

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE HOTEL RATING
SYSTEM AND SERVICE QUALITY
A CASE STUDY OF
THE 'THAILAND HOTELS STANDARD'

By

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THAI TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

As one of the major tourist destinations in Asia-Pacific, Thailand enjoys the growth of its tourism industry and the revenue generated by international tourists mainly from East Asia, Europe, and the Americas (TAT, 2003). In 2003, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) ranked Thailand the third top tourism earner in Asia followed by China and Hong Kong (China) (WTO, n.d.) (See Appendix A). Additionally, Thailand was ranked Asia's fourth top-tourism destination in terms of the number of international tourist arrivals behind China, Hong Kong (China), and Malaysia (WTO, n.d.) (See Appendix B). Regarding accommodation capacity, the WTO placed Thailand the third for Asia's top tourism destination measured by the number of rooms in 2003 (WTO, n.d.) (See Appendix C). This prominent standing was accomplished by strong support from the Thai government and by rigorous marketing and promotional plans of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), a national tourism organization with a history of more than 40 years. In addition, the Thai tourism industry has been growing along with the Thai economy.

Despite the incidents and crises that have occurred over the decades, tourism remains one of the major sectors contributing prosperity to the Thai economy. According

to TAT statistics, since the Gulf War in 1991 the number of international tourist arrivals has been continuously increasing except in 2003, when the number decreased 7.36%. This decrease was attributed to the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in Asia and the Iraqi War (TAT, 2004_a; TAT, 2004_b). Additionally, the revenue flowing in from inbound tourism has been growing in terms of Thai currency with the exception of a decreasing rate of 4.39% in 2003. Despite the challenges that the Thai tourism industry is facing, the TAT aims to generate at least 20 million international tourist arrivals by the year 2008 (Sritama, 2004).

According to the TAT (n.d._a), in today's roller-coaster world, Thailand had the stability, consistency, and long-term growth prospects that hoteliers desired. Furthermore, accessibility to Thailand has been improving due to routing expansion of both Thai and other international airlines, deregulation of the aviation industry, linkage of transportation networks, and the opening of Bangkok's new international airport – Suvarnabhumi (TAT, n.d._a). Because of these advancements, Thai tourism has attracted a large amount of both Thai and foreign capital for investment, making it one of the foremost dynamic industries in Thailand.

Many international hotel operators and investors see opportunities of high investment returns not only in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand, but also in other tourist destinations, particularly the beach town provinces (TAT, n.d._a; Schneider, n.d.). Some international hotel brands, including Accor, Sheraton, Hilton, Marriott, Crowne Plaza, and Le Meridien, are expanding vigorously by constructing new resorts in Southern Thailand, a paradise of sun, sand, and sea (TAT, n.d._a). Schneider also noted the presence of global chain hotel companies challenges the operation and management

of non-brand-affiliated hotels, raises staff turnover, and increases costs as they are forced to upgrade to compete with the quality provided by the big players (Schneider, n.d.).

SERVICE QUALITY IN THAI TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Recently, there has been a trend for internationalization of Thai hotels and resorts (Schneider, n.d.). The increasing number of boutique hotels in major tourist destinations is an example of the quality trend in Thailand. Not only are the Thai hotels facing the challenges to upgrade their service quality to compete with the international chain hotels, but the entire Thai hotel industry also has to compete with other countries. Mr. Vichit Na Ranong, Chairman of the Tourism Council of Thailand, expressed concerns over the intense competition among ASEAN countries to recover tourism losses in 2003 (“Economic Review”, 2003). Therefore, service quality is expected to increase Thai hotel businesses’ capability for either domestic or international competition.

Thailand has implemented several national quality-improvement programs to motivate Thai hotel and tourism entrepreneurs to recognize and improve the service quality. The TAT has launched several programs for quality improvements such as the Thailand Tourism Award, the Green Leaves Award, and the Thailand Hotels Standard. These quality programs exemplify the efforts to improve the quality of hotels and tourism businesses in Thailand. The Thailand Hotels Standard, the key focus of this study, involves all aspects of quality in the hotel sector.

THE THAILAND HOTELS STANDARD

According to the data collected by WTO in 2003, Thailand has the third largest accommodation capacity in Asia with a total of 321,000 guestrooms in hotels and similar establishments (WTO, n.d.). Not only does the potential of the Thai tourism industry attract a number of international chain hotels for investment, but also many small/medium local entrepreneurs entered this industry. Undoubtedly, these locally owned small/medium hotels have difficulty in competing with the international giants. The quality of services offered by these hotels is the fundamental issue that can lead to either failure or success of the businesses.

Prior to the development of a national hotel quality rating program, Thailand was one of a few major travel destination countries without a standard hotel rating system (Intarakomalyasut, n.d.). The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the Thai Hotel Association (THA), and the Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA) collaborated under the project of “World Class Standard” to establish a quality standard for the hotel industry, which served as a pilot project to standardize the Thai tourism industry (THA, TAT, & ATTA, n.d.). The program, which was entitled “Thailand Hotels Standard”, uses stars as symbols to certify the quality of hotel properties.

The development of a reliable hotel standard was expected to improve both the efficiency and the effectiveness of hotel operation and management and to grant equal recognition to both Thai-owned and managed hotels as well as international chain hotels. The TAT stated the Thailand Hotels Standard allowed tour operators and customers to recognize hotels with non-renown brand names and trust the ratings, which assisted them in identifying what levels of standard they should expect from the hotel (TAT, n.d.a).

Hence, customers could evaluate their expectations from the service performance of the hotel they selected. The goals of the Thailand Hotels Standard were expected to be recognized as the following (THA, TAT, & ATTA, n.d., p. 5):

- To raise the overall standards of Thai hotels by benchmarking and aligning local standards with internationally-accepted standards and practices;
- To promote healthy competition within the Thai tourism industry and achieve higher quality of service and management;
- To encourage the participation of hotels in Bangkok as well as in the four regions of Thailand;
- To inspire international confidence and gain increasing international acceptance in the services offered and the management of Thai hotels; and
- To raise the visibility and awareness of newly certified hotel and resort properties among tour operators, individual travelers and tourists in Thailand and abroad.

Additionally, to attain the established goals, six objectives of the Thailand Hotels Standard were set as guidelines, which included (THA, TAT, & ATTA, n.d., p. 5):

- To establish a tangible and reliable hotel standard;
- To encourage fair practice and equally protect consumers as well as hotels;
- To promote superior service, efficient administration and efficient and effective utilization of natural resources;

- To develop a set of standards that accurately reflects the physical characteristics of a property and offers a clear indicator of its ‘marketing value;
- To raise awareness of the ongoing development of the Thailand Hotels Standard;
- To build a firm foundation and promote the sustainable growth of the Thai hotel industry.

Hotels’ participation in the Thailand Hotels Standard project is voluntary. A qualified hotel property must have a valid and legal hotel operation license and have been in operation in Thailand for more than a year. In addition, the hotel has to accept the certifications criteria by the Thailand Hotels Standard and pay certification fees. The major factors that are taken into consideration include physical structure, quality of service, and maintenance. The hotel is inspected and scored in the three areas covering the standard of construction and facilities, the standard of maintenance, and the standard of service. The minimum scores are set for each five star rating as quality levels of the Thailand Hotels Standard. One star indicates the lowest level of hotel quality and five stars indicates the highest level of hotel quality.

The committee’s evaluation of each hotel is both subjective and objective. The committee of the Thailand Hotels Standard consists of representatives from TAT, THA, ATTA and academic institutions offering hotel management programs (THA, TAT, & ATTA, n.d.). The Thailand Hotels Standard certification is offered every year. If the total scores of the three criteria (the standard of construction and facilities, the standard of maintenance and cleanliness, and the standard of service) of a hotel passes the minimum

score requirements, a hotel will be certified with the proposed star rating level of the Thailand Hotels Standard. If it fails, the hotel will be offered three alternatives including canceling the application, accepting the results for certifying a lower star level, or making improvements within 180 days for re-inspection.

The Foundation of Standard and Human Resources Development in Service and Tourism Industry, a non-profit organization representing the cooperation between the private and public sector, was founded to administer all the aspects involved in the implementation of the Thailand Hotels Standard (THA, TAT, & ATTA, n.d.). In March 2004, the foundation officially launched the Thailand Hotels Standard certification program and awarded the first 84 hotels with 2-5 star ratings after the evaluation of 110 voluntary hotel participants (TAT, n.d.b). It was anticipated that with the adaptation of internationally accepted star rating models and its systematic administration, the Thailand Hotels Standard would be an effective instrument to enhance the overall service quality of the Thai hotel industry.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As the Thailand Hotels Standard is still at its infancy, little is known about its effects or relationship with service quality of the hotel industry in Thailand. Identifying the perceptions of hotel operators toward the Thai hotel rating system may help the tourism-related organizations develop strategies for hotel establishments to participate in the hotel rating system and increase service quality. The study's finding is expected to reveal the improvement of hotel service quality as a result of implementing the hotel rating system. The study is also expected to enhance the competitiveness of the Thai

hotel industry by facilitating lodging properties moving up to a higher level of service quality. The service quality movement of the entire hotel industry would provide assurance of positive travel experience in Thailand. At the property level, the hotel managers decide whether to apply for the hotel rating or not. The results will be published in academic and industrial conferences and journals to further discuss the impacts of the hotel rating system.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship of the hotel rating system and service quality. This research focuses on the Thailand Hotels Standard that has recently been launched to improve service quality in the Thai hotel industry. Hotel managers' perspectives were examined because they had the authority to make a decision to apply for the hotel standard certification and make initiatives in the hotels leading to a movement in the industry. Also, they were presumed to understand their customers through their frontline employees. To achieve the purpose of the study, ten specific objectives were proposed as follows:

1. To measure the perceived influences of the hotel rating system on the hotel industry in general as well as hotel properties;
2. To examine the differences of perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the applicant hotels and the non-applicant hotels;

3. To examine the differences of perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the star-rating certified hotels and the non-star-rating certified hotels;
4. To identify the dimensions of service quality improvement as a result of the implementation of the Thailand Hotels Standard;
5. To compare the service quality improvement among hotels at different star rating levels;
6. To compare the service quality improvement between independent hotels and chain affiliated hotels; and
7. To examine the relationship among service quality improvement and hotel performance changes.

The following chapter presents a review of previous research on two major areas - hotel rating systems and service quality. Chapter Three describes the research methods used in this study. Chapter Four presents findings and discussion of the study. Lastly, Chapter Five summarizes the content presented in this study and presents recommendations as the application of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

HOTEL RATING

Definitions of Hotel Rating System

According to Collins Concise Dictionary (1998, p. 1109), rating is defined as “a classification according to order or grade and as ranking”. Consequently, hotel rating can be described as a classification of hotels according to grade and rank. Often, there is confusion regarding the terminology used in hotel rating. Callan (1989) attempted to identify the differences between classification and grading. Classification involved assessing the tangible elements of the service mix and qualitative grading was concerned with the intangible elements. Subsequently, Callan’s review paper described clear definitions of terms used by the British hotel classification schemes as following (Callan, 1994, p. 11):

- *Registration*: A listing or ‘register’ of establishments which may or may not require minimum standards. Most countries require conformity with public health, fire and safety legislation, which indicates some minimum requirements.
- *Classification*: A grouping together of different types of serviced accommodation differentiated by criteria of physical facilities. Because ‘hotels’ provide a broad spectrum of facilities, they are often classified into five, six or even seven categories. Other types of serviced accommodation such as guest houses have a more limited range of facilities and may, therefore, have fewer categories; commonly two or three.

- *Grading*: Often used as a general term, sometimes to mean ‘classification’ but more widely accepted to mean ‘quality grading’, namely a more subjective assessment of the quality of those facilities and services objectively assessed under ‘classification’.

The scope of the joint study conducted by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the International Hotel and Restaurant Association (IH&RA) was limited only to hotels and similar establishments. The study excluded other types of accommodations such as holiday centers, holiday homes, youth hostels, holiday camps, camping, caravanning sites, and time-shares. For this study, the researcher follows the definition of hotel classification as defined by the WTO and the IH&RA. However, the term “hotel rating” is used instead of “hotel classification” or “hotel grading.” The definition, according to the WTO and the IH&RA (2004), was as follows:

‘The classification of accommodation establishments denotes a system, duly published, in which accommodation establishments of the same type (e.g. hotels, motels, and inns) have been conventionally broken down into classes, categories or grades according to their common physical and service characteristics and established at government, industry or other private levels. (p. 9).

The European Standardization Committee (CEN-the Comité Européen de Normalisation) established the standard of tourism terminology in which ‘accommodation’ referred to hotels and other types of tourism accommodation (WTO & IH&RA, 2004). It further clarified the term “accommodation rating: classification scheme” as “a system providing an assessment of the quality standards and provision of facility and/or service of tourist accommodation, typically within five categories, often indicated by one to five symbols” (p. 68).

The Characteristics of Hotel Rating Systems

There were two major systems for more than 100 hotel rating systems worldwide including official and non-official systems (Brook, 1989 & WTO, 1985 cited in Qing and Liu, 1993). The official hotel-rating systems were established and conducted by a government agency and obliged to follow the compulsory and regulatory basis. On the contrary, private organizations (hotel or tourism associations, the national/regional automobile associations, or private companies) operated non-official hotel-rating systems normally on a voluntary basis. Some national tourism and hotel associations required their members evaluated by their rating system and graded with one of the five-levels. The purpose of the official system was mainly to control the lodging tariff and taxes, whereas no social obligation was found for the non-official system (WTO & IH&RA, 2004). Callan (1994) specified some hotels tended to oppose the compulsory grading scheme because they were concerned for bureaucratic interference. In contrast, customers would expect the protection of guaranteed quality from the official system.

A hotel rating system embraced two standards, including a basic registration standard and a grading standard. The basic registration standard was the basic requirement a hotel property had to meet; it was the minimum quality requirement. The grading standard was the quality grading that compared a hotel to others, and it was the higher quality standard a hotel can achieve. Callan (1993) compared UK quality grading systems. His comparisons of each rating system were conducted by analyzing classification and quality grades assessment, but other minor criteria could not be compared because they were varied in detail. However, to communicate the quality level a hotel achieved, a variety of grading symbols were used; for example stars, crowns,

diamonds, suns, or letters. The universally recognized symbol was the stars as the majority of countries with at least a hotel rating system used the stars to represent grades of their rating systems (Callan, 1993: WTO & IH&RA, 2004).

Callan's analysis (1995) presented the hotel grading classification in the U.K. applied two measures. First, hotels and other similar establishments were classified into types of accommodations. Second, the hotels were subdivided into levels of quality grading. Like other products, an effective hotel rating system needed to be consistently fine-tuned. Callan (1992) noted the major reasons for change in a Jersey's hotel grading scheme. They included: 1) offering a more understandable grading scheme to both customers and hoteliers; 2) improper shape of quality-hotel frequency distribution due to being outdated; 3) useful as marketing tool; and 4) too much reliance on subjective assessment. Callan (1989) also referred to the report of Horwath and Horwath, which stated customer needs should be the grading scheme's priorities and should be placed above the hotel operator's needs.

Furthermore, cultural differences seemed to play a major role in developing an effective hotel classification scheme. Exploring China's hotel-rating system, Yu (1992) examined the criteria used in the hotel evaluation of the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and markedly commented it was impossible for a host country to adopt the entire standardization of hotel operation and management because of cultural differences and perceptions of the country. Similarly, WTO and IH&RA's study (2004) pointed out a national or regional classification scheme recognized the importance of cultural differences between states that extensively affected services and facilities, marketing, and purpose of travel. Moreover, they strongly recommended the

consolidation of diversity, not uniformity, to achieve sustainable tourism. Furthermore, Callan (1992) mentioned that individual priorities of consumers resulted in a grading scheme that was different from others in terms of assessment, but in which the fundamentals of the scheme remained the same.

The Survey of Existing Hotel Rating Systems

In 2004, a joint study on hotel classification between the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the International Hotel and Restaurant Association (IH&RA) virtually published the survey results of various existing hotel classification throughout the world. One hundred and eight countries replied to their questionnaires. They surveyed the hotel classification schemes from both public sector respondents like the National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) and private sectors respondents like the National Hotel Associations. The ultimate goal of the study was to develop a single hotel grading scheme which could be used internationally in order to create benefits for both customers and tourism service providers. Simply, the joint study attempted to reduce the perplexity caused to both parties by the huge number of hotel rating systems. A number of tourists were confused by the hotel ratings as every travel service had one's own rating system, and they had to learn the differences between these rating systems and decide which sources were trustworthy (Daily, 2004).

The joint study reviewed various administrations and the criteria of hotel rating systems used in different countries. For example, many countries required mandatory classification of all hotels. Some countries needed only licenses to operate the hotels and the others demanded no classifications in order to operate. In addition, some countries

adopted classification systems from neighboring countries. For instance, Sweden utilized the Danish hotel rating system. Beyond the national hotel rating systems, many countries had been trying to form a regional hotel classification as a standard to be referred by neighboring countries in Scandinavia, Southeast Asia, Middle East and Europe. In the global perspective, the WTO and the IH&RA had been studying and developing the universal hotel classification.

The U.S. Hotel Rating Systems

The review of existing hotel classification systems by WTO and the IH&RA (2004) disclosed more than 100 systems were used in different countries worldwide. Only a few hotel-rating systems were exemplified here. The American hotel industry was dynamic and the hotel rating systems were highly developed. However, there was no official hotel rating system, only non-official systems existed. The three most popular US hotel rating systems were provided by AAA (Diamond rating), Mobil (Star rating), and Utell (Official Hotel Guide-OHG). Following are the summaries of the three US hotel rating systems:

The American Automobile Association (AAA) used diamonds to rate each hotel property. (WTO & IH&RA, 2004, pp. 74-75).

American Automobile Association (AAA) “Diamond” ratings

One Diamond

These establishments typically appeal to the budget-minded traveler. They provide essential, no-frills accommodations. They meet the basic requirements pertaining to comfort, cleanliness and hospitality.

Two Diamond

These establishments appeal to the traveler seeking more than the basic accommodations. There are modest enhancements to the overall physical

attributes, design elements and amenities of the facility typically at a moderate price.

Three Diamond

These establishments appeal to the traveler with comprehensive needs. Properties are multifaceted with a distinguished style, including marked upgrades in the quality of physical attributes, amenities and the level of comfort provided.

Four Diamond

These establishments are upscale in all areas. Accommodations are progressively more refined and stylish. The physical attributes reflect an obvious enhanced level of quality throughout. The fundamental hallmarks at this level include an extensive array of amenities combined with a high degree of hospitality, service and attention to detail.

Five Diamond

These establishments reflect the characteristics of the ultimate in luxury and sophistication. Accommodations are first class. The physical attributes are extraordinary in every manner. The fundamental hallmarks at this level are to meticulously serve and exceed all guest expectations while maintaining an impeccable standard of excellence. Many personalized services and amenities enhance an unmatched level of comfort.

The Mobil Travel Guide used star rating for recommending hotels to travelers.

(WTO & IH&RA, 2004, p. 74).

Mobil “Star” Ratings

One star

A Mobil One-Star Lodging Establishment is a limited service Hotel/Motel/Inn that is considered a clean, comfortable and reliable establishment.

Two star

A Mobil Two-Star Lodging Establishment is a Hotel/Resort/Inn that is considered a clean, comfortable, and reliable establishment, but also has expanded amenities, such as a full-service restaurant on the property.

Three star

A Mobil Three-Star Lodging Establishment is a Hotel/Resort which is well-appointed, with a full-service restaurant and expanded amenities, such as, but not limited to: fitness center, golf course, tennis courts, 24-hour room service, and optional turndown service.

Four star

A Mobil Four-Star Lodging Establishment is a Hotel/Resort/Inn which provides a luxury experience with expanded amenities in a distinctive environment. Services may include, but are not limited to: automatic turndown service, 24 hour room service, and valet parking.

Five Diamond

A Mobil Five-Star Lodging Establishment provides consistently superlative service in an exceptionally distinctive luxury environment with

expanded services. Attention to detail is evident throughout the Hotel/Resort/Inn from the bed linens to staff uniforms.

AAA and Mobil Travel Guide had offered the gold standards of hotel ratings for many countries in the Americas including the United States, Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean. In fact, both AAA and Mobile awarded 40,500 hotels and lodgings in these countries (Daily, 2004).

The Official Hotel Guide was provided through the Utell by Pegasus service by Pegasus Solutions, Inc. It was the same company that offered the Global Distribution Systems (GDS). Moreover, it was the world leading hotel-reservation service provider (Hotels Magazine, July 2002 cited in www.utell.com). Despite the dubbing ‘official’, the Official Hotel Guide was actually not an official hotel rating system as defined in the beginning of the section “Hotel Rating.”

Official Hotel Guide: Utell hotel selections

Luxury selection

Properties that provide the ultimate hotel experience. For guests who demand the very highest standards, selected from the finest choice available from around the world.

Superior selection

Hotels which offer the traveler quality rooms and facilities making their stay, whether business or leisure, relaxing and comfortable.

Value selection

Hotels that take pride in creating a friendly and informal atmosphere, providing excellent value for money for both business and leisure stays.

Style selection

Exclusive and individually designed hotels and historic properties that offer guests a unique hotel environment, each with a character all of its own.

Resort selection

Ideal for those who require leisure or recreation facilities in a hotel or adjacent, as a part of their hotel experience. The selected resorts offer accommodation for all tastes and budgets, whether for business or relaxation, or fun.

Apartment selection

Ideal for those who require leisure or recreation facilities in a hotel or adjacent, as a part of their hotel experience. The selected resorts offer

accommodation for all tastes and budgets, whether for business or relaxation, or fun.

Airport selection

A range of hotels conveniently positioned near the major airports of the world. Each with the key attribute of being within a 10km zone of the airport, many offer shuttle services.

Britain's Hotel Rating Systems

In Britain, there were a number of hotel classification schemes offered by private organizations and the regional tourist boards. For example, the English Tourist Board (ETB) awarded crowns for rating hotels in England, whereas the Automobile Association (AA) and the Royal Automobile Club (RAC) rated tourist accommodation by a star system with different criteria and judgment (Conway, 2004). As a result, the same property could have three different levels of ratings from these rating systems. The variety of these schemes in the same destination confused the consumers. A joint promotional campaign among the AA, RAC and ETB had recently developed a new harmonized hotel-classification scheme (Conway, 2004: the British Hospitality Association (BHA) cited in WTO & IH&RA, 2004). However, Conway stated the three organizations would continue making their own accommodation guides but the results were less likely to differ from one another. The following is the description of star-based system of the new joint hotel rating schemes (BHA cited in WTO & IH&RA, 2004, p.76).

Hotel Classification (Stars)

One Star Hotels

Hotels in this classification are likely to be small and independently owned with a family atmosphere. Services may be provided by the owner and family on an informal basis. There may be a limited range of facilities and meals may be fairly simple. Lunch, for example, may not be served. Some bedrooms

may not have en-suite bath/shower rooms. Maintenance, cleanliness and comfort should, however, always be of an acceptable standard.

Two Star Hotels

In this classification hotels will typically be small to medium sized and offer more extensive facilities than at the one star level. Some business hotels come into the two star classification and guests can expect comfortable, well equipped, overnight accommodation, usually with an en-suite bath/shower room. Reception and other staff will aim for a more professional presentation than at the one star level, and offer a wider range of straightforward services, including food and drink.

Three Star Hotels

At this level, hotels are usually of a size to support higher staffing levels, and a significantly greater quality and range of facilities than at the lower star classifications. Reception and the other public rooms will be more spacious and the restaurant will normally also cater for non-residents. All bedrooms will have fully en-suite bath and shower rooms and offer a good standard of comfort and equipment, such as a hair dryer, direct dial telephone, and toiletries in the bathroom. Some room service can be expected, and some provision for business travelers.

Four Star Hotels

Expectations at this level include a degree of luxury as well as quality in the furnishings, decor and equipment, in every area of the hotel. Bedrooms will also usually offer more space than at the lower star levels, and well-designed, coordinated furnishings and decor. The en-suite bathrooms will have both bath and fixed shower. There will be a high enough ratio of staff to guests to provide services like portage, 24-hour room service, laundry and dry cleaning. The restaurant will demonstrate a serious approach to its cuisine.

Five Star Hotels

Here you should find spacious and luxurious accommodations throughout the hotel, matching the best international standards. Interior design should impress with its quality and attention to detail, comfort and elegance. Furnishings should be immaculate. Services should be formal, well supervised and flawless in attention to guests' needs, without being intrusive. The restaurant will demonstrate a high level of technical skill, producing dishes to the highest international standards. Staff will be knowledgeable, helpful, well versed in all aspects of customer care, combining efficiency with courtesy.

Guest House Classification (Diamonds)

The Diamond awards assess guest accommodation at five levels of quality, from one Diamond at the simplest, to 5 Diamonds at the luxury end of the spectrum.

China's Hotel Rating System

According to Yu's study (1992), China's rating criteria included six categories: 1) architecture and level of service, 2) facilities, 3) maintenance, 4) sanitation and hygiene, 5) service quality, and 6) guest satisfaction. The first five criteria were evaluated by the inspectors of the National Hotel Evaluation Committee (NHEC), whereas the guest satisfaction scores were obtained from conducting a guest survey by NHEC at all participating hotels. There were three stages in China's star rating procedure. First, as an entry requirement, the managers or owners of hotels had to evaluate and decide the category of their hotels. Next, the NHEC evaluated each hotel for the entry requirements. If the minimum requirements were met, then hotels could apply for that star rating. In the subsequent process, the NHEC inspected and evaluated the hotels in line with the six criteria mentioned previously. Finally, when the scores derived from these six criteria were summed up, the NHEC awarded the qualifying hotels one of the five star categories.

Additionally, Yu pointed out the criteria for rating guest satisfaction was unclear as the NHEC did not provide a specific scoring system required for each star-rating category. Quin and Liu (1993) indicated other limitations that China's hotel rating system had inconsistent scoring requirements, unspecified service requirements, and a lack of incentives to maintain continuous standards. Instead, it overemphasized physical facilities and left little space for service quality.

Table 1 presents the comparisons of the Chinese Star Rating System, the AAA Diamond Rating System, and the Thailand Hotels Standard (star rating system).

According to the assessment of hotel rating in China by Qing and Liu (1993), the hotel

rating system in Thailand was examined with their existing rating systems used between Chinese system and the AAA system.

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF THREE HOTEL RATING SYSTEMS

Item	Chinese Star Rating System	AAA Diamond Rating System	Thailand Hotels Standard
Authority	Official, CNTA* Government agency	Non-official, professional association	Non-official, non- profit organization (unity of private and public tourism- related organization)
Participation	Mandatory, all tourist lodgings	Voluntary, AAA* members	Voluntary, both member and non- member of THA*
Rating purpose	Management, Marketing national standards	Consumers information, Marketing	Consumer protection, Marketing, National standards, Sustainability
Rating method	Rating without classification	Classifying before rating	Rating without classification
Scoring	Mostly quantitative point system	Qualitative, non- point system	Totally quantitative point system
Inspection	Large number of inspectors with short training session	Small number of full-time hotel professionals with experience	Small number of full-time hotel professionals with experience
Guest satisfaction Service requirement	One of the decisive elements of rating General, list items, not specific actions	Informally considered Specific action requirement	Non-existence General, list items, not specific actions

Source: Adapted from Qing and Liu, (1993)

Note* CNTA – China National Tourism Administration
AAA - American Automobile Association
THA – Thai Hotel Association

The Importance of Hotel Rating Systems

The hotel rating or classification systems offered benefits to various sectors. The WTO & IH&RA (2004) pointed out the benefits to travel agency, tour operators, hotel industry, government and consumers. The hotel classification systems facilitated the travel agents' tasks of hotel selection for their customers. They also indicated that major tour operators such as First Choice, Thomson Holidays, Airtours, and Thomas Cook had their own hotel classifications to assist in the tour operations and their marketing.

In addition, the hotel companies used another form of classification which was known as "branding" (WTO & IH&RA, 2004). It conveyed both qualitative and quantitative grading of the hotel properties to their customers. For the country or states' benefits, the hotel rating or classification system allowed the government to control the hotel industry with tariff and taxes and met basic requirement of safety and hygiene.

The consumers also benefited from an easy comparison between hotels in various destinations which compete in a healthy fashion. The customer, nevertheless, did not perceive the grades of any hotel rating system as a strongly important indicator in the selection of a hotel (Callan, 1995). Even leisure hotel customers had considered it more important than other types of customers. They identified the hotel rating as only a moderately important tool in selecting a hotel. Callan also revealed statistics proving two-thirds of customers in three to five star (or other symbols) hotels used a rating system more often than those in one and two star levels. He also commented that whatever the classification and grading schemes were, they were beneficial to both the customers and the hotel industry for assistance in improving facilities and service quality at a given price.

As a result, it was proposed that hotel rating system was correlated with improving service quality.

SERVICE QUALITY

Definition of Service

Service had been studied by multi-academic disciplines including operations management, marketing, human resource management, organizational behavior. From the economic perspective, Haksever, Render, Russell, and Murdick (2000) defined service as “economic activity that produce time, place, form, or psychological utilities” (p. 3). They described further that services could save customers’ time (e.g. maid service), provide convenient outlets (e.g. department stores), provide more usable form of information (e.g. database service), and provide psychological refreshment (e.g. holiday service).

From an operational perspective, service was viewed as a process where input was processed to output. Morris and Johnston as cited in Lovelock (1991) specified three types of inputs: customers, materials, and information. Lovelock (1991 & 2001) proposed that services has three components - people processing, possession processing, and information processing - and later added mental stimulus processing. Table 2 provides examples of these services.

