Dissatisfiers and Demand of Hotels with Poor Online Rating

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ABSTRACT

Hotel booking nowadays has been made easy with technology. Customers from all over the world have better advantage as reviews by previous customers assisting them in their final purchase decisions. Satisfied customers provide positive reviews while dissatisfied ones would share negative reviews on elements contributing to the unpleasant experience. As many other studies mainly focused on enhancing customers' satisfactions, this research focuses on identifying the elements of dissatisfaction (or sometimes regarded as the dissatisfier). Generally, negative elements always have a greater impact on customers' purchase intention as compared to the positive elements.Hence, identifying the factors that result in the customers' dissatisfaction is vital. A total of 22 hotels with rating 2 and below on booking.com was analysed in the research. It was found that the dissatisfiers identified in the research are of these categories; room,hotel staff, services and environment. The findings show that the highest contributor to dissatisfaction is the "room". This indicates that customers will be more satisfied if their hotel rooms are properly maintained. The poor rating hotel demand was also analysed. More results and important findings are discussed in the later section of this report. The results and findings of the research are useful to hotel operators in order to offer better services to customers.

Keywords: *Dissatisfiers; hotel ratings; customer feedbacks; hotel performance; customer dissatisfactions*

INTRODUCTION

The customers' decisions to book a hotel may not be merely based on the hotel's location, price and facilities anymore as a hotel's rating has become one of the key criteria in selecting the best hotel possible. This is especially for first-time travellers. With the availability of online hotel reservation websites such as 'Agoda.com', 'Booking.com', 'Trip Advisor', 'Trivago' and 'Expedia.com', guests can easily choose a hotel based on its ratings and previous customer feedbacks or testimonials. Though feedbacks from customers in the electronic market have become increasingly important (Xie, Zhang, Zhang, Singh & Lee, 2016), it is equally important to consider the actual performance of the hotel because ratings provided may be given by a very small percentage of the actual number of customers. Hence, the ratings may mislead other customers and may give rise to room sales in the future.

High ratings and positive customer feedbacks are crucial when attracting future customers. However, poor ratings and negative customer feedbacks could be detrimental to hotel operators, especially when there is no filtration of the feedbacks on hotel-reservation websites. According to Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh andGremler (2004), while many online reviews are positive, a large proportion is negative (Xie, Zhang, Zhang, Singh & Lee, 2016), sometimes extremely and unfairly. Negative evaluations often remain on sites for long periods of time, resulting in a lasting impact on the reputation of businesses, including hotels and subsequently on performance metrics such as room sales and online booking (Ye, Law&Gu, 2009). As customers will most likely leave negative feedbacks, compared to the positive ones, this leaves hotels with poor online rating, despite offering good services to their other guests. This study aims to identify the dissatisfiers of the 2-star hotels in Malaysia with rating below 2 from booking.com website. The effect on the hotel demand due to the dissatisfiers is also investigated. The findings of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge and are useful for hotel with poor ratings to improve its services and products.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Influence of Online Ratings

According to Gavilan, Avello and Navarro (2017), online consumers nowadays have to deal with huge amount of information, new search engines, different devices, and new strategies to approach information in order to make a purchasing decision. In this new context, online ratings become one of the most trusted sources when making e-commerce decisions. Usually, consumers have faith in these ratings and view them as trustworthy. Year by year, customers' trust in online ratings and reviews has been increasing and has even become as relevant as personal recommendations when taking purchasing decisions.

When making a purchase decision, the consumer is in a goal-oriented mode that favours an easy information processing approach (Van Schaik & Ling, 2009). Ratings are easy to process and can be easily employed to deal with a large quantity of information, and help to establish selection criteria i.e. only options over 4 in a 5 scale rating.

The use of aggregated ratings that results from peer evaluation of products or services represents a form of social influence, which involves accepting information or advice from an unknown person. Online ratings have become an important source of information to consumers, substituting and complementing other forms of word of mouth communication about the quality of services such as hotels or restaurants. In fact, one of the main ways in which a booking website differs from a brochure is that the website can provide evaluative and descriptive information from peers' experiences. Consequently, numerous managers believe that a website needs to provide community content, and therefore, firms proactively induce their consumers to rate and spread the word about their products or service experiences online (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004).

