



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES AND TRAINING EXPERIENCE OF PROVIDING SERVICE QUALITY IN A SELECTED HOTEL IN PENANG, MALAYSIA

Alicia Leow Zhia Ling

60230

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Masters

PhD

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ALICIA LEOW ZHIA LING (60230)

Name of the student (Matric No.)

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**CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES AND TRAINING EXPERIENCE OF PROVIDING
SERVICE QUALITY IN A SELECTED HOTEL IN PENANG, MALAYSIA**

ALICIA LEOW ZHIA LING (60230)

This project is submitted
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
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Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
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Projek bertajuk ‘Cabaran, strategi dan pengalaman latihan dalam memberikan kualiti perkhidmatan di hotel terpilih di Pulau Pinang, Malaysia’ telah disediakan oleh Alicia Leow Zhia Ling dan telah diserahkan kepada Fakulti Sains Kognitif dan Pembangunan Manusia sebagai memenuhi syarat untuk Ijazah Sarjana Muda Sains dengan Kepujian (Pembangunan Sumber Manusia)

Diterima untuk diperiksa oleh:

Hana Hamidi

(Dr. Hana Hamidi)

Tarikh:

25th Aug 2020

Gred

A

The project entitled ‘Challenges, strategies and training experience of providing service quality in a selected hotel in Penang, Malaysia’ was prepared by and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Human Resource Development)

Received for examination by:

Hana Hamidi

(Dr. Hana Hamidi)

Date:

25th Aug 2020

Gred
A

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ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneroka cabaran,strategi dan pengalaman latihan dalam memberikan kualiti perkhidmatan di hotel terpilih di Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. Dengan menggunakan kaedah persampelan bertujuan, sejumlah tiga informan diperoleh daripada sebuah hotel terpilih di Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. SKYPE digunakan sebagai alat untuk temu bual semi struktur dalam pengumpulan data. Rakaman audio ditranskrip secara manual dan transkrip temu bual dianalisis menggunakan kaedah analisis tematik. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa cabaran, strategi dan jenis latihan adalah penemuan penting dalam mempengaruhi kualiti perkhidmatan di hotel terpilih. Kesimpulannya, cabaran bagi memberikan kualiti perkhidmatan merupakan pengiriman perkhidmatan tepat waktu, industri hotel yang kompetitif dan kepuasan pelanggan. Selanjutnya, strategi digunakan untuk memberikan kualiti perkhidmatan adalah melatih pekerja untuk memberi kualiti perkhidmatan yang baik , mengupah pekerja yang sesuai dan memberikan sokongan yang diperlukan. Akhir sekali,bagi pengalaman latihan, terdapatnya latihan dalaman, pembayang pekerjaan dan bimbingan.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the challenges, strategies and training experience of providing service quality in a selected hotel in Penang, Malaysia. By using a purposive sampling method, a total of three informants were obtained from a selected hotel in Penang, Malaysia. SKYPE was used as a tool for semi-structured interviews in data collection. The audio recordings were transcribed manually and the interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis. This study concluded that challenge, strategies and types of training were the important findings in influencing the service quality in a selected hotel. In conclusion, challenges or providing service quality are timely service delivery, competitive hotel industry and customer satisfaction. Next, strategies on providing service quality are develop employees to deliver service quality, hire the right employee and provide the needed support. Lastly, for training experience, there are in-house training, job shadowing and mentoring.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Based on Crescent Rating's 2018 global survey, Malaysia ranked the first in the Global Muslim Travel Index 2018. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in 2018, Malaysia is placed at 15th position in terms of tourist arrivals and 21st for tourism receipt (Bernama, 2019). These achievements have recognized Malaysia as one of the tourist destinations that worth visiting at the international level and could be determined by the continuous increment in both tourist arrivals and tourist receipts in the statistics. As shown in Table 1, the tourist arrivals increased to 25.83 million in 2018 from 20.97 million in 2007, while the tourist receipts for the same period increased from RM 53.4 billion to RM 84.1 billion.

Table 1.1.1

Tourist Arrivals and Receipts to Malaysia.

Year	Tourist Arrivals, Million	Tourist Receipts (RM), Billion
2018	25.83	84.1
2017	25.95	82.1
2016	26.76	82.1
2015	25.72	69.1
2014	27.44	72.0
2013	25.72	65.4
2012	25.03	60.6
2011	24.71	58.3
2010	24.58	56.5
2009	23.65	53.4
2008	22.05	49.6
2007	20.97	53.4

Note: Tourist Arrivals and Receipts to Malaysia from Tourism Malaysia, 2018

Malaysia is a country located in SouthEast Asia and the total surface area of the country is about 330, 800 square kilometres (Malaysia Population, 2019). The land of Malaysia is divided into two parts, which are Peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia), and the states of Sabah and Sarawak (East Malaysia) on the island of Borneo. Instead of our beautiful nature, diverse culture and cuisine, factors attracting tourists to Malaysia also include the rising of middle-income populations, low inflation and suitable venues for short-haul vacation. The abundance of natural resources, such as islands and well-reserved forests, encourages the visits of beach tourism and ecotourism. Malaysia enjoys a tropical weather year, in which the weather is never too hot, and average temperatures range between 20°C to

30°C throughout the year. This encourages the visits of tourists to the beaches or visit our UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as Georgetown, Penang, Malacca city, Mulu Caves and national parks in Miri, Sarawak.