TABLE 2
UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF THE SERVICE ACT

What is the Nature of the Service Act?	Who or What is the Direct Recipient of the Service?	
	People	Possessions
Tangible Actions	<i>People processing</i> (service directed at people's bodies): Passenger transportation Health care Lodging Beauty salons Physical therapy Fitness center Restaurant/bars Barbers Funeral services	<i>Possession processing</i> (services directed at physical possessions): Freight transportation Repair and maintenance Warehousing/storage Office cleaning services Retail distribution Laundry and dry cleaning Refueling Landscaping/gardening Disposal/recycling
Intangible Actions	<i>Mental stimulus processing</i> (services directed at people's minds): Advertising/PR Arts and entertainment Broadcasting/cable Management consulting Education Information services Music concerts Psychotherapy Religion Voice telephone	<i>Information processing</i> (services directed at intangible assets): Accounting Banking Data processing Data transmission Insurance Legal services Programming Research Securities investment Software consulting

Source: Lovelock (2001, p.38)

Service had been commonly viewed as the opposite side of goods along a continuum. Analyzing the categories of products on a product continuum that was titled 'a tangibility spectrum', Shostack (1977) as cited in Reisinger (2001_a) classified services according to the degree of intangibility. Berry (1980) specified from the intangibility perspective that goods were referred to as an object, a device, or a thing, whereas service

was a deed, a performance, or an effort. In practice, it was difficult to completely separate service from goods. Goods purchase was almost always accompanied by supporting services. Similarly, service purchase was almost always accompanied by supporting goods (Haksever et al., 2000). To distinguish the differences between services and goods, Lovelock (1991) provided seven generic differences between goods and services in a marketing domain which included nature of the product, greater involvement of customers in the process, people as part of the product, greater difficulties in maintaining quality control standards, absence of inventories, relative importance of the time factor, and the structure of distribution channels. Gronroos (1990) distinguished services into two dimensions: a technical outcome dimension and a functional outcome dimension. The technical outcome dimension was the type (*what*) of service delivered to consumers. The functional outcome dimension was the process (*how*) by which service is delivered. Most of service and service quality literatures examined the later dimension.

Service was also perceived as a system which a service organization must provide. The service system comprises service operations system, service marketing system, and service delivery system (Lovelock, 1991). The service system is demonstrated in Figure 1. The operations system embraced resources to create services and run the service operations. The resources included personnel, facilities, and equipment. First, the service marketing system incorporated marketing efforts and activities for the service delivery system. Next, the service delivery system involved place, time, and method to provide services. Lastly, the service marketing system was included in the service delivery system.

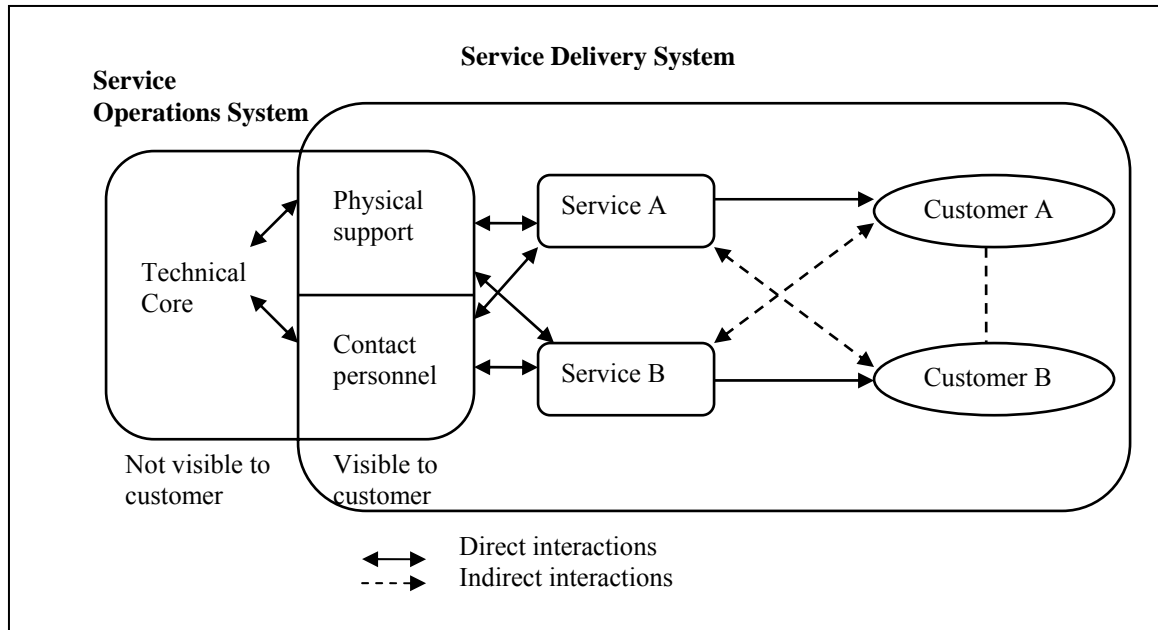


FIGURE 1: THE SERVICE BUSINESS AS A SYSTEM

Source: Lovelock, 1991, p.14 adapted from Eric Langeard, John E. G. Bateson, Christopher H. Lovelock, and Pierre Eiglier, *Services Marketing: New Insights form Consumers and Managers*, Cambridge, Mass./ Marketing Science Institute, 1981.

In addition, services had been distinguished from goods by considering the degree to which the four unique characteristics of services exist. They were intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability. A number of researchers documented these characteristics in their studies (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1985). Based on Zeithaml et al (1985), Hoffman and Bateson (1997, pp. 24-35) defined these characteristics as following:

The intangibility: A distinguishing characteristic of services that makes them unable to be touched or sensed in the same manner as physical goods.

Inseparability: A distinguishing characteristic of services that reflects the interconnection among the service provider, the customer involved in receiving the service, and other customers sharing the service experience.

Heterogeneity: A distinguishing characteristic of services that reflects the variation in consistency from one service transaction to the next.

Perishability: A distinguishing characteristic of services in that they cannot be saved, their unused capacity cannot be reserved, and they cannot be inventoried.

Challenges created by these characteristics did not only play significant roles for developing service strategies of service organizations, but they also made it difficult for customers to evaluate services and their quality. All of these characteristics are seen in the hospitality services.

Reisinger (2001_a) described hospitality as the provision of accommodation and catering (food and beverage) services for guests that included both tourists and local residents. The author also mentioned the quality of hospitality services implying that guests were to be treated with empathy, kindness, and friendliness, and there was also a concern for their well-being and satisfaction. In addition, Reisinger (2001_b) stated that a few tourism and hospitality services were either purely tangible or intangible. They were mixtures of products and services; most had high degrees of intangibility. The customers could not use all the five senses prior to the purchase. The hospitality services were produced and consumed simultaneously; therefore, they required the presence of both hospitality provider and customer. The services varied over times, persons, moods of both parties. Lastly, it was also impossible to store or save them for future purchase.

Furthermore, Reisinger (2001_b) explained the evaluation of services that existed in three stages: pre-consumption, consumption, and post-consumption. In the pre-consumption stage, consumers made a choice among alternatives, but they rarely had cues to evaluate the service attribute before consuming. The causes might be that only a single brand was offered or the inability to get sufficient pre-purchase information. In the consumption stage, consumers started comparing the expectation and the experience; this action continued into the post-consumption stage. Although the service provided to the

consumers mostly consisted of a series of actions and interactions, they evaluated the whole process, rather than evaluated each one separately.

Definition of Quality

In an attempt to cover quality in all sectors, Garvin (1988) brought together the definitions of quality described by scholars from fields as diverse as philosophy, economics, marketing, and operations management. He classified the quality definitions into five categorized perspectives. First, *Transcendent* perspective viewed quality as an innate excellence, which could be recognized only through experience. It could not be defined precisely, and thus it offered little practical guidance. Second, *Product-based* perspective viewed quality as precise and measurable quantities. It was highly effective on an objective nature, but failed in measuring subjective attributes. Third, *User-based* perspective considered quality from an individual customer's perspective which was highly subjective. Fourth, *Manufacturing-based* perspective viewed quality from production process or supply side by setting up a specification and considering product conformance. However, it recognized consumer's interest rather than simplifying the production process. Fifth, *Value-based* perspective viewed quality as the result of a balance between service performance and price or "affordable excellence" (p. 46). Haksever et al. (2000) noted that these categories reflected the application of quality in business functions.

Schneider and White (2004) commented that the quality based on philosophical (transcendent) approach was useless for research and practice since it was inexplicable and unquantifiable. In addition, defining quality from a technical (manufacturing or

objective) approach was well-suited to standardized products since it focused on the objective and the readily measurable. Moreover, the user-based approach was more attractive in order to define the quality of services because it was more appropriate to the subjective terms and the characteristics of service. They further suggested that because most services were supplied in a combination with goods, the technical approach should measure the *what* of services whereas the user-based approach was fitted for measuring the quality of the *how* of services.

Garvin (1988) also identified eight dimensions of quality as a framework for analysis. He stated that these dimensions provided the disaggregating concept of quality for businesses to attain and focus on some harmonizing dimensions because some of them could be achieved with the expense of the other. The eight dimensions were described as the followings (pp. 50-59):

Performance refers to the primary operating characteristics of a product or service. *Features* refer to the secondary characteristics that supplement the product's basic functioning.

Reliability refers to the probability of a product's malfunctioning or failing within a specified period of time.

Conformance refers to the degree to which a product's design and operating characteristics meet pre-established standards.

Durability refers to the amount of use one gets from a product before it physically deteriorates or before it breaks down.

Serviceability refers to the speed, courtesy, competence, and ease of repair.

Aesthetics refers to how a product looks, feels, sounds, tastes, or smells (most subjective).

Perceived Quality refers to indirect measures of quality comparison by using perception of quality i.e. images, advertising, and brand names rather than the reality itself (most subjective).

Quality concept emerged far back in human history. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the importance of quality became apparent to the world, starting with the simple inspection by artisans and skilled craftsmen to more complicated

statistical quality control and quality assurance in manufacturing companies (Garvin, 1988). The statistical quality control included process control (using simple statistical techniques) and sampling techniques (checking a limited number of items within an acceptable range of defects).

Beyond the statistical point of view, quality control was extended to quality assurance that engaged quantifying the costs of quality, total quality control, reliability engineering, and zero defects. The costs of quality were controlled based on the premise that failure costs could be reduced significantly by investing in quality improvement (Juran, 1951 as cited in Garvin, 1988). Rather than performance by the manufacturing department only to achieve quality in three main functions – new design control, incoming material control and product or ship floor control – the concept of total quality control necessitated the co-operation of multiple departments (Feigenbaum, 1956 as cited in Garvin, 1988). Reliability engineering was the control of quality that is anchored in probability theory and statistics with the assurance of acceptable product performance over time (the Department of Defense, 1950 as cited by Garvin, 1988). Zero defects introduced by Martin Company as cited in Gavin (1988), awarded incentives to workers for lowering defects. Then a new approach to quality achievement, a so-called strategic quality management, was developed to respond to the needs of broader quality scope. Strategic quality management was the extension of the preceding quality movements. It was more comprehensive because it incorporated profitability and business strategies that were associated with competitive needs, customer viewpoint, and continuous quality improvement. Table 3 summarizes the quality movements as previously mentioned.

TABLE 3
THE FOUR MAJOR QUALITY ERAS

Identifying Characteristics	Stage of the Quality Movement			
	<i>Inspection</i>	<i>Statistical Quality Control</i>	<i>Quality Assurance</i>	<i>Strategic Quality Management</i>
Primary concern	Detecting a problem to be solved	Control a problem to be solved	Coordinating a problem to be solved, but one that is attacked proactively	Strategic impact a competitive opportunity
Emphasis	Product uniformity	Product uniformity with reduced inspection	The entire production chain, from design to market, and the contribution of all functional groups, especially designers, to preventing quality failures	The market and consumer needs
Methods	Gauging and measurement	Statistical tools and techniques	Programs and systems	Strategic planning, goal-setting, and mobilizing the organization
Role of quality professionals	Inspection, sorting, counting, and grading	Troubleshooting and the application of statistical methods	Quality measurement, quality planning, and program design	Goal-setting, education and training, consultative work with other departments, and program design

Identifying Characteristics	Stage of the Quality Movement			
	<i>Inspection</i>	<i>Statistical Quality Control</i>	<i>Quality Assurance</i>	<i>Strategic Quality Management</i>
Who has responsibility for quality?	The inspection department	The manufacturing and engineering departments	All documents, although top management is only peripherally involved in designing, planning, and executing quality policies	Everyone in the organization, with top management exercising strong leadership
Orientation and approach	“inspects in” quality	“controls in” quality	“builds in” quality	“manages in” quality

Source: Gavin, 1988, p. 37

Definition of Service Quality

According to the previous section, this study reviews the service quality from the user-based approach which focuses on satisfying the customers' quality need. Scholars have recognized and discussed service quality during the past few decades. Numerous service quality literature has studied conceptualization, measurement, implementation, and management of the service quality. In this research, only the service quality concept and measurement are examined. The concept of service quality was established after there had been a growing interest in the quality of goods served. Garvin (1988) was among the first scholars who examined the quality concepts to cover both goods and service as described in the preceding section.

Service quality was originally cultivated in the marketing context in which the customer was the focal point of the movement. As previously mentioned, Garvin (1988) explained the perceived quality as the subjective perception of quality through indirect measures of quality comparison. Investigating the service quality development, Gronroos (1993) stated service quality had been developed based on the confirmation/disconfirmation concept of service quality he introduced in the "perceived service quality" model in 1982. The notion of the model explained that the perceived service quality was the result of comparing the real experience with the expectation of a customer before consuming the service. The model is illustrated in figure 2. The perceived service quality is positive when the experience goes beyond the expectation and vice versa when expectations are not met. Additionally, he asserted customers had subjective views for the quality of service, thus an individual's meaning of good quality might be different from others. The empirical study of Callan (1989) similarly recognized that in general

people had diverse perceptions of the service quality definition as a result of their experiences, thus the service quality was obviously impossible to measure.

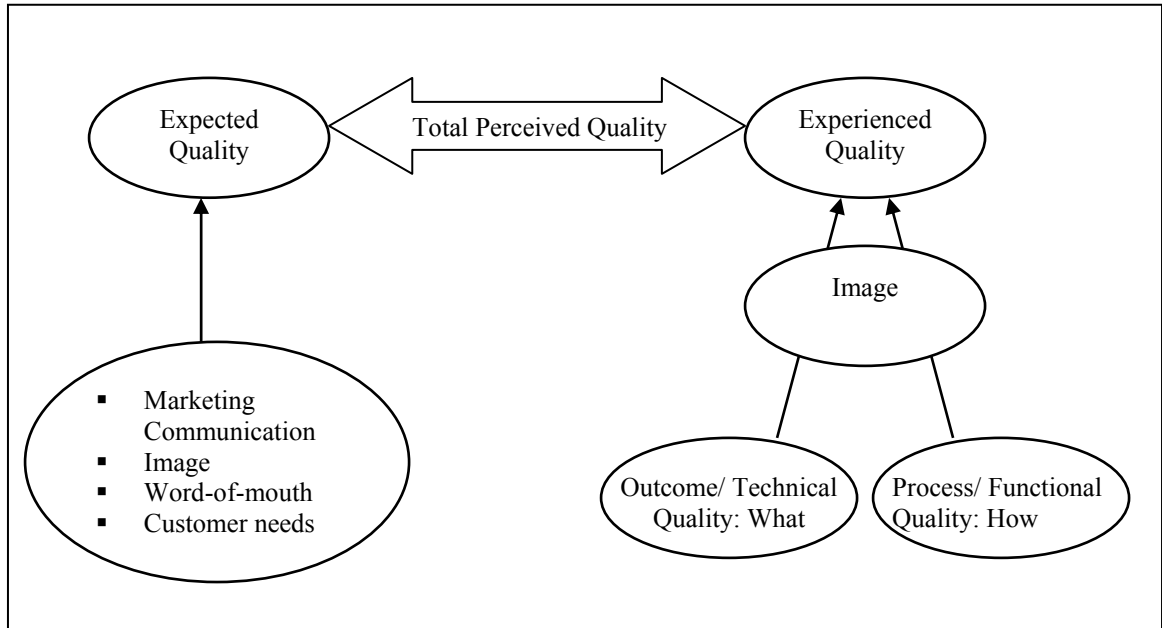


FIGURE 2: THE PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY MODEL

Source: Gronroos, 1990, p. 41 as cited in Gronroos, 1993

Based on the perceived service quality concept Parasuraman et al. (1985) applied premises from other previous studies to form their model of service quality. The ideas included a consumer had difficulty in evaluating service quality rather than goods quality, that a perception of service quality was developed from a comparison of consumer expectation with actual service performance, also quality evaluation involved the evaluation of both the process and outcome of service delivery (Gronroos, 1982; Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1982; Lewis and Boom, 1983; Sasser, Olsen, and Wyckoff, 1978 as cited in Parasuraman et al., 1985).

Consequently, the conceptual model study of Parasuraman et al. (1985) presented 10 original determinants which included reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/knowing the customer, and tangibles. In their succeeding study, using the SERVQUAL measured some of these determinants were combined and only five dimensions remained (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The five dimensions consisted of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The definitions of these five dimensions are as follows (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p. 23):

- *Reliability* is defined as the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
- *Responsiveness* is defined as the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
- *Assurance* is defined as the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
- *Empathy* is defined as caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.
- *Tangibles* concerns physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel.

In the exploratory research of Parasuraman et al. (1985), a conceptual gap model of service quality was developed based on the difference between expectation and experience or the so-called “perceived service quality.” It was derived by comparing customer expectation and perceived service performance. The fundamental notion was that the service quality was perceived as an overall evaluation or attitude toward an entity. The gap model explained the existence of five service quality gaps due to differences between service quality sources. The five gaps included: (Gap 1) Customer expectations versus management perceptions of customer expectations; (Gap 2) Translation of perceptions into service quality specifications versus management perceptions of

customer expectations; (Gap 3) Service delivery versus service quality specifications; (Gap 4) External communications to customers versus service delivery; and (Gap 5) Customer service quality expectations versus customer service quality perceptions (Figure 3). The perceived service quality (Gap 5) is the function of Gap1 through Gap 4. Haksever, Render, Russell, and Murdick (2000) cited some risks of the gap model application found in several studies. They opined that customers always had expectations of high quality and those services that involved credence characteristics caused difficulty in service quality evaluation.

The gap model was intentionally developed to apply to a broad range of service industries. Scholars preferred specific measurements to evaluate the service quality of a certain industry. Also, Brown and Swartz (1989) recommended using a simpler model for professional services. However, the gap model was the basis for the development of many service quality measurements. More details of research studies on service quality measurements applied in various services industries are mentioned in the following section.

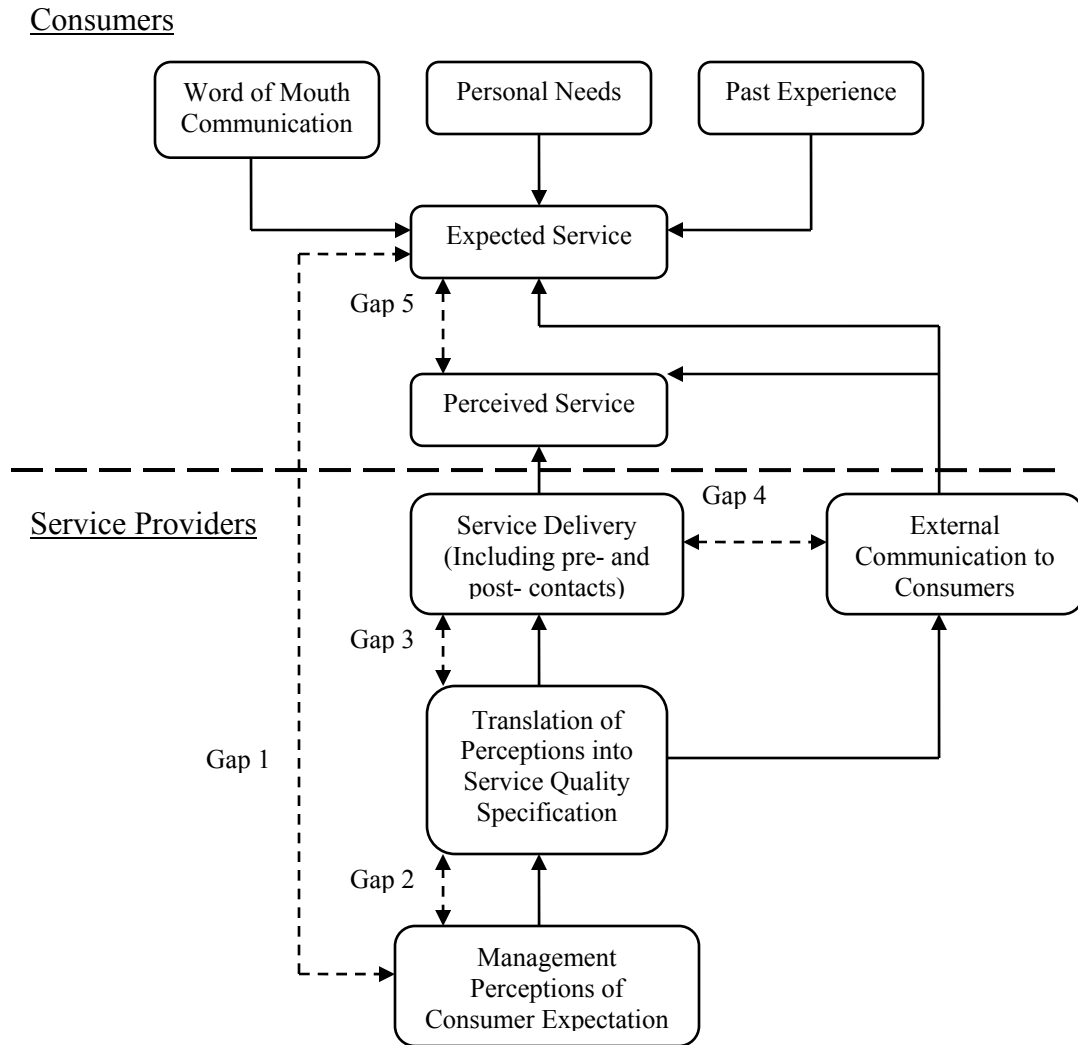


FIGURE 3: SERVICE QUALITY GAP MODEL
 Source: Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985, p.44

Service Quality Measurement

Service quality is vital to all organizations. Many service strategies are implemented to achieve customers' service quality expectations. Before each business makes a decision of which strategies are to be used, they have to know their strengths and weaknesses in order to make the right decision. A way to help the organizations determine their own situation is to measure the existing service quality provided to its

customers. Several methods are used including customer satisfaction measurement, measurement by the critical incident technique, performance measurement, and attribute-based measurement. As the study focused on the attribute-based measurement, therefore expectation-perception approach (SERVQUAL) and only-performance approach (SERVPERF) were described. Soutar (2001) specified the most commonly used measurement of service quality was the SERVQUAL.

The quantitative multi-attribute measurement was developed in response to the global quality-perception definition of service quality. The multi-attribute measurement is another alternative that measures individual quality attributes of the service quality rather than measuring only overall perception of the service offerings or measuring the indirect service quality through customer satisfaction. The measurement starts with establishing a list of related quality attributes and then is assessed by the service provider's respondents. Stauss (1993) reported that multi-attribute measurement in a periodical monitoring program provided greater contributions to the management of service organizations. The most well-known and contributing-to-service industries attribute-based measurement of service quality is the SERVQUAL instrument. More details are provided in the following section.

Stauss (1993) pointed out three limitations of using the attribute-based measurement of service quality. First, it was possible that the attributes in the questionnaire represented subjective point of view. Second, there was likeliness that some customer quality perception might be missed. Third, the questionnaire did not designate specific behaviors opposing to the episodic nature of service.

Schneider and White (2004) suggested the perception-expectation measurement of service quality provided practical and research benefits. By using the perception-expectation measure, the practitioners knew which dimensions needed to be improved. For the research benefit, the perception-expectation measure offered opportunities for the researchers to track the service quality.

- **The SERVQUAL Measurement**

Although the measurement of service quality was hard to pin down due to the service characteristics involving intangibility, perishability, inseparability, and heterogeneity (Lovelock, 1981; Gronroos, 1990; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996), researchers had continuously investigated and contributed to this area. Among others, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry have been widely recognized for their service quality battery. Their significant contribution was the development of a service quality measurement, called “SERVQUAL”, based on the original conceptual gap model of service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Parasuraman, et al, 1991). The SERVQUAL was seen as a generic service-quality measurement tool for services industries (Lovelock, 2001). Each containing 22 items in two parts, the SERVQUAL was a questionnaire that examined customers’ perceived service quality by measuring customer expectation in the first portion, and their perceived service performance in the second portion. The last section of point allocation weighed the five proposed attributes. Customer expectation and perception were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree. The SERVQUAL instrument had been

primarily developed to measure service quality in general; therefore, the developers recommended minor changes for a specific organization or industry.

The SERVQUAL was criticized for its validity, predictive power, and length. The validity of some dimensions was doubted but the original developers argued their dimensions were conceptually distinguished, but somewhat interrelated. The empirical research by Carmen (1990) commented on the validity and applicability of the SERVQUAL instrument. Its dimensions were criticized for not being generic enough that they could be used without adding new items or factors which were considered potentially important to the quality of given service firms. The empirical findings of Cronin and Taylor (1992) found the inconsistency of item scales defining service quality in different industries. In fact, Parasuraman and colleagues had recognized this limitation and suggested other researchers to consider minor modifications of their instrument to a particular service industry.

Additionally, service organizations with multiple service functions were recommended to use the instrument separately to evaluate the service quality of each function (Carmen, 1990). Concerns over handling the expectations were also noted because the expectation responses were not practically effective. The method of asking respondents was questionable. Specifically, a problem might occur from some respondents who might be unable to establish the expectation due to a new experience or no communication with other sources.

The extension of arguments over the SERVQUAL provided more insights into the evaluation of service quality. Cronin and Taylor (1992 & 1994) further argued that the SERVQUAL was an inappropriate instrument due to its inadequate conceptualization and

operationalization of service quality. Likewise, Teas (1993 & 1994) pointed out conceptual and operational flaws of the SERVQUAL, particularly its validity.

Parasuraman et al. (1994) argued that the concerns of Cronin and Taylor, and Teas over the validity and other suspected deficiencies of the SERVQUAL were not warranted.

Despite these debates, more studies were conducted and made the measure more well-established.

Hoffman and Bateson (1997) mentioned the critique about the predictive power of the SERVQUAL (measuring both expectation and perception): that its ability to predict customer purchase intention was less than the modified instrument that measured only the perception of service performance. Service quality required customer satisfaction as a mediating variable that affected purchase intention. Cronin & Taylor (1992, p.65) stated, “service quality is an antecedent of consumer satisfaction and that consumer satisfaction exerts a stronger influence on purchase intentions than does service quality.” They suggested for managerial purpose the customer satisfaction program should be more emphasized than strategies that focused exclusively on service quality.

Because of the length of the questionnaire, the SERVQUAL made service managers reluctant to adopt it for their firms. Because of the 44-item instrument formed by two parallel parts creating unnecessary repetition, Cronin (1992: 1994) and Brady, Cronin, and Brand (2002) preferred the use of only perception of service performance to measure service quality. However, Parasuraman et al. (1994) argued that measuring both sides could provide more valuable diagnostic tools for management to discover which dimensions should be improved by considering the gap scores.

Despite the critiques, the SERVQUAL has been widely applied in various service industries. The review research on this issue by Buttle (1996) summarized the discussions and application of the SERVQUAL in a number of industries as follows (p. 8).

Published studies include tire retailing (Carman, 1990) dental services (Carman, 1990), hotels (Saleh and Ryan, 1992) travel and tourism (Fick and Ritchie, 1991), car servicing (Bouman and van der Wiele, 1992), business schools (Rigotti and Pitt, 1992), higher education (Ford *et al.*, 1993; McElwee and Redman, 1993), hospitality (Johns, 1993), business-to-business channel partners (Kong and Mayo, 1993), accounting firms (Freeman and Dart, 1993), architectural services (Baker and Lamb, 1993), recreational services (Taylor *et al.*, 1993), hospitals (Babakus and Mangold, 1992; Mangold and Babakus, 1991; Reidenbach and Sandifer-Smallwood, 1990; Soliman, 1992; Vandamme and Leunis, 1993; Walbridge and Delene, 1993), airline catering (Babakus *et al.*, 1993a), banking (Kwon and Lee, 1994; Wong and Perry, 1991) apparel retailing (Gagliano and Hathcote, 1994) and local government (Scott and Shieff, 1993). There have also been many unpublished SERVQUAL studies. In the last two years, the author has been associated with a number of sectoral and corporate SERVQUAL studies: computer services, construction, mental health services, hospitality, recreational services, ophthalmological services, and retail services. In addition, a number of organizations, such as the Midland and Abbey National banks have adopted it.

