

Service Quality Dimensions and Tourist Satisfaction towards Melaka Hotels

Goh Ling Shing^{#1}, Carolyn Koh^{*2}, Robert J. Nathan^{#3}

[#]Faculty of Business and Law, Multimedia University; ^{*}University of Wollongong

¹sallyxin87@gmail.com; ²stamaria@singnet.com.sg; ³robert.jeyakumar@mmu.edu.my

Abstract-This study examines the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction with regard to services offered by hotels in Melaka. Service Quality dimensions were derived from the RATER model. Through a sample of 250 respondents, result shows that reliability is the most important dimension of service quality that determines customer satisfaction towards hotel services in Melaka. The study finds assurance and empathy significantly low in contribution towards customer satisfaction. It is important to focus and emphasize the right dimensions of service quality in ensuring customer satisfaction towards Melaka hotels.

Keywords-Hotel Service Quality; Reliability; Assurance; Tangibles; Empathy; Responsiveness

I. INTRODUCTION

The consumer's first impression of service satisfaction at a hotel is the most important aspect of service experience. Studies show that the consumers' outlook towards a service affects their loyalty and willingness to pay more [1][2]. As the saying goes, 'The Customer is King' and as such, it is imperative that customer satisfaction is achieved in order to succeed in any business; the hotel business being no exception. Hoteliers face the challenge of establishing and more importantly, maintaining positive relationships with their customers in the hopes that their customers will reciprocate with loyalty that would translate to profitability. However it is difficult for hoteliers to achieve optimum customer satisfaction without the provision of good quality service.

According to UNWTO's *Tourism 2020 Vision* forecasts [3], international arrivals are anticipated to reach close to 1.6 billion by 2020 with East Asia and the Pacific receiving 397 million visitors translating to a record growth rate of over five percent. The individual inbound forecasts for countries within East Asia and the Pacific indicates that following China, the next leading countries are Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Australia. Based on a research [4], accommodations are an obvious link to tourism since hotels provide lodging and food for travelers. Tourism is definitely a key to the stimulation of a nation's economic growth and hotels are an essential aspect of the overall equation.

In the service industry, hotels are considered one with the highest contact services [5]. Previous researches define high-contact services as that with high levels of communication involvement between customers and service employees, intimacy of communication and richness of information exchange. For the hotelier, this translates to the need to focus on their employees' interpersonal skills. Service providers

must be able to interact well with their customers and to make good judgment calls in situations that demand decision making [6].

Despite negative setbacks such as epidemics, tourism remains the second largest revenue generator for Malaysia [7]. It is therefore imperative that Malaysia pursues all avenues towards growing the tourism industry. Initiatives such as "Malaysia My Second Home" where visitors from abroad can experience living in Malaysia and experience her culture and historical tales attracts large number of foreigners to live in Malaysia.

The Malaysian Government encourages medical tourism especially from neighbouring Indonesia is also among the agenda to popularize the country [8]. Families of foreign patients seeking treatment at local hospitals may choose to remain in Malaysia to accompany their relatives during their convalescence. They would therefore require accommodation and would contribute to spending on day-to-day necessities and hence to the economy. In order for medical tourism to develop, there must be assurances of quality medical care, a safe environment and reasonable cost of living. The Government must seize the opportunities presented to them and focus on these areas. The advantage has in fact already presented itself as reported by Travel and Tourism 2009 where Malaysia was listed as the fourth most price competitive country in the world. This fact in itself will encourage investors to plug their capital into the hospitality sectors [9].

Among the main contributors to the economy and certainly an effective source of revenue is de finitely tourism. As the hotel industry and tourism are intertwined, the quality of service offered by hotels is of the greatest importance. This research seeks to study the extent to which the various service quality dimensions influences the customers' satisfaction within the hotel industry in Melaka.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer satisfaction is customer's overall psychological state [10]. The psychological state refers to positive affective responses or emotions such as interest, joy and pleasure [11]. The cognitive state refers to the customer's evaluation of a series of service attributes that constitute a service performance [5]. This occurs when a product or service has met the customer's needs, wants and expectations [12]. Customer satisfaction of an outcome [13] or process [14] is examined during the service delivery which includes both

tangible and intangible services [15]. According to [2], there are several essential determinants to meet customer satisfaction such as product or service performance, consumption feelings and expectations. Customer satisfaction is also associated with repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth recommendations, lower price sensitivity, loyalty, competitive advantages and cost reduction [16].