A successful tourism business provides the host countries with greater financial and non-monetary benefits. Hence, many countries made enormous efforts to promote their tourism industry and Malaysia is no exception. As referring to Table 2, for the past 10 years, the supply of hotels in Malaysia grew 100.17 % from 2373 in the year of 2009 to 4750 in 2018. The supply of rooms increased from 168,844 to 308,207 in the respective year.

Table 1.1.2

Supply of Hotels and Rooms

Year	Supply of Hotels	Supply of Rooms
2018	4750	308207
2013	3094	209527
2009	2373	168844

Source: Tourism Malaysia, 2018

A hotel is considered a success if the hotel gets the repeat customers. This is because attracting new customers is a very challenging task for hotel management. It is difficult to draw attention to customers who have not stayed at the hotel but if the customers perceive a higher service quality than their expectation, the customers will definitely revisit the same hotel. These happy customers will unintentionally share the level of service quality that they received and persuade their relatives and friends to stay at the suggested hotel. Therefore, delivering a quality of service is essential for hotel management in the tourism industry. A service quality can affect the customer satisfaction and enhance the vacation experience of the travellers.

For that reason, the study of challenges, strategies and training of providing service quality is important. In Malaysia, the positive competitive issue among the hotel industries has been raised from time to time. Considering this competitive environment, there is an awareness for human resource practitioners to plan and train strategies that will differentiate them from others. This can be achieved through the delivery of excellent service quality.

1.2 Problem Statements

In Malaysia, the study of challenges, strategies and training experience of providing service quality in a selected hotel in Penang is essential for the improvement of the hotel service providers. Thus, it is very important to increase the awareness of the hotel management to distinguish one hotel's services from those of its competitors in the highly competitive hotel industry. A successful hotel business always portrays a professional presentation and constant improvement in their service quality, which could catch the eye of their potential customers starting from pre-booking until the post- stay period. Hence, the service providers should understand and fulfil the customers' needs by offering high-quality services. These efforts would improve market share and overall profitability. This can be determined by the previous study about the customers who are willing to pay a higher price when they receive a higher service quality (Dabholkar, 2015).

Other than that, according to Amin, Yahya, Nasharuddin and Kassim (2013), the researchers investigated that service quality is positively related with customer satisfaction in Malaysian hotel industry. Although the hotel customers are satisfied with the service quality of the hotel, they stated that there is room for improvement for the method that hotel managers applied to attract customers, especially in getting customers to pay return visit to the hotel. Consequently, hotel managers are well-prepared and mindful that hotel employees play a significant part in delivering services to hotel guests. Therefore, hotel managers should concentrate on improving the emotion of hotel guests and committed to preserving their relationship with their guests. Hence, in order to establish employee's effectiveness and efficiency in facing the global market, employee skills should be trained and upgraded. Alauddin, Ahsan, Mowla and Islam (2019) also supported that hotel staff should pay more attention to their customers and willing to lend a hand to their customers.

Moreover, Shen and Tang (2018) explained that training support affects transition behavior as those who have obtained some form of help from the company are more likely to reward their employers by using the experience and expertise they have learned to increase the level of customer service. Therefore, throughout the study, the researcher aims to recognize this problem and how hotel workers deliver the standard of service to the customer from their own training experience in the hotel organization.

Furthermore, Asian tourists provide the lower ratings of service quality compared to the Non-Asian tourists. Based on the study of Cham and Easvaralingam, (2012), this statement can be supported by two factors, which are Asians are more focused about getting the worth of their money because of their lower levels of income and the second is, or the difference perceptions of Asians and non-Asians in how the services should be provided to them. Thus, it is important for the researcher to explore the service quality in Malaysian context in order to avoid the hotel management providing the different standard for the local tourists in this study.

Based on the past researches, most of the scholars were using the SERVQUAL model questionnaires in collecting the data, but the researcher chooses to use semi-structured interviews to explore more in-depth questions in this study. Furthermore, there are fewer researchers doing qualitative studies. As far as most of the past research is done in the interview in Kuala Lumpur, the interviews of this study will be carried out in Penang. This study identified several research questions that need to be answered:

- i. What are the challenges of providing service quality by the employees in a selected hotel in Penang, Malaysia?

- ii. From the management's perspective, what are the strategies planned to help the hotel staff to provide service quality in a selected hotel industry in Penang, Malaysia?
- iii. What types of training experiences are required for employees to enhance the service quality in a selected hotel in Penang, Malaysia?