- **The SERVPERF Measurement** (Performance-based measure)

Although many studies supported the SERVQUAL, the use of gap scores was opposed. The empirical research of Cronin and Taylor (1992) suggested measuring service quality only perceptions of the service experience. For more consistent results of the analysis of a structural model, they recommended using “SERVPERF” -a modified SERVQUAL instrument to measure service quality. Instead of measuring both customer expectations and perceptions as in the SERVQUAL, the SERVPERF was operationalized by only one part of the perceived performance on the differently labeled 7-point scale. It did not assess the gap scores between expectation and perception as the expectation does not exist in the SERVPERF. Therefore, by excluding the measurement of customer

expectation, a total of only 22 items remained in the new measure. Cronin and Taylor concluded that the SERVPERF was a superior service quality measurement in comparison to the SERVQUAL. In addition, the results demonstrated that the new measure had more predictive power on the overall service quality judgment than the original instrument.

In response to Cronin and Taylor (1992), the SERVQUAL developers insisted on the superiority of their measurement and criticized the use of the SERVPERF for practical issues. The claim made by Cronin and Taylor about the practitioners preferring simpler measurement of overall satisfaction/perceived quality through solely the performance of the business was countered by the contention that a widespread preference did not necessarily support their claim of superiority (Parasuraman et al., 1994). They also stressed the practical values of the SERVQUAL for providing rich information and as a diagnostic tool to isolate the weak points of service quality. Moreover, they asserted that superior diagnostic value made up for the loss in predictive power.

Cronin and Taylor (1994) defended that the SERVPERF also provided practical values to managers. They alleged that the performance-based measure of service quality could offer a longitudinal index of the service quality perceptions, relative to time and customer subgroups. Their final thoughts did not commit them to remain supportive to the SERVQUAL, yet remained confident of their SERVPERF. However, both measures were found to have insignificant differences in their performance of prediction in the study conducted by Quester and Romaniuk (1997) and Angur, Natarajan, and Jahera (1999).

Service Quality in Hospitality Industry

Literature involving service quality in the hospitality industry can be categorized into three major groups: human resource related, strategy and management related, and service quality measurement issues. Some examples of the service quality articles related to the human resource management are illustrated as follows. Lewis (1989) and Cannon (2002) studied the implementation of internal service as the essence of high-service quality improvement in the hospitality industry. The study of team building among hotel employees was considered to improve customer relations and address operational problems, which resulted in service quality improvement (Berger & Vanger, 1986). Barbee and Bott (1991) investigated hospitality management's employee treatment to improve service quality delivered by their employees. Employee empowerment was also a vital issue with regard to service quality in hospitality industry. Lashley (1995) examined the employee empowerment in hospitality operations to improve the performance of front-line staff through empowerment initiatives shaped by managerial motives and perceptions. Due to the association with the service quality delivery and management, interpersonal work conflict stress and response were explored by Ross (1995). His subsequent research investigated potential employees' problem solving styles to predict their responses (Ross, 1996). Similarly, Garavan (1997) studied interpersonal skills training for improving quality service interactions. A number of researchers examined various aspects of the relationship between performance and service quality in hospitality industry (Cheung & Law, 1998: Worsfold, 1999: Southern, 1999: Haynes & Fryer, 2000: Maxwell & Lyle, 2002).

For the second group, a variety of subtopics related to the service organization's strategy and management were explored. Research concerning organizational culture to enhance hospitality organizations includes Davidson (2003) and Luk (1997). Yasin & Zimmerer (1995) and Kozak & Rimmington (1998) studied benchmarking for achieving hospitality service quality. Maxwell, McDougall, and Blair (2000) discussed the service quality opportunity that was derived from managing diversity in hospitality organizations. The research associated with the study of total quality management in hospitality areas includes the studies of Randall and Senior (1994), and O'Neill, Watson, and McKenna (1994). Another subgroup involving developments in the service strategy are Bowen (1997), Denburg and Kleiner (1993), and Enz and Siguaw (2000). These research studies are only a few among many.

The last group of service quality literature involves the measurement of service quality. Many researchers in this domain applied the SERVQUAL or modified instrument to identify the perception of service quality in the hospitality industry (Douglas, Connor, 2003; Juwaheer & Ross, 2003; Antony, Antony, & Ghosh, 2004; Ndhlovu & Senguder, 2002; Chen, Ekinici, Riley, Yoon, & Tjelflaat, 2001; Tsang & Qu, 2000; Ingram & Daskalakis, 1999; Mei, Dean, & White, 1999; Gabbie & O'Neill, 1996; Webster & Hung, 1994; Saleh & Ryan, 1991). Another group concerns the constructs of service quality measurement combined with those using other techniques. This group includes Getty & Getty (2003), Olorunniwo, Hsu, & Udo (2003), Ekinici & Riley (1999), Stauss & Weinlich (1997), Randall & Senior (1992), and Wisner & Corney (1997).

Service quality is extremely important to today's businesses, particularly those in the hospitality industry. The industry simply cannot survive without delivering satisfied

quality of their services. A survey of Canadian hospitality found that service quality was the most popular subject for education and training programs (Shaw & Patterson, 1995). Knutson (1988) and Haksever, Render, Russell, and Murdick (2000) rationalized the essentials of service quality including higher customer loyalty, higher market share, higher returns to investors, loyal employees, lower costs, and lesser vulnerability to price competition. Based on academic literatures, Wuest (2001) reported similar impacts of service quality in tourism, hospitality, and leisure businesses which were improving guest convenience; enhancing service provider's image; ensuring customer security; generating traffic linking to profits, saving costs, and higher market share; and establishing a competitive edge, and customer demand. They were specifically explained in the following statements:

“Services such as accessible rest rooms, refreshment vending, shuttle service, and comfortable seating add to guest convenience, enjoyment, and satisfaction and indirectly encourage guests to extend their stay ... Full service hotels provide almost every imaginable service to their guests ... Protective services such as adequate lighting, security staff, emergency medical facilities, guest room locks, sprinklers, and clearly marked exits instill [safety] confidence... Satisfied guests will be more likely to extend their stay, return to the destination, and recommend the property to other potential guests ... With creative ideas and a strong understanding of the needs and desires of their guest hospitality service providers are developing innovative, extensive service strategies ... By providing specific services [such as cable television, newspaper delivery, coffee, room service, fitness facilities, and laundry/dry cleaning], businesses can generate demand among certain target markets ...”. (pp. 56-57).

Denburg and Hleiner (1993) emphasized the importance of a company's provision of excellence service quality. They reported, “Service excellence is the best way for a company to sustain a competitive advantage in today's competitive global market”. They mentioned that technology made companies' products similar and that excellent quality of their service could help differentiate them in their market. To achieve such excellent

service quality, a company needed to understand their customer's expectations. Then, they could design and develop its service improvement program. The program had to include the issues of customer segmentation, service culture, listening to customers, recruitment and training of service personnel, empowerment to their people, and appraisal system.

Small hotels also recognized the service quality. However, they tended to use basic and simple strategies to control the quality of their services. According to Callan (1989), almost one third of small country-based UK hotels inspected their quality of services by establishing particular service standards. A few hotels (15%) used anonymous transactions to inspect their service quality. From those who monitored their service quality, half of them informed their staff about the monitoring transaction and almost all were reported to discuss the results with the staff. The communication between the hotel owner/management and the staff demonstrates that the hotel operators understand the need for employee involvement in delivering service quality. Additionally, if the hotel companies improved interpersonal communication, they could achieve better service standards, increase profits and repeat businesses through better service and high customer satisfaction, greater employee pride and sense of ownership, and lower staff turnover (Creelman, 1992).

Service quality in hospitality has been studied from different approaches. The total quality management (TQM) and the gap analysis model are two examples. The gap analysis approach is the foundation for a number of research studies regarding service quality in hospitality. The most popular product from this approach is the SERVQUAL instrument, as previously discussed. Many researchers in the hospitality field have

contributed to knowledge development from this approach (Saleh & Ryan, 1991: Knutson, Stevens, Wullaert, Patton, and Yokoyama, 1991: Mei, Dean, & White, 1999: Getty & Getty, 2003: Ekinici & Riley, 1999). Another approach that is based on TQM found in Randall & Senior (1992).

Based on TQM, the study of Randall and Senior (1992) employed the Perceptual Blueprinting technique to examine quality standard achievement of hospitality services. The technique was used to identify the failing points in the service delivery system as perceived by both the customers and the employees. The study revealed that there was little employee consultation in designing service quality, although the employee is a critical part of TQM. In addition, Nick (1993) summarized that a consensus on total commitment by management, employee ownership and empowerment, a strong sense of mission, communications, training and customer care were necessary for quality management in the hospitality industry.

Getty and Thompson (1994) tested the relationship between quality, satisfaction, and recommending behavior of customers in making lodging decisions. There were three conclusions to their study. First, the results showed that the dimensions of service quality have a stronger relationship with the overall perceptions of quality than the satisfaction does. Second, opposing Parasuraman et al. (1988) they discovered that reliability failed to be the most important dimension of service quality. Their contradiction was justified because of the addition of more generic items and inadequate exposure of customers to the services provided by a specific property. Third, there was no significant direct effect on satisfaction based on the perceptions of overall quality as previously assuming reciprocal effect between these two variables.

For the attempts of the hospitality industry to attain service quality as sustainable competitive advantage, O'Neill (2001) affirmed that hospitality organizations were actively receptive to service quality initiatives, such as the British Standards Institute, the European Quality Award, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, and the Edwards Deming prize. In addition, the hospitality organizations paid close attention to raising the service quality through investment in human resources development. Furthermore, a suggestion was made for hospitality professionals to incorporate the measurement of service quality in their quality improvement program in order to understand customers' perceptions of actual service delivered and to stay ahead of the customers by anticipating their needs. Enz and Sigauw (2000) examined the best practices in service quality among the US hospitality industry. Only a small number of hotel operations focused specifically on service excellence, which they did extremely well for one or more service issues; creating a service culture; building an empowered service-delivery system; facilitating a customer listening orientation; and developing responsive service guarantees.

Service Quality Measurement in Hospitality Industry

In the field of hospitality, the measurement of service quality was derived from the concept and studies of service quality experts. A number of studies applied or modified the SERVQUAL instrument to measure service quality in the hospitality industry. Several specific instruments were developed based on the SERVQUAL. Lee and Hing (1995) supported the SERVQUAL application in measuring service quality because it was relatively simple and inexpensive; provided benefits to entrepreneurs for

developing better tailored marketing; and was comparable in tracking the service quality of different firms in the same business sector.

The study of Saleh and Ryan (1991) attempted to apply the SERVQUAL model within the hospitality industry. Initially, assuming the same five dimensions of the developers, the result of their study however showed a somewhat different construct from the original model of the SERVQUAL. The factor analysis of the study combined tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance dimensions of the original model into “conviviality”, the first factor of Saleh and Ryan’s study, which explained roughly 63% and the remaining four factors (tangibles, reassurance, avoid sarcasm, and empathy) accounted for another 16%. They justified that different constructs might occur when using a 5-point scale instead of a 7-point scale as in the original research, and the invalidity of questions concerning tangibles.

In the same year, “LODGSERV”, a modified SERVQUAL instrument, was developed to measure hotel guests’ expectations of service quality and experience by using a 26-item index. It resulted in the same five dimensions (Knutson, Stevens, Wulaert, Patton, and Yokoyama, 1991). Later, Stevens, Knutson, and Patton (1995) developed another version of SERVQUAL in the restaurant setting called “DINESERV”. It was a tool for measuring service quality in restaurants. In the more specific goal of assessing the service quality, Lee and Hing (1995) attempted to assess the application of the SERVQUAL in the fine-dining restaurant sector. In 1999, another extension of the SERVQUAL scale was introduced in the hospitality industry, called “HOLSERV” (Mei, Dean, & White, 1999). In the HOLSERV study, a 27-item scale with a separate overall service quality was administered. This led to the extraction of three dimensions including

employee (behaviour and appearance), tangibles, and reliability. Ekinici and Riley (1999) proposed the application of the Q-sort technique in the context of service quality evaluation in hotels to validate the dimensions of the established models of service quality. Using the same approach as the SERVQUAL, a more recent study presented the development of a reliable and valid quantitative quality measuring tool that allowed hotel operators to measure their customers' perception of service performance. It was named "Lodging Quality Index" (LQI). The LQI study found tangibility, reliability (includes original reliability and credibility dimension), responsiveness, confidence (includes original competence, courtesy, security, and access dimensions), and communication (includes original communications and understanding dimensions). Table 4 provides short descriptions of the service quality instruments in the hospitality area (Getty & Getty, 2003).

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF SERVICE QUALITY INSTRUMENTS IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

	SERVQUAL (1991)	Saleh & Ryan (1991)	LODGSERV (1991)	HOLSERV (1999)	LQI (2003)
Data Collection	Customers of a telephone co., two insurance cos., and two banks in USA	Guests at a downtown 400- room four-star hotel in Canada	Adults who had stayed in a hotel/motel at least 3 nights during the previous year	Guests of five hotels in Australia, ranking three to five star	Frequent-traveler business owners who were members of their local Chamber of Commerce in 12 US cities
Sample size	290-487 in 5 companies	200 guests and 17 management staff	201 persons	155 guests	222 -229 respondents
Response rate	17-25%	85%	Not available	15.5 %	18.5 - 19.1%
Items	22 items modified from the original SERVQUAL (1988)	33 items modified from Martin (1996), which measured service quality in restaurant context (originally based on the SERVQUAL)	26 items modified from the SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al. (1986) The study focused on only the expectation side.	27 items modified from the SERVQUAL (1991)	26 items modified from the SERVQUAL (1988)
Questionnaire Format	2 parts: Perception and Expectation, and a part of point-allocation importance	2 parts: Perception and Expectation	1 part: Expectation	1 column customized format for comparison between Perception and Expectation, and a separate part of overall service quality	1 part: Perceived performance

	SERVQUAL (1991)	Saleh & Ryan (1991)	LODGSERV (1991)	HOLSERV (1999)	LQI (2003)
Response scale	7-point scale for both parts and a constant-sum comparative-ratings scale (100 points) for measuring the importance	5-point scale	7-point scale	7-point scale for the comparison and 10-point scale for the overall measurement	Not specified in the scale development process. No specific point scale is suggested for its application
Questionnaire administration	Mailing survey	On-site survey	Telephone survey	In-site survey	Mailing survey
Data analysis procedure for assessing factor structure	Principal-axis factor analysis followed by oblique rotation	Factor analysis	Confirmatory factor analysis	Factor analysis followed by varimax rotation	Principal components extraction
Findings:					
-Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alphas)	0.80 to 0.93	0.74 to 0.77	0.92	0.97	High
-Final number of dimensions	5 dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, Assurance, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy	5 dimensions: Conviviality, Tangibles, Reassurance, Avoid Sarcasm, and Empathy	5 dimensions: Reliability, Assurance, Responsiveness, Tangibles, and Empathy	3 dimensions: Employee, Tangibles, and Reliability	5 dimensions: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Confidence, and Communication

	SERVQUAL (1991)	Saleh & Ryan (1991)	LODGSERV (1991)	HOLSERV (1999)	LQI (2003)
-Explained variance	57% to 71%	78.57%	Not available	64.74%	Not available
Application	Measuring service quality based on the comparison of customers' perception and expectation for service business in general		Measuring only customers' expectations in hotel industry	Multiple regression analysis showing Employee as the best predictor, followed by Tangibles and Reliability	A new instrument to measure service quality in lodging industry, not limited by the SERVQUAL dimensions

Source: Adapted from Parasuraman et al., 1991

HOTEL RATING SYSTEMS, SERVICE QUALITY, AND HOTEL PERFORMANCE

As defined by various organizations, the term ‘hotel rating’ can be summarized as the classification of lodging establishments according to both qualitative and quantitative attributes. Research by the WTO and the IH&RA (2004) stated that the hotel rating systems were developed with the intention of protecting consumers. Later, the focus shifted to consumer information. Currently, competitive marketing pushes local and international hotels to seek standardization and tools to guarantee their service quality. One of the answers to the hotels’ need is a reliable hotel rating system, which proves, ranks, and certifies the hotels’ quality and facilities at a given level.

According to the WTO and the IH&RA (2004), more than 100 hotel rating systems worldwide are reported, which confuses customers’ decision on reliability of ranking. In addition, although tour operation companies and travel agencies had their own hotel rating systems for facilitating their selection of accommodation choice for their customers (WTO & IH&RA, 2004), by having their own rating system in hotel booking websites negated the hotel standard (Grossman, 2004). Countries with more than one hotel rating system confused customers in making a choice, particularly when the same hotel was assigned different rating levels (Daily, 2004). There was, however, an attempt to evaluate hotel rating systems offered in the same country (UK). The attempt was to identify which rating system represented the most accurate recognition of service quality. However, this did not succeed since a range of minor details varied across rating systems resulting in too wide spread to compare (Callan, 1989). Therefore, the comparisons could not be made.

Additional research by Fernandez and Bedia (2004) studied whether a hotel rating system in Spain was a good indicator of hotel quality. Their findings showed that based on values of expectations, perceptions and differences of perceptions and expectation, the ranking of the hotel groups did not correspond to the ranking of star rating category. In addition, they found that customers from highest category hotels were more demanding resulting in negative differences between perceptions and expectations.

Regarding the relationship with hotel performance, hotel rating systems were perceived to be vital to the hotel industry and individual property in terms of marketing in comparison to other aspects. In a survey study of small country hotels and hotels awards scheme were a measurement of service quality, Callan (1989) discovered that hotel operators valued the classification awards and grading as promotional assets, and the classification schemes provided significant amount of business to the hotels. Furthermore, Vallen and Vallen (2005) cited there was an approximately 20% increase in sales of top rating hotels in Mobile Guide and 40% increase of business in the small hotels rated in AAA. Based on his study, it was proposed that the hotel rating functioning as a promotional tool was associated with the growth of hotel business as measured by volume of sales and occupancy rate.

Finally, hotel rating was perceived as a pricing tool for hotel business. Israeli and Uriely (2000) studied the impact of star ratings and corporate affiliations on hotel room prices in Israel. Empirically, the significant result of the chi-square test verified that the star ratings and the hotel corporate affiliations were dependent of each other and they were related with the use of uniform naming strategy. Each property was named in the same manner with one brand name (e.g. Jerusalem Hilton, Tel Aviv Hilton).

Additionally, the test of the linear regression model showed that a large part of the price variation could be accounted for by the influence of the star rating. Thus, they interpreted that the star rating system was a significant predictor of a hotel's pricing decision. To support this conclusion, Lollar (1990) stated that once a hotel was awarded and the more stars the hotel had, the higher the room rate was. With the support of their studies, it was interesting to discover what influence the star rating would have in Thai hotel industry. Therefore, these led the researcher to propose an examination of the relationship among hotels' participation in the hotel rating system, their service quality improvement, and hotel performance changes as measured by average daily room rate (price), sales, and occupancy rate.

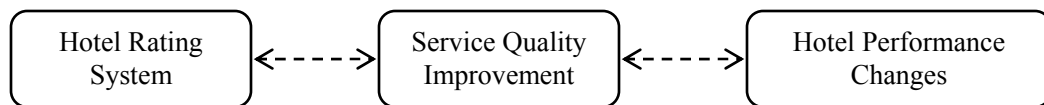


FIGURE 4: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Summary

In summary, the literature suggested the hotel rating system was conceptually one of many instruments the hotel industry used as a guideline to reach the expected service quality level. Specifically, the hotel rating systems throughout the world were not identical which confused consumers about the quality grading in each system. The assumption of this study emerged that the hotel rating system might not completely correspond to the service quality concept as the service quality seemed to be more abstract in its constructs than did in the constructs of some hotel rating system. Figure 4

contains the conceptual framework, which is proposed from a review of literature on hotel rating systems and service quality. The figure displays the concept that the hotel rating systems is related to the service quality improvement, and that service quality improvement is associated with changes in hotel performance. Therefore, the hotel rating system can encourage hotel operators to improve their service quality leading to changes in hotel performance.

HYPOTHESES

The study of the relationship of the hotel rating system and service quality improvement proposed to test the hypotheses of the objective 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 as follows;

Objective 2: To examine the differences of perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the applicant hotels and the non-applicant hotels.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the applicant hotels and the non-applicant hotels.

Objective 3: To examine the differences of perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the star-rating certified hotels and the non-star-rating certified hotels.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the star-rating certified hotels and the non-star-rating certified hotels.

Objective 5: To compare the service quality improvement among hotels at different star rating levels.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the service quality improvement among hotels at different star-rating levels.

Objective 6: To compare the service quality improvement between independent hotels and chain-affiliated hotels.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the service quality improvement between independent hotels and chain-affiliated hotels.

Objective 7: To examine the relationship among service quality improvement and hotel performance changes.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant relationship among service quality improvement and hotel performance changes.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the methods used to conduct the research. Specifically, it details the research framework, research design, sampling plan, data collection, instrument, and data analysis. Next, the pilot study, validity and reliability are clarified to ensure the suitability of the study instrument.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The research framework is presented in Figure 5. My purpose is to investigate the relationship of the hotel rating system on service quality, a case study of the Thailand Hotels Standard in Thailand. By administering the survey questionnaire, the data regarding the perception of the hotel rating system on the hotel industry as a whole and hotel properties, the changes in service quality improvement, and the hotel information were collected and analyzed as described in the next section.

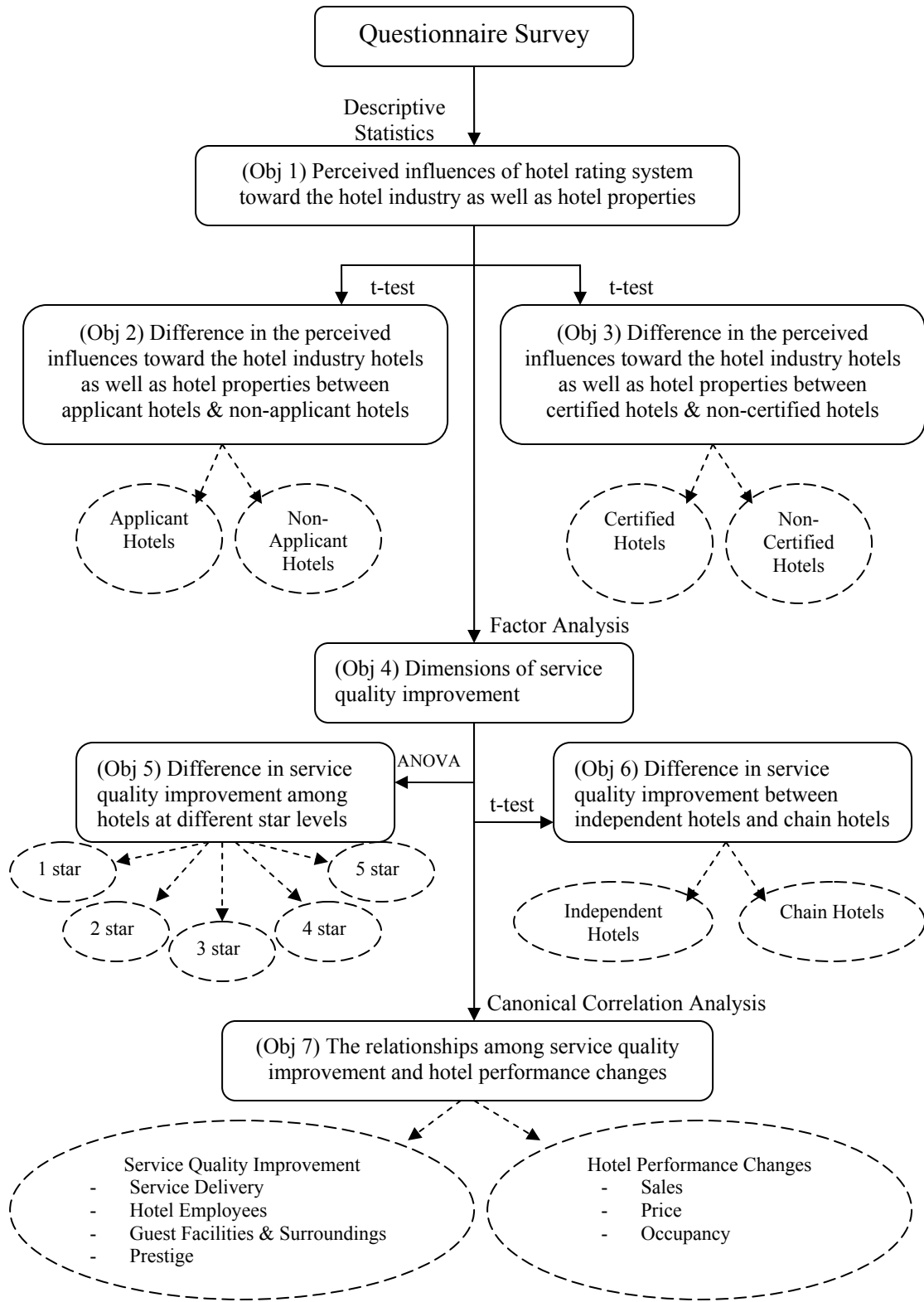


Figure 5: Research Framework

RESEARCH DESIGN

This exploratory and descriptive study attempts to examine the perception of hotel rating system on service quality in the Thai hotel industry. Data was obtained by conducting a cross-sectional survey. A structured self-administered questionnaire was developed to collect the data from hotel managers in Thailand as the target population during April-May 2006.

SAMPLING PLAN

Target Population

The target population of the study was the general managers or their representatives of hotel properties that have been in operation for at least one year in Thailand. In guesthouses or small hotels, the owners of the business would complete the questionnaire themselves.

Many people perceived 'hotel' as a multi-storied structure having sleeping rooms with private bathrooms and a number of amenities in each rentable room and at least a restaurant serving its guests. In fact, there are several kinds of hotels available in today's market, including guesthouses, resorts, motels, all-suites, and convention hotels. They all were established for the same basic purpose that was to supply lodging (and food) to travelers. Thus, this study aimed to examine the perception of the managers randomly selected from all lodging establishments in Thailand.

As a result, the term 'hotel' used in this study refers to any establishment that provided accommodation usually on a short-term basis, no matter if it offered additional

guest services or not. This definition was established to provide a measurement of all levels and categories of hotels in Thailand. According to the accommodation directory of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2002), there were approximately 5,000 hotels and similar establishments in Thailand.

Sample Size

Israel (2003) summarized that there were four strategies to decide sample size including (1) census for small populations, (2) imitating a sample size of similar studies, (3) applying formulas to calculate a sample size, and (4) using published tables. The first strategy 'census' was appropriate for the population of 200 or less. It allowed collecting data from all subjects, thus eliminating sampling error that occurred because only a part of the population was directly contacted. This strategy, however, was impossible when conducting research on a larger population and when cost was a factor. Secondly, imitating a sample size of similar studies saved time for the current research. Nonetheless the major drawback was the risk of repeating errors that were made in determining the sample size for another study; however, if the procedure were convincing, they were included. Thirdly, applying the calculation methods for determining a sample size allowed the researcher to achieve the necessary sample size for a different combination of levels of precision, confidence, and variability of a particular study. Fourthly, using published tables saved time for the researcher because calculating a number of sample sizes for different given set of criteria was made available.

According to the table of sample size for a given population size published in Sekaran (2003), the sample size to be drawn from an approximate population size of

5,000 lodging establishments appearing on the website of the TAT was 357. The calculation was assumed that the desired level of precision (e) was set at 5% by conventional guidelines and as commonly appropriate for a research in social or behavioral sciences (Shavelson, 1996). Additionally, Israel (2003) recommended adding 10-30% to the needed number of respondents to compensate for non-responses.

A pilot test of this research showed a response rate of 29%. In case of achieving lower response rate when collecting the real data, a new response rate of 25% was estimated. Thus, the sample size increased to 1,428 or roughly 1,500 respondents. This number included all 119 hotels that are certified for star rating by the Thailand Hotels Standard, all 337 THA hotel members excluding those 105 repeated hotel-name appeared on the star rating hotel directory of the Thailand Hotels Standard, and a sample of 1,044 non-THA members listed in the TAT hotel directory.

Sampling Methods

The sampling methods exercised a census and a simple random sampling. The sampling frame was derived from three sources including the certified hotel directory of the Thailand Hotels Standard, the hotel membership directory of Thai Hotel Association (THA), and the accommodation directory of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), given that hotel properties with at least one-year operation were contacted.

The entire award-winning hotels from the directory of the Thailand Hotels Standard was first included in the sampling frame as it guaranteed the maximum number of the subjects that had been directly affected by the certified star-rating. There were 119 hotels listed in the directory along with the star levels ranging from two to five stars; 7

two-star hotels, 36 three-star hotels, 48 four-star hotels, and 28 five-star hotels. None of the hotels was certified for one star. Recognizing that the majority of the certified hotels were also members of the THA, the researcher deleted the new selected hotel when it repeated any of the 119 hotels.

The second source was the THA membership directory as they represented the hotels serving highly acceptable quality. This source supplied an additional 337 uncertified star-rating hotels resulting from removing the repetitive 105 certified star-rating hotels from the total of 442 registered hotel members in the Thai Hotel Association.

The last source taken and placed in the sampling frame was the TAT hotel directory. The majority of hotels from this source characterized from small and medium hotels serving low or commonly acceptable quality level to luxury five-star hotels. There were approximately 5,000 hotels and similar establishments available in the directory listed by the location only. From this group, the hotel characteristics are as follows. First, some of these hotels were members of the THA and were already certified with one of the star levels. Second, some properties were members of the THA but were not been certified with any star level. Lastly, some hotels were neither involved with the THA membership nor applied for the Thailand Hotels Standard. Therefore, a sample of hotels selected in this stage was included only when the new hotels did not repeat the hotels drawn from earlier stages, which were obtained from the Thailand Hotels Standard and the THA membership directory, respectively. The remaining 1,044 hotels were selected by exercising a simple random sampling, performed by the SPSS program on the function of random sample of cases.