Attributes of the Hotel

There are several attributes that have been contributing to the hotel ratings namely room, hotel staff services, and also the hotel environment. Knutson (1988),Barsky and Labagh (1992), McCleary and Weaver (1992),

Gilbert, Gieslerand Morris (1995) andHeung , Mok and Kwan (1996) reported that room-relatedattributes such as its cleanliness, quietness and facilities offered, are important considerations for travellers in hotel selection. However, Lewis and Nightingale (1991) argue that they believe while lack of cleanliness is a prime reason diverting a visitor from staying in a hotel, exceptional cleanliness is not really an attraction either. However, it is important for the hoteliers to make sure the condition of their rooms are at the utmost standard as being uncomfortable in the room leads to the poorly rated hotels.

For the hotel staff attribute, hoteliers should devote more effort to human resources training. For instance, in-house training programs could be arranged to improve employee courtesy, helpfulness, understandability, language skills, appearance, and check-in/out effciency. Furthermore, hoteliers should also ensure that all employees are required to become involved in setting quality standards, and employees should realize that maintaining service quality of staff performance is part of their job requirement (LeBlanc & Nguyen, 1996). Poorly performed staff can contribute to the incompetencies from the eyes of consumers, resulting in poor ratings of the hotel.

Adopted from Christiansson and Sporrek (2003), this research from Grönroos (2001) classified services into high-touch or high-tech services. It was decided that high-touch services are mainly reliant on people in the service process producing the service, whereas high-tech services are primarily based on the use of automatic systems (in a click of a button), information technology (internet via websites) and other types of physical resources. High-tech services such as Internet reservation systems are in need of a helpdesk or a receptionist for when they are in critical moments where there is a service failure and a staff could be of assistance on hand. The human interaction that then occurs is very dependent on the hoteliers that are friendly, since the human interaction in high-tech services is not enough and mostly occurs in critical situations like on-the-spot repairment. Quick and fast responses by the hoteliers in handling any services are crucial in determiningcustomers' satisfaction. When services are poor and taking a very long time to be attended or solved (for problems), customers may put low ratings on this attribute.

Amblee (2015) suggested that the environment (e.g. the location of an establishment) being one of the most critical decisions in the hospitality industry (Chou, 2008), and it is a common practice for hotels to update security features when the surrounding location becomes less safe (Feickert, 2006). This is because there are customers and even family members involved and all their lives should be free from any kind of harm. The safety and security of the hotel and surrounding areas are of great importance to customers (Lockyer, 2005), and the location of a hotel has also been shown to trigger all customers' thoughts regarding personal security (Shortt &Ruys, 1994).

Location with a negative environment has also been shown to indirectly affect security perceptions of a hotel by influencing its reputation (Clow, Saltus & Waddington, 1995).On top of that, most poorly rated hotels are claimed to have sound and air pollution. Noise and smelly air can contribute to dissatisfaction towards the hotel thus the environment attribute is rated poorly.

Hotel Demand

Over the years, scholars have been researching on the variables to explain the hotel performance. Various approaches were used and suggested. Sainaghi (2010) stated that the hotel performance is typically measured by both the financial and non financial aspects. The financial aspect ranges from the hotel demand, profit margin and return on investment while the non financial aspect covers the internal perspective on the operations, marketing and human resource. For this study, researchers are using the hotel demand as the hotel performance. Although different hotels may have different number of rooms on Booking.com, the hotelsare considered performing well when they are fully occupied or fully booked on a certain period of time.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the research. The independent variables are based on the factors relating to the

dissatisfaction of customers in their experience with the hotel. The dependent variables are to show the relationship between hotel ratings and hotel reservation.

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework of the Research

According to the data gathered, the common complaints from guests concerning their hotel stay include: (a) wrong type of room, (b) room not properly cleaned, (c) uncomfortable bed, (d) no wake-up call, (e) slow service, (f) noise outside the hotel, (g) errors in the bill, (h) slow check-in and lastly, (i) reserved room not ready. The reasons identified for complaints are usually closely connected to dissatisfaction, so they could be associated with the 4 attributes from the reviews used for this research. In that case, the attributes that are the most influential drivers of dissatisfaction with guests are: "Room" (dirty, unclean and smelly, no towels, bad conditions), "Staff" (irresponsible), "Service" (poor service) and "Environment" (noisy).

Kandampully (2007) stated that in hotels, it is most likely that the guests' perception of service quality is purely based on intangible elements, so the provision of a superior service gives a company the possibility to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The reason is because these intangible elements are very difficult to copy. Therefore, the expected results of this research show that the most influential drivers of customer dissatisfaction are the ones connected to the "provisional elements" or the services availability. This further implies that the attributes which will contribute significantly to the unsatisfied hotel's guests can be "very dirty", "dirty blankets and bedsheets", "dirty, unclean, smelly", "poor room condition", "no towels", "no windows", "no toiletries", "bad condition", "aircon not functioning", "irresponsible", "rude staff", "noisy staff", "poor

service", "Wi-fi poor", "no parking", "noisy", "not suitable for family" and so forth.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted using secondary data. According to Radojevic, Stanisic,Stanic and Sarac (2014), Booking.com has a large market share and is one of the most visited websites dedicated to hotel reservation services. Using data available on this website, hotels with poor rating (star rating and score reviewed by customers) were identified based on popular destinations according to Booking.com.