Authors however argued that even if a customer is satisfied, they could suddenly change their minds and switch service providers hence indicating that customer satisfaction is not necessarily synonymous with customer retention [17]. There are other approaches to promote customer satisfaction such as mutual confidence, open dialogue, effective complaint handling and service. These approaches are evidently found in the service quality dimensions [18].

Customer satisfaction brings about positive feedback which contributes to a company's sustainability in the market [19]. It was also discovered that physical evidence could possibly play an important role in influencing customer satisfaction. Service excellence projects a good impression in the customer's mind and encourages the customer to make a purchase as opposed to when service standards are poor.

In addition, consumer satisfaction is positively associated with the willingness to pay [1][2][20]. An author supports this finding with his discovery that consumers were prepared to pay extra so long as the service they receive is excellently provided to them [21]. Customer satisfaction can therefore be considered a low-cost promotional method since positive customer satisfaction projects positive feedback and hence increases sales [22].

Reliability is defined as the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. It is an accurate predictor of overall service quality as it relates to due completion of a task as promised, the consistency in the courtesy extended and the provision of the correct service [23]. It is similarly perceived the importance of reliability when dealing with conflicts. A study finds it is important for retailers to respond to customers' requests, be error-free and in timely manner [24]. Since problem handling is a key driver for evaluating a service, it is critical for an organization to possess a well-managed, good recovery and complaint system in order to provide quality service [21].

Reliability is classified as a necessity [15] however; there are authors who view reliability as more pertinent for intangible services [25]. A research reported that managers expressed the lack of ability to socialize as the reason for young employees not being consistently good service providers [16]. It was found that customers of Islamic Banks were willing to tolerate delays or mistakes if they were satisfied with the personal skills and values of the bank personnel. They believed that reliability problems can be solved if the service providers are sincere and displayed a willingness to offer assistance and made the customer feel that they were never too busy to attend to their requests [26].

Security is perceived to be conducted professionally, when the hotel guests feel safe and secure. The Mauritius Hotels failed to provide a good level of assurance and hence

the hotelier was not able to harness the confidence of their customers [27]. This resulted in reluctance by the customers to prolong their stays. Another similar findings; claimed that service providers were possibly unable to provide a hundred percent professional satisfaction to their customers unless they were able to instill confidence in the minds of their customers [17].

Tangibles are defined as appealing and attractive physical cues. Physical cues included the appearance of cleanliness, the physical facilities and decoration [28]. Tangibles also referred to staff appearances such as dress codes and personal presence [29]. A prospective employee with a visible tattoo may be perceived to possibly damage the organisation's corporate image and hence he or she may not get the job. An author reported that the tangible dimension is one criterion when selecting accommodation [30]. Depending on gender and status, certain features such as the bathroom and shower qualities or a comfortable mattress and pillow could be considerations when selecting a place to stay. However, cleanliness was the most important factor that influenced an individual's accommodation choice. The transition from a traditional to a more modern look also produced a positive reaction [31]. Just as these tangible attributes attract customers to re-visit; it also motivates the employees to be more pro-active. There are researches reconfirmed in their findings that physical evidence is important and failure to maintain impeccable physical facilities as well as employee appearances could result in an image of below par service satisfaction in the customer's mind as with the case of the North Cyprus Hotels [32].

Empathy is described as understanding the customers' needs and is the basis for designing a service strategy. A mismatch of services offered with the customers' needs will not benefit either party. Avoiding unreasonable expectations may on the other hand, reduce the possibility of customer discontent [33]. Empathy can also refer to personalization which gives customers individualized attention in order to enhance corporate value [34]. The shortfall in the Mauritius Hotels was empathy indicating that an understanding by the hotelier of the customer's expectations is a significant factor in quality service [27].