Survey Administration

The study collected primary data from the hotel managers in Thailand during April-May 2006. The data collection was administered through mailing survey and telephone follow-ups when necessary. A self-administered questionnaire was mailed with three cover letters; first from the president of the Thailand Hotel Association, second from the secretary of the committee of the Foundation of Standard and Human Resources Development in Service and Tourism Industry for the Thailand Hotels Standard, and lastly from the researcher giving an introduction of the study and instruction to complete the questionnaire.

After mailing the questionnaires, the researcher contacted the hotel managers whose name appeared on the Thailand Hotels Standard list and the THA membership list by telephone to ask if they had received the questionnaires. If so, they were encouraged to be a part of the study. If not, an introduction about the survey was given. A few weeks later, two follow-up phone calls were made to remind the hotel managers particularly those from the Thailand Hotels Standard list and the THA membership list. Several reasons were given by the hotel managers for not participating in the survey including 1) they did not receive the questionnaire 2) their businesses were closed 3) they changed their business or property for other purposes 4) they were afraid that their businesses were too small to be a part of the study. For the first reason, the researcher called them back again in a week to check for late questionnaires. For the fourth reason, the hotel managers were encouraged that their data was as important as all other types and levels of hotel to this study. The two other reasons were ignored and not included in the study.

Responses

Among the 1,500 questionnaires distributed to a randomly selected sample of hotel managers in Thailand, 354 completed surveys were received and the response rate was 23.6%. Due to incorrect mailing addresses and business closures, 40 surveys were returned. Out of the 354 surveys, six questionnaires had over 50% information missing and were excluded from data analysis. Therefore, a total of 308 surveys were valid. A variable on the questionnaire which asked for the number of capital registered to measure hotel size was deleted as a majority of the respondents refused to provide the data. They left questions blank for the following reasons: mainly due to business' confidential information, no authority to provide the data, not knowing the number, and registering the business as sole proprietorship in which the Civil and Commercial Code did not require capital registration.

TABLE 5
RESPONSE RATE

	Number	Percent
Number of questionnaires distributed	1,500	100
Number of returned questionnaires	354	23.6
Number of questionnaires containing more than 50% missing values	6	0.4
Number of non-response	40	2.7
Number of usable response	308	20.5

INSTRUMENT

The instrument used in this study was a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was undisguised-structured to employ the benefits of a standardized structure. The greatest benefits of using an undisguised-structured were the ease of administration and the reliability that the respondents answered similarly to the same exact questions (Churchill & Brown, 2004). Two forms of questions were used including fixed-alternative questions as a majority and a few open-ended questions. The questionnaire was written in both Thai and English in order to ensure both Thai and foreign managers could understand and answer all the questions.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections (Appendix E and F). Section 1 collected data concerning the hotel managers' perceived impacts of the hotel rating system 'the Thailand Hotels Standard'. Section 2 collected general information of the hotel property.

There were nine questions in section 1. The first six questions examined the respondents' awareness of the Thailand Hotels Standard, experience, and plan of application. Their answers were both dichotomous and multichotomous except when they needed to specify the 'reason' in an open-ended form. Question 7 and 8 asked the hotel managers to indicate the level of their agreement with the statements concerning the perceived or expected impacts of the Thailand Hotels Standard at the industry level and the property level, respectively. The statements in question 7 and 8 were taken from the "benefits" and "objectives" statements of the Thailand Hotels Standard. The level of the agreement ranged from 1 representing strongly disagree to 7 representing strongly agree. Question 9 explored the extent to which each hotel property had changed or might have

changed attributes in support of an application for certification by the Thailand Hotels Standard. Fifty-four attributes were obtained from 36 major attributes used for evaluation by the Thailand Hotels Standard scheme and another 18 attributes from the SERVQUAL, excluding similar attributes. The reason of combining the measure of Thailand Hotels Standard and the SERVQUAL measure was that the Thailand Hotels Standard did not specify specific behaviors of hotel's service delivery as Stauss (1993) indicated it as a limitation of using the attribute-based measurement of service quality. The responses varied from 1 indicating minimum changes to 7 indicating maximum changes with 0 indicative of no change.

In section 2, 12 questions investigated general hotel information. The first four questions asked for the hotel size, category, ownership pattern (chain affiliation), and length of its operation under the current name. The hotel size and length of its operation were answered in the open-ended form of response. The response of hotel category was dichotomous, either business or resort. The ownership pattern (chain affiliation) had three alternatives: international hotel chain, Thai hotel chain, or independent hotel. Question 5-8 asked to indicate the level of the hotel's performance in the year 2005 for hotels that were not officially certified by the Thailand Hotels Standard or the year before being certified by the Thailand Hotels Standard for hotels that had been officially certified by the Thailand Hotels Standard. Question 7-12 asked to indicate the anticipated level of the hotel's performance in the year 2006 for hotels that had not yet officially certified by the Thailand Hotels Standard or the year after being certified by the Thailand Hotels Standard for hotels that had been officially certified by the Thailand

Hotels Standard. The responses ranged from 1 signifying least successful to 7 signifying most successful.

PILOT STUDY

A pilot study of a sample of 75 hotel managers was conducted to test the internal consistency of the perceived impacts of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry in general and on each hotel property and the measure of attributes that had been changed or might be changed in support of an application for certification under the Thailand Hotels Standard. The anticipated response rate was initially set at 40% or 30 responses. However, only a total of 22 hotel managers returned the completed questionnaire or approximately 29% of response rate. The reliability coefficients were shown 0.9700 to 0.9769 meaning that the measures were highly reliable.

About 52% of the responses were resorts serving tourists and not much different proportion (48%) were business hotels. Almost two-thirds were independent hotels, whereas the percentage of international hotel chains and Thai hotel chains were 24% and 14% respectively. Almost 70% had implemented some other service quality improvement other than following the criteria of the Thailand Hotels Standard. More than 86% of the respondents were aware of the Thailand Hotels Standard. Half of the respondents had applied for the star rating evaluation by the Thailand Hotels Standard. Among those being the applicants, half of the respondents had applied for four-star evaluation, 20% had applied for five-star evaluation, and a few had ever applied for three- and two- star evaluation. None of them applied for one-star grading. Eighty percent of these applicants achieved their proposed level of the star-rating. For those

whose hotel failed the evaluation, half accepted the evaluation result at a lower star level than had applied. Seventy percent of those whose hotel did not apply for the Thailand Hotels Standard admitted that they had no plan to apply for the star rating at all. Another 30% had a plan to apply for it within three years.

CONTENT VALIDITY

According to Churchill and Brown (2004), “content validity is the adequacy with which the important aspects of the characteristics are captured by the measure” (Churchill & Brown, 2004, p.333). Simply, the content validity ensured the instrument fully included the important features of the construct that was being measured. To achieve the content validity, a review of literature was conducted to find the important variables related to the constructs of both service quality and hotel rating systems. Additionally, the measure of service quality used in this study was adopted from the well-established measurement of the SERVQUAL and the adaptation of internationally accepted hotel rating model. Prior to collecting the data, the questionnaire was reviewed by professors in the hospitality field and professionals in the Thai hotel industry. Corrections and adjustments were made according to their suggestions.

RELIABILITY

Churchill and Brown (2004, p. 335) defined reliability as an “ability of a measure to obtain similar scores for the same object, trait, or construct across time, across different evaluation, or across the items forming the measure”. They also explained the

two types of reliability which were an inter-judge reliability and an internal consistency. The inter-judge reliability of a measure was operated when different subjects evaluated a single object. An internal consistency was another reliability used to determine the correlation of items in the measure. This study observed only the internal consistency because the study asked for a score from each respondent toward a statement. The internal consistency allowed the researcher to check if each respondent's scores of different parts in the measurement appeared in a similar pattern. The coefficient alpha, generally known as Cronbach's alpha, indicated that the internal consistency existed. Nunnally (1978, p. 245) as cited in Pedhazur & Schmelkin (1991) suggested "reliabilities of .7 or higher will suffice." Thus, the greater the coefficient alpha is, the more reliable the measurement is.

The reliability analysis of the collected data revealed that the scales had an internal consistency supported by highly satisfied alpha value (see Table 6). The scale used to measure the perceived impacts of the hotel rating system on the industry in general containing 7 items had the alpha value of 0.9447. The scale measuring the perceived impacts of the hotel rating system on each hotel property having 14 items generated the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.9692. Fifty-four items determined changes in the service quality improvement resulted in the alpha value of 0.9854. The last scale to assess hotel performance changes quantified by three items produced the alpha value of 0.8567. All scales had the alpha value greater than 0.7, thus the measurement of the study was sufficiently reliable.

TABLE 6
RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR SCALES

Scales	Number of Items	Alpha Value
Perceived impacts of the hotel rating system on the industry in general	7	0.9447
Perceived impacts of the hotel rating system on individual hotel property	14	0.9692
Service quality improvement	54	0.9854
Hotel performance changes	3	0.8567

DATA ANALYSIS

The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze all the data. The study applied four statistical techniques to analyze and interpret the data including descriptive analysis, exploratory factor analysis, independent sample t-test, analysis of variance and canonical correlation analysis.

Specifically, the logical procedure started with profiling the sample. Next, the first objective was examined with descriptive statistics. The second and third objectives examined the differences of the perception of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties by the application status (between the applicant hotels and the non-applicant hotels) and the certification status (between the certified hotels and the not-certified hotels) of the hotel sample. The fourth objective was attained by factor analysis. The underlying dimensions of the service quality improvement derived from the factor analysis were used for the analyses in the next objectives. The fifth objective compared the service quality improvement at different star rating hotels. Similarly, the sixth objective assessed the service quality improvement between the affiliated hotels and the non-affiliated hotels. The last objective also used the service quality improvement

factors to explore the relationships with the hotel performance changes which measured by volume of sales, average daily room rate, and occupancy.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was used to assess the data to answer the first and second objectives, which assessed the perceptions of hotel rating system on the hotel industry in general and on the hotel property level. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the measures of central tendency (mean) and measures of the variation of the characteristics in this survey study (range and standard deviation) in order to describe the distribution of responses on each variable (Churchill & Brown, 2004). In addition, the frequency analysis was used to describe the distribution of hotel's general information

Independence Sample T-Test

To analyze data involving categorical and continuous measure, the independence sample t-test was used for the third to sixth and ninth objectives. It was a between-subject design that required a subject being observed in one time and one cell of the design (Shavelson, 1996). This statistical technique helped to answer the question if the two samples of interest came from the same population. This means that it was commonly used to test the difference between two group means arose by chance or represented a true difference between populations (Shavelson, 1996) and when there were a categorical independent variable and a continuous dependent variable (Churchill & Brown, 2004). The t-test was recommended because the technique would be useful in a

situation when there was likelihood for a causal relationship between a categorical independent variable and a continuous dependent variable (Churchill and Brown, 2004).

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was used to identify underlying dimensions of hotel operator's perceptions of service quality changes that had been or might have been made in order for certification of the hotel rating system. Factor analysis is an interdependence technique to find inter-correlations among numerous variables by considering all variables simultaneously, not to predict a dependent variable (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004). The factor analysis allows identification of underlying dimensions of service quality changes to meet the standard of the Thailand Hotels Standard.

R-type factor analysis was applied to analyze a set of variables, not respondents, to derive the underlying dimensions. The variables were obtained from the well-established SERVQUAL measure and the major variables listed in the evaluation form of the Thailand Hotels Standard. The variables were measured on metric scale of 0-7 indicating no change (0), and minimum (1) to maximum (7) levels of change.

Generally, the sample size needed for factor analysis should not be less than 50 cases, with a preferred number of 100 or more cases (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004). Although, a minimum number of 10 observations per a variable are more preferable, researchers found five observations per a variable as the acceptable number of observations required for the factor analysis (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004).

The assumption of factor analysis was tested by the Bartlett test of sphericity (a statistical test for the overall significance of all correlations within a correlation matrix),

and the measure of sampling adequacy (a statistical test for suitability to apply the factor analysis technique) (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004).

The factor model applied in the study was principal component analysis to identify the latent dimensions and use them in subsequent analysis. The principal component analysis forms a linear combination of variables to extract the maximum variance of the variables (Garson, 2006). Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black (2004) states that the component factor model yields the smallest number of factors explaining the greatest amount of variance in the original set of variables. With the principal component analysis, the researcher considered applying the latent root criterion or eigenvalues greater than one as the criterion to consider the number of factor to be significant. The notion of considering eigenvalues greater than one was that each factor would account for the variance of at least a single variable. In addition, the analysis applied an orthogonal factor rotation with the intention each factor would be independent with one another. The derived factors were used in further analysis in the form of summated scales taken from calculating mean of variables loaded on each factor.

Analysis of Variance

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypothesis of objective 8, which examined the difference between each measure of the service quality improvement among the hotels at different star rating levels (one- to five stars). Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black (2004) specified that the technique was more efficient than t-tests when there was more than two groups to be considered due to the decrease of the type-I error-rejecting a true null hypothesis. The ANOVA model compared the amount of dispersion

found on each of the groups to the total amount of dispersion in the data. The study applied univariate analysis of variance for one dependent variable was compared by one or more factors and/or variables. The dependent variable was each measure of service quality improvement consisting of service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige. The independent variable was the hotels in the five-star rating levels.

The assumptions of analysis of variance included independence of cases, normality, and homogeneity of variances. The independence of cases was incorporated in the research design. The normality of the distribution in each group was checked by using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests. The homogeneity of variances was verified by using Levene's test.

Canonical Correlation Analysis

Canonical correlation analysis was used to identify any relationship among the two set of variables consisting of measures of service quality improvement and hotel performance changes. It was the most generalized multivariate analysis which facilitated the collective analysis of relationships among multiple dependent variables and multiple independent variables (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004). The measures of service quality improvement were the summated factor values obtained from the average of attributes that were significantly loaded on each factor. Both the MANOVA procedure and the CANCORR macro in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) were performed in the syntax to run the canonical correlation analysis.

Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (2004) recommended having at least 10 cases per variable to avoid overfitting the data. The number of canonical functions to be obtained was equal to the less number of variables in either independent or dependent variable set. The first canonical function accounted for the most variance in the set of variables. The succeeding canonical function explained the most remaining variance. To select which canonical functions to be interpreted, three criteria were considered including statistical significance, magnitude of relationships, and redundancy measure of shared variance. Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black (2004) believed that considering only a single criterion was insufficiently reliable. Therefore, the researcher checked all three criteria.

The interpretation for the results of the canonical analysis was carried out by considering canonical loading (canonical structure correlation) which was the simple linear correlation between an original variable and its canonical variate (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004). A high canonical loading provided more contribution to the canonical variate. Examining canonical weight was disregarded due to its criticism as in the used of beta weight in regression technique and instability when applying to other sample.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of data analysis in four stages. The first stage includes profiling the sample and describing the perceived influences of the hotel rating system on the entire hotel industry and hotel properties. In the second stage, factory analysis is presented for identifying the underlying dimensions of service quality improvement. Next, statistical differences on service quality improvement are shown regarding the application status and the certification status. Lastly, the canonical correlation analysis was applied to determine the relationships among the set of service quality improvement and the set of hotel performance changes.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

As shown in Table 7, among the 308 hotel respondents, more than half (55%) were business hotels located in downtown areas primarily serving business travelers. The others were resorts near tourist attractions whose target market was mainly pleasure travelers. About 80% of the hotels were independent properties, while the others were hotels operated under chain affiliation. Among the 64 chain affiliated hotels, 21

properties were under international chain brands and 43 properties were associated with Thai chains, accounting for 6.9% and 14.1% of the total respondents respectively.

TABLE 7
HOTEL CATEGORY AND CHAIN AFFILIATION

	Frequency	Percent
Hotel Category		
• Business	168	54.9
• Resort	138	45.1
Total	306	100.0
Hotel Chain Affiliation		
• Chain hotels	64	21.0
○ International hotel chain	21	6.9
○ Thai hotel chain	43	14.1
• Independent hotels	242	79.0
Total	306	100.0

Table 8 exhibits the descriptive statistics of hotel size and length of the operation under the current name. The size of the hotel properties sampled ranged from 3 guestrooms to 1,200 guestrooms. More than half were small hotels containing not more than 100 guest rooms. Approximately 40% were medium-sized hotels offering between 101-200 guest rooms. Only 9% of the hotel sample was large hotel properties owning more than 200 guest rooms. The average number of guestrooms was 135. The number of employees hired corresponds to the hotel size, ranging from one person to 1,000 persons. The average number of full-time employees was 126 persons.

As required for this study, the hotels have been in operation at least one year. The maximum number of years a hotel has operated was 46 years. Almost 45% had been in the hotel industry for less than 10 years. The second largest group is the hotel business with the experience between 11-20 years for 39%. Approximately 16% had run their

business for more than 20 years. The average length of the hotel operation was almost 14 years.

TABLE 8
HOTEL SIZE AND LENGTH OF OPERATION

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Hotel size:					
• Number of guestrooms	300	3	1,200	135.17	141.985
• Number of full-time employees	298	1	1,000	126.49	159.045
Length of hotel operation under the current name	287	1	46	13.74	9.765
				Frequency	Percent
Hotel size:					
1 – 100 guest rooms (Small)				161	53.5
101 – 200 guest rooms (Medium)				113	37.5
More than 200 guest rooms (Large)				27	9.0
Total				301	100.0
Length of hotel operation:					
1 – 10 years				135	44.9
11 – 20 years				117	38.9
21 – 30 years				30	10.0
More than 30 years				19	6.2
Total				301	100.0

Table 9 presents the number of the respondents' involvement with the hotel rating system. Most respondents (87%) were aware of the Thailand Hotels Standard, which was the first official Thai hotel rating system. However, only a quarter of the hotel respondents had ever applied for the certification of the Thailand Hotels Standard. Regardless if they apply or not, a majority (81%) had already implemented a service quality improvement program other than following the criteria of the Thailand Hotels Standard. Simply, most of them had performed at least a type of service quality control for their business.

Table 9 also presents the frequency and percent of the proposed star levels of the hotel respondents and their successful application in total. The majority of the hotel applicants applied for three- to five- star evaluation. Nearly 27% of the respondents applied for the three-star evaluation. Half of the hotel applicants proposed for the four-star evaluation. About 14% of them submitted an application for the five-star evaluation. Around 80% of all the applicants were awarded with the star rating certification of the Thailand Hotels Standard. Table 10 displays the number of successful and failed hotels in their application for the proposed star level. Most hotel applicants that had applied for two- to five- star evaluation received the certification for their proposed star rating evaluation. Only a few of them failed the evaluation.

The subsequent actions of the hotels which applied for the star rating and failed the evaluation are shown in Table 9. The hotels which failed to meet the minimum requirement of the Thailand Hotels Standard for each proposed star level took subsequent actions. Three quarters insisted the determination to attain the proposed star-rating that they had applied. They chose either to improve their property to meet the standard of the proposed level within 180 days before re-inspection or to cancel the application in order to have more time for renovation, rather than to accept the evaluation result of certifying at a lower star level. A few percentages were in the process of hotel rating evaluation to be certified and announced the following year. Of those hotels which failed the evaluation and decided to cancel the application preferred to delay the application for more than three years or never apply for it again. None of them would like to apply within three years.

TABLE 9
THE SAMPLE'S INVOLVEMENT WITH THE HOTEL RATING SYSTEM

	Frequency	Percent
Awareness		
• Yes	268	87.3
• No	39	12.7
Total	307	100.0
Application		
• Yes	78	25.4
• No	229	74.6
Total	307	100.0
Other service quality control		
• Yes	247	81.3
• No	57	18.8
Total	304	100.0
Proposed star level		
• One star	1	1.3
• Two star	7	9.0
• Three star	21	26.9
• Four star	38	48.7
• Five star	11	14.1
Total	78	100.0
Star rating certification for the proposed level		
• Yes	62	79.5
• No	16	20.5
Total	78	100.0
Subsequent action of the hotels which failed the evaluation		
• Improving within 180 days	6	37.5
• Accepting the evaluation result	2	12.5
• Canceling the application	6	37.5
• In the process	2	12.5
Total	16	100.0
Plan of next application of the hotels which failed the evaluation and selected to cancel the application as subsequent action		
• Within 3 years	0	0
• More than 3 years	2	40
• Never	3	60
Total	5	100.0
Application Plan of the Hotels which did not apply for the hotel rating		
• Never	85	37.3
• Within 3 years	94	41.2
• More than 3 years	44	19.3
• Not sure	5	2.2
Total	228	100.0

The application plan of the hotels that did not apply for the star rating is shown in table 9 as well. More than 40% of the hotels that had not yet applied for the certification of the Thailand Hotels Standard intended to apply for the star rating within three years. Approximately 37% would never apply for the star rating. Approximately 19% planned to apply for the star rating more than 3 years. Only 2% did not decide whether and when to apply for the hotel star rating scheme.

TABLE 10
SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS OF EACH PROPOSED STAR LEVEL

The Proposed Star Level	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
• One star	0	0	1	100.0	1	100.0
• Two star	6	85.7	1	14.3	7	100.0
• Three star	16	76.2	5	23.8	21	100.0
• Four star	30	78.9	8	21.1	38	100.0
• Five star	10	90.9	1	9.1	10	100.0
Total	62	79.5	16	20.5	78	100.0

THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCES OF THE HOTEL RATING SYSTEM

Perceptions at the industry level

Table 11 exhibits the mean and standard deviation (SD) of the attributes to measure the perceived influences of the hotel rating system on the hotel industry in general. As shown in the table, the hotel managers agreed with all the statements regarding the perceived influences of the hotel rating system on the hotel industry in general, supported by high overall mean scores at 5.75 and the mean scores ranging from 5.54 to 5.94 on the 7 point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

They agreed mostly in terms of the ability of the hotel rating system to increase hotel operators' awareness of the continuous development of hotel standards in Thailand (Mean = 5.94, SD = 1.30). The next highest score (Mean = 5.88, SD = 1.23) is that the hotel rating system was able to provide guests accurate service expectations of the hotels' products and services. The third highest mean (Mean = 5.86, S.D. = 1.24) is that the hotel rating system was able to provide a reliable benchmark for hotel operations. The fourth rating indicates the agreement that it helped to improve the quality of hotels in Thailand (Mean = 5.75, S.D. = 1.35). Next, the rating system was perceived to enhance sustainable growth in the hotel industry (Mean = 5.70, S.D. = 1.43). The agreements of the last two perceived influences that the hotel rating provided standards for fair competition in the hotel industry and for guaranteeing fair value to guests were slightly lower (Mean = 5.58, S.D. = 1.43 and Mean = 5.54, S.D. = 1.40, respectively). Interestingly, the rating system revealed a common impression from the hotel managers perspective, they agreed the Thailand Hotels Standards was imminent and an important instrument that would advance the Thai hotel industry.

TABLE 11
THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCES OF THE HOTEL RATING SYSTEM
AT THE INDUSTRY LEVEL

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Increasing hoteliers' awareness of the continuous development of hotel standards in Thailand.	305	5.94	1.30
Allowing guests have accurate service expectations.	305	5.88	1.23
Providing a reliable benchmark for hotel operations.	304	5.86	1.24
Improving the quality of hotels in Thailand.	304	5.75	1.35
Enhancing sustainable growth in the hotel industry.	305	5.70	1.43
Providing standards for fair competition in the hotel industry.	304	5.58	1.43
Providing standards for guaranteeing fair value to guests.	305	5.54	1.40
Overall perceived influences on the hotel industry in general	305	5.75	1.16

Perceptions at the property level

Table 12 exhibits descriptive statistics of the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on hotel properties, perceived by the managers of hotels that had applied for the evaluation, and expected by the managers of hotels with no experience with the application for the hotel rating evaluation. The statistics shows high mean scores similar to their perceived influences of the hotel rating system toward the hotel industry as a whole. The range of mean scores is 5.75 to 5.22 and overall mean is 5.47 indicating that their agreement to the statements concerning the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on their own property is at 'somewhat agree' to 'agree' level. In particular, they had positive perceived influences that the hotel rating system could provide benefits for each property in terms of the management commitment to service quality (Mean = 5.75), promotion and advertising (Mean = 5.68), brand recognition (Mean = 5.67), standards of service (Mean = 5.62), standards for hotel premises (Mean = 5.58), employee commitment to service quality (Mean = 5.48), value of products and services (Mean = 5.47), a superior marketing position (Mean = 5.45), efficiency in administration (Mean = 5.39), business growth (Mean = 5.34), the expectation of customers' needs (Mean = 5.34), an equitable competitive marketing situation (Mean = 5.30), price levels (Mean = 5.28), and repeat business (Mean = 5.22). No variable received mean score lower than 5.

TABLE 12
THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCES OF THE HOTEL RATING SYSTEM
AT THE PROPERTY LEVEL

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Increasing management commitment to service quality.	305	5.75	1.30
Helping hotel's promotion and advertising.	305	5.68	1.35
Aiding in brand recognition.	305	5.67	1.38
Improving standards of service.	305	5.62	1.22
Providing the standards for hotel premises, amenities, and surroundings.	303	5.58	1.39
Increasing employee commitment to service quality.	305	5.48	1.42
Increasing the value of products and services.	305	5.47	1.34
Providing a superior marketing position.	304	5.45	1.45
Allowing efficiency in administration.	303	5.39	1.36
Helping to increase business growth.	303	5.34	1.44
Providing the hotel with the expectation of customers' needs.	305	5.34	1.38
Providing an equitable competitive marketing situation.	304	5.30	1.46
Increasing hotel price levels.	302	5.28	1.48
Increasing repeat business.	303	5.22	1.45
Overall perceived influences on individual hotel	305	5.47	1.17

DIFFERENCES OF THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCES OF THE THAILAND HOTELS STANDARD ON HOTELS' APPLICATION STATUS

The differences of hotel managers' perceived influences regarding the Thailand Hotels Standard were examined in relation to hotels' application status. The seven measures of the hotel managers' perceived influences of the hotel rating system on the industry in general and the 14 measures representing the managers' perceived influences of the hotel rating system on hotel properties were dependent variables and the hotels' application status was the independent variable. To examine perception differences between the hotels which applied for the hotel rating and the hotels, and did not applied for the hotel rating, the independence sample t-tests were performed to check the significance of mean differences. Levene's test was considered for equality of variances.

Table 13 presents the mean scores, standard deviations, mean differences, and t-tests of the hotel managers' perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard regarding whether they have ever applied for the hotel rating evaluation. Four mean differences were statistically significant at a significance level of 0.05 and a mean difference was statistically significant at 0.10. The significant mean differences at α 0.05 included 'improve the quality of hotels in Thailand' ($t = 2.01, p \leq 0.05$), 'allows guest to have accurate service expectations' ($t = 2.78, p \leq 0.05$), 'provide standards for guaranteeing fair value to guests' ($t = 2.57, p \leq 0.05$), and 'increase hotel operators' awareness of the continuous development of hotel standards in Thailand' ($t = 3.01, p \leq 0.05$). The statement with significant mean difference at alpha level of 0.10 is 'provide standards for fair competition in the hotel industry' ($t = 1.85, p \leq 0.10$).

Accordingly, hypothesis 1 was rejected indicating there were significant differences of the hotel managers' perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry between the hotels which applied for the hotel rating and the hotels which did not apply for the hotel rating. Table 13 shows that the applicant hotels had higher levels of agreement for the statements concerning the hotel rating system on the industry in general than the hotels which did not apply for the hotel rating.

TABLE 13
THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCES OF THE HOTEL RATING SYSTEM
AT THE INDUSTRY LEVEL BY APPLICATION STATUS

	Applicants (N=77)		Non Applicants (N=227)		Mean Difference	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			
Improve Thai hotels' quality	6.00	1.15	5.68	1.41	0.32	2.01	0.046*
Provide a reliable benchmark	6.01	1.03	5.81	1.30	0.20	1.36	0.175
Fair competition	5.82	1.20	5.50	1.50	0.31	1.85	0.065**
Accurate service expectation	6.17	0.94	5.79	1.30	0.38	2.78	0.006*
Guaranteeing fair value	5.86	1.10	5.45	1.47	0.41	2.57	0.011*
Sustainable growth	5.86	1.35	5.66	1.46	0.20	1.04	0.300
Awareness of the continuous service quality development	6.27	0.97	5.84	1.38	0.43	3.01	0.003*
Overall	6.00	0.94	5.68	1.22	0.32	2.41	0.017*

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.10$

Table 14 reveals the differences in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on each hotel property between the hotels which applied for the hotel rating and the hotels which did not applied for the hotel rating. The t-test revealed 5 mean differences significant at the level of 0.05 and 3 mean differences significant at the level of 0.10. At the 0.05 level, the hotels that applied for the hotel rating evaluation agree more with the statements than the hotels that had never applied for it for the following attributes; ‘help to improve standards of service’ ($t = 2.34, p \leq 0.05$), ‘increase management commitment to service quality’ ($t = 2.37, p \leq 0.05$), ‘provide the hotel with the expectation of customers’ needs’ ($t = 2.28, p \leq 0.05$), ‘provide an equitable competitive marketing situation’ ($t = 2.20, p \leq 0.05$), and ‘increase repeat business’ ($t = 2.34, p \leq 0.05$). The three mean significant differences at level 0.10 were ‘provide the standards for hotel premises, amenities, and surroundings’ ($t = 1.83, p \leq 0.10$), ‘increase employee commitment to service quality’ ($t = 1.88, p \leq 0.10$), and ‘help to increase business growth’ ($t = 1.75, p \leq 0.10$).

