

SERVICE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINES OF ACCOMMODATION BUSINESS FOR SUPPORTING NEW NORMAL

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ABSTRACT

The research attempted to study the satisfaction of guest and to propose the Service Quality Improvement Guidelines of Accommodation Business for Supporting New Normal. The population were 400 visitors by questionnaire for data collection and data analysis. Data were additionally analyzed in percentage, standard deviation and One-way ANOVA.

According to the result, the majority of the respondents were female, single, 20–29 years old. The highest education in a Bachelor's degree, students and worked as a officer/employee of private company. A monthly income of 15,000 Baht.

The study of respondents' behavior found that the propose of staying was for travel, staycation with friends on weekend for 2-3 nights, almost rates of the room are 1,000 – 2,000 Bath/night, staying at 3-4 star hotels. The result showed that, the respondents booked by online agent such as Agoda, Booking.com and searching from the internet and social media.

The result showed that, the satisfaction of guest as follows services, safety, access, accommodation and sanitation and hygiene are the high level.

The researcher found the guideline to supporting New Normal for Accommodation Business that should had more the policy and standard for the assurance of guest. Making new standard during the new normal tourist behavior after the pandemic with sustainable policy from public and private sector.

Keywords: Service Quality, Accommodation Business, New Normal

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is one of the most significant industries in the country's economy, and it has been directly affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic, leading travelers' behavior to change. For this reason, various related enterprises must adapt themselves to achieve their capability to survive and continue their business in the current pandemic (August 2021). The hotel business has also been affected quite severely. Despite the tourism stimulation from foreign tourists, most hotels have not yet recovered (Thai Hotels Association, 2021).

The Amazing Thailand Safety and Health Administration, or SHA, acts as a sign telling tourists that a place has been assessed according to the criteria. But that is only the basic prerequisite. In order to make changes to accommodate future trends, it is essential to study many perspectives of tourism services, especially in the accommodation business, which is a place where excellent hygiene measures must be taken into account together with the excellent

services to provide the highest satisfaction to tourists which will requires a thorough understanding of changing tourist behavior.

The objectives of this research study are to study the satisfaction of service users or guests towards the accommodation business for supporting the new normal and to propose the service quality improvement guidelines of accommodation business for supporting the new normal. The results of this research will benefit both the service users and the accommodation business as a whole in the country, which is considered to improve the quality of services sustainably and increase the competitiveness of the country's accommodation business.

In this research, the researcher studied the documents, concepts, theories and related researches as follows:

1. Concepts and theories about service quality
2. Concepts and theories about satisfaction
3. Concepts and theories about new normal tourism
4. Concepts about accommodation business

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To study the satisfaction of service users or guests towards the accommodation business for supporting the new normal.
2. To propose the service quality improvement guidelines of accommodation business for supporting the new normal.

METHOD

1. The researchers surveyed the business information of accommodation in the research area to study the overview and context of the area.
2. Customer Satisfaction Survey for accommodation businesses for information on customer satisfaction towards accommodation businesses for supporting the new normal.
3. Content analysis and synthesis of the results of the questionnaire to determine the service quality improvement guidelines of accommodation business for supporting the new normal.

Population and Sample

Guests of accommodation businesses stay in Bangkok. Since the exact population is unknown, the sample size can be calculated from the formula of W.G. Cochran's unknown sample size, with the sample selection criteria being; 1) Being 20 years of age or older 2) Those who have used accommodation business services in Bangkok for a period of not more than 1 year.

RESULTS

1. General information of respondents

According to the survey, most of the respondents were female, from 217 people, 54.3% were female, followed by 30.0% male and 12.5% LGBTQ+. 76.3% were single. The sample group was 20-29 years old (41.5%) followed by 30-39 years (25.5%). Most of them had a bachelor's degree (70.8%). Most of them were students (40.0%), followed by private company employees, (30.5%), with an average monthly income of less than 15,000 baht (39.3%), and 35,001 baht or more (31.3%), respectively.

2. Behavior of using accommodation business services

A study of behavior of using accommodation services found that most of the purpose of the stay was to travel (66.5%), followed by Staycation (14.2%) and Workcation (9.3%), respectively. Almost half of them stayed with friends (47.3%) and stayed with family (22.5%). During the 1 year period, an average stay was 2-3 times (46.5%) and 41.8% used the service for the first time. The sample group usually stayed on Saturday-Sunday, (41.5%), for 2-3 nights (59.3%), and had the highest room cost per night equal to 1,001-2,000 baht (33.5%), followed by 2,001- 3,000 baht (28.0%) respectively. Most of the sample groups traveled to use the service by private cars or company cars (71.8%), staying in 3-4 star hotels, (56.0%). Accommodation was booked through online agents such as Agoda, Booking.com (58.8%), and in terms of the most informed channels of accommodation, samples mostly searched for information from Internet and online media (63.0%), followed by the website of the accommodation (59.5%) and the tour companies or travel agents (3.5%) respectively.

