

ABSTRACT

The hotel industry today has been recognized as a global industry. Since Thailand encountered the economic crisis, the government emphasized more on tourism. There are many promotions and campaigns launched to attract inbound tourism, the most interesting one was Amazing Thailand 1998-1999. The hospitality industry becomes a crucial revenue generator for the country. The hotel industry will constitute a major segment of the growing hospitality industry in Thailand. Therefore, it is very necessary to understand tourists and attempt to attract them to visit the country.

This paper investigates tourists' perceptions of hotel frontline employees' questionable job-related behavior. It is proposed to achieve five objectives: (1) To assess tourists' perceptions of hotel frontline employees' questionable job-related behaviors in Thailand; (2) To find out factors that govern the tourists' perceptions of these questionable job-related behaviors; (3) To investigate any correlation between the identified factors with the attitudinal statements about general ethics concerning people and customer satisfaction; (4) To examine tourists' characteristics as possible explanatory variables; and (5) To suggest work rules that hoteliers might implement as to staff behavior which will enhance tourist satisfaction.

There are two independent variables to be tested with a dependent variable, which is tourists' perception of hotel employees' questionable behavior. The first group of independent variables is tourists' ethical attitudes including company policy, reciprocation, honesty, human nature, legality, and flexibility. The other one is tourists' characteristic variables including gender, age, education, nationality, purpose of trip, and length of stay.

The survey method with self-administered was applied. A convenient sampling method was used to collect primary data from 300 tourists, who had actual experience of hotel accommodation in Bangkok, at the departure hall, Bangkok International Airport.

Tourists were asked to indicate their perceptions about hotel employees' ethics in three service encounters (Front Office, Housekeeping and Food & Beverage) they experienced in hotels. Four dimensions were identified by factor analysis. Listed in descending order, from wrong to not wrong, they were: (1) infringement of guests' privacy; (2) benefiting at expense of hotel; (3) against hotel work rules without serious consequence; and (4) benefiting at expense of guest supplementary service.

Pearson's correlation analysis revealed certain relationships between four dimensions and six independent attitudinal statements. An attempt was carried out to investigate whether any significant differences existed between the tourists' characteristic variables using independent t-test and ANOVA analysis with the four identified dimensions. It was found that gender exerted significant difference in factor 4, while age, nationality, purpose of trip and length of stay scored differently in some factors, but there was no difference in education.

Overall, a clearer understanding of tourists' perceptions of hotel frontline employees was achieved. Recommendations to hotel practitioners are given in the areas of protecting guests' privacy, ethical education, disciplinary rules, and equitable rewards to cater to tourists' needs.