The hypothesis 1 was rejected indicating there were significant differences in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on individual hotel properties between the hotels that applied for the hotel rating and the hotels that did not apply for the hotel rating.

TABLE 14
THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCES OF THE HOTEL RATING SYSTEM
AT THE PROPERTY LEVEL BY APPLICATION STATUS

	Applicants (N=77)		Non Applicants (N=227)		Mean Difference	T	Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			
Standards for hotel premises, amenities, & surroundings	5.83	1.22	5.50	1.43	0.33	1.83	0.068**
Improve standards of service	5.91	1.04	5.54	1.25	0.37	2.34	0.020*
Increase the value of products & services	5.68	1.20	5.41	1.38	0.27	1.51	0.133
Increase hotel price levels	5.50	1.40	5.22	1.50	0.28	1.44	0.151
Increase employee commitment to service quality	5.73	1.21	5.41	1.47	0.32	1.88	0.062**
Increase management commitment to service quality	6.03	1.10	5.66	1.35	0.37	2.37	0.019*
Provide hotel the expectation of customers' needs	5.65	1.16	5.24	1.44	0.41	2.28	0.023*
Provide an equitable competitive marketing situation	5.58	1.18	5.21	1.53	0.37	2.20	0.029*
Help hotel's promotion & advertising	5.81	1.34	5.64	1.35	0.17	0.94	0.349
Aid in brand recognition	5.74	1.30	5.66	1.40	0.08	0.44	0.662
Superior marketing position	5.51	1.46	5.44	1.44	0.07	0.36	0.722
Efficiency in administration	5.53	1.23	5.35	1.39	0.18	1.02	0.310
Increase repeat business	5.52	1.14	5.13	1.53	0.39	2.34	0.021*
Increase business growth	5.57	1.23	5.27	1.49	0.30	1.75	0.082**
Overall	5.68	1.01	5.41	1.21	0.28	1.80	0.072**

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.10

DIFFERENCES OF THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCES OF THE THAILAND HOTELS STANDARD ON HOTELS' CERTIFICATION STATUS

The independent sample t-test was applied to test the mean differences of hotel managers' perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry between the star-rating certified hotels and the non-star-rating certified hotels. Table 15 shows mean scores and standard deviations of the hotels that were certified and not certified with any star rating. The significant mean differences were identical to the results of the applicant and non-applicant hotels. Specifically, the hotels that were certified under the Thailand Hotels Standard had perceived the hotel rating system more beneficial than the hotels that were not certified for the following attributes; 'improve the quality of hotels in Thailand' ($t = 3.26, p \leq 0.05$), 'provide standards for fair competition in the hotel industry' ($t = 2.03, p \leq 0.05$), 'allow guests have accurate service expectations' ($t = 3.07, p \leq 0.05$), 'provide standards for guaranteeing fair value to guests' ($t = 3.01, p \leq 0.05$), 'increase hotel operators' awareness of the continuous development of hotel standards in Thailand' ($t = 3.65, p \leq 0.05$) and 'provide a reliable benchmark' ($t = 1.72, p \leq 0.10$). As a result, hypothesis 2 was rejected indicating there were significant difference in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry between the star-rating certified hotels and the non-star-rating certified hotels.

TABLE 15
THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCES OF THE HOTEL RATING SYSTEM
AT THE INDUSTRY LEVEL BY CERTIFICATION STATUS

	Certified (N=62)		Not Certified (N=243)		Mean Difference	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			
Improve Thai hotels' quality	6.16	1.01	5.65	1.41	0.51	3.26	0.001*
Provide a reliable benchmark	6.06	0.99	5.81	1.29	0.26	1.72	0.088**
Fair competition	5.87	1.21	5.50	1.48	0.37	2.03	0.044*
Accurate service expectation	6.23	0.91	5.79	1.28	0.44	3.07	0.003*
Guaranteeing fair value	5.95	1.12	5.44	1.44	0.51	3.01	0.003*
Sustainable growth	5.94	1.34	5.65	1.45	0.29	1.42	0.157
Awareness of the continuous service quality development	6.35	0.87	5.84	1.37	0.52	3.65	0.000*
Overall	6.08	0.91	5.67	1.21	0.41	2.98	0.004*

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.10$

To examine perception differences of the influence of the Thailand Hotels Standard on hotel properties between the star-rating certified hotels and the non-star-rating certified hotels, the independent sample t-test was also applied. Mean scores and standard deviations of the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on each hotel property assessed by both hotels that were certified and not certified with star rating were presented in Table 16.

The only mean difference with significance level of 0.10 was ‘provide the standards for hotel premises, amenities, and surroundings’ ($t = 1.67, p \leq 0.10$). It was also found that the certified hotels saw the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard toward hotel properties more favorable than those hotels that had not been certified with the star rating system on the following attributes, ‘help to improve standards of service’ ($t = 2.16, p \leq 0.05$), ‘increase the value of products and services’ ($t = 2.00, p \leq 0.05$), ‘increase hotel price levels’ ($t = 2.32, p \leq 0.05$), ‘increase employee commitment to service quality’ ($t = 2.26, p \leq 0.05$), ‘increase management commitment to service quality’ ($t = 2.68, p \leq 0.05$), ‘provide an equitable competitive marketing situation’ ($t = 2.53, p \leq 0.05$), ‘increase repeat business’ ($t = 2.45, p \leq 0.05$), and ‘help to increase business growth’ ($t = 2.36, p \leq 0.05$).

The significant t-scores caused the rejection of the null hypothesis 4, which tested if there was no significant difference in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard, on individual hotel property between the star-rating certified hotels and the non star-rating certified hotels.

TABLE 16
THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCES OF THE HOTEL RATING SYSTEM
AT THE PROPERTY LEVEL BY CERTIFICATION STATUS

	Certified (N=62)		Not Certified (N=243)		Mean Difference	T	Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			
Standards for hotel premises, amenities, & surroundings	5.84	1.24	5.51	1.42	0.33	1.67	0.096**
Improve standards of service	5.92	1.03	5.55	1.25	0.37	2.16	0.032*
Increase the value of products & services	5.77	1.15	5.40	1.38	0.38	2.00	0.047*
Increase hotel price levels	5.67	1.30	5.18	1.51	0.49	2.32	0.021*
Increase employee commitment to service quality	5.81	1.21	5.40	1.46	0.41	2.26	0.026*
Increase management commitment to service quality	6.10	1.10	5.66	1.33	0.44	2.68	0.008*
Provide hotel the expectation of customers' needs	5.71	1.18	5.24	1.41	0.47	2.40	0.009*
Provide an equitable competitive marketing situation	5.66	1.17	5.21	1.51	0.45	2.53	0.013*
Help hotel's promotion & advertising	5.82	1.35	5.64	1.35	0.18	.964	0.336
Aid in brand recognition	5.84	1.27	5.63	1.41	0.21	1.07	0.288
Superior marketing position	5.57	1.44	5.42	1.45	0.15	0.72	0.471
Efficiency in administration	5.56	1.26	5.34	1.38	0.22	1.14	0.255
Increase repeat business	5.56	1.14	5.14	1.51	0.43	2.45	0.016*
Increase business growth	5.68	1.20	5.25	1.48	0.42	2.36	0.020*
Overall	5.75	1.00	5.40	1.20	0.35	2.12	0.035*

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.10

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF SERVICE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The fourth objective which was to identify the dimensions of service quality improvement, as a result of the implementation of the Thailand Hotels Standard was accomplished by running the factor analysis. In this factor analysis, when considering the total number of 308 respondents for 54 variables, yielded the proportion of cases to a variable as 5.7:1. The analysis included 170 respondents for the hotels that applied for the Thailand Hotels Standard and the hotels planning to apply for the hotel rating system within three years. These selected respondents represented the sampled group of interest which was likely to make an improvement with the introduction of the Thailand Hotels Standard.

The assumption of the factor analysis was verified by statistical tests including the Bartlett test of sphericity and the measure of sampling adequacy (MSA). Variables that were factor analyzed required some degree of multicollinearity (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004). The correlation matrix of the variables showed that there were sufficient correlations among these variables for the application of the factor analysis. The Bartlett test of sphericity was used to assess the overall statistical significance of the correlations within the correlation matrix (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004). In this study, the Bartlett test of sphericity had an approximate chi-square value of 12,389, at a significant level of 0.000, indicating that there were significant correlations among at least some variables in the matrix. MSA measured the appropriateness to the application of the factor analysis. The measure of sampling adequacy, ranging from 0 to 1; MSA value of this analysis was 0.951. According to the general guidelines quoted in Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black (2004), the MSA value of 0.951 was considered meritorious. Therefore,

the factor analysis could be perfectly applied to the data in spite of a relatively small proportion of observations per variable.

The latent root criterion revealed five significant factors of service quality improvement perceived by hotel managers in Thailand in relation to the Thailand Hotels Standard. The analyzed factors explained 81.031% of the total variance of the variable input. The percentage was fairly high when considering an acceptable level of 60% or less of the total variance explained by the factor solution in social sciences (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004).

To interpret the factor and select the final factor solution, a VARIMAX orthogonal rotation was used as it provided clearer separation of factors. The VARIMAX method provided straightforwardness of the interpretation due to the evaluation of the correlation between variables and factors approaching ± 1 . Next, the significance of factor loadings was taken into consideration. The consideration ensured both practical and statistical significance. According to the criterion assessing the practical and statistical significance, 42 variables were retained for their high factor loadings on a single factor and 12 variables were disregarded.

In the last factor solution, the exploratory factor analysis resulted in four factors with eigenvalues above one explaining 81.04 % of the total variance (Table 17). Based on the representative items, the four factors were named as “Service Delivery”, “Hotel Employees”, “Guest Facilities and Surroundings”, and “Prestige”. The reliability coefficients of the four factors ranged from 0.85 to 0.99.

TABLE 17
DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Attributes	Factor Loadings	Eigen value	Variance Explained	Reliability (Cronbach α)
<i>Factor 1: Service Delivery</i>		<i>15.7</i>	<i>37.4</i>	<i>0.99</i>
Enabling guests to feel safe about their transactions	.903			
Showing willingness to help guests	.870			
Providing error-free service	.862			
Consistent staff courtesy to guests	.856			
Providing services at the agreed time without delay	.846			
Telling guests exactly when services will be performed	.843			
Having guests' best interests in mind	.842			
Instilling confidence in guests through reassuring staff's behavior	.824			
Offering opening hours to all guests	.823			
Giving prompt service to guests	.820			
Understanding the guests' specific needs	.804			
Showing genuine interest in solving guests' problems	.785			
Staff having sufficient knowledge to answer guests' questions	.777			
Never being too busy for guests' requests	.775			
Completing arrangements as agreed time without delay	.763			
Giving guests individual attention	.760			
Providing hotel sanitation and safety	.753			
Providing services correctly without need for repetition	.727			
Having staff give guests personal attention	.705			
Providing overall service efficiency	.697			

Attributes	Factor Loadings	Eigen value	Variance Explained	Reliability (Cronbach α)
<i>Factor 2: Hotel Employees</i>		9.6	22.8	0.98
Improving employees' foreign language ability	.820			
Providing quality service by receptionists	.810			
Providing quality service by cashiers	.783			
Providing quality service by bellboys	.777			
Improving employees' personality	.775			
Improving employees' discipline	.770			
Improving language ability, menu recommendation, and restaurant management by restaurant manager and staff	.765			
Improving service manner, discipline, language ability and serving efficiency of waiters/waitresses	.755			
Improving employees' service manner	.731			
Improving guest room cleaning service	.711			
Improving employees' dress	.693			
<i>Factor 3: Guest Facilities and Surroundings</i>		5.6	13.4	0.93
Improving surroundings	.760			
Improving location/physical structure	.723			
Improving lobby	.707			
Improving guest rooms	.652			
Improving restaurants	.648			
Improving business center & facilities	.616			
Improving parking	.607			
Improving public, health & entertainment facilities	.581			
<i>Factor 4: Prestige</i>		3.2	7.5	0.85
Receiving awards from international contests	.843			
Receiving awards from domestic contests	.810			
Providing services to VIPs	.768			

Note: Total variance explained: 81%

Factor 1 *Service Delivery* covers almost all statements used in the SERVQUAL measure with some modifications plus the overall service efficiency used as an attribute found in the measure of Thailand Hotels Standard. The factor expresses common characteristics of whatever the services in the hotel are handled properly and efficiently. Twenty statements covered factor 1, they consisted of enabling guests to feel safe about their transactions, showing willingness to help guests, providing error-free service, providing staff courtesy to guests, providing services at the agreed time without delay, telling exactly when services will be performed, having guests' best interests in mind, instilling confidence in guests through reassuring staff's behavior, offering opening hours to all guests, understanding guests' specific needs, showing genuine interest in solving guests' problems, staff having sufficient knowledge to answer guests' questions, never being too busy for guests' requests, completing arrangements as agreed time without delay, giving guests individual attention, providing hotel sanitation and safety, providing services correctly without need for repetition, having staff give guests personal attention, and providing overall service efficiency. All factor loadings are 0.697 or higher. The factor explains 37.4% of total variance in the original variables, and reliability coefficient is 0.99. The high coefficient alpha may be caused by obtaining the attributes from the well established measure (the combination of the SERVQUAL measure and the measure of the Thailand Hotels Standard).

Factor 2 *Hotel Employees* describes competence of hotel employees in relation to services delivered in the operation departments. The factor contains 11 statements used in the measure of the Thailand Hotels Standard including improving employees' foreign language ability, providing quality of services by receptionists, providing quality of

services by cashiers, providing quality of services by bellboys, improving employees' personality, improving employees' discipline, improving language ability, menu recommendation, and restaurant management by restaurant manager and staff, improving service manner, discipline, language ability and serving efficiency of waiters/waitresses, improving employees' service manner, improving guest room cleaning service, and improving employees' dress. The factor loadings are from 0.693 to 0.820. The factor accounts for another 22.8% of the total variance with an alpha coefficient of 0.98.

Factor 3 *Guest Facilities and Surroundings* represents improving physical facilities and surroundings in hotels. The factor explains 13.4% of the total variance with the reliability coefficient of 0.93. It consisted of eight attributes including improving surroundings, location/physical structure, lobby, guest rooms, restaurants, business center and facilities, parking, and public, health and entertainment facilities.

Factor 4 *Prestige* signifies the three attributes, which provide recognition to hotels. They include the statements of receiving awards from international contests, receiving awards from domestic contests, and providing services to VIPs. They represent the last 7.5% of the total variance with an alpha coefficient of 0.85.

The four factors subsequently formed a summated scale. They were used as the measures of service quality improvement in determining differences in service quality improvement in hotels among different star rating levels and between independent hotels and chain hotels. In addition, these factors were applied as the measures of service quality improvement in the examination of the latent relationship with hotel performance changes.

SERVICE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND STAR RATING LEVEL

The fifth objective which aimed to compare the service quality improvement and the hotels' star rating level applied the analysis of variance (ANOVA). The study analyzed only four-star levels (two- to five- star levels) excluding one-star hotels because there was no one-star hotel passing the evaluation of the Thailand Hotels Standard. The independent variable was the star level including two to five stars, whereas the dependent variables were the four factors derived from the factor analysis of the service quality improvement consisting of service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige.

ANOVA results are recorded in Table 18. The statistics revealed all non-significance. Therefore, the fifth null hypothesis was accepted supporting that there was no significant difference in the service quality improvement among different star-level hotels. It was evident that the hotel's star-rating level was not related to the service quality improvement. Further, it explained that the hotels that were certified with any star level by the Thailand Hotels Standard did improve the four aspects of service quality improvement including service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige at the same level of improvement to be certified for their proposed star levels.

TABLE 18
T-TESTS OF SERVICE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT BY STAR LEVEL

	2-star	3-star	4-star	5-star	F	Sig.
	Mean (S.D)	Mean (S.D)	Mean (S.D)	Mean (S.D)		
Factor 1 Service delivery	5.12 (2.2)	4.85 (1.6)	4.55 (2.1)	4.26 (2.8)	0.307	0.820
Factor 2 Hotel employees	5.75 (1.2)	4.92 (1.5)	5.05 (1.9)	4.39 (2.7)	0.991	0.416
Factor 3 Guest facilities & surroundings	4.05 (1.0)	4.43 (1.6)	4.83 (1.8)	3.36 (2.4)	1.479	0.248
Factor 4 Prestige	3.47 (1.6)	3.71 (2.0)	3.81 (1.8)	3.48 (2.3)	0.117	0.950

TABLE 19
T-TESTS OF SERVICE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT BY CHAIN AFFILIATION

	Chain-Affiliated Hotels (N=41)		Non-Chain Affiliated Hotels (N=111)		Mean Difference	t	Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			
	Factor 1 Service delivery	4.42	2.18	4.80			
Factor 2 Hotel employees	4.70	2.06	5.12	1.34	-0.41	-1.23	.224
Factor 3 Guest facilities & surroundings	4.41	1.85	4.55	1.61	-0.14	-.46	.644
Factor 4 Prestige	3.48	1.98	3.59	1.87	-0.11	-.33	.743

SERVICE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND HOTEL CHAIN AFFILIATION

The sixth objective determined the difference in service quality improvement and the hotel chain affiliation. The independent sample t-test was used to test the mean differences between independent hotels and chain hotels. The independent variable was the chain affiliation and the dependent variables were service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige as extracted in factor analysis of the service quality improvement. Only the hotels that applied for the evaluation of the hotel rating system and the hotels that planned to apply within three years were considered.

Table 19 reports t-tests of the mean differences in the service quality improvement between chain hotels and independent hotels. The result disclosed all non-significance between these hotels. This indicated that chain affiliation was not associated with the service quality improvement implying that the service quality improvement were conducted by all hotels in Thailand, not only the chain-affiliated hotels but also independent (non-chain-affiliated) hotels. Therefore, the fourth null hypothesis was failed to reject indicating that there was no significant difference in service quality improvement between independent hotels and chain hotels.

SERVICE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND HOTEL PERFORMANCE CHANGES

The seventh objective examined the relationship between hotel performance changes and service quality improvement. Canonical correlation analysis was employed to study the relationship between sets of multiple dependent variables and sets of multiple independent variables. The independent variable set contained the four factors derived from factor analysis including 1) Service delivery, 2) Hotel employees, 3) Guest facilities and surroundings, and 4) Prestige. The dependent variable set comprised three variables measuring the degree of the perceived hotel performance changes which were operationalized by volume of sales, average daily room rate, and level of hotel occupancy.

The negative impacts of sample size may occur in the application of the canonical correlation analysis when the sample size is too small or too large. The sample size of at least 10 observations per variable needed in the canonical correlation analysis was recommended to avoid 'overfitting' the data to the specific sample (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004). The set of four independent variables yielded an acceptable proportion of the number of observation per variable, which were about 30 observations per variable.

The canonical correlation analysis of the three measures of hotel performance changes and the four factors of service quality improvement generated three canonical functions as the maximum number that could be extracted. There were equal to the minimum number of variables in the dependent variable set. Each canonical function had two canonical variates; one for the set of dependent variables and another for the set of independent variables. The strength of relationship between these two variates was termed as the canonical correlation (R_c). In Table 20, the canonical correlations range

from 0.321 to 0.127. The first canonical function has the canonical correlation of 0.321. The canonical correlations of the second and third canonical functions were 0.270 and 0.127, respectively. The small canonical correlations presented a low level of association between dependent variables and independent variables in each canonical function.

Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black (2004) recommended three criteria to consider for canonical function for interpretation. “The authors believe that the use of a single criterion such as the level of significance is too superficial” (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004, p.450). The first criterion was the level of significance. Generally, an accepted significance level was 0.05 indicating that the two sets of variables were significantly associated by canonical correlation. Instead of testing each individual canonical function separately, several multivariate tests including Wilks’ Lambda, Hotelling’s Trace, Pillai’s Trace, and Roy’s gcr were used to evaluate all functions simultaneously. Table 20 also presents multivariate tests’ values, F-statistic, and probability of the canonical correlation analysis. The results showed that the combined canonical functions were statistically significant at the 0.05 level. In addition, it displays the significance test of each canonical function extracted from the canonical correlation analysis. Out of the three canonical functions, only the first is statistically significant at 0.05, while the second canonical function is statistically significant at 0.10. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, the 0.10 level was used as the criterion of model significance.

The second criterion was the practical significance reflected by the magnitude of the canonical relationship. Garson (2006) indicated that a canonical function, as an arbitrary rule of thumb, would be interpreted if its canonical correlation was equal or

greater than 0.30. The first canonical function in the study had the canonical correlation at 0.321. The second canonical function had the canonical correlation approximately 0.30 which was sufficient to be of interest. Lastly, the third had the canonical correlation quite lower than 0.30.

TABLE 20
MEASURES OF OVERALL MODEL FIT FOR CANONICAL CORRELATION
ANALYSIS

Canonical Correlation Analysis				
Canonical Function	Canonical Correlation (R_c)	Canonical R^2	F-Statistic	Probability
1	0.321	0.103	1.985	0.025
2	0.270	0.073	1.803	0.099
3	0.127	0.016	0.950	0.390

Multivariate Tests of Significance			
Statistic	Value	Approximate F-Statistic	Probability
Wilks' Lambda	0.818	1.985	0.025
Pillai's Trace	0.192	1.986	0.025
Hotelling's Trace	0.210	1.973	0.026
Roy's gcr	0.103		

The third criterion was the redundancy measure of shared variance. The redundancy measured the shared variance in a canonical variate that could be explained by the variance of the other canonical variate in each canonical function (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004). This is the product of average canonical loadings squared multiplied by the canonical roots. High redundancy index indicates a high predictability of the canonical variate to explain the other set in a given canonical function. Normally, researchers were interested in the redundancy analysis of how well the independent

canonical variate extracted the variance in the dependent canonical variate (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004; Garson, 2006).

In the study, the redundancy indices for the first canonical function are exhibited in Table 21. The analysis showed that the redundancy index of the dependent variate was 0.0168 or approximately 2%. Table 22 shows the calculation of the redundancy indices for the second canonical function, which resulted in the variance proportion of 0.054 or about 5%. The redundancy indices of the third canonical function is presented in Table 23, indicating only 0.002 or less than 1% of the variance proportion in the dependent variate that was explained by the independent variate. The low redundancy resulted from the small amount of average loading squared and the only 10% of the canonical roots. There was no generally accepted guideline specifying the minimum redundancy index, for confirmation of theoretical and practical significance to the research problem (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004). However, researchers accepted a minimum redundancy index of 2% or even 1.5% as meaningful canonical variate (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Oh et al., 1995 quoted in Baloglu, Weaver, & McCleary, 1998). Therefore, in light of the redundancy index, the first two canonical functions were taken into consideration because their redundancy indices were greater than 1.5%.

Furthermore, the result showed in Table 24 specified that the total redundancy is 0.073 or 7.3% of the variance in the dependent set. The first canonical function accounted for 23.29%, and the second explained 73.97% equaling 97.26% of the total redundancy. Due to the first two functions contributing for the most part to the total redundancy, it supported the interpretation of these functions.

By evaluating these three criteria, the null hypothesis 5 was rejected. There was significant relationship found between the service quality improvement and the hotel performance changes.

TABLE 21
CALCULATION OF THE REDUNDANCY INDICES
FOR THE FIRST CANONICAL FUNCTION

Variate/ Variables	Canonical Loading	Canonical Loading Squared	Average Loading Squared	Canonical R ²	Redundancy Index
<i>Dependent Variables (Hotel Performance Changes)</i>					
Change in Sales	- 0.692	0.4789			
Change in ADR	0.099	0.0098			
Change in Occupancy	- 0.029	0.0008			
Dependent Variate		0.4895	0.1632	0.103	0.017
<i>Independent Variables (Service Quality Improvement)</i>					
Service Delivery	- 0.616	0.3795			
Hotel Employees	- 0.342	0.1170			
Guest Facilities & Surroundings	- 0.331	0.3036			
Prestige	- 0.821	0.6740			
Independent Variate		1.4741	0.3685	0.103	0.038

TABLE 22
CALCULATION OF THE REDUNDANCY INDICES
FOR THE SECOND CANONICAL FUNCTION

Variate/ Variables	Canonical Loading	Canonical Loading Squared	Average Loading Squared	Canonical R ²	Redundancy Index
<i>Dependent Variables (Hotel Performance Changes)</i>					
Change in Sales	0.722	0.521			
Change in ADR	0.905	0.819			
Change in Occupancy	0.931	0.867			
Dependent Variate		2.207	0.736	0.073	0.054
<i>Independent Variables (Service Quality Improvement)</i>					
Service Delivery	0.301	0.091			
Hotel Employees	0.804	0.646			
Guest Facilities & Surroundings	0.668	0.446			
Prestige	0.375	0.141			
Independent Variate		1.324	0.331	0.073	0.023

TABLE 23
CALCULATION OF THE REDUNDANCY INDICES
FOR THE THIRD CANONICAL FUNCTION

Variate/ Variables	Canonical Loading	Canonical Loading Squared	Average Loading Squared	Canonical R ²	Redundancy Index
<i>Dependent Variables (Hotel Performance Changes)</i>					
Change in Sales	- 0.018	0.000			
Change in ADR	- 0.414	0.171			
Change in Occupancy	- 0.363	0.132			
Dependent Variate		0.303	0.101	0.016	0.002
<i>Independent Variables (Service Quality Improvement)</i>					
Service Delivery	0.367	0.135			
Hotel Employees	0.378	0.143			
Guest Facilities & Surroundings	- 0.216	0.047			
Prestige	0.064	0.004			
Independent Variate		0.329	0.082	0.016	0.001

TABLE 24
OVERALL RESULTS OF CANONICAL CORRELATION ANALYSIS

	Canonical Function		
	1	2	3
Canonical correlation	0.321	0.270	0.127
Eigenvalues/Canonical roots	0.103	0.073	0.016
Percentage of variance explained			
Service quality improvement	0.368	0.331	0.082
Cumulative percentage	0.368	0.699	0.781
Hotel performance changes	0.163	0.735	0.101
Cumulative percentage	0.163	0.898	0.999
Redundancy			
Service quality improvement	0.038	0.023	0.001
Cumulative percentage	0.038	0.061	0.062
Hotel performance changes	0.017	0.054	0.002
Cumulative percentage	0.017	0.071	0.073
Proportion of Total Redundancy in the Dependent Set (%)	23.29	73.97	2.74
Cumulative proportion of total redundancy in the dependent set (%)	23.29	97.26	100.00

The consideration of the three criteria including the level of significance, the magnitude of canonical correlation, and the redundancy was finalized to interpret only

the first two canonical functions. In Table 24, the first two canonical functions accounted for almost 90% of the variation in the variable set of hotel performance changes and about 70% variation in the set of service quality improvement variables. While hotel performance changes accounted for 6% of the variance (redundancy) in service quality improvement, an approximate amount 7% of variation (redundancy) in hotel performance changes was explained by the variability in service quality improvement. Simply stated, when the independent variables were collectively taken into the analysis, they explained about 7% of variance shared among the dependent variables.

TABLE 25
CANONICAL LOADINGS IN THE CANONICAL FUNCTIONS

	Canonical Loadings		
	1	2	3
Correlations between the dependent variables and their canonical variates (Hotel Performance Changes)			
Change in Sales	- 0.692	0.722	
Change in Average Daily Room Rate		0.905	
Change in Occupancy		0.931	
Correlations between the independent variables and their canonical variates (Service Quality Improvement)			
Service Delivery	- 0.616		
Hotel Employees		0.804	
Guest Facilities & Surroundings	- 0.551	0.668	
Prestige	- 0.821		

Table 25 contains the canonical loadings or structure correlations of variables in the dependent and independent canonical variates. To describe the relationship between the independent and dependent measures, canonical loadings greater than absolute value of ± 0.50 according to the guidelines for identifying significant factor loadings based on

sample size that was accepted by the canonical correlation analysis were considered for interpretation of the variate in Table 25 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2004).

The results exposed the different structure of the variable sets looming in the dependent relationship. The first canonical function suggested that change in sales was significantly and positively correlated with change in prestige, change in delivery, and change in hotel employees. The second canonical function indicated that change in occupancy, change in average daily room rate, and change in sales was significantly and positively related to change in hotel employees and change in guest facilities and surroundings. The canonical correlation result also showed that change in sales and change in guest facilities and surroundings did provide significant contribution to the multivariate relationship among the service quality measures and the hotel performance measures.

The first dependent variate containing only one dependent variable (change in sales) had a variance of 48% with the canonical loading of -0.692 . When examining the rank order in the first canonical function, the canonical loadings of the independent variables were ranged from prestige (-0.821), service delivery (-0.616) and guest facilities and surroundings (-0.551).

The second dependent variate had a high shared variance of 74% among all the three dependent variables. In the second canonical function, positive relationship was also found among the independent and dependent variates. The variables providing the most importance in the second independent variate were hotel employees (0.804) and guest facilities and surroundings (0.668).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Sample Profile

A sample of 308 respondents representing 21% response rate of hotel operators in Thailand provided the data to be analyzed for the study. The number of business hotels and resorts was approximately comparable (55% and 45%). From the total number of respondents, the majority was independent hotels. A small number of hotels were operated under chain hotel companies (Thai chain hotels 14% and international chain hotels 7%). The sample varied in size covering small hotels of only three guestrooms to grand hotels supplying 1,200 guestrooms. The size of hotel observed by the number of guestrooms was associated with the number of full-time employees varying from one to 1,000 persons. The majority is small and medium sized hotel containing less than 200 guestrooms. The average length of hotel operation under the current name was almost 14 years. Most of the hotels had been established for less than 20 years.