Responsiveness is defined as keeping customers informed of when services will be performed [35]. Responsiveness is an act of carrying out the service promptly and being available when a customer needs assistance [19]. If, for example, a bank created a better degree of proximity and displayed a willingness to engage their customers in difficult times, then the bank would be able to obtain higher customer satisfaction [36]. Studies stated that ignorance when dealing with customers' inquiries will cause dissatisfaction and hence, company representatives must be empowered with the knowledge required for them to be able to respond to customers' inquiries efficiently [37]. Adding to that, researchers found that customers desire the service provider to be responsive to their needs and to respond to their demands in a patient and enthusiastic manner [38]. It was discovered that one of the weaknesses of service providers was their lack of thoughtfulness of the customers' needs and

accompanying that the staff's efficiency to respond to these needs [4].

III. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The objective of this study is to analyse five service quality dimensions that influence customer satisfaction in the hotel industry. These are being 1) Reliability 2) Assurance 3) Tangibles 4) Empathy and 5) Responsiveness. Specifically, this study seeks:

A. *To Investigate the Relationship between Reliability in Hotel Services And Customer Satisfaction towards Hotels in Melaka*

Reliability is a key driver for problem handling and solving as agreed in several previous researches [21][39][40][41]. Reliability is described as human capital. Employees must be concerned, anticipate and solve the problems of hotel guests in order to obtain a positive customer satisfactory level. The hypothesis to examine this objective is stated below:

H1: There is a significant relationship between reliability in hotel services and customer satisfaction towards hotels in Melaka.

B. *To Investigate the Relationship between Assurance in Hotel Services and Customer Satisfaction towards Hotels in Melaka*

Staff behaviour such as assurance has a stronger impact on customer satisfaction than physical qualities [42]. This is in line with other studies [43]. Another study indicated that assurance is the most important determinant in the life insurance industry [44]. In this study, assurance refers to the employees' ability to exhibit their interactive skills in dealing with customer requests confidentially and inspiring a sense of security [28]. The hypothesis to assess this objective is presented below:

H2: There is a significant relationship between assurance in hotel services and customer satisfaction towards hotels in Melaka.

C. *To Investigate the Relationship between Tangibles in Hotel Services and Customer Satisfaction towards Hotels in Melaka*

Western travellers' accommodation satisfaction is influenced by the room quality and physical cues such as a comfortable bed and room temperature control [45]. In Bangladeshi private universities, tangibles dimension has been placed as the highest priority towards instrument perception [46]. Researches described tangibles as having good certification and credentials [44]. In addition, hotel customers are more likely to tolerate heterogeneity on the tangibles dimension [47]. The hypothesis to evaluate the objective is stated below:

H3: There is a significant relationship between tangibles in hotel services and customer satisfaction towards hotels in Melaka.

D. *To Investigate the Relationship between Empathy in Hotel Services and Customer Satisfaction towards Hotels in Melaka*

Hotel customers are unlikely to accept heterogeneity when it comes to empathy in hotel services, thus customer satisfaction would seriously be affected [47]. In addition, previous studies discovered that employees, who do not practice empathy dimensions well, end up with negative gaps in the research [48]. In contrast, in a different industry, a study concluded that assurance is the least important in nuclear medicine since this field is a task-interactive service [49]. The following hypothesis is forwarded to examine this objective:

H4: There is a significant relationship between empathy in hotel services and customer satisfaction towards hotel in Melaka.

E. *To Investigate the Relationship between Responsiveness in Hotel Services and Customer Satisfaction towards Hotel in Melaka*

A research reported responsiveness as being rated the highest priority in the port industry, since the port has to deliver promptly, has little waiting time for ships and has to be efficient in handling complaints and settling claims [50]. In other words, responsiveness refers to the degree of willingness, enthusiasm or passion to assists customers and provides prompt services. The hypothesis to test this objective is as below:

H5: There is a significant relationship between responsiveness in hotel service and customer satisfaction towards hotels in Melaka.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The dependent variable in this study is Customer Satisfaction while the independent variables are Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness.

