expectations and their perceptions (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The use of perceived as opposed to actual service received makes the SERVQUAL measure an attitude measure that is related to, but not the same as, happiness (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1991) presented some revisions to the original SERVQUAL measure to remedy problems with high means and standard deviations found on some questions and to obtain a direct measure of the importance of each construct to the customer.

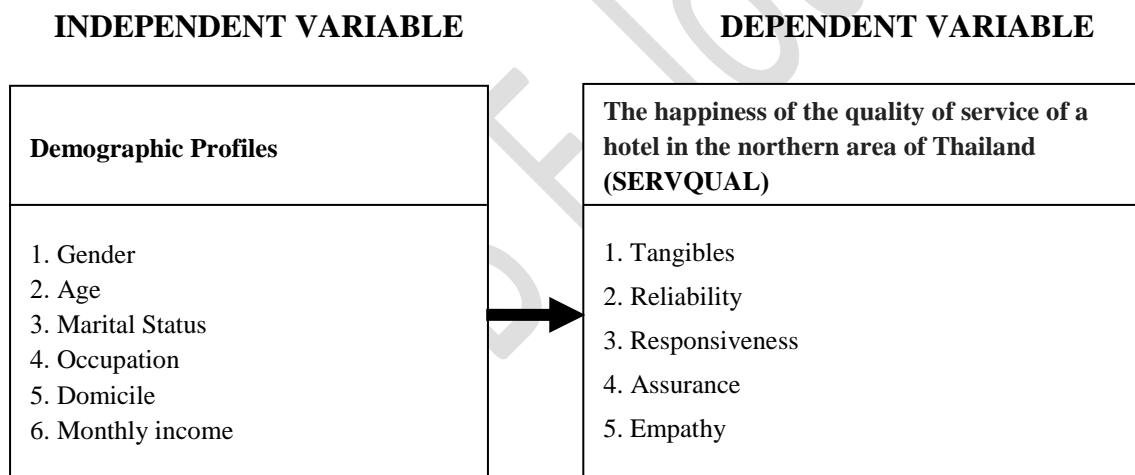


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the happiness of foreign tourists to the quality of service of hotels in the northern areas of Thailand

HYPOTHESIS

The level of different demographic factors has affected the level of happiness of the foreign tourists on the differential of the quality of services of a hotel in the northern areas of Thailand.

RESULTS

The results of “the investigation of a hotel in the northern areas of Thailand for Foreign Tourists to the quality of services” will be presented by following the objectives of this research.

Firstly results of the happiness of foreign tourists with the quality of services of a hotel in northern part of Thailand are shown in Table 3 and 4 below.

Table 3. Demographic Factors of the participants
(N = 450)

Demographic Factors	Frequency	Percentile
1. Gender		
- Male*	232	52.00
- Female	218	48.00
2. Age		
- Under 21 yrs	22	5.00
- Between 21 and 30 yrs	58	13.00
- Between 31 and 40 yrs*	141	31.00
- Between 41 and 50 yrs	136	30.00
- Between 51 and 60 yrs	65	14.00
- Over 60 yrs	28	6.00
3. Marital Status		
- Single*	275	61.00
- Married	104	23.00
- Divorced / Windowed / Separated	71	16.00
4. Domicile		
- Asia*	246	55.00
- Europe	123	27.00
- America	66	15.00
- Africa / Oceania	15	3.00
5. Occupation		
- Company employee*	165	37.00
- Government employee	149	33.00
- Business owner	75	17.00
- Student	17	4.00
- Retire	36	8.00
- General employee	8	2.00
6. Monthly income		
- Less than US\$ 2,000	72	16.00
- Between US\$ 2,001 and 3,000	52	12.00
- Between US\$ 3,001 and 4,000	52	12.00
- Between US\$ 4,001 and 5,000*	104	23.00
- Between US\$ 5,001 and 6,000	38	8.00
- Upper than US\$ 6,000	132	29.00

Table 3, in terms of demographic factors: most respondents' gender were male (52%), age between 31 and 40 years old (31%), single

status (61%), Asian domicile (55%), working in private company as employee (37%), and monthly income upper than US\$ 6,000 (29%).