Almost all of the hotel managers were aware of the Thailand Hotels Standard as the national hotel-rating system. However, only a quarter applied for the hotel rating system to evaluate their hotel business. Although it succeeded in its name recognition, it achieved less in drawing a greater number of hotels to the evaluation system. The reason may be the hotel rating system was launched only a few years ago. As a result, only a small number of hotels had participated in the hotel star rating scheme. The time limitation of implementing the hotel rating system made it impractical for performing the hotel star rating campaign throughout the entire industry. Additionally, the benefits and incentives may not be widely spread or allocated properly for the hotels in each grading

level. Among the hotels that applied for the hotel star rating, almost all applied for the top three star levels (3-5 stars). Thus, while the majority of the hotels that perceived themselves as three- to five- star hotels were able to seek benefits from the national hotel rating system, a few hotels that perceived themselves as one- to two- star hotels saw the hotel rating system insignificant to their business. As a result, the one- and two-star hotels showed little interest to get involved in the system. According to the study of Callan (1995), the majority of customers in 3-5 star hotels used star rating more often than the customers in 1-2 star hotels. The finding of this study also showed corresponding results with Callan's study in which the top three-star rating were more popularly accepted by both hotel businesses and customers than the bottom two-star rating levels.

Most hotels that applied for the hotel rating were awarded with the certification of their proposed star level. Three quarters of the failed applicants persisted to achieve their goal of the proposed star level by deciding either to improve their property to meet the minimum requirements within 180 days before re-inspection or to cancel the application of that year. The cancelled application would be restored in more than three years or would be cancelled completely. However, when looking at the application plan of the hotels that had not yet applied for the hotel rating system, over half did plan to participate in the hotel rating system. The majority of them planned to apply within close proximity of time (three years). Only a few of the non-applicant hotels would apply for the hotel rating after the next three years. The findings related to the non-applicant hotels' plan for the hotel rating indicated a high possibility of a number of hotels' participation with the Thailand Hotels Standard.

Additionally, most hotel respondents had already employed an initiative to control the service quality of their business signifying that they valued service quality as a strategy for hotel management. However, some hotel managers expressed their concern that as their hotel properties were very small, an entire service quality control program was surplus to requirements of their operation. In other words, the hotel managers were afraid of unnecessary costs generated by designing and implementing the entire service quality program. Another reason provided by conventional hotels for not taking part of the national official hotel rating system were that their existing service quality management/ control programs were already effective that such a rating system would make no difference in their service performance. Simply stated, the hotel rating system was not necessary to their business. It was possible that they did not know what benefits they could achieve from the rating system as well as the risks/costs to participate in the hotel rating system. Further in-depth research is recommended for identifying problems or obstacles of the hotels and similar establishments to participate in the hotel rating system and to learn the effective motivation for these establishments to enroll in the program.

The perceived influences of the hotel rating system

The descriptive statistics of the measures of the perceived influences of the hotel rating system assessed on the hotel industry in general resulted in the 'agree' level of mean scores ranging 5.54 to 5.94 with overall mean score at 5.75 on the seven statements based on the 7-point scale. When determining the perceived influences of the hotel rating system on individual hotel property, the hotel managers rated the 14 statements with

average scores from 5.22 to 5.75 and overall mean score at 5.47 indicating somewhat agree to agree level. The numbers show favorable perceptions of the hotel managers toward the influence of the Thailand Hotels Standard at the level of the industry in general and the individual hotel property. These measurements confirm the comment Callan (1995) made to the effect of whatever the star rating system it was beneficial to both the customers and the hotel industry for assistance in improving facilities and service quality.

The t-tests results show significant differences in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard at the industry level between the hotels that applied for the hotel rating system and those hotels that did not apply for it as well as between the hotels that were certified by the Thailand Hotels Standard and those that were not certified at all. The sample group that applied for the hotel rating system and the sample group that were certified with the star rating were overlapping, thus showed identical significant differences. Both groups believed that the Thailand Hotels Standard could increase hotel operators' awareness of the continuous development of hotel standards in Thailand; provide standards for guaranteeing fair value to guests; allow guests have accurate service expectations; provide standards for fair competition in the hotel industry; and improve the quality of hotels in Thailand more than the group that did not applied for the hotel rating system and the group that was not certified with the star rating. The overall result suggested that the hotels that had participated in the Thailand Hotels Standard perceived more benefits of the hotel rating system on the hotel industry in general than those hotels that had not participated in the scheme.

The hotels that participated in the hotel rating system were more concerned for the development of the entire hotel sector than non-participants. This indicates that the participants of the Thailand Hotels Standard understood the benefits of the rating system valuing for the stakeholders in the hospitality industry. The understanding can create a more harmonized atmosphere in the hotel industry. Thus the entire industry is equipped with the effective coordination to compete with the hotel industry of other countries or destinations that provide similar products and services.

At the property level, the perceived influences of Thailand Hotels Standard revealed significant differences between the hotels that applied for the rating system and those hotels that did not apply for it as well as between the hotels that were certified with the proposed star-rating and the hotels that were not certified with any star-rating. The results showed similar significant differences except the perceived influences of the hotel rating system which were to increase the value of products and services, the hotel price levels and marketing-related attributes. The participants of the Thailand Hotels Standard including the hotels that applied for hotel rating and those that were certified with the stars perceived that the hotel rating system provided the standards for physical structure, improved the standards of service, increased employee and management commitment to service quality, provided hotels the expectation of customers' needs, provided an equitable competitive marketing situation. It also increased repeat business and its business growth increased than the hotels that did not apply for the hotel rating or that were not certified with any star. These perceptions include having a benchmark for quality each hotel could rely on, a tool for quality management in the property, and a tool for enhancing business performance.

The four groups consisting of the applicants, the non-applicants, the certified hotels, and the non-certified hotels equally recognized the marketing benefits of the hotel rating system. The marketing benefits included the attributes which help hotels' promotion and advertising, to aid in brand recognition, to provide a superior marketing position plus to allow efficiency in administration. Although the study of Callan (1989) revealed that the award and grading scheme were seen as a promotional asset by the award-winning hotels in United Kingdom, this research found that not only the award-winning hotels but whichever hotel valued the hotel rating system primarily viewed it as a promotional and marketing tool.

The perceived influences concerning increasing the value and price of hotel products and services were found inconsistent between the group of between the hotels that applied for the rating system and those that did not apply for it and the group of between the certified hotels and the non-certified hotels. This suggests that in the application stage all the hotels had the same level of the perception toward the hotel rating system affecting the price and value of hotel products and services. However, afterward, when they were certified with the official star level, the certified hotels did achieve better value and price than the hotels that were not certified at all. The analysis complied with the empirical study of Callan (1989); and an article of Lollar (1990) stated that the more stars were awarded, the more a hotel was permitted to charge for its services.

Dimensions of service quality improvement

The combination of attributes used in the evaluation form of the Thailand Hotels Standard and the attributes in the SERVQUAL measurement was factor analyzed to identify the dimensions of service quality improvement in consequence of implementation of the Thailand Hotels Standard. The final solution generated four factors namely according to the size of eigenvalues as 'service delivery' (15.7), 'hotel employees' (9.6), 'guest facilities and surroundings' (5.6), and 'prestige' (3.2).

The structure result was different from the original dimensions of the SERVQUAL and other studies of service quality as the purpose of this analysis was to identify the dimensions of service quality improvement, or the changes that had been made on the specified attributes necessitated to be evaluated by the hotel rating system in support of an application for certification of the Thailand Hotels Standard. The first factor named 'service delivery' as their variables represented how efficiently the hotel services were delivered to the guests. It included the 'reliability', 'responsiveness', 'assurance' and 'empathy' dimensions of service quality found in the SERVQUAL measurement (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Its detail involved safe transaction, willingness to help, error-free service, courtesy, the agreed time of services, telling when to perform the service, guests' best interest in mind, service confidence, opening hours, prompt service, guests' specific needs, genuine interest for problem solving, staff's knowledge, never busy for guests, completing service without delay, individual attention, sanitation, correct services, personal attention, and overall service efficiency. The 'service delivery' dimension extracted in this study was also found in 'conviviality', 'reassurance' and 'empathy' dimension in the study of Saleh and Ryan (1991); 'reliability', 'assurance',

responsiveness’, and ‘empathy’ dimensions in the study of Knutson, Stevens, Wulaert, Patton, and Yokoyama (1991); ‘reliability’ dimensions by Mei, Dean, & White (1999); and ‘reliability’, ‘responsiveness’, ‘responsiveness’, ‘confidence’, and ‘communication’ in the study of Getty and Getty (2003). When considering another point of view, these variables also reflected the intangibles of hotel service which could lead to favoritism, unless the inspectors are well-trained and informed about the description of different scores rating each attribute.

The second factor named ‘hotel employees’ referred to the competency of individual hotel employees to improve the service quality of the hotel. Though it represented the intangible aspect of service quality similar to what were represented in the first factor, it was more related to individual person’s qualification appropriate to work in the hotel profession including language ability, services performed on duty, personality, discipline, service manner, and their uniforms. The ‘hotel employees’ dimension extracted in this study was also found as the ‘employee’ dimension in the study of Mei, Dean, & White (1999), covering hotel employees’ appearance and behavior.

The third factor labeled as ‘guest facilities and surroundings’ characterized similarly to the ‘tangible’ dimension found in the SERVQUAL measurement. The improvement of the hotel tangibles included surroundings, location/physical structure, lobby, guestrooms, restaurants, business center and facilities, parking lot, and public, health, and entertainment facilities. It was the only tangible aspect existing in this factor analysis of the service quality improvement. The guest facilities and surroundings dimension covers attributes embedded in ‘tangibles’ dimension of the SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988), Saleh and Ryan (1991), Knutson, Stevens, Wulaert, Patton,

and Yokoyama (1991), Mei, Dean, & White (1999), and 'tangibility' dimension by Getty and Getty (2003).

The fourth factor called 'prestige' involved recognition of the hotel from receiving awards from international or domestic contests in relation to the hotel profession and service to national and well-known international celebrities. This factor was not found in the original dimensions of service quality. Although the factor helped in classifying hotels into exclusively different quality grading, it could be questioned how the hotels define these well-known persons.

As summarized these four factors were the main facets to which the hotels in Thailand paid attention to improve and prepare for the hotel rating of the Thailand Hotels Standard. The five original dimensions of service quality were incorporated into the first three dimensions of service quality improvement by the hotels in Thailand (service delivery, hotel employees, and guest facilities and surroundings). However, it emphasized the importance of hotel employees apart from the efficiency of the hotel service delivery. This demonstrates that it is impossible to ignore the quality of hotel employees when grading the hotels. The new significant dimension for the hotel rating system titled prestige was not found in other studies of hospitality's service quality (Saleh & Ryan, 1991; Knutson, Stevens, Wulaert, Patton, and Yokoyama, 1991; Mei, Dean, & White, 1999; Ekinici and Riley, 1999). This might be due to combining the major attributes used in the Thailand Hotels Standard with the SERVQUAL attributes. The implication is that a hotel rating system should not only assess how efficiently hotel services were delivered but also the recognition of their customers' social class.

Service quality improvement and star-rating level

The exploratory study of the relationship between the measures of service quality improvement and hotel's star-rating level was examined by applying t-test. The statistics result revealed insignificant differences in service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige as measures of service quality improvement between each star rating level consisting of two- to five-star level. The one-star hotel was not analyzed because there were no hotels awarded as a one-star hotel. This indicated that there was no relationship between service quality improvement and hotel's star-rating level.

The results showed that the changes in each dimension of service quality improvement in order to be certified by the Thailand Hotels Standard were not associated with hotel's star-rating level. It meant that the hotels in each star-rating level were interested in the hotel rating system and made the same level of improvement in their service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige. Any campaign launched to encourage the hotel industry in Thailand to participate in the Thailand Hotels Standard could attract hotels from whatever star-level in the industry. Finally, they would all contribute to the continuous development of service quality in the Thai hotel industry.

Service quality improvement and hotel chain affiliation

The relationship between service quality improvement and hotel chain affiliation was assessed by using t-test. The test focused on the examination of the differences

found in the four dimensions of service quality improvement between the hotels operated by chain affiliation and the hotels independently-operated from any hotel chain company. It revealed that the differences were not statistically significant. They would occur by chance. Thus, the service quality improvement was not related to the hotel chain affiliation.

The findings implied the Thailand Hotels Standard encouraged both the chain-affiliated hotels and the independent hotels to improve their business and make changes to their service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige. Known for having an advantage of financial support by the chain company to reinvest in their properties, the chain-affiliated hotels were able to achieve the star-rating certification. The independent hotels, which typically had limited capital, also made the improvement in their properties to attain the star-rating certification. Promotions from the Thailand Hotels Standard encourage continuous development of service quality in both two hotel groups.

Service quality improvement and hotel performance changes

The canonical correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship between the service quality improvement measures and the hotel performance measures. The result did correspond to the notion of Callan (1989) that hotel rating schemes were helpful to both hotel guests and the industry by encouraging hoteliers to improve facilities and quality of service.

The canonical results of the study exposed strong positive relationships in both canonical functions. As shown in the first canonical function, change in prestige, change

in service delivery, and change in guest facilities and surroundings were significantly and positively related with change in sales. When hotels made more improvement in the prestige of the hotel, more improvement in their service delivery to guests, and more improvement in their guest facilities and surroundings, a higher change in sales could be expected. It was observed that only the change in sales was significant to the first dependent variate but not the change in average daily room rate and the change in occupancy. This suggests that the change in sales might be attributed to non-room revenues which might include food and beverage sales, catering sales, facilities rental, and laundry service.

In the second canonical function a significant and positive relationship was found between change in hotel employees and change in guest facilities and surroundings as independent measures and change in occupancy, change in average daily room rate, and change in sales as dependent measures. This implies that hotels that demand greater hotel performance changes measured in the forms of occupancy, average daily room rate (price), and sales, have to improve more on the hotel employee aspects and guest facilities and surrounding aspects. By focusing on only two aspects of service quality improvement, the hotels can ensure better hotel performance changes. Furthermore, it signified that the two high loading independent variables tended to demonstrate a stronger relationship with the change in occupancy and the change in average daily room rate than the change in sales. This indicates that when guests perceived hotel's departmental employees communicating and working efficiently and mannerly at their work station and saw or experienced with new guest facilities and surroundings, the

guests were pleased to extend their stay at the hotel and willing to pay for a higher price yielding more revenue to the hotel.

Obviously, guest facilities and surroundings provided significant contribution to both independent variates as well as the measure of change in sales was a significant dependent variable in the two canonical functions. An improvement of guest facilities and surroundings was clearly visible to the eyes of hotel guests due to its nature of tangibility; therefore, it was easily perceived by the guests. This tangible perception would encourage an increase in the volume of sales indicating the provision of significant amount of business to the hotel as a result of physical improvement on the hotel property. These findings supported the study of Callan (1989) in which hotel grading systems were seen as promotional assets producing significant levels of business, in particular supplying valuable sales contribution. Although the research was performed on investigating small country hotels, the canonical result of this study proved true for the entire hotel industry in Thailand.

While the first canonical function did not show a relationship between the improvement in hotel employees and dependent measures of change in average daily room rate and change in occupancy, their relationship was found in the second canonical function. It implied that the improvement in hotel employees dimension was significantly and positively related with the hotel performance changes variables that were related to rooms operation as a key activity of hotel business.

Of significance, while the improvement in guest facilities and surroundings was important to both canonical functions of the service quality improvement and the hotel performance changes; it concerned the physical or tangible attributes of the hotel. The

other three measures of service quality improvement consisting of prestige, service delivery, and hotel employees were significantly loaded on a single canonical function suggesting that these intangible attributes were essential to provide service experiences to what hotel guests expected, which would in turn contribute to any or all measures of hotel performance changes.

SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypotheses testing of the objectives 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 are summarized as follows;

Objective 2: To examine the differences of perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the applicant hotels and the non-applicant hotels.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the applicant hotels and the non-applicant hotels.

Result: There are significant differences in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the applicant hotels and the non-applicant hotels.

Objective 3: To examine the differences of perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the star-rating certified hotels and the non-star-rating certified hotels.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the star-rating certified hotels and the non-star-rating certified hotels.

Result: There are significant differences in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the star-rating certified hotels and the non-star-rating certified hotels.

Objective 5: To compare the service quality improvement among hotels at different star rating levels.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the service quality improvement among hotels at different star-rating levels.

Result: There is no significant difference in the service quality improvement among hotels at different star-rating levels.

Objective 6: To compare the service quality improvement between independent hotels and chain-affiliated hotels.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the service quality improvement between independent hotels and chain-affiliated hotels.

Result: There is no significant difference in the service quality improvement between independent hotels and chain-affiliated hotels.

Objective 7: To examine the relationship among service quality improvement and hotel performance changes.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant relationship among service quality improvement and hotel performance changes.

Result: There is significant relationship among service quality improvement and hotel performance changes.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

The first section of this chapter presents the summary of the study. Next, recommendations are offered for the application of the study. Limitations of the study are also explained. Finally, recommendations for future work are presented to gain insights of related issues.

SUMMARY

The study was conducted to investigate the relationship of the Thailand Hotels Standard, the national hotel rating system in Thailand, and hotel service quality. Specifically, 7 objectives were set including: 1) to measure perceived influences of the hotel rating system on the hotel industry in general as well as hotel properties; 2) to examine difference in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the applicant hotels and the non-applicant hotels; 3) to examine difference in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the star-rating certified hotels and the non-star-rating certified hotels; 4) to identify the dimensions of service quality improvement as a result of the implementation of the Thailand Hotels

Standard; 5) to compare the service quality improvement among hotels at different star rating levels; 6) to compare the service quality improvement between independent hotels and chain-affiliated hotels; 7) To examine the relationship among service quality improvement and hotel performance changes.

Data was collected through surveys from a sample of hotel managers in Thailand during April 2006. These hotel managers were selected from three sources: the award-winning hotels by the Thailand Hotels Standard, the hotel membership directory of the Thai Hotel Association, and the accommodation directory by the Tourism Authority of Thailand. The hotel managers were included in the sample only when there was no repetitive name recorded from earlier sources. The sample respondents included a slightly greater number of business hotels than resorts. The majority were independent hotels, whereas the smaller number was operated under chain affiliation. The hotels on average had 135 guestrooms, employed 126 full-time employees, and served their customers for 14 years. Most hotel businesses in Thailand have been in their operation for less than 20 years and hired sufficient number of hotel employees to service hotel guests.

Nearly all of the respondents were aware of the Thailand Hotels Standard as the national hotel star rating system in Thailand, but only a quarter of them participated in the program. Almost the entire hotel applicants applied for the three- to five-star level with the biggest group of 4-star level. Eighty percent of the total respondents had implemented at least a service quality control program excluding the participation in the Thailand Hotels Standard. Most hotel applicants achieved their proposed star level with a few failures. Most of the failed applicants preferred improving their property within 180

days otherwise canceling the application of the current year, rather than accepting the result of a lower star level. This information supports the fact most hotels sampled took the initiatives to improve their service quality. Although many hotels had not yet applied for the Thailand Hotels Standard, most of them indicated strong interest.

The hotel managers had fairly favorable perceptions of the influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on individual properties and the hotel industry in general. It was found the hotels that applied for the star rating or certified with star rating agreed more favorably with the importance of the hotel rating system. The participants valued more benefits of the Thailand Hotels Standard at both the industry level and the property level than the non-participants.

An exploration of the underlying constructs of improvement in hotel service quality revealed four dimensions: service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige. These four dimensions represented the key interests Thai hotels considered in making changes to be qualified for the evaluation of the proposed star rating.

It was found there was no significant difference in the four dimensions consisting of service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige among the star rating levels. In essence, it indicated that the hotels awarded different star levels had made similar level of changes to improve their properties. The finding also revealed that there was no significant difference in the four dimensions of service quality improvement between chain-affiliated hotels and independent hotels. Correspondingly, the independent hotels had made changes to improve their properties at an equal level to the chain hotels indicating that despite the limitations of business administration, the

independent hotels had tried hard to be certified with the proposed star level as well as the chain hotels that were more advantageous for business administration and capital access (Vallen & Vallen, 2005).

Canonical correlation analysis discovered significant relationship between four dimensions of service quality improvement and three measures of performance changes. Two of the three canonical functions were significant. A relationship was found between the improvements in service delivery, hotel employees, and guest facilities and surroundings as independent variables and change in sales as a dependent variable. Another strong relationship was also found between change in hotel employees and change in guest facilities and surroundings as independent variables and all dependent measures including change in occupancy, change in price, and change in sales. In addition, change in sales and change in guest facilities and surroundings were important for both two relationships.

IMPLICATIONS

Implications for the Foundation of Standard and Human Resources Development in Service and Tourism Industry

As supported by hypothesis 1, there were significant differences in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the applicant hotels and the non-applicant hotels. It is suggested the non-applicant hotels be educated on the importance of the hotel rating system toward the hotel industry regarding the perceived influences of the hotel rating system toward improving the quality of hotels in Thailand: providing standards for fair competition in

the hotel industry; allowing guests have accurate service expectation; providing standards for guaranteeing fair value to guests; and increasing hotel operators' awareness of the continuous development of hotel standards in Thailand. Regarding the perceived influences of the hotel rating system toward hotel properties, the non-applicant hotels should be informed of the benefits of the hotel rating system including providing the standards for hotel premises, amenities, and surroundings; helping to improve standards of service; increasing employee commitment to service quality; increasing management commitment to service quality; providing the hotel with the expectation of customers' needs; providing an equitable competitive marketing situation; increasing repeat business; and helping to increase business growth.

As supported by hypothesis 2, there were significant differences in the perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties between the star-rating certified hotels and the non star-rating certified hotels. The non-certified hotel did not succeed in the hotel rating. However, they should be educated about the importance and benefits of the hotel rating system to motivate their efforts with service quality and the Thailand Hotels Standard program. In relation to the perceived influences of the hotel rating system toward the hotel industry in general, the non-certified hotels should be informed about the importance of the hotel rating system for improving the quality of hotels in Thailand: providing a reliable benchmark for hotel operations; providing standards for fair competition in the hotel industry; allowing guests have accurate service expectations; providing standards for guaranteeing fair value to guests; and increasing hotel operators' awareness of the continuous development of hotel standards in Thailand. Regarding the perceived influences toward hotel properties, the

non-certified hotels should also be alerted about the benefits of the hotel rating including providing the standards for hotel premises, amenities, and surroundings; helping to improve standards of service; increasing the value of products and services; increasing hotel price levels; increasing employee commitment to service quality; increasing management commitment to service quality; providing the hotel with the expectation of customers' needs; providing an equitable competitive marketing situation; increasing repeat business; and helping to increase business growth.

As supported by hypothesis 3, there was no significant difference in the service quality improvement among hotels at different star rating levels. It describes that hotels from lower star levels improve their service quality as well as hotels from higher star levels. The rationale is that service quality improvements in lower star rated hotels attempts to comply with the same level of quality improvements such as service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige, with higher star rated hotels. Therefore, it is recommended involvement with the Thailand Hotels Standard would increase service quality regardless of a hotel's star level. This suggests the Thailand Hotels Standard motivate hotels in all star levels to take a serious movement toward service quality improvement and to stimulate their involvement with the hotel rating system. However, it is advantageous for the foundation to listen to the needs and examine the perceived influences of the hotels from each star level regarding the criteria used for evaluation and the method it administers. The examination of the hotel managers' perception from all star levels allows the foundation to realize their position for strengths and weaknesses from the hotel operators' perspectives. Ultimately, the

foundation is able to develop a strategy that meets the hotel industry's situation and future development.

As supported by hypothesis 4, there was no significant difference in the service quality improvement between independent hotels and chain-affiliated hotels. It suggests both chain and independent hotels believe that participation in the Thailand Hotels Standard has improved their service quality. Hence, both independent hotels and chain hotels should be encouraged for the service quality improvement in service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige to achieve star rating certification by the Thailand Hotels Standard. Incidentally, the chain hotels are backed by its parent company and have brand recognition, the best management talent, economies of scale, access to capital, and expertise in site selection (Vallen & Vallen, 2005). The advantages of the chain hotels are far more competitive than the independent hotels. Research of the WTO & IH&RA (2004) stated that the major international hotel chains preferred classification by branding to hotel (star) ratings as branding provides target customers, price tier, brand positioning, brand essence, customer value proposition, and hotel benefits and features to facilitate hotel companies' marketing strategy development. Therefore, a recommendation regarding hotel companies' branding is that the Thailand Hotels Standard should offer star rating for brands of hotel chain companies in addition to offer star rating for individual properties. This recommendation is made to individualize the star rating for the hotel business and to enhance the hotel rating's value to the chain hotels.

The demographic profile of hotel respondents reported that most hotel respondents were independently-operated hotels, either business hotels or resorts, small

to medium size, and operated less than 20 years. Specifically, eighty percent of the hotel respondents were independent hotels. Fifty-five percent of the total was business hotels, whereas the remaining percentage was resorts. About ninety percent were small and medium sized hotels (53% small-sized hotels and 37% medium-sized hotels).

Approximately eighty four percent had been in their operation for less than 20 years (45% operated within their first 10 years and 39% operated between the eleventh and twentieth year). This information helps the Foundation for Standard and Human Resource Development in Hospitality Industry or other relevant parties to encourage the majority of hotels to participate in the hotel rating system. A consideration of these small- and medium-sized independently-owned hotels' entrepreneurship was capital limitation (Vallen & Vallen, 2005). Therefore, these hotels must be guided to control and manage their service quality with cost consciousness. Otherwise, the hotels may disregard the participation in the Thailand Hotels Standard and could lead to failure in the service quality improvement in this hotel group.

A number of hotels showed strong interests in the Thailand Hotels Standard and its hotel rating system, although some had never applied for the hotel rating. This finding suggests the Foundation for Standard and Human Resource Development in Hospitality Industry and regional representatives should take a proactive role to promote and encourage hotels and similar establishments to be part of the hotel rating system. For example, the foundation may request the hotel interested in applying for the hotel rating system to register for service quality improvement programs or workshops. The registration signified a commitment in action, yet it does not require them to seek ratings immediately or create apathy toward the hotel standard.

Additionally, the foundation should consider planning and promoting benefits and incentives that are specifically designed for hotels at each star level, as hotels at each star level have different characteristics, requirements, and constraints. The findings indicated that the majority of hotel applicants applied for three- to five-star rating, while hotels at one- and two-star levels showed little interest in getting involved in the system. Although the one- and two-star hotels offer the limited services and quality to customers, the customers still expect these hotels' services to meet the minimum but acceptable quality level. According to Dr. Suvit Yodmani, the Minister of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the backpackers are considered quality tourists as they stay in the country longer than other types of tourists. Their spending directly benefits the locals, particularly small shops, bars, restaurants, and guesthouses. They also are more willing to understand local people and cultures than tourists on a tour bus (Ross, 2007). With the importance of the backpackers who normally stay at guest houses or small hotels, it is worthy to focus on this accommodation sector to improve its service quality through conforming the requirements of the appropriate star level of the Thailand Hotels Standard. Thus, the foundation may consider working extensively to motivate this hotel sector to seek star rated to guarantee a standard of its star level.

Furthermore, a recommendation is offered for allowing feedback from hotel guests to the Foundation for Standard and Human Resource Development in the Hospitality Industry for the guests' experience with the star rated hotels and for confirmation of their perception whether the hotels perform services corresponding to the star quality level. Feedback allows the foundation to re-assess the hotels' service quality as well as the performance of the hotel rating system. In addition, the foundation is able

to know what the travelers' expectations are and their perception toward the hotels' quality in Thailand. This will lead to the development of more efficient strategies for the hotel rating system and the trends of service quality in the Thai hotel industry. The communication channel for hotel guests' feedback may include a self-administered service quality questionnaire or online survey, a self-administered service quality questionnaire at the international airports, and a call center for the Thailand Hotels Standard. It is similar to the guest satisfaction survey conducted by the Chinese hotel rating system, which is a decisive element in the hotel rating (Qing and Liu, 1993). The survey should be conducted by the hotel rating system's staff not by the hotel staff. According to Yu (1992) and Quin and Liu (1993), it is important that the criteria for rating guest satisfaction is clear and has consistent scoring requirements. Further recommendation is the Foundation for Standard and Human Resource Development in Hospitality Industry provide incentives for hotel customers participating in the survey for higher response rate in the survey data collection.

Implications for the hotel industry

As supported by hypothesis 5, there was a statistically significant relationship between service quality improvement and hotel performance changes. Additionally, a positive relationship was found between the set of service quality improvement consisting of change in prestige, change in service delivery, and change in guest facilities and surroundings and hotel performance change measured by change in sales. The relationship implied that change in sales might be influenced by non-room revenues, as hotel performances measured by average daily room rate and occupancy rate, which were

related to room sales, were not significant. The implication is that when hotels plan to increase non-room revenues, the hotels should enhance prestige, improve service delivery, and upgrade guest facilities and surroundings. First, the enhancement of prestige can be obtained through winning international or domestic contests as well as having opportunities to serve celebrities. Next, improvement in service delivery can be gained by emphasizing departmental service production stage and the delivery stage is error-free. Finally, upgrading guest facilities and surroundings can be made through redesign, reconstruction, innovation, and physical expansion.