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

This study aims to explore the challenges, strategies and training experience of providing service quality in a selected hotel in Penang, Malaysia.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To explore the challenges of providing service quality by the employees in a selected hotel in Penang, Malaysia.
- ii. To explore the strategies which have been planned to help employees provide service quality in a selected hotel in Penang, Malaysia.
- iii. To explore the types of training required for employees to enhance the service quality in a selected hotel in Penang, Malaysia.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

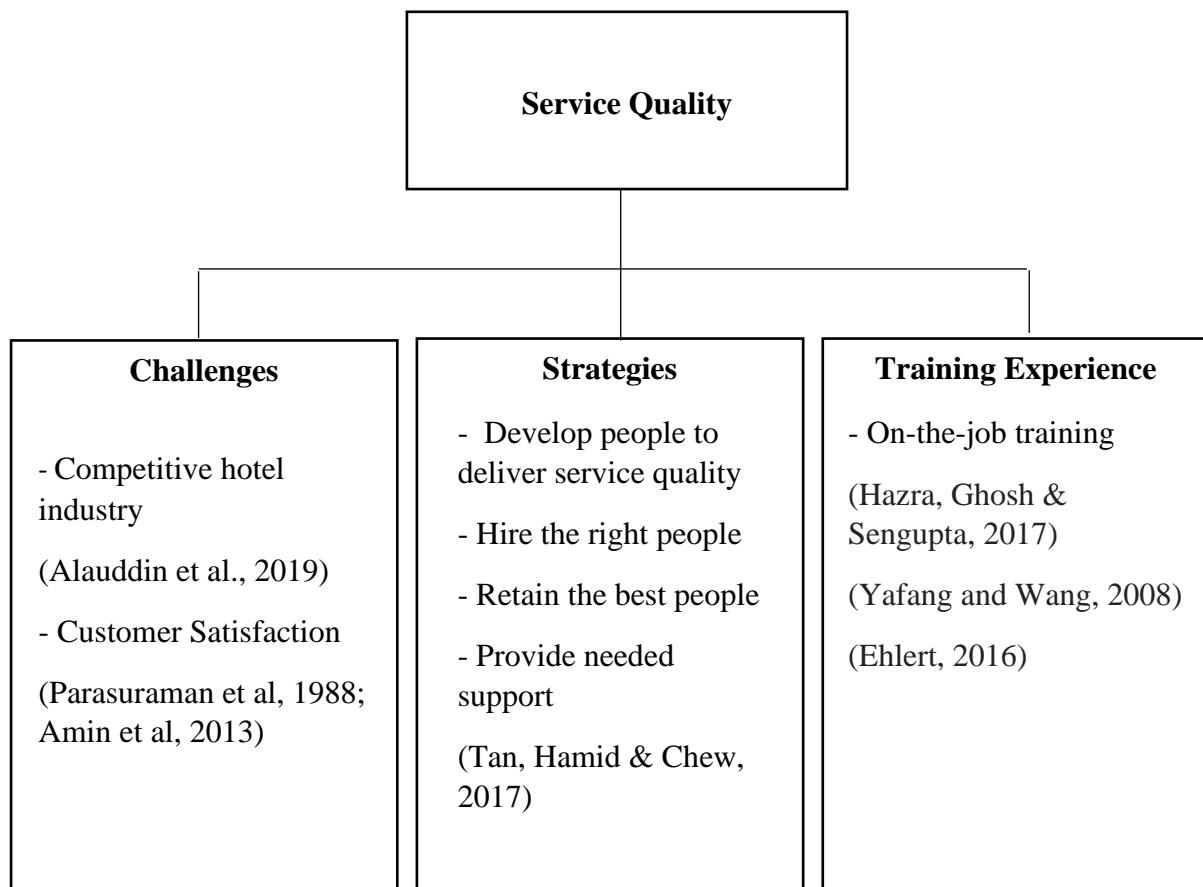


Figure 1. Challenges, Strategies and Training Experience of Providing Service Quality in the Past Researches

1.5 Significance of Study

This study is beneficial to the organizations on promoting the importance of service quality to the employees. By understanding the importance of the quality service in the hotel industries, the organizations can increase customer satisfaction and have a rise in profit.

Besides, the current study is also important as to provide useful information to the human resource practitioners. This study can give a guide to them in human management, objectives, and strategies. Eventually, service quality allows human resource practitioners in retention talent employees because it can increase employees' motivation and reduce the employees' turnover. Thus, human resource practitioners can understand the training needs against the challenges through this study. For instance, create a new policy, select a suitable trainer to provide training and what type of trainee should be involved in providing service quality.

Additionally, the current study is also important to provide useful information for local Malaysian researchers who are interested in his field to encourage more study to be conducted in Malaysia context. Next, this also can make possible the involvement of adding new knowledge as a reference or knowledge for future study purposes.