Table 4. The analysis of the happiness of foreign tourists with the quality of services a hotel in northern part of Thailand

The happiness of the quality of service of a hotel in the northern areas of Thailand (SERVQUAL) by foreign tourists	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (S.D.)	Level of Happiness
1. Tangibles	3.90	0.54	High
2. Reliability	3.98	0.55	High
3. Responsiveness	4.03	0.59	High
4. Assurance	4.01	0.58	High
5. Empathy	3.98	0.55	High
Total	3.98	0.48	High

As shown in Table 4, the results revealed that most responses had an overall happiness with the quality of services in hotels in the northern part of Thailand was high at $\bar{x} = 3.98$. Meanwhile, the results for each item revealed that responsiveness was high at $\bar{x} = 4.03$, assurance was high at $\bar{x} = 4.01$, reliability was high at $\bar{x} = 3.98$, empathy was high at $\bar{x} =$

3.98, and tangibles were high at $\bar{x} = 3.90$ respectively.

Secondly, results of this research, designed to compare the happiness of foreign tourists with the quality of services of a hotel in northern part of Thailand according to demographic factors, are shown on Table 5 below.

Table 5. The comparison of the happiness of foreign tourists with the quality of services of a hotel in northern part of Thailand by demographic factors

Demographic Factors / SERVQUAL	Tangibles 3.90	Reliability 3.98	Responsiveness 4.03	Assurance 4.01	Empathy 3.98
Gender	0.651	0.107	0.812	0.176	0.107
Age	0.021*	0.005*	0.000*	0.440	0.005*
Marital Status	0.061	0.278	0.074	0.091	0.278
Education	0.002*	0.000*	0.000*	0.001*	0.000*
Domicile	0.000*	0.001*	0.018*	0.000*	0.001*
Occupation	0.000*	0.017*	0.015*	0.241	0.017*
Monthly income	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*

* : Different at a statistical significance level of 0.05

As Table 5 shows, results indicated that, in terms of gender and marital status, they have no different statistics significance in **SERVQUAL** (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) at a level of 0.05. Meanwhile, when it comes to education, domicile and monthly income, it was found that there was a different statistical significance in **SERVQUAL** (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) at level of 0.05. With the exception of assurance in **SERVQUAL**, there was not the different statistical significance on some demographic factors, i.e. age and occupation.

DISCUSSION

The research into “Happiness of foreign tourists to the quality of service of a hotel in Thailand,” found some issues that will be discussed below.

The study found that happiness levels of foreign tourists with the quality of services of a hotel in Thailand were, on an overall average, high. This could be due to the quality of hotel services implementing improvements to the quality of services. Improving the quality of services should be focused on creating a customer-centric attitude and expectations, so it can raise to the highest

happiness eventually. The second issue was to increase the skills and capacity of hotel staff to answer customer questions. This increase provides confidence to customers, in which the high performance of employees is a key factor. Also, hotels should be aware of the quality of the services they offer, so that customers get good quality service and are highly happiness. This is related to the concepts of Kotler et. al. (2013), who discussed the importance of business services that help manage the difference. In order to offer a good expectation service quality, this also relates to the concepts of Pungpho and Wanarat's (2014) research into "Factors Affecting The Expectation of Service Quality in Service Sectors." They indicated that the overall customer happiness with the quality of services was high. In addition, the international tourists' happiness with the quality of services of accommodation in Thailand, researched by Jaroenpong (2004), and the tourist happiness with the quality of services of the Kho Chang National Park accommodation in Trat province, researched by Suwanpipat (2009), where it was also found that the overall tourist happiness with the quality of services was high.

Considering each of the five SERVQUAL aspects, by prioritizing the descending level of foreign tourists' happiness in the quality of services, it was found that the average of responsiveness was highest, while assurance, reliability, empathy and tangibles were also high. These results from the hotels in the northern parts of Thailand have been emphasized on the quality of services development by a focus on customer-centric measures, such as taking good care and helping, facilitating, coordinating and delivering services to respond to their customers immediately. These results were also found by the Thomyawit (2010) and Suwanpipat (2009) research studies.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1991) revealed that the evaluation of the quality of consumer service is linked to the comparison of expectations and perceptions after receiving the services. For example, in terms of tangibles, things can be touched like places, offices, tools and service areas. For reliability, they are

offering corrected services as a promise and of having confidence in their professional career.

SUGGESTIONS

AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results in this research include recommendations for each aspect, as guidelines for the hotels in the northern part in Thailand. They should take notice of these points to improve their policies in the quality of service offerings.