3. Satisfaction towards using accommodation business services

From the study of the satisfaction of the accommodation users, it was found that the sample group had the highest level of satisfaction, 42.0%, followed by a high level, 38.8%, with the highest average score of 4.17 ± 0.68 . The second score was safety, equal to 4.12 ± 0.73 points, communication channels and access averaged 4.12 ± 0.68 points, location averaged 4.08 ± 0.75 points; and hygiene measures had the lowest mean scores, equal to 3.76 ± 0.81 points, respectively.

Hypothesis testing

Different demographics according to education and income affected different satisfaction with accommodation business services.

1.1 Comparative analysis results classified by education level.

The results of the study revealed that respondents with different levels of education had different satisfaction with using accommodation business services at a statistically significant level of 0.05.

1.2 Comparative analysis results classified income

The study found that respondents with different incomes had different satisfaction with using accommodation business services at a statistically significant level of 0.05.

CONCLUSION

1. A study of the satisfaction of people who used accommodation business services found that

Place

Place is a gathering place and a destination for tourists to choose to come to rest during the holidays; so, entrepreneurs must pay attention to safety from COVID-19, which is one factor that affects the feelings of tourists. If a property has reported an outbreak of COVID-19, travelers are likely to avoid those places. Therefore, if most of all establishments have regular cleaning measures and good screening and prevention measures to prevent the spread of infection, it will always be of interest to Thai tourists.

Process

During the COVID-19 outbreak, accommodation operators should focus on the skills and expertise of staff to provide services such as providing information, solving problems, and responding to guest requests. Operators may need to take some measures to limit the number of people who come to use the service to not be too many and also to maintain social distancing. Therefore, one of the measures is that it may be necessary to have a system to reserve a queue or time to use the service. This measure may be applied only during weekends when there are a lot of tourists.

In the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affects all sectors, causing many customers to disappear. As a result, there are many establishments in some areas need to temporarily stop their business because they are unable to afford their operating expenses. Therefore, one approach is that operators need to seek cooperation as a cluster, such as cooperation between hotels and transport operators and restaurant operators by providing many services to customers as packages, such as providing services for picking up customers from the airport to the hotel along with serving delicious food from famous restaurants in the area, etc. This will facilitate the customers, including expanding to find new customers. This is consistent with the study of Prawee Khiri (2018) on "Expectations and Satisfaction in Service Quality of Budget Hotel Users in the Sukhumvit Area, Bangkok". It was found that service quality expectations affected the service quality satisfaction of budget hotel users in the Sukhumvit area, Bangkok with a statistical significance level of 0.05.

Safety

The safety satisfaction study results not only in terms of security in common rooms but also in terms of guest privacy and food service safety which must be in line with the New Normal, whether it is keeping a distance, controlling private activities, controlling the numbers of customers not to be crowded, which are things that accommodation businesses should not overlook.

Communication and accessibility

Most tourists drive their own cars, so the most necessary thing for customers is a location to find accommodation that is easy and convenient, as well as having a convenient contact channel for tourists to contact. If there will be staff to take care of facilitating traffic, giving way to customers, it will impress customers and reduce conflicts between customers, which is to maintain customer satisfaction during the vacation.

Sanitary and hygiene measures

With the outbreak of COVID-19, most tourists place safety as their top priority. Therefore, what entrepreneurs should pay attention to is the form of service that takes into account safety standards, such as strictly hygienic measures in the area such as regular cleaning in the area, providing services that take into account Social Distancing, as well as having measures to meet the safety standards of the Ministry of Public Health (SHA).

2. Service quality improvement guidelines of accommodation business for supporting the new normal

Based on the results of the study and data analysis, the researcher found that accommodation businesses in Bangkok were ready to accommodate guests in many basic ways. But considering the results of the study in detail, it was found that hotel business users still attached great importance to hygiene measures along with other service quality factors. Therefore, those involved in the accommodation business must adapt to meet the needs of those who use the service today and support the New Normal lifestyle in the future, such as the use of contactless payment systems to support global systems, simplifying check-in times, adapting common touchpoints whether it's a door handle, elevator button, etc.

Government agencies should increase the inspection of public health care measures, not only in order to provide standards for entrepreneurs in the first application, but should also set up periodic assessments to adjust and improve the quality of the criteria to be suitable for a new way of life that is diverse and always changing in terms of policies to support and promote accommodation business operations, which should be conducive to all types of accommodations; whether it is in terms of price reductions, public relations for tourism models that are in line with the development of tourism and service industries, including the development of technologies that facilitate tourism and services that are in line with the new normal life even more.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Data collection by means of interviews and focus group interviews, representatives of accommodation businesses, service users, tourists and government agencies to know more in-depth opinions and suggestions to jointly find guidelines for improving the service quality of the accommodation business to support the new normal life (New Normal)

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