Additionally, the findings showed the relationship between the set of service quality improvement consisting of change in hotel employees and change in guest facilities and surroundings and the set of hotel performance changes comprising change in occupancy, change in price, and change in sales. Meaning the improvement in hotel employees' quality and competency and the improvement in guest facilities and surroundings should increase all three measures of hotel performance changes including price, occupancy rate, and sales. This relationship suggests when hotels focus on improving their hotels' employees in addition to upgrading guest facilities and surroundings; the hotels can expect greater hotel performance measures of room and non-room services.

Based on the relationship found in the fifth hypothesis testing, hotel employees and guest facilities and surroundings are the keys to hotel business' performance. Therefore, a recommendation for hotel businesses is in order to succeed in the application for the hotel rating by the Thailand Hotels Standard, their hotel employees must first be taken into consideration and then upgrade their guest facilities and surroundings.

Specifically, hotel employees should be well-qualified from recruitment and continue professional training with work-knowledge and appropriate service manners. Upgrading guest facilities and surroundings can be made through redesign, reconstruction, innovation, and expansion. The improvements in these two factors are effective for the application of star rating by the Thailand Hotels Standard and for the hotels' performance changes.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES

Based on the implications offered, strategies are summarized as following:

- Motivate hotel businesses to seek star rating by the Thailand Hotels Standard
 - a. Provide service quality improvement program with cost consciousness to small-medium sized and independent hotels.
 - b. Take a proactive role in reaching hotel establishments to be part of the Thailand Hotels Standard.
 - c. Provide incentives for hotels' participation with the Thailand Hotels Standard, particularly one- and two-star hotels.
 - d. Allow feedback from hotel guests to the Foundation for Standard and Human Resource Development in Hospitality Industry.
 - e. Educate the non-applicant hotels on the importance and benefits of the hotel rating system toward the hotel industry as well as hotel properties.
 - f. Educate the non-certified hotels on the importance and benefits of the hotel rating system toward the hotel industry as well as hotel properties.

- g. Motivate hotels in all star levels to seriously make a movement toward service quality improvement and to stimulate their involvement with the hotel rating system.
 - h. Encourage both independent hotels and chain hotels for the service quality improvement in service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige to achieve star rating certification by the Thailand Hotels Standard.
 - i. Offer star rating for brands of hotel chain companies in addition to offer star rating for individual properties.
- Be certified with the star rating by the Thailand Hotels Standard
 - a. A hotel should enhance prestige, improve service delivery, and upgrade guest facilities and surroundings for greater hotel performance changes on non-room revenues.
 - b. A hotel should focus on improving their hotels' employees plus upgrading guest facilities and surroundings for greater hotel performance changes on both room and non-room services.

LIMITATIONS

The application of this research's findings acknowledges the limitations as follows. First, sample prejudice may exist. The target population of the study referred to all lodging establishments in Thailand. Among approximately 5,000 hotels and similar establishments, only about 400 hotels registered with the Thai Hotel Association. The majority of the accommodations consist of small hotels and guest houses. The contact

names were obtained by the name of each establishment without considering the number of rooms on each property. The number of small and medium properties outweighs the number of large properties. As a result, the perception from the hotel managers of the small and medium-sized hotels might prevail over the perception from the hotel managers of the large hotels.

Second, the target population size of star-awarded hotels is small. Because the Thailand Hotels Standard has only been in operation for a few years, promoting the star rating campaign throughout the entire country would not be feasible. Accordingly, it limited the number of hotel applicants to participate in the hotel star rating scheme and affected the response rate from this group.

Thirdly, non-response bias may affect the results of this study. As the period of distributing the questionnaires was during the tourism high season in Thailand, the hotel managers might have been too busy to complete the six-page questionnaire. As a result, the response rate was low (20.5%).

Fourthly, measurement bias may occur. Since the questionnaire is the attribute-based measurement, it is possible it may overlook some respondents' quality perceptions as mentioned by Stauss (1993). However, the attributes used in the questionnaire were assumed to be valid as they were drawn from the well-established measurement of SERVQUAL and the measurement of the Thailand Hotels Standard, which was well-designed based on the internationally accepted hotel rating model.

Finally, mono-source bias may affect the study's findings as data was collected only from the hotel managers' perspective, excluding customers and other related parties' perspectives.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE WORK

Through in-depth interviews with hoteliers, future research is recommended to identify hidden obstacles that inhibit hotels and similar establishments from participating in the Thailand Hotels Standard. Some hotel managers expressed their concern that being a star rated hotel would increase price and decrease the number of their repeat customers. Theoretically, having a star rating will allow a hotel to increase the price of its services is supported by this study. Conversely, why did some of the hoteliers still have the perception that increasing price as a result of the hotel rating would lessen their repeat customers? An in-depth interview can reveal covert facts so as to identify an effective motivation for these hotel managers to be a part of the star rated hotels.

As the number of certified star-rating hotels is small due to the recent adoption of Thailand Hotels Standard, future studies could have larger population of the certified star-rating hotels. Replicating this study is suggested to examine if there is a different result by a different period of time and the increasing number of the population. Indeed, the retention of the star-level by awarded star-rating hotels is of special interest and examination. How do the star rated hotels still keep the star level? How long will the hotels be listed on the list of star rated hotels? Is it possible that some hotels will keep their star rating for a while to have their hotel names widely recognized and then discontinue their status in the Thailand Hotels Standard? Are there factors such as an annual fee affecting the retention of hotels' status in the Thailand Hotels Standard?

As mentioned previously, data collection of this study was conducted during tourism high season in Thailand. Future researchers can try collecting data in low season

as more hotel managers can devote time to participate in the study. Researchers can then compare their findings for differences.

Additionally, it is appealing to compare the ranking of star level hotels that have been certified in the Thailand Hotels Standard and the ranking of the Green Leaves, the same hotel has in the Green Leaf standard. The purpose is to help hotels improve their efficiency in saving energy, water and other resources under the theme “Save Money, Save Environment.” If the relationship is found between the star ranking of the Thailand Hotels Standard and the Green Leaf ranking of Green Leaf standard, it can absolutely reveal that the growth of hotel industry in Thailand goes with the direction of sustainability.

The canonical correlation analysis of the four dimensions of the service quality improvement and the three hotel performance changes generated low redundancy indices though considered acceptable. This index implies there are other important variables excluded in this study. Therefore, the implication suggests including other dependent variables in future research. Kaplan and Norton (1992) quoted in Medlik and Ingram (2000) recommended four perspectives to measure and monitor tangible and intangible hotel performance following their concept of ‘Balanced Scorecard’. The four perspectives include: financial perspective, internal business perspective, innovation and learning perspective, and customer perspectives.

Currently boutique hotels are growing rapidly in Thailand. Owing to the boutique hotel’s unique characteristics, does the hotel rating system respond to this special attribute or is the hotel rating system flexible enough for the different style of this

hotel type? Therefore, a study to examine the effectiveness of the hotel rating system in correspondence to the changing hotel industry structure is suggested.

Regarding the star rating users or hotel guests, future research should examine the importance and role of the Thailand Hotels Standard plays in their perception of hotel selection in the Thai tourism market. In addition, the difference between Thai customers and foreign customers toward the use of star rating should be investigated. Thus, hotels serving mainly Thai tourists and hotels serving primarily foreign tourists will be able to make a decision to hold their rating status in the Thailand Hotels Standard and to apply the star rating status in their marketing strategies. Finally, a future study should identify how well the star rating system's criteria reflects the criteria formed in the hotel customers' mind.

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APPENDIX A
WORLD'S TOP TOURISM EARNERS

Rank	International Tourism Receipts (US\$)			Change (%)		Market share 2002	Population 2002 (million)	Receipts per capita (US\$)
	2000	2001	2002	2001/2000	2002/2001			
World	473	459	474	-2.9	3.2	100	6,228	76
1 United States	82.4	71.9	66.5	-12.8	-7.4	14.0	288	231
2 Spain	31.5	32.9	33.6	4.5	2.2	7.1	40	837
3 France	30.8	30.0	32.3	-2.5	7.8	6.8	60	539
4 Italy	27.5	25.8	26.9	-6.2	4.3	5.7	58	465
5 China	16.2	17.8	20.4	9.7	14.6	4.3	1,279	16
6 Germany	18.5	18.4	19.2	-0.3	4.0	4.0	82	233
7 United Kingdom	19.5	16.3	17.6	-16.7	8.0	3.7	60	294
8 Austria	9.9	10.1	11.2	1.9	11.1	2.4	8	1,375
9 Hong Kong (China)	7.9	8.3	10.1	5.0	22.2	2.1	7	1,385
10 Greece	9.2	9.4	9.7	2.4	3.1	2.1	11	915
11 Canada	10.8	10.8	9.7	-0.6	-10.0	2.0	32	304
12 Turkey	9.4	7.4	9.0	-21.7	22.0	1.9	67	134
13 Mexico	8.3	8.4	8.9	1.3	5.4	1.9	103	86
14 Australia	8.5	7.6	8.1	-9.8	6.1	1.7	20	414
15 Thailand	7.5	7.1	7.9	-5.5	11.7	1.7	64	124
16 Netherlands	7.2	6.7	7.7	-6.8	14.6	1.6	16	480
17 Switzerland	7.6	7.3	7.6	-3.5	4.4	1.6	7	1,045
18 Belgium	6.6	6.9	6.9	4.7	-0.2	1.5	10	671
19 Malaysia	4.6	6.4	6.8	39.7	6.4	1.4	23	299
20 Portugal	5.3	5.5	5.9	4.2	7.5	1.2	10	587
21 Denmark	4.0	4.6	5.8	13.9	25.8	1.2	5	1,078
22 Indonesia	5.7	5.4		-5.9			231	24
23 Republic of Korea	6.8	6.4	5.3	-6.4	-17.2	1.1	48	110
24 Singapore	6.0	5.1	4.9	-15.6	-2.9	1.0	4	1,108
25 Poland	6.1	4.8	4.5	-21.1	-6.5	0.9	39	117

Source: World Tourism Organization (WTO)

(Data as collected by WTO September 2003)

APPENDIX B
WORLD'S TOP TOURISM DESTINATIONS (ABSOLUTE NUMBERS)

Rank	Series	International Tourists Arrivals (million)			Change (%)		Market share 2002	Population 2002 (million)	Arrivals per 100 of Population
		2000	2001	2002	2001/2000	2002/2001			
World		687	684	703	-0.5	2.7	100	6,228	11
1. France	TF	77.2	75.2	77.0	-2.6	2.4	11.0	60	129
2. Spain	TF	47.9	50.1	51.7	4.6	3.3	7.4	40	129
3. United States	TF	50.9	44.9	41.9	-11.9	-6.7	6.0	288	15
4. Italy	TF	41.2	39.6	39.8	-3.9	0.6	5.7	58	69
5. China	TF	31.2	33.2	36.8	6.2	11.0	5.2	1,279	3
6. United Kingdom	VF	25.2	22.8	24.2	-9.4	5.9	3.4	60	40
7. Canada	TF	19.6	19.7	20.1	0.3	1.9	2.9	32	63
8. Mexico	TF	20.6	19.8	19.7	-4.0	-0.7	2.8	103	19
9. Austria	TCE	18.0	18.2	18.6	1.1	2.4	2.6	8	228
10. Germany	TCE	19.0	17.9	18.0	-6.9	0.6	2.6	82	22
11. Hong Kong (China)	VF	13.1	13.7	16.6	5.1	20.7	2.4	7	227
12. Hungary	VF/2	15.6	15.3	15.9	-1.5	3.5	2.3	10	158
13. Greece	TF	13.1	14.1	14.2	7.3	0.9	2.0	11	133
14. Poland	TF	17.4	15.0	14.0	-13.8	-6.8	2.0	39	36
15. Malaysia	TF	10.2	12.8	13.3	25.0	4.0	1.9	23	59
16. Turkey	TF	9.6	10.8	12.8	12.5	18.5	1.8	67	19
17. Portugal	TF	12.1	12.2	11.7	0.6	-4.1	1.7	10	116
18. Thailand	TF	9.6	10.1	10.9	5.8	7.3	1.5	64	17
19. Switzerland	TF	11.0	10.8	10.0	-1.8	-7.4	1.4	7	137
20. Netherlands	TCE	10.0	9.5	9.6	-5.0	1.0	1.4	16	60
21. Russian Federation	TF	7.0	7.4	7.9	5.3	7.3	1.1	145	5
22. Saudi Arabia	TF	6.6	6.7	7.5	2.1	11.7	1.1	24	32
23. Sweden	CE/T	2.7	7.2	7.5	160.5	4.3	1.1	9	84
24. Singapore	TF	6.9	6.7	7.0	-2.8	4.0	1.0	4	157
25. Croatia	TCE	5.8	6.5	6.9	12.2	6.1	1.0	4	158

Source: World Tourism Organization (WTO)

(Data as collected by WTO September 2003)

APPENDIX C

WORLD'S TOP TOURISM DESTINATIONS BY NUMBER OF ROOMS

Rank	Number of Rooms in Hotels and Similar Establishment (1000)						Chang (%)		Market Share	Average annual growth (%)	
	1990	1995	1998	1999	2000	2001	00/99	01/00		2001	90-00
World	12,718	14,753	16,224	16,605	17,199	17,423	3.6	1.3	100	3.1	2.8
1. United States	3,066	3,500	3,900	3,900	4,100	4,200	5.1	2.4	24.1	2.9	3.1
2. Japan	1,412	1,540	1,570	1,580	1,574	1,572	-0.4	-0.1	9.0	1.1	0.3
3. Italy	938	944	950	956	966	976	1.1	1.0	5.6	0.3	0.5
4. Germany		776	833	869	877	885	1.0	0.9	5.1		2.2
5. China	294	486	765	889	948	816	6.6	-13.9	4.7	12.4	9.0
6. Spain	498	565	586		677					3.1	
7. France	547	612	587	584	589	600	1.0	1.9	3.4	0.7	-0.3
8. United Kingdom			553								
9. Mexico	334	370	397	420	422	452	0.5	7.2	2.6	2.4	3.4
10. Canada		280	330		359	367		2.4	2.1		4.6
11. Thailand	169	256	279	280	319	321	13.9	0.5	1.8	6.6	3.8
12. Greece	233	282	304	308	312	317	1.1	1.5	1.8	3.0	2.0
13. Austria	318	310	302	309	305	310	-1.4	1.8	1.8	-0.4	0.0
14. Indonesia	132	193	231	248	253	259	1.8	2.6	1.5	6.7	5.0
15. Australia	157	170	182	190	195	198	2.5	1.6	1.1	2.2	2.6
16. Russian Federation	206	214	194	188							
17. Turkey	81	133	150	153	155	177	1.8	13.6	1.0	6.7	4.8
18. Argentina	109	112	162	162	166	168	2.3	1.2	1.0	4.3	7.0
19. Switzerland	147	144	141	141	141	141	0.1	-0.2	0.8	-0.4	-0.3
20. Malaysia	45	76	108	109	135	131	22.9	-2.8	0.8	11.6	9.4
21. Egypt	48	65	83	94	114	121	21.1	6.3	0.7	9.1	10.9
22. Peru	53		98	104	115	107	9.7	-6.9	0.6	8.0	
23. Tunisia	58	81	92	96	99	103	2.9	4.1	0.6	5.4	4.1
24. Sweden	82	90	94	95	96	99	1.7	3.3	0.6	1.6	1.7
25. Portugal	79	90	95	95	98	99	2.4	1.4	0.6	2.1	1.6

Source: World Tourism Organization (WTO)

(Data as collected by WTO September 2003)

APPENDIX D
PILOT TEST QUESTIONNAIRE
(ENGLISH)

Survey Questionnaire

Section 1: The perceived or expected impacts of the hotel rating system

1. Are you aware of the Thailand Hotels Standard, a hotel star rating system offered by the Thailand Hotels Standard Foundation, which is a non-profit organization founded by the Thai Hotel Association (THA), the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and the Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA)?

Yes

No

2. Have you applied for the star rating evaluation by the Thailand Hotels Standard?

Yes

No (please go to question 5)

3. Which star level did you apply for?

One star (★)

Two star (★★)

Three star (★★★)

Four star (★★★★)

Five star (★★★★★)

4. Did you receive the star-rating that you applied for?

Yes

No, then which subsequent action have you taken?

Improving the hotel to meet the standard of the level applied for within 180 days

Accepting the evaluation result (a lower star level than applied for)

Canceling the application

(Whether you have answered 'Yes' and 'No', please go to question 6)

5. When do you plan to apply for the Thailand Hotels Standard?

Within 3 years

Over 3 years

Never. The reason is _____

6. Have you implemented any other service quality improvement other than following the Thailand Hotels Standard?

Yes

No

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the perceived or expected impacts of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry in general.

The Thailand Hotels Standard can... / will be able to...	Strongly Disagree ←→ Strongly Agree
1. ...improve the quality of hotels in Thailand.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
2. ...provide a reliable benchmark for hotel operations.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
3. ...provide standards for fair competition in the hotel industry.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
4. ...allow guests have accurate service expectations.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
5. ...provide standards for guaranteeing fair value to guests.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
6. ...enhance sustainable growth in the hotel industry.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
7. ...increase hotel operators' awareness of the continuous development of hotel standards in Thailand.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7

8. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the perceived or expected impacts of the hotel star rating system on your hotel.

The Thailand Hotels Standard can... / will be able to...	Strongly Disagree ←→ Strongly Agree
1. ...provide the standards for hotel premises, amenities, and surroundings	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
2. ...help to improve standards of service.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
3. ...increase the value of products and services.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
4. ...increase hotel price levels.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
5. ...increase employee commitment to service quality	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
6. ...increase management commitment to service quality.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
7. ...provide the hotel with the expectation of customers' needs.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
8. ...provide a competitive marketing situation.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
9. ...help hotel's promotion and advertising.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
10. ...aid in brand recognition.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
11. ...provide a superior marketing position.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
12. ...allow efficiency in administration	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
13. ...increase repeat business.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
14. ...help to increase business growth.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7

9. Please check the status of your hotel and rate the extent to which the following attributes have been changed, or may be changed, in support of an application for certification under the Thailand Hotels Standard.

If your hotel is certified with the star rating, please indicate the degree of change made at the hotel according to each of the following criteria.

If your hotel is interested in the star rating scheme but has not yet been certified, please indicate the degree of change which is being made at the hotel according to each of the following criteria.

If your desire for certification of your hotel is not being made, please indicate the degree of improvement which will be made at the hotel according to each of the following criteria.

Attributes	No Change	Minimum Changes	↔	Maximum Changes
1. Location/ Physical Structure	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
2. Surroundings	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
3. Parking	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
4. Lobby	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
5. Guest rooms	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
6. Restaurants	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
7. Business center	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
8. Conference facilities	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
9. Public, health & entertainment facilities	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
10. Safety system	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
11. Employee facilities	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
12. Modern equipment	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
13. Materials used in the provision of services	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
14. Employees' dress	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
15. Employees' service manner	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
16. Employees' discipline	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
17. Employees' foreign language ability	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
18. Employee's personality	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
19. Quality of services provided by receptionists	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
20. Quality of services provided by cashiers	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
21. Quality of services provided by bellboys	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

Attributes	No Change	Minimum Changes	↔	Maximum Changes
22. Guest rooms cleanliness	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
23. In-house TV program quality	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
24. Quality of the audio system in guestrooms	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
25. Provision of good quality drinking water in guest rooms	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
26. Language ability, menu recommendations, and restaurant management by restaurant manager or staff	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
27. Service manner, discipline, language ability, and serving efficiency of waiters/waitresses	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
28. Appropriateness of music and quality of sound in restaurants	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
29. Quality of food and drinks	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
30. Food presentation	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
31. Food hygiene	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
32. Overall serving efficiency	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
33. Hotel sanitation	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
34. Awards from domestic contests	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
35. Awards from international contests	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
36. Providing service for government administrators and VIPs from other countries	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
37. Completing arrangements as agreed and without delay	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
38. Showing genuine interest in solving guests' problems	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
39. Providing services correctly without need for repetition	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
40. Providing services at the agreed time without delay	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
41. Providing error-free service	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
42. Telling guests exactly when services will be performed	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
43. Giving prompt service to guests	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
44. Showing willingness to help guests	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
45. Never being too busy to respond to guests' requests	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
46. Instilling confidence in guests through reassuring staff behavior	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
47. Enabling guests to feel safe about their transactions.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

48. Consistent staff courtesy to guests.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
49. Staff having sufficient knowledge to answer guests' questions.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
50. Giving guests individual attention.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
51. Offering opening hours to all guests.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
52. Having staff who give guests personal attention.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
53. Having guests' best interests in mind.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
54. Understanding guests' specific needs.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7

Section 2: Hotel Information

1. Hotel Size:

- The amount of capital registered _____ baht
- The number of guestrooms available for sale _____ rooms
- The number of full-time employees _____ persons

2. Hotel Category:

- Business Resort

3. Management Pattern:

- International hotel chain Thai hotel chain Independent hotel

4. How long has your property been operated under the current name? _____ years

5. What was your hotel performance *before* being certified by the Thailand Hotels Standard (*for the hotels that achieved the certification of star rating*) or what was your hotel performance in the year 2005 (*for both the hotels that have not shown interest in the scheme and those that have shown interest but have not yet been certified for star rating*) ?

5.1. Revenue per available room (RevPAR)

(Annual Room Revenue ÷ Total number of available rooms in the year) _____ baht

5.2. Average daily room rate (ADR)

(Annual Room Revenue ÷ Total number of rooms sold in the year) _____ baht

5.3. Average occupancy rate

(Total number of available rooms in the year ÷ Total number of available rooms in the year x 100) _____ %

6. What was your hotel performance in the year after being certified by the Thailand Hotels Standard (for the hotels that achieved the certification of star rating) or what would be your expected hotel performance for the year after certification of star rating for your hotel (for both the hotels that have not shown interest in the scheme and those that have shown interest but have not yet been certified for star rating) ?

6.1. Revenue per available room (RevPAR)

(Annual Room Revenue ÷ Total number of available rooms in the year) _____ baht

6.2. Average daily room rate (ADR)

(Annual Room Revenue ÷ Total number of rooms sold in the year) _____ baht

6.3. Average occupancy rate

(Total number of available rooms in the year ÷ Total number of available rooms in the year x 100) _____ %

APPENDIX E
PILOT TEST QUESTIONNAIRE
(THAI)

7. โปรดเลือกหมายเลข 1-7 เพื่อแสดงระดับที่ท่านเห็นด้วยหรือไม่เห็นด้วยกับประโยคในช่องซ้ายมือต่อไปนี้ซึ่งเกี่ยวกับความคิดเห็นต่อผลกระทบของการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทยที่มีต่ออุตสาหกรรมโรงแรมโดยรวม โดยให้ระดับคะแนนดังนี้ 1 = ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างมาก ไล่ระดับจนถึง 7 = เห็นด้วยอย่างมาก

การรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมสามารถ... / คาดว่าจะสามารถ...	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างมาก	↔	เห็นด้วย อย่างมาก
1. ...ยกระดับมาตรฐาน โรงแรมในประเทศไทย	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
2. ...ทำให้มีมาตรฐาน โรงแรมที่น่าเชื่อถือ	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
3. ...ทำให้อุตสาหกรรม โรงแรมไทยมีมาตรฐานเพื่อการแข่งขันอย่างยุติธรรม	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
4. ...ทำให้ผู้เข้าพักมีความคาดหวังในการบริการที่ถูกต้อง	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
5. ...ช่วยป้องกันการซื้อใช้บริการของผู้เข้าพักให้เป็นไปอย่างยุติธรรม	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
6. ...ส่งเสริมให้อุตสาหกรรม โรงแรมเติบโตอย่างยั่งยืน	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
7. ...ทำให้ผู้ประกอบการ โรงแรมตระหนักมากขึ้นในการพัฒนามาตรฐาน โรงแรมในประเทศไทยอย่างต่อเนื่อง	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

8. โปรดเลือกหมายเลข 1-7 เพื่อแสดงระดับที่ท่านเห็นด้วยหรือไม่เห็นด้วยกับประโยคในช่องซ้ายมือต่อไปนี้ซึ่งเกี่ยวกับความคิดเห็นต่อผลกระทบของการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทยที่มีต่อโรงแรมของท่าน โดยให้ระดับคะแนนดังนี้ 1 = ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างมาก ไล่ระดับจนถึง 7 = เห็นด้วยอย่างมาก

การรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมสามารถ... / คาดว่าจะสามารถ...	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างมาก	↔	เห็นด้วย อย่างมาก
1. ...ทำให้โรงแรมมีมาตรฐานสำหรับการจัดสถานที่ สิ่งแวดล้อม และสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวก	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
2. ...เพิ่มมาตรฐานของการบริการด้านต่างๆ	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
3. ...เพิ่มมูลค่าของสินค้าและบริการ	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
4. ...ช่วยให้การกำหนดอัตราค่าห้องพักและบริการอื่นๆ เพิ่มสูงขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
5. ...ช่วยให้พนักงานใส่ใจทุ่มเทในคุณภาพการบริการเพิ่มมากขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
6. ...ช่วยให้ฝ่ายบริหารใส่ใจทุ่มเทในคุณภาพการบริการเพิ่มมากขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
7. ...ทำให้โรงแรมสามารถลดค่าความต้องการของผู้เข้าพักได้	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
8. ...ทำให้โรงแรมของท่านได้แข่งขันในตลาดอย่างได้เปรียบมากขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
9. ...ช่วยในการโฆษณาและประชาสัมพันธ์ของ โรงแรม	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
10. ...ทำให้ชื่อของ โรงแรมเป็นที่รู้จักกว้างขวางมากขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
11. ...ทำให้ตำแหน่งทางการตลาดของ โรงแรมขยับสูงขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

การรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมสามารถ... / คาดว่าจะสามารถ...	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างมาก	↔	เห็นด้วย อย่างมาก
12. ...ช่วยให้การบริหารโรงแรมมีประสิทธิภาพมากขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
13. ...ทำให้มีลูกค้าประจำเพิ่มขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
14. ...ทำให้ธุรกิจโรงแรมเติบโตมากขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

9. โปรดทำเครื่องหมาย เพื่อแสดงสถานะของโรงแรม (เลือกข้อใดข้อหนึ่ง) และเลือกหมายเลข 0 - 7 ในตารางด้านล่างเพื่อแสดงส่วนประกอบต่างๆ ของโรงแรมในช่องซ้ายมือที่ได้ทำการปรับปรุง หรือคาดว่าจะทำการปรับปรุงเพื่อให้ได้รับการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทย (หากไม่มีการปรับปรุงให้เลือกหมายเลข 0 หากมีการปรับปรุงให้เลือกระดับการปรับปรุงจาก 1 = น้อยที่สุด ไประดับถึง 7 = มากที่สุด)

สถานะของโรงแรม

- หากโรงแรมของท่านผ่านการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทยแล้ว อยากทราบว่า โรงแรมของท่านได้ทำการปรับปรุงสิ่งใดต่อไปนี้มากน้อยแค่ไหน
- หากโรงแรมของท่านสนใจแต่ยังไม่ได้รับการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทย อยากทราบว่า ท่านได้ดำเนินการปรับปรุงสิ่งใดต่อไปนี้มากน้อยแค่ไหน
- หากโรงแรมของท่านไม่สนใจหรือไม่ต้องการเข้าร่วมรับรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทย อยากทราบว่า ท่านจะทำการปรับปรุงสิ่งใดต่อไปนี้บ้างหรือไม่

ส่วนประกอบของโรงแรม	ไม่ปรับปรุง	↔	ปรับปรุง น้อย	ปรับปรุง มาก
1. สถานที่ตั้ง/โครงสร้างอาคาร	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
2. สภาพแวดล้อม	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
3. ที่จอดรถของโรงแรม	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
4. ลิฟท์/ห้องโถง	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
5. ห้องพัก	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
6. ห้องอาหาร	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
7. ศูนย์บริการทางธุรกิจ	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
8. สิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกในการจัดประชุม/สัมมนา	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
9. สิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกสาธารณะ สุขภาพและบันเทิง	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
10. ระบบและอุปกรณ์ความปลอดภัย	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
11. สิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกสำหรับพนักงาน	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
12. ระบบและอุปกรณ์ทันสมัย	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
13. เอกสาร/สิ่งของที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการบริการ	0		1...2...3...4...5...6...7	

ส่วนประกอบของโรงแรม	ไม่ปรับปรุง	ปรับปรุง น้อย ↔	ปรับปรุง มาก
14. การแต่งกายของพนักงาน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
15. มารยาทของพนักงาน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
16. ความมีระเบียบวินัยของพนักงาน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
17. ความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาต่างประเทศของพนักงาน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
18. บุคลิกภาพของพนักงาน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
19. คุณภาพของการบริการ โดยพนักงานต้อนรับ (Reception)	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
20. คุณภาพของการบริการ โดยพนักงานรับชำระเงิน (Cashier)	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
21. คุณภาพของการบริการ โดยพนักงานยกสัมภาระ (Bellboys)	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
22. คุณภาพของการบริการทำความสะอาดห้องพัก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
23. คุณภาพของรายการทีวีภายในโรงแรม	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
24. คุณภาพของระบบเสียงในห้องพัก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
25. คุณภาพน้ำดื่มในห้องพัก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
26. ความสามารถในการใช้ภาษา, การแนะนำรายการอาหาร และการจัดการห้องอาหาร โดยผู้จัดการหรือหัวหน้าบริกร	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
27. มายาทกาบริการ, ระเบียบวินัย, ความสามารถในการใช้ภาษา, และประสิทธิภาพการบริการของพนักงานเสิร์ฟ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
28. ความเหมาะสมของคนตรีและคุณภาพเสียงคนตรีในห้องอาหาร	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
29. คุณภาพอาหารและเครื่องดื่ม	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
30. การตกแต่งอาหาร	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
31. สุขอนามัยด้านอาหาร	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
32. ประสิทธิภาพการบริการอาหาร โดยรวม	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
33. ความปลอดภัยและสุขอนามัยในโรงแรม	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	