The purpose of this research is to identify the negative attributes which are called dissatisfiers that cause guest dissatisfactions towards the hotel. Dissatisfiers were emphasized as Bolfing (1989) suggested that hotel guests are more likely to voice complaints over the more uncontrollable dissatisfaction responses when they perceive the problem as severe and when they feel it is their responsibility to keep the management informed.

All available online reviews for Malaysia hotels were collected from the website Booking.com. The Booking.com website enables visitors or travellers to access information about hotels through their overviews, location of the nearest restaurant or fast food chain within the hotel, vacation rental, a place for visitors or travellers to withdraw cash (ATM) and so on. The website itself also has its own mobile apps (Google Play Store and Apple App Store) to give convenience for visitors that have little to no time to find a computer or boot up a laptop just to do their reservations online. In just a click of a button, all information is relayed to them in a matter of seconds.

A total of 349 reviews was recorded and observed on weekends from 22nd July 2017 till 23rd July 2017 (for one night only).This is considered a peak season as it was over the weekends.A list of 22 hotels that was included in this research with corresponding star ratings (1-star and 2-star hotels), name of the hotels chosen, the comments or remarks of the attributes, the visitor's country of origin and his dissatisfaction scores. 1-star and 2-star rated hotels are considered as poorly rated as these ratings were computed automatically by Booking.com.

All of these hotel rooms' information was collected from the website Booking.com. except for Cyber Heights Villa (Cyberjaya)and Hotel 168 (Kuala Lumpur) because they are operated using agency/agent for bookings which could not be reached.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The dissatisfiers are categorized as general dissatisfiers and classification of the dissatisfiers. The final group of general dissatisfiers' categories was classified into four, namely, "Room", "Hotel Staff", "Services" and "Environment".

Dissatisfiers like "dirty", "no towels", "no window" and "no toiletries" are considered to be a part of the dissatisfaction group "Room". Additional attributes related to the "Room" are the topics from the reviews related to TV, Wi-fi, small room, furniture, no blanket, bath soap holder is broken, corridor is not well kept, water pipe leaking and others.

Next,a general dissatisfaction attribute is "Hotel Staff". This group refers to the common attributes mentioned as "irresponsible", "rude staff" and "not well-trained staff". Whereas other topics mention about unpleasant staff, not experienced staff, no reception clerk or manager available, could not speak basic English and so on.

Table 1: Frequency of Dissatisfiers by Hotel Star

Dissatisfiers	1-star Hotel	2-star Hotel	Total
Room	60	184	**244**
Hotel Staff	8	32	**40**
Service	9	22	**31**
Environment	10	12	**22**

**Table 2:Dissatisfiers by Hotel Star Expected Outcome**

Dissatisfiers	1-star Hotel	2-star Hotel	Total	P-value	Significance
Room	20.997	60.337	244	0.012	Significant
Hotel Staff	10.326	29.674	40	0.401	Not significant
Service	8.003	22.997	31	0.682	Not significant
Environment	5.679	16.320	22	0.035	Significant

"Service" is related to the hotel's ability to provide for its customer during the duration of stay and when the customer turns to leave the place with a smile and makes a comeback in the future. But this general dissatisfaction attribute group does the opposite. Other related attributes mentioned are no breakfast, slow service, poor cleaning and so on. Finally, "Environment" attribute refers to the dissatisfaction attributes like "noisy" and "not suitable for family". Other related attributes are humidity, troublesome, dog noises at night and others.