1. The tangibles of service, the mean score of the hotels' equipment was lowest; therefore, the equipment is old or lacks modern hotel equipment. The hotels should be modified and provide adequate modern equipment in the guest rooms and bathrooms. The internet in rooms and lobby, and Internet access (Wi-Fi) should be available anywhere in the hotels; ATM machines should be placed in a good location; decoration and the surrounding natural environment should be made beautiful by planting trees. Additional improvements include that the entrance should be wide and include additional lighting to highlight the entrance. The environment inside and outside the hotels should be clean and attractive. Also, improving the areas of the hall and around the hotels should include adequate lighting. These guides can help the hotels to increase the average score in this research that presented less than the well-dressed staff aspect. Lastly, the hotels should be updated in terms of advertising and media, as a way of providing useful information to their valued customers, such as details of sightseeing spots, travel routes, public transports, facilities and services.

2. For reliability of services, the average scores of the service, looking at ways of customer retention, can be improved, so there should be a declaration or a clear message to customers by relating messages about privacy and personal information policies. In cases where the customer must provide personal information, they should have more confidence about the hotel's services. The hotel managers should ensure that their relevant staffs understand all relevant information and all the hotels' policies. For the maintenance of equipment and appliances in the hotels, they should have a schedule or clear signs of consistently checking, which can create an impression of

reliability. This may improve the lower average scores in the research results.

3. In terms of responsiveness, the average score can be improved, so hotels should be able to increase staff performance to meet the customers' requirements, for example, empowering employees to be more responsive to their customers by giving faster and more flexible service. In order to train staff, to improve knowledge, skills and understanding, providing sufficient information to customers, having a service mindset, and well-mannered services should be targeted. These can improve the overall score for foreign tourists' happiness.

4. For assurance of services, the mean of hotel standards and safety scores can be improved; consequently, creating high standards of service for hotel management plays an important part, namely creating hotel service regulations for all relevant staff. This may help hotels to reduce mistakes and errors in their operations. Integrated services offer facilities for customers. Whenever customers get the information they need quickly; it results in good images and impressions. The customers' safety of life and property is important; so that hotels should arrange employ a 24-hour security officer and add surveillance cameras, electrical fire alarms and improve the security system regularly.

5. Lastly, the factor relating to empathy of services was considered. Such service should be friendly and caring for the customers. The mean for this aspect may also be improved. In order to improve this aspect, hotels should train their staff in service mindedness and soft skills, such as saying "Sawasdee" every time they meet a customer and saying "Thank you" when the customer leaves. In order to keep customers, the hotel should provide good media for communication such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google plus. This way of expressing their thanks to customers allows customers to feel special. This will allow opportunities for customers to return to use the services again.

CONCLUSIONS

The objectives in this research were 1) to study the happiness of foreign tourists toward services quality of hotels in the Northern Areas of Thailand; and 2) to compare the happiness of foreign tourists toward service quality of hotels in the Northern Areas of Thailand by demographic profiles. A questionnaire was used as a research tool for collecting data from a sample of 450. The data were analyzed for descriptive statistics: percentiles, means and standard deviations (S.D.) while inferential statistics used were Independent-Sample t-test, One-Way ANOVA (F-test), and using Least Significant Difference (LSD) test to compare each pair at the significance level of 0.05. The results in this study revealed that the overall happiness of foreign tourists toward service quality in the Northern Areas of Thailand was high ($\bar{x} = 3.98$). When looking at each item, the results demonstrated that responsiveness was ($\bar{x} = 4.03$), assurance ($\bar{x} = 4.01$), reliability ($\bar{x} = 3.98$), empathy ($\bar{x} = 3.98$), and tangibility ($\bar{x} = 3.90$) respectively.

For tangibility ($\bar{x} = 3.90$), the result found that an average highest score of foreign tourists' response was in the good services from hotel staffs such as a good manner and well-dress. In terms of reliability ($\bar{x} = 3.98$), an average highest score of foreign tourists' response was no error and mistake from the hotel staff services. Then responsiveness ($\bar{x} = 4.03$), an average highest score of their response were in the readiness of the hotel staff services. For assurance ($\bar{x} = 4.01$), an average highest score of foreign tourists' response was the competency of the hotel staff services such as ability to provide sufficient information and ability to answer the questions. Lastly, in terms of empathy ($\bar{x} = 3.98$), an average highest score of foreign tourists' response was the hotel staffs meet the guest requirement by providing the best services.

Meanwhile, the different happiness results in comparison in this study showed that the demographic profiles of foreign tourists were different in terms of age, education, domicile, career, and monthly income at the significant level of 0.05. The demographic profiles of

foreign tourists were not different in terms of gender and marital status at the significant level of 0.05.

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