A questionnaire which consists of two sections was utilized to collect the research data. Section A discovers the target respondents' demographic characteristics such as life style, cost of living, economic status that have impact on the hotel industry. Whilst, Section B assesses the independent and dependent variables with itemized rating scale known as the Six-point Likert Scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 6-Strongly Agree). The research has adapted some of the questionnaire statements from previous studies [51][52] [53][54].

Convenient sampling was used due to the time and cost constraints and ease to measure and cooperativeness. The research also used Snowball sampling to get referrals in respond to the survey. The research comprises 250 Malaysian and Foreign respondents where 110 are students and 140 are from public. The findings were analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 18.

V. RESULT

Table I displays background information and characteristics of respondents who participated in this study.

TABLE I DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	129	51.6
Female	121	48.4
Nationality		
Malaysian	215	86.0
Others	35	14.0
Race		
Malay	41	16.4
Indian	19	7.6
Chinese	169	67.6
Others	21	8.4
Marital Status		
Single	180	72.0
Married	70	28.0
Size of Family		
2 or below	18	7.2
3 to 5	133	53.2
6 to 8	90	36.0
9 to 11	5	2.0
12 or above	4	1.6
Age Category		
20 or below	53	21.2
21 to 30	126	50.4
31 to 40	44	17.6
41 to 50	19	7.6
51 to 60	5	2.0
Above 60	3	1.2
Occupation		
Student	110	44.0
Self-Employed	40	16.0
Private sector	72	28.8
Government sector	25	10
Retired	3	1.2
Monthly Income (RM)		
Less than 1000	38	15.2
1000 to 3000	69	27.6
3000 to 5000	35	14.0
More than 5000	30	12.0
Sponsored by parents	78	31.2
Frequently Visited Hotel in Melaka		
Equatorial	99	39.6
Renaissance	47	18.8
Emperor	14	5.6
City Bayview	38	15.2
Orchid	23	9.2
Others	29	11.6
Frequency for Hotel Visitation	Frequency	Percent (%)
Once a week	9	3.6
Once a month	24	9.6
Once a year	112	44.8
Twice a week	1	0.4
Twice a month	3	1.2
Twice a year	83	33.2
Others	18	7.2
Purpose of Stay		
Personal/Holiday	192	76.8
Business	58	23.2
Booking Method		
Online booking	79	31.6
Traditional booking	171	68.4
Total Respondents	250	100

Reliability analyses were carried out to all 6 variables of the study, as shown in Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha scores more than 0.60 are reliable [55].

TABLE II RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Variables	Item	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Reliability	5	0.859
Empathy	5	0.844
Responsiveness	5	0.844
Tangibles	5	0.836
Assurance	5	0.786
Customer Satisfaction	4	0.833

Table II shows the reliability of the variables of research ranges from $\alpha=0.786$ to $\alpha=0.859$; the variables are hence deemed fit for further statistical testing.

The five hypotheses put forth in the study are tested via Pearson Correlation test. Research variables tested are 1) Reliability, 2) Assurance, 3) Tangibles, 4) Empathy and 5) Responsiveness (Independent Variables) with Customer Satisfaction (Dependent Variable). The result is presented in Table III as below.

TABLE III PEARSON CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Independent Variables	Correlation Coefficient #
Reliability	.712*
Tangibles	.670*
Empathy	.636*
Responsiveness	.589*
Assurance	.579*

*Correlated with Customer Satisfaction and Significant at the 0.01 level

Sorted in Descending Order

Table III shows reliability has the strongest relationship with customer satisfaction compared to the other independent variables. It is followed by tangibles, empathy, responsiveness and assurance. All research variables are nevertheless positively correlated with customer satisfaction with hotel services in Melaka.

TABLE IV MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSIONS

	SC Beta	t	p-value
(Constant)		3.207	.002
Responsiveness	.151	2.636	.009
Assurance	.059	.962	.337
Tangibles	.296	5.171	.000
Empathy	.050	.691	.491
Reliability	.341	4.572	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

Further to the correlation analysis above, a Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) analysis was carried out to examine the significance of each independent variable in determining customer satisfaction of hotel services in Melaka and to ascertain the research model fit. The result of MLR shows R Square value of 0.597, and result of Analysis of Variance reveal an F Statistics of 72.231 with a corresponding p-value less than 0.05 indicating a model fit for the research framework.