ส่วนประกอบของโรงแรม	ไม่ปรับปรุง	ปรับปรุง น้อย ↔	ปรับปรุง มาก
34. รางวัลจากกิจกรรมการแข่งขันภายในประเทศ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
35. รางวัลจากกิจกรรมการแข่งขันในต่างประเทศ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
36. การมีผู้บริหารประเทศและบุคคลสำคัญจากประเทศต่าง ๆ มาใช้บริการบ่อยครั้ง	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
37. โรงแรมให้บริการแขกตามที่ตกลงไว้หรือถูกร้องขอ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
38. พนักงานแสดงความสนใจอย่างแท้จริงในการแก้ปัญหาของแขกที่เข้าพัก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
39. พนักงานให้บริการอย่างถูกต้องโดยไม่ต้องทำซ้ำ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
40. โรงแรมให้บริการตามเวลาที่ได้แจ้งแก่แขกไว้	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
41. โรงแรมตั้งมั่นที่จะให้บริการอย่างไม่มีข้อผิดพลาด	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
42. พนักงานแจ้งแขกให้ทราบเกี่ยวกับช่วงเวลาในการให้บริการใด ๆ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
43. พนักงานให้บริการด้วยความรวดเร็ว	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
44. พนักงานเต็มใจให้บริการ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
45. พนักงานไม่ยุ่งกับงานมากเกินไปจนทำให้บริการแขกไม่ได้	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
46. พฤติกรรมท่าทางของพนักงานสร้างความมั่นใจในการใช้บริการของแขก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
47. แขกรู้สึกปลอดภัยเมื่อใช้บริการจากพนักงานโรงแรม	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
48. พนักงานสุภาพต่อแขกอย่างสม่ำเสมอ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
49. พนักงานมีความรู้ในการตอบคำถามของแขกอย่างดี	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
50. พนักงานสามารถให้ความใส่ใจแขกเป็นรายบุคคล	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
51. ชั่วโมงการเปิดให้บริการของโรงแรมใน ส่วนบริการใด ๆ สะดวก และเหมาะสมสำหรับแขกทุกคน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
52. การมีทีมงานที่ใส่ใจแขกเป็นการส่วนบุคคล	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
53. พนักงานให้ความสนใจกับแขกเป็นอันดับหนึ่ง	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
54. พนักงานเข้าใจในความต้องการพิเศษของแขก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	

ส่วนที่ 2 ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับโรงแรมของท่าน

1. ขนาดของโรงแรม:
 - 1.1. จำนวนทุนจดทะเบียน _____ บาท
 - 1.2. จำนวนห้องพักสำหรับขาย _____ ห้อง
 - 1.3. จำนวนพนักงานประจำ _____ คน

2. ประเภทของโรงแรม:
 ประเภทธุรกิจ/ในเมือง (Business/City Hotels) ประเภทที่พักตากอากาศ (Resorts)

3. รูปแบบการบริหารจัดการ:
 กลุ่มเครือข่ายโรงแรมต่างชาติ กลุ่มเครือข่ายโรงแรมไทย โรงแรมอิสระ

4. โรงแรมของท่านเปิดให้บริการภายใต้ชื่อที่ใช้ในปัจจุบันมาเป็นเวลา _____ ปี

5. สำหรับโรงแรมที่ผ่านการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทย ผลการดำเนินงานในปีก่อนการเข้ารับการรับรองเป็นอย่างไร หรือ สำหรับโรงแรมที่สนใจแต่ยังไม่ได้รับการรับรองหรือไม่ต้องการการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรม ผลการดำเนินงานในปี 2548 เป็นอย่างไร
 - 5.1. รายได้ต่อจำนวนห้องพักทั้งหมดที่มีให้บริการ (Revenue per available room-RevPAR)
(รายได้ทั้งหมดตลอดปี ÷ จำนวนห้องห้องพักทั้งหมดที่มีให้บริการตลอดปี) _____ บาท
 - 5.2. อัตราเฉลี่ยค่าห้องพักประจำวัน (Average daily room rate-ADR)
(รายได้ทั้งหมดตลอดปี ÷ จำนวนห้องห้องพักทั้งหมดที่ขายไปตลอดปี) _____ บาท
 - 5.3. อัตราการเข้าพัก (The average occupancy rate) _____ %
(จำนวนห้องห้องพักทั้งหมดที่ขายไปตลอดปี ÷ จำนวนห้องห้องพักทั้งหมดที่มีให้บริการตลอดปี x 100)

6. สำหรับโรงแรมที่ผ่านการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทย ผลการดำเนินงานในปีถัดไปภายหลังจากได้รับการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมเป็นอย่างไร หรือ สำหรับโรงแรมที่สนใจแต่ยังไม่ได้รับการรับรองหรือไม่ต้องการการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรม คาดว่าผลการดำเนินงานภายหลังจากได้รับการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมจะเป็นอย่างไร
 - 6.1. รายได้ต่อจำนวนห้องพักทั้งหมดที่มีให้บริการ (Revenue per available room-RevPAR)
(รายได้ทั้งหมดตลอดปี ÷ จำนวนห้องห้องพักทั้งหมดที่มีให้บริการตลอดปี) _____ บาท
 - 6.2. อัตราเฉลี่ยค่าห้องพักประจำวัน (Average daily room rate-ADR)
(รายได้ทั้งหมดตลอดปี ÷ จำนวนห้องห้องพักทั้งหมดที่ขายไปตลอดปี) _____ บาท
 - 6.3. อัตราการเข้าพัก (The average occupancy rate) _____ %
(จำนวนห้องห้องพักทั้งหมดที่ขายไปตลอดปี ÷ จำนวนห้องห้องพักทั้งหมดที่มีให้บริการตลอดปี x 100)

APPENDIX F
QUESTIONNAIRE
(ENGLISH)

Survey Questionnaire

Section 1: The perceived or expected impacts of the hotel rating system

1. Are you aware of the Thailand Hotels Standard, a hotel star rating system offered by the Thailand Hotels Standard Foundation, which is a non-profit organization founded by the Thai Hotel Association (THA), the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and the Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA)?

Yes

No

2. Have you applied for the star rating evaluation by the Thailand Hotels Standard?

Yes

No (please go to question 5)

3. Which star level did you apply for?

One star (★)

Two star (★★)

Three star (★★★)

Four star (★★★★)

Five star (★★★★★)

4. Did you receive the star-rating that you applied for?

Yes

No, then which subsequent action have you taken?

Improving the hotel to meet the standard of the level applied for within 180 days

Accepting the evaluation result (a lower star level than applied for)

Canceling the application

(Whether you have answered 'Yes' and 'No', please go to question 6)

5. When do you plan to apply for the Thailand Hotels Standard?

Within 3 years

Over 3 years

Never; The reason is _____

6. Have you implemented any other service quality improvement other than following the Thailand Hotels Standard?

Yes

No

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the perceived or expected impacts of the Thailand Hotels Standard on the hotel industry in general.

The Thailand Hotels Standard can... / will be able to...	Strongly Disagree ←	↔	Strongly Agree
1. ...improve the quality of hotels in Thailand.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
2. ...provide a reliable benchmark for hotel operations.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
3. ...provide standards for fair competition in the hotel industry.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
4. ...allow guests have accurate service expectations.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
5. ...provide standards for guaranteeing fair value to guests.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
6. ...enhance sustainable growth in the hotel industry.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
7. ...increase hotel operators' awareness of the continuous development of hotel standards in Thailand.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

8. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the perceived or expected impacts of the hotel star rating system on your hotel.

The Thailand Hotels Standard can... / will be able to...	Strongly Disagree ←	↔	Strongly Agree
1. ...provide the standards for hotel premises, amenities, and surroundings	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
2. ...help to improve standards of service.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
3. ...increase the value of products and services.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
4. ...increase hotel price levels.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
5. ...increase employee commitment to service quality	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
6. ...increase management commitment to service quality.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
7. ...provide the hotel with the expectation of customers' needs.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
8. ...provide an equitable competitive marketing situation.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
9. ...help hotel's promotion and advertising.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
10. ...aid in brand recognition.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
11. ...provide a superior marketing position.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
12. ...allow efficiency in administration	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
13. ...increase repeat business.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
14. ...help to increase business growth.	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

9. Please check the status of your hotel and rate the extent to which the following attributes have been changed, or may be changed, in support of an application for certification under the Thailand Hotels Standard.

If your hotel is certified with a star rating, please indicate the degree of change made at the hotel according to each of the following criteria.

If your hotel has applied for a star rating but has not yet been certified, please indicate the degree of change which is being made at the hotel according to each of the following criteria.

If an application for certification of your hotel is not being made, please indicate the degree of improvement which will be made at the hotel according to each of the following criteria.

Attributes	No Change	Minimum Changes	↔	Maximum Changes
1. Location/ Physical Structure	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
2. Surroundings	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
3. Parking	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
4. Lobby	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
5. Guest rooms	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
6. Restaurants	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
7. Business center and facilities (computer, duplicator, etc.)	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
8. Conference facilities	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
9. Public, health & entertainment facilities	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
10. Safety system	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
11. Employee facilities (break room, parking lot, etc.)	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
12. Modern equipment	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
13. Materials used in the provision of services	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
14. Employees' dress (uniforms, tidiness, etc.)	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
15. Employees' service manner	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
16. Employees' discipline	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
17. Employees' foreign language ability	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
18. Employee's personality	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
19. Quality of services provided by receptionists	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
20. Quality of services provided by cashiers	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
21. Quality of services provided by bellboys	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

Attributes	No Change	Minimum Changes	↔	Maximum Changes
22. Guest rooms cleanliness	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
23. In-house TV program quality	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
24. Quality of the audio system in guestrooms	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
25. Provision of good quality drinking water in guest rooms	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
26. Language ability, menu recommendations, and restaurant management by restaurant manager or staff	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
27. Service manner, discipline, language ability, and serving efficiency of waiters/waitresses	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
28. Appropriateness of music and quality of sound in restaurants	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
29. Quality of food and drinks	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
30. Food presentation (attractiveness of food presentation)	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
31. Food hygiene (cleanliness of food handling, etc.)	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
32. Overall serving efficiency (service quality)	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
33. Hotel sanitation and safety	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
34. Awards from domestic contests	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
35. Awards from international contests	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
36. Providing service for government administrators and VIPs from other countries	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
37. Completing arrangements as agreed and without delay	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
38. Showing genuine interest in solving guests' problems	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
39. Providing services correctly without need for repetition	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
40. Providing services at the agreed time without delay	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
41. Providing error-free service	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
42. Telling guests exactly when services will be performed	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
43. Giving prompt service to guests	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
44. Showing willingness to help guests	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
45. Never being too busy to respond to guests' requests	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
46. Instilling confidence in guests through reassuring staff behavior	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
47. Enabling guests to feel safe about their transactions.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

48. Consistent staff courtesy to guests.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
49. Staff having sufficient knowledge to answer guests' questions.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
50. Giving guests individual attention.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
51. Offering opening hours to all guests.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
52. Having the staff give guests personal attention.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
53. Having guests' best interests in mind.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7
54. Understanding the guests' specific needs.	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7

Section 2: Hotel Information

1. Hotel Size:

- The amount of capital registered _____ baht
- The number of guestrooms available for sale _____ rooms
- The number of full-time employees _____ persons

2. Hotel Category:

- Business Resort

3. Management Pattern:

- International hotel chain Thai hotel chain Independent hotel

4. How long has your property been operated under the current name? _____ years

Please indicate the level of your hotel performance in the year 2005 (for hotels that are not officially certified by the Thailand Hotel Standard) or the year before being certified by the Thailand Hotels Standard (for hotels that have been officially certified by the Thailand Hotel Standard).

Attributes	Least Successful ← → Most Successful						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Your hotel was very profitable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Your hotel generated a high volume of sales.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Your hotel achieved a high average daily room rate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Your hotel had a high level of occupancy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate the level of your expected hotel performance in the year 2006 (for hotels that are not officially certified by the Thailand Hotel Standard) or the year after being certified by the Thailand Hotels Standard (for hotels that have been officially certified by the Thailand Hotel Standard).

Attributes	Least Successful		←→			Most Successful	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Your hotel will be very profitable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Your hotel will generate a high volume of sales.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Your hotel will achieve a high average daily room rate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Your hotel will have a high level of occupancy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX G
QUESTIONNAIRE
(THAI)

แบบสอบถาม

ส่วนที่ 1 ความคิดเห็นต่อการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทย (Thailand Hotels Standard)

1. ท่านรู้จักการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทย (Thailand Hotels Standard) ซึ่งใช้สัญลักษณ์รูปดาว 1-5 ดวง จัดตั้งโดยมูลนิธิมาตรฐานโรงแรมไทยอันเป็นความร่วมมือระหว่างสมาคมโรงแรมไทย การท่องเที่ยวแห่งประเทศไทย และสมาคมไทยธุรกิจท่องเที่ยวหรือไม่?
 รู้จัก ไม่รู้จัก
2. โรงแรมของท่านเคยสมัครเพื่อรับการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทยหรือไม่?
 เคยสมัคร ไม่เคยสมัครเลย (กรุณาข้ามไปตอบข้อ 5)
3. ท่านได้สมัครเพื่อรับการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทยในระดับใด?
 หนึ่งดาว (★)
 สองดาว (★★)
 สามดาว (★★★)
 สี่ดาว (★★★★)
 ห้าดาว (★★★★★)
4. โรงแรมของท่านได้รับการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทยตามที่ได้สมัครไว้หรือไม่?
 ได้รับ
 ไม่ได้รับ , ท่านได้ดำเนินการใดต่อ ตามข้อต่อไปนี้
 ปรับปรุงโรงแรมเพิ่มเติมและรับการประเมินใหม่ภายใน 180 วัน
 ขอมรับผลการประเมินจำนวนดาวที่ต่ำกว่าที่สมัครไว้
 ยกเลิกการประเมิน
(ผู้ตอบทั้งสองคำตอบ กรุณาข้ามไปตอบข้อ 6)
5. ท่านคาดว่าจะสมัครเพื่อรับการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทยเมื่อไหร่?
 ภายใน 3 ปี
 เกินกว่า 3 ปี
 ไม่สนใจที่จะสมัคร เพราะ _____
6. โรงแรมของท่านได้ดำเนินการพัฒนาคุณภาพการบริการด้วยมาตรการอื่นๆ นอกจากการปฏิบัติตามเกณฑ์ที่กำหนดในการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทยหรือไม่?
 ได้ดำเนินการ ไม่ได้ดำเนินการ

7. โปรดเลือกหมายเลข 1-7 เพื่อแสดงระดับที่ท่านเห็นด้วยหรือไม่เห็นด้วยกับประโยคในช่องซ้ายมือต่อไปนี้ซึ่งเกี่ยวกับความคิดเห็นต่อผลกระทบของการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทยที่มีต่ออุตสาหกรรมโรงแรมโดยรวม โดยให้ระดับคะแนนดังนี้ 1 = ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างมาก ไประดับจนถึง 7 = เห็นด้วยอย่างมาก

การรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมสามารถ... / คาดว่าจะสามารถ...	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างมาก	↔	เห็นด้วย อย่างมาก
1. ...ยกระดับมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทย	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
2. ...ทำให้มีมาตรฐานโรงแรมที่น่าเชื่อถือ	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
3. ...ทำให้อุตสาหกรรมโรงแรมไทยมีมาตรฐานเพื่อการแข่งขันอย่างยุติธรรม	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
4. ...ทำให้ผู้เข้าพักมีความคาดหวังในการบริการที่ถูกต้อง	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
5. ...ช่วยปกป้องการซื้อใช้บริการของผู้เข้าพักให้เป็นไปอย่างยุติธรรม	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
6. ...ส่งเสริมให้อุตสาหกรรมโรงแรมเติบโตอย่างยั่งยืน	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
7. ...ทำให้ผู้ประกอบการโรงแรมตระหนักมากขึ้นในการพัฒนามาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทยอย่างต่อเนื่อง	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

8. โปรดเลือกหมายเลข 1-7 เพื่อแสดงระดับที่ท่านเห็นด้วยหรือไม่เห็นด้วยกับประโยคในช่องซ้ายมือต่อไปนี้ซึ่งเกี่ยวกับความคิดเห็นต่อผลกระทบของการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทยที่มีต่อโรงแรมของท่าน โดยให้ระดับคะแนนดังนี้ 1 = ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างมาก ไประดับจนถึง 7 = เห็นด้วยอย่างมาก

การรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมสามารถ... / คาดว่าจะสามารถ...	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างมาก	↔	เห็นด้วย อย่างมาก
1. ...ทำให้โรงแรมมีมาตรฐานสำหรับการจัดสถานที่ สิ่งแวดล้อม และสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวก	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
2. ...เพิ่มมาตรฐานของการบริการด้านต่างๆ	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
3. ...เพิ่มมูลค่าของสินค้าและบริการ	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
4. ...ช่วยให้การกำหนดอัตราค่าห้องพักและบริการอื่นๆ เพิ่มสูงขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
5. ...ช่วยให้พนักงานใส่ใจทุ่มเทในคุณภาพการบริการเพิ่มมากขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
6. ...ช่วยให้ฝ่ายบริหารใส่ใจทุ่มเทในคุณภาพการบริการเพิ่มมากขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
7. ...ทำให้โรงแรมสามารถคาดเดาความต้องการของผู้เข้าพักได้	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
8. ...ทำให้โรงแรมของท่านได้แข่งขันในตลาดอย่างได้เปรียบมากขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
9. ...ช่วยในการโฆษณาและประชาสัมพันธ์ของโรงแรม	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
10. ...ทำให้ชื่อของโรงแรมเป็นที่รู้จักกว้างขวางมากขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
11. ...ทำให้ตำแหน่งทางการตลาดของโรงแรมขยับสูงขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

การรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมสามารถ... / คาดว่าจะสามารถ...	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างมาก	↔	เห็นด้วย อย่างมาก
12. ...ช่วยให้การบริหารโรงแรมมีประสิทธิภาพมากขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
13. ...ทำให้มีลูกค้าประจำเพิ่มขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
14. ...ทำให้ธุรกิจโรงแรมเติบโตมากขึ้น	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

9. โปรดทำเครื่องหมาย เพื่อแสดงสถานะของโรงแรม (เลือกข้อใดข้อหนึ่ง) และเลือกหมายเลข 0 - 7 ในตารางด้านล่างเพื่อแสดงส่วนประกอบต่างๆ ของโรงแรมในช่องซ้ายมือที่ได้ทำการปรับปรุง หรือคาดว่าจะทำการปรับปรุงเพื่อให้ได้การรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทย (หากไม่มีการปรับปรุงให้เลือกหมายเลข 0 หากมีการปรับปรุงให้เลือกระดับการปรับปรุงจาก 1 = น้อยที่สุด ไประดับถึง 7 = มากที่สุด)

สถานะของโรงแรม

- หากโรงแรมของท่านผ่านการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทยแล้ว อยากรทราบว่า โรงแรมของท่านได้ทำการปรับปรุงสิ่งใดต่อไปนี้มีมากน้อยแค่ไหน
- หากโรงแรมของท่านสนใจแต่ยังไม่ได้รับการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทย อยากรทราบว่า ท่านได้ดำเนินการปรับปรุงสิ่งใดต่อไปนี้มีมากน้อยแค่ไหน
- หากโรงแรมของท่านไม่สนใจหรือไม่ต้องการเข้าร่วมรับรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรมในประเทศไทย อยากรทราบว่า ท่านจะทำการปรับปรุงสิ่งใดต่อไปนี้มีบ้างหรือไม่

ส่วนประกอบของโรงแรม	ไม่ปรับปรุง	ปรับปรุง น้อย	↔	ปรับปรุง มาก
1. สถานที่ตั้ง/โครงสร้างอาคาร	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
2. สภาพแวดล้อม	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
3. ที่จอดรถของโรงแรม	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
4. ล็อบบี้/ห้องโถง	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
5. ห้องพัก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
6. ห้องอาหาร	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
7. ศูนย์บริการทางธุรกิจ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
8. สิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกในการจัดประชุม/สัมมนา	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
9. สิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกสาธารณะ สุขภาพและบันเทิง	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
10. ระบบและอุปกรณ์ความปลอดภัย	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
11. สิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกสำหรับพนักงาน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
12. ระบบและอุปกรณ์ทันสมัย	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		
13. เอกสาร/สิ่งของที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการบริการ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7		

ส่วนประกอบของโรงแรม	ไม่ปรับปรุง	ปรับปรุง น้อย ↔	ปรับปรุง มาก
14. การแต่งกายของพนักงาน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
15. มารยาทของพนักงาน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
16. ความมีระเบียบวินัยของพนักงาน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
17. ความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาต่างประเทศของพนักงาน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
18. บุคลิกภาพของพนักงาน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
19. คุณภาพของการบริการโดยพนักงานต้อนรับ (Reception)	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
20. คุณภาพของการบริการโดยพนักงานรับชำระเงิน (Cashier)	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
21. คุณภาพของการบริการโดยพนักงานยกสัมภาระ (Bellboys)	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
22. คุณภาพของการบริการทำความสะอาดห้องพัก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
23. คุณภาพของรายการทีวีภายในโรงแรม	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
24. คุณภาพของระบบเสียงในห้องพัก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
25. คุณภาพน้ำดื่มในห้องพัก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
26. ความสามารถในการใช้ภาษา, การแนะนำรายการอาหาร และการจัดการห้องอาหารโดยผู้จัดการหรือหัวหน้าบริการ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
27. มารยาทการบริการ, ระเบียบวินัย, ความสามารถในการใช้ภาษา, และประสิทธิภาพการบริการของพนักงานเสิร์ฟ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
28. ความเหมาะสมของคนตรีและคุณภาพเสียงคนตรีในห้องอาหาร	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
29. คุณภาพอาหารและเครื่องดื่ม	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
30. การตกแต่งอาหาร	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
31. สุขอนามัยด้านอาหาร	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
32. ประสิทธิภาพการบริการอาหารโดยรวม	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
33. ความปลอดภัยและสุขอนามัยในโรงแรม	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	

ส่วนประกอบของโรงแรม	ไม่ปรับปรุง	ปรับปรุง น้อย ↔	ปรับปรุง มาก
34. รางวัลจากกิจกรรมการแข่งขันภายในประเทศ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
35. รางวัลจากกิจกรรมการแข่งขันในต่างประเทศ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
36. การมีผู้บริหารประเทศและบุคคลสำคัญจากประเทศต่าง ๆ มาใช้บริการบ่อยครั้ง	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
37. โรงแรมให้บริการแขกตามที่ตกลงไว้หรือถูกร้องขอ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
38. พนักงานแสดงความสนใจอย่างแท้จริงในการแก้ปัญหาของแขกที่เข้าพัก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
39. พนักงานให้บริการอย่างถูกต้องโดยไม่ต้องทำซ้ำ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
40. โรงแรมให้บริการตามเวลาที่ได้แจ้งแก่แขกไว้	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
41. โรงแรมตั้งมั่นที่จะให้บริการอย่างไม่มีข้อผิดพลาด	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
42. พนักงานแจ้งแขกให้ทราบเกี่ยวกับช่วงเวลาในการให้บริการใด ๆ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
43. พนักงานให้บริการด้วยความรวดเร็ว	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
44. พนักงานเต็มใจให้บริการ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
45. พนักงานไม่ยุ่งกับงานมากเกินไปจนทำให้บริการแขกไม่ได้	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
46. พฤติกรรมท่าทางของพนักงานสร้างความมั่นใจในการใช้บริการของแขก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
47. แขกรู้สึกปลอดภัยเมื่อใช้บริการจากพนักงานโรงแรม	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
48. พนักงานสุภาพต่อแขกอย่างสม่ำเสมอ	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
49. พนักงานมีความรู้ในการตอบคำถามของแขกอย่างดี	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
50. พนักงานสามารถให้ความใส่ใจแขกเป็นรายบุคคล	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
51. ชั่วโมงการเปิดให้บริการของโรงแรมใน ส่วนบริการใด ๆ สะดวก และเหมาะสมสำหรับแขกทุกคน	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
52. การมีทีมงานที่ใส่ใจแขกเป็นการส่วนบุคคล	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
53. พนักงานให้ความสนอกกับแขกเป็นอันดับหนึ่ง	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	
54. พนักงานเข้าใจในความต้องการพิเศษของแขก	0	1...2...3...4...5...6...7	

ส่วนที่ 2 ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับโรงแรมของท่าน

1. ขนาดของโรงแรม:

- 1.1. จำนวนทุนจดทะเบียน _____ บาท
 1.2. จำนวนห้องพักสำหรับขาย _____ ห้อง
 1.3. จำนวนพนักงานประจำ _____ คน

2. ประเภทของโรงแรม:

- ประเภทธุรกิจ/ในเมือง (Business/City Hotels) ประเภทที่พักตากอากาศ (Resorts)

3. รูปแบบการบริหารจัดการ:

- กลุ่มเครือข่ายโรงแรมต่างชาติ กลุ่มเครือข่ายโรงแรมไทย โรงแรมอิสระ

4. โรงแรมของท่านเปิดให้บริการภายใต้ชื่อที่ใช้ในปัจจุบันมาเป็นเวลา _____ ปี

โปรดแสดงระดับความสำเร็จของผลการดำเนินงานของโรงแรม ก่อนการเข้ารับการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรม หรือ หากไม่ได้เข้าร่วม โปรดแสดงผลการดำเนินงานปีที่ผ่านมา

ตัวชี้วัด	ประสบความสำเร็จ น้อย			←→				ประสบความสำเร็จ มาก	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
5. โรงแรมของท่านประสบความสำเร็จด้านผลกำไร	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. โรงแรมของท่านประสบความสำเร็จด้านรายได้	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. โรงแรมของท่านประสบความสำเร็จด้านอัตราค่าห้องพัก	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. โรงแรมของท่านประสบความสำเร็จด้านอัตราการเข้าพัก	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

โปรดแสดงระดับความสำเร็จของผลการดำเนินงานของโรงแรม ภายหลังจากได้รับการรับรองมาตรฐานโรงแรม หรือ หากไม่ได้เข้าร่วม โปรดแสดงการคาดการณ์ผลการดำเนินงานรอบปีนี้

ตัวชี้วัด	ประสบความสำเร็จ น้อย			←→				ประสบความสำเร็จ มาก	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
9. โรงแรมของท่านประสบความสำเร็จด้านผลกำไร	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. โรงแรมของท่านประสบความสำเร็จด้านรายได้	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. โรงแรมของท่านประสบความสำเร็จด้านอัตราค่าห้องพัก	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. โรงแรมของท่านประสบความสำเร็จด้านอัตราการเข้าพัก	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX H
IRB APPROVAL

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Wednesday, March 08, 2006
IRB Application No HE0646
Proposal Title: Investigating the Perceived Impact of the Hotel Rating System and Service Quality: A Case Study of the Thailand Hotel Standard
Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 3/7/2007

Principal Investigator(s)

Yeamdao Narangajavana Bo Hu
222 Thaiburi, Thasala 220 HES
Nakhonsithammarat, Thail Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Yeamdao Narangajavana

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctoral of Philosophy

Dissertation: THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE HOTEL RATING SYSTEM AND SERVICE QUALITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE 'THAILAND HOTELS STANDARD'

Major Field: Human Environmental Sciences

Bibliographical:

Education: Graduated from Samakkeevittayakom High School, Chiangrai, Thailand 1993; received Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Hotel Management from Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand, 1997. Completed the requirements for the Master of Art degree with a major in Tourism and Hospitality Management at Bournemouth University, Bournemouth, the United Kingdom, (September, 1999). Completed the Requirements for the Doctoral of Philosophy degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 2007.

Experience: Trainee in Reception and Reservation Division, Dusit Island Resort Hotel, Thailand, 1997; Employed by Walailak University, Institute of Management as a lecturer, 1999 to present, as a Tourism Management Program Coordinator, 2000-2002, and as a Hotel Manager at Walailak Hospitality Center, 2000-2002.

Name: Yeamdao Narangajavana

Date of Degree: May, 2007

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE HOTEL RATING SYSTEM AND SERVICE QUALITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE 'THAILAND HOTELS STANDARD'

Pages in Study: 145

Candidate for the Degree of Doctoral of Philosophy

Major Field: Hospitality Administration

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of the hotel rating system and service quality. Respondents in the study were 308 hotel managers in Thailand. All hotel managers completed a questionnaire asking for their perceived influences of the Thailand Hotels Standard, a national hotel rating system of Thailand. T-test, analysis of variance, canonical correlation analysis were used to test 5 hypotheses.

Findings and Conclusions: Both hotel applicants and certified hotels of the hotel rating system perceived more favorable about its influences on the hotel industry as well as hotel properties. Factor analysis of service quality improvement as a result of participation in the Thailand Hotels Standard extracted 4 dimensions including service delivery, hotel employees, guest facilities and surroundings, and prestige. The four dimensions of service quality improvement were not significantly associated with either star level or chain affiliation. Canonical correlation analysis found significant relationship between the four dimensions of service quality improvement and three hotel performance changes.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Bo Hu