The results show that the R^2 is 0.597 which indicates that the independent variables in this study explain almost 60% of the variations in the overall customer satisfaction. The findings confirms that reliability has the highest coefficients ($\beta=0.341$) among the tested variables in this study and has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction towards hotel services in Melaka.

VI. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reliability is the most important variable in determining customer satisfaction. Thus, hoteliers in Melaka should further enhance their problem solving skills in promptly attending to and solving customer problems as well as maintain an error-free record. Hoteliers should also carry out immediate recovery systems to eliminate the degree of consequences. The study confirms that it is important to take constructive action to eliminate a customers' dissatisfaction towards service failure [56]. Hotel management staffs should attend comprehensive and more practical training courses. Subsequently train, guide and share their knowledge gained with their subordinates in order to equip all their employees with the ability to handle problems proactively and efficiently.

Tangible is the second most important determinant of customer satisfaction with cleanliness as one of its key elements. Despite this finding, many hotel providers do not project an absolutely satisfactory cleanliness standard of their environment, equipment and facilities. Hygiene issues are critical not just for guest satisfaction but also for health reasons. This is supported by a studied [57]. Food and beverage services also affect customer satisfaction. A good and creative variety of food and beverages is important to the customer and if necessary, an hotelier should consider outsourcing these services to those with the expertise to provide a higher standard that would be possible in-house. In a study reported that the highest numbers of complaints were related to food and beverages [31]. Hence it is necessary for the hotelier to take their food and beverage services very seriously.

The third important key determinant of customer satisfaction is responsiveness. Hoteliers need to ensure that their front-line personnel keep customers informed and updated at all times.

Hotel industry may choose to utilize specialised internet services in order to enhance service quality and inspire customer satisfaction. The present research proposes that the hotelier consider applying intelligent multimedia and pervasive computing in hotel rooms such as providing electronic check-in facilities and enabling guests to change their room ambience based on their preferences [58].

Undeniable, the hotel industry is one of the most essential service industries to focus on in order to increase tourism in Melaka and in Malaysia. This study further confirms and strengthens the existing body of knowledge that highlight the importance of Reliability, Empathy, Assurance, Responsiveness and Tangibles in assuring customer satisfaction, and in this context towards Hotel Services in Melaka. Hotels in Melaka may specifically focus on the three variables found highly important in this study; namely

reliability, tangibles and responsiveness in continuing to ensure and possibly take the hotel service quality to the next level.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

We manage to interview only 250 respondents for this study and mostly Malaysians. Future studies could include bigger number of respondents and also a larger sample of foreigners visiting Melaka and Malaysia. Studies could also conduct a comparative study between hotels services of hotels in Melaka and George Town, Penang since these two states were recently declared as the World Heritage Sites [59].

REFERENCES

- [1] D. Ribbink, A. C. R. Riel, V. Lilijander, and S. Streukens, "Comfort your online customer: quality, trust and loyalty on the internet," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 14 no. 6, pp.446-456, 2004.
- [2] R. D. Blackwell, P. W. Miniard, and J. F. Engel, *Consumer Behavior*, 10th ed., South-Western: Thomson, 2006.
- [3] Tourism Highlights 2009. [Online]. Available: http://www.unwto.org/facts/eng/pdf/highlights/UNWTO_Highlights09_en_HR.pdf [Viewed: March 2011].
- [4] M. S. Sohail, M. H. Roy, M. Saeed, and A. U. Ahmed, "Determinants of service quality in the hospitality industry: the case of Malaysian Hotels." *Journal of Accounting-Business & Management* 14, pp.64-74, 2007.
- [5] C. H. Lovelock, P. G. Patterson, and R. H. Walker, *Services Marketing, An Asia-Pacific and Australian Perspective*, 4th ed., Australia: Pearson, 2007.
- [6] R. Sarreal, "Customer satisfaction and service quality in high-contact service firm," *DLSU Business & Economics Review*, vol. 17 no. 1, pp.1-12, 2008.
- [7] New Straits Times (2011). Reeling in Big Bucks through Agro-Tourism. ProQuest Information and Learning Company. [Online]. Available: http://findarticles.com/p/news-articles/new-straits-times/mi_8016/is_20110311/reeling-bucks-agro-tourism/ai_n57056146/ [Viewed: April 2011].
- [8] E. Ang, (2009, February 14). Malaysian medical tourism growing. [Online] Available: <http://biz.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/2/14/business/3245091&sec=business> [Viewed: April 2011].
- [9] E. Sarif, (2010, January 16). Hotelier: More can be done to promote tourism in the country. [Online] Available: <http://biz.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/1/16/business/5467797&sec=business> [Viewed: April 2011].
- [10] S R. Swanson, and J. C. Davis, "The relationship of differential loci with perceived quality and behavioral intentions," *Journal of Service Marketing*, vol. 17 no. 2, pp.202-219, 2003.
- [11] R. Ladhari, "Service quality, emotional satisfaction, and behavioural intentions: a study in the hotel industry," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 19 no. 3, pp.308-331, 2009.
- [12] Voltaire, "Customer service and satisfaction: We must cultivate our garden," pp.1-8, 2003.
- [13] Pizam, and T. Ellis, "Customer satisfaction and its measurement in hospitality enterprises," *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 11/7, pp.326-339, 1999.
- [14] M. L. Raposo, H. M. Alves, and P. A. Duarte, "Dimensions of service quality and satisfaction in healthcare: a patient's satisfaction index," *Service Business*, 3:85-100, 2008.
- [15] U. Apte, and R. Martin, "Managing quality in a "Hidden" service," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 4 no.6, pp. 20-24, 1994.
- [16] R. Presbury, A. Fitzgerald, and R. Chapman, "Impediments to improvements in service quality in luxury hotels." *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 15 no. 4, pp.357-373, 2005.
- [17] C. Hansemark and M. Albinsson, "Customer satisfaction and retention: the experiences of individual employees," *Managing Service Quality*

- Journal, vol. 14 no. 1, pp.40-57, 2004.
- [18] N. O. Ndubisi, and K. W. Chan, "Factorial and discriminant analyses of the underpinnings of relationship marketing and customer satisfaction," *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, vol. 23 no. 7, pp.542-557, 2005.
- [19] Edvardsson, "Service quality improvement," *Managing Service Quality Journal: Research and Concept*, vol. 8 no. 2, pp.142-149, 1998.
- [20] Huber, A. Herrmann, and M. Wricke, "Customer satisfaction as an antecedent of price acceptance: results of an empirical study," *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, vol. 10 no. 3, pp.160-169, 2001.
- [21] R. Johnston, "Towards a better understanding of service excellence," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 14 no. 2/3, pp. 129-133, 2004.
- [22] E. Tsoukatos, and G. K. Rand, "Path analysis of perceived service quality, satisfaction and loyalty in Greek insurance," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 16 no. 5, pp.501-519, 2006.
- [23] T. D. Juwaheer, "Exploring international tourist's perceptions of hotel operations by using a modified SERVQUAL approach-a case study of Mauritius," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 14 no. 5, pp.350-364, 2004.
- [24] B. Keating, R. Rugimbana, and A. Quazi, "Differentiating between service quality and relationship quality in cyberspace," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 13 no. 3, pp.217-232, 2003.
- [25] N. Chowdhary, and M. Prakash, "Prioritizing service quality dimensions," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 17 no. 5, pp.493-509, 2007.
- [26] N. Jabnoun, and A. Khalifa, "A customized measure of service quality in the UAE," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 15 no. 4, pp.374-388, 2005.
- [27] T. D. Juwaheer, and D. L. Ross, "A study of hotel guest perceptions in Mauritius," *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 15/2, pp.105-115, 2003.
- [28] N. Glaveli, E. Petridou, C. Liassides, and C. Spathis, "Bank service quality: evidence from five Balkan countries," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 16 no. 4, pp.380-394, 2006.
- [29] D. Nickson, C. Warhurst, and E. Dutton, "The importance of attitude and appearance in the service encounter in retail and hospitality," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 15 no. 2, pp.195-208, 2005.
- [30] T. Lockyer, "Business guests' accommodation selection: the view from both sides," *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, vol. 14/6, pp.294-300, 2002.
- [31] J. Antony, F. J. Antony, and S. Ghosh, "Evaluating service quality in a UK hotel chain: a case study," *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management: Research in brief*, vol. 16 no. 6, pp.380-384, 2004.
- [32] Nadiri, and K. Hussain, "Perceptions of service quality in North Cyprus hotels," *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, vol. 17 no. 6, pp.469-480, 2005.
- [33] G. Groth, and R. T. Dye, "Service quality: guidelines for marketers. Techniques," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 9 no. 5, pp.337-351, 1999.
- [34] Nusair, and J. Kandampully, "The antecedents of customer satisfaction with online travel services: a conceptual model," *European Business Review*, vol.20 no.1, pp.4-19, 2008.
- [35] G. D. Kang, J. James, and K. Alexandris, "Measurement of internal service quality: application of the SERVQUAL battery to internal services quality," *Perspective: Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 12 no. 5, pp.278-291, 2002.
- [36] N. Lundahl, F. Vegholm, and L. Silver, "Technical and functional determinants of customer satisfaction in the bank-SME relationship" *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 19 no. 5, pp.581-594, 2009.
- [37] X. Liu, M. He, F. Gao, and P. Xie, "An empirical study of online shipping customer satisfaction in China: a holistic perspective," *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, vol. 36 no. 11, pp.919-940, 2008.
- [38] C. Lymperopoulos, I. E. Chaniotakis, and M. Soureli, "The importance of service quality in bank selection for mortgage loans," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol.16 no. 4, pp.365-379, 2006.
- [39] M. D. Clames, L. K. Ozanne, and W. L. Laurensen, "Patients' perceptions of Service Quality Dimensions: an empirical examination of Health Care in New Zealand," *Health Marketing Quarterly*, vol. 19(1), pp.3-22, 2001.
- [40] S. A. Kumar, B. T. Mani, S. Mahalingam, and M. Vanjikovan, "Influence of service quality on attitudinal loyalty in private retail banking: an empirical study," *The IUP Journal of Management Research*, vol. IX, no. 4, pp.21-38, 2010.
- [41] G. D. April, and S. Pather, "Evaluating service quality dimensions within e-commerce SMEs," *Electronic Journal Information Systems Evaluation Volume*, vol. 11, Issue 3, pp.109-124, 2008.
- [42] Y. Ekinci, P. L. Dawes, and G. R. Massey, "An extended model of the antecedents and consequences of consumer satisfaction for hospitality services," *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 42, no. 1/2, pp.35-68, 2008.
- [43] R. M. Sanchez-Hernandez, V. Martinez-Tur, J. M. Peiro, and J. Ramos, "Testing a hierarchical and integrated model of quality in the service sector: functional, relational, and tangible dimensions," *Total Quality Management*, vol. 20, no. 11, pp.1173-1188, 2009.
- [44] M. H. Siddiqui, and T. G. Sharma, "Measuring the customer perceived service quality for life insurance services: an empirical investigation," *International Business Research*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp.171-186, 2010.
- [45] T. Y. Choi, and R. Chu, "Levels of satisfaction among Asian and Western travelers," *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp.116-131, 2000.
- [46] H. Chowdhury, M. T. Iqbal, and M. K. Miah, "A study of service quality determinants of private universities in Bangladesh using SERVQUAL," *Journal of Knowledge Globalization*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp.49-74, 2010.
- [47] Yilmaz, "Do hotel customers use a multi-expectation framework in the evaluation of services? A study in Cappadocia, Turkey," *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp.59-69, 2009.
- [48] P. R. Munhurrin, S. D. L. Bhiwajee, and P. Naidoo, "Service quality in the public service," *International Journal of Management and Marketing Research*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp.37-50, 2010.
- [49] S. D. Man, P. Gemmel, P. Vierick, P. V. Rijk, and R. Dierckx, "Patients' and personnel's perceptions of service quality and patient satisfaction in nuclear medicine," *European Journal of Nuclear Medicine*, vol. 29, No. 9, pp. 1109-1117, 2002.
- [50] Ugboma, I. C. Ogwude, O. Ugboma, and K. Nnadi, "Service quality and satisfaction measurements in Nigerian ports: an exploration," *Maritime Policy & Management*, vol. 34, no. 4, pp.331-346, 2007.
- [51] Clare, C. Chua, and P. Luk, "A strategic service quality approach using analytic hierarchy process," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 15 no. 3, pp.278-289, 2005.
- [52] G. D. Kang, and J. James, "Service quality dimensions: an examination of Gronroos's service quality model," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 14 no.4, pp.266-277, 2004.
- [53] Bove, and B. Mitzifiris, "Personality traits and process of store loyalty in a transactional prone context", *Journal of Service Marketing*, vol. 21 no. 7, pp.507-519, 2007.
- [54] O. Sawyerr, S. Srinivas, and S. Wang, "Call center employee personality factors and service performance," *Journal of Services Marketing*, 23/5, pp.301-317, 2009.
- [55] N. K. Malhotra, *Basic marketing research, a decision-making approach 3rd ed.*, Prentice-Hall: Pearson, 2009.
- [56] C. A. Warden, T. Liu, C. Huang, and C. Lee, "Service failures away from home: benefits in intercultural service encounters," *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, vol. 14 no. 4, pp.436-457, 2002.
- [57] P. Akan, "Dimensions of service quality: a study in Istanbul. ILLUMINATE," *Managing Service Quality Journal*, vol. 5 no. 6, pp.39-43, 1995.
- [58] N. K. Sharda, "Chapter 6: Creating innovative solution for future hotel rooms with intelligent multimedia and pervasive computing," *Computer and Communication Networks*, pp.117-134, 2009.
- [59] Economic Report, *Economic Performance and Prospect 3*, pp.37-94, 2008/2009.



GOH Ling Shing, Malaysian, Bachelor in Marketing Management, Multimedia University, Malaysia. Her major interest is in the service industry, in particular, the hospitality industry. A fresh graduate, she has worked in an intellectual property company where she was in charge of drafting patent and copyright proposals. Ms Goh is currently employed as a management trainee in a boutique hotel in Melaka, Malaysia and intends to pursue a career in the hospitality

industry which she is passionate about.



Carolyn KOH, Singaporean, Undergraduate, Bachelor of Commerce in Business Management, University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia. Her major field of interest is in Management and is particularly interested in organisational behaviour, cultural diversity and responsible leadership.

She has 30 years' of international work experience in design and management including 11 years managing her own design firm, Studio 78, Singapore. She was a member of the Landscape

Technical Workgroup appointed by Landscape Industry Council where she contributed to the development of a Competency Education Map for the industry. She is currently a full-time student at the University of Wollongong and is a member of the Dean's Merit List 2010.

Ms Koh is the recipient of the Singapore Life Long Learners' Award 2004 and intends to pursue her PHD in 2013 specialising in Responsible Leadership.



Robert Jeyakumar NATHAN, Malaysian, Bachelors in Marketing (Research in ergonomics and internet marketing), Multimedia University, Malaysia, Masters of Philosophy, Multimedia University, Malaysia.

Prior to joining the academia, he worked as System Analyst for Infineon Technologies AG, a semiconductor manufacturing company based in Munich, Germany specialising in Manufacturing Statistics and Data Analysis. He has conducted statistical, data mining and enterprise document

and knowledge management system trainings in various Infineon plants in Asia, Europe and North America. He is currently attached to Multimedia University, Malaysia under the Faculty of Business and Law. He conducts Marketing, Research Methodology and Leadership courses.

Mr. Nathan is active in various research projects in Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and in the Middle East. His research interests include Marketing and Information Technology, Electronic Commerce, Social Networks Technologies, Student Internet Users, Usability and Ergonomics, and Occupational Safety & Health Research. Mr Nathan is an active member of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Malaysia. He currently holds an Adjunct Lecturer position with the University of Newcastle Australia (Singapore Campus) where he delivers modules on Marketing and Research Methodologies.