The cross-tabulation of the dissatisfaction attribute "Room" by Hotel Star can be interpreted because of the significant result of the Chi-square test (p=0.01<0.05). The reason for the outcome was because 2-star hotel has the most number of words calculated when mentioning the attribute by 184 times. But guests from 1-star hotel decided to avoid mentioning which resulted in less times mentioned in the review. (Refer to Figure 2)
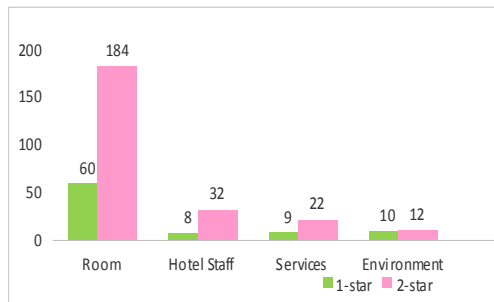
Figure 2: Frequency of Dissatisfiers by Hotel Star

The cross tabulation of the dissatisfaction attribute "Hotel Staff" by Hotel Star could not be interpreted because of the insignificant result of the Chi-square test (p=0.40<0.05). The 2-star hotel has the most amount

of words calculated when mentioning the attribute by 32 times. But guests from 1-star hotel decided to avoid mentioning which resulted in less times mentioned in the review.

The cross tabulation of the dissatisfaction attribute "Service" by Hotel Star could not be interpreted because of the insignificant result of the Chi-square test (p=0.68<0.05). The 2-star hotel has the most amount of words calculated when mentioning the attribute by 22 times. But guests from 1-star hotel decided to avoid mentioning which resulted in less times mentioned in the review.The cross tabulation of the dissatisfaction attribute "Environment" by Hotel Star can be interpreted because of the significant result of the Chi-square test (p=0.04<0.05). The 2-star hotel has the most amount of words calculated when mentioning the attribute by 12 times. But guests from 1-star hotel decided to avoid mentioning which resulted in less times mentioned in the review.

Hotel Demand

Generally, the hotel performance is measured by various approaches and variables depending on areas the management wish to tackle. Sainaghi (2010) studied that hotel performance can be measured by financial and non-financial aspects. Limited by the willingness of hotels analysed in this research to provide information on room night sales, the actual performance of hotels in this research is measured by the availability of the room at a booking time. The table below shows the result of findings on availability of rooms to compare to get the actual performance of each 22 hotels chosen. The days chosen to check on room availability to determine actual performance were on weekends from 22nd July 2017 till 23rd July 2017 (for one night only).

Table 3: Actual Performance of Each Hotels with Low Ratings

No.	Name of Hotel/Inn/Villa/Apartment	Star	Rooms Unbooked
1	Golden Summer Hotel, Kuala Lumpur	1	2 rooms
2	Cyber Heights Villa, Cyberjaya	1	Not sure
3	Dream Inn Hotel, Cheras	1	5 rooms
4	TTL Motel, BatuNiah	1	15 rooms
5	New Town Hotel Butterworth, Sungai Bakap	1	4 rooms
6	15 Avenue Inn, Wakaf Che Yeh	1	3 rooms
7	Buddy Hotel, Seremban	1	9 rooms
8	Babylon Guest House, Bukit Bintang	2	10 rooms
9	Winsons Business Inn, Bukit Mertajam	2	4 rooms
10	Tiong Nam Hotel, Masai	2	8 rooms
11	Hotel Heaven Lodge, Bukit Bintang	2	5 rooms
12	Old Penang Road-Trang Road, George Town	2	No rooms available
13	Intime Hotel Kuchai Lama, Kuala Lumpur	2	4 rooms
14	Hotel Yes, Kuala Lumpur	2	2 rooms
15	Grand M Hotel, Kota Kinabalu	2	6 rooms
16	Accordian Hotel Malacca, Melaka	2	7 rooms
17	Hotel Legent, Kota Kinabalu	2	6 rooms
18	Havana Guest House, Bukit Bintang	2	4 rooms
19	T-Hotel, Johor Bahru	2	10 rooms
20	Hotel 168, Kuala Lumpur	2	Not sure
21	Grand City Hotel II, Kuantan	2	12 rooms
22	Hotel Kajang. Selangor	2	5 rooms

The 1-star hotels each has a type of room that has been high on demand from its customer. For Golden Summer Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, most customers come for family room and that weekend there is availability of 2 rooms for guests with a large family to stay in. Cyber Heights Villa is an apartment but the agency is uncontactable. Dream Inn Hotel in Cheras provides guests with standard twin rooms with no windows, superior double rooms (high demand), standard triple rooms with no window, deluxe double rooms and last but not least, standard single rooms. All 5 types of rooms but with one room left available on the weekend of the date chosen.

TTL Motel in Batu Niah provides its guests with standard twin rooms (4 left), deluxe twin rooms (4 left), deluxe king rooms (4 left), basic triple rooms (2 left), deluxe triple rooms (one left) and double rooms (which is

still available and not yet booked by customers). The double room is the one in high demand from the customers.

New Town Hotel Butterworth in Sungai Bakap provides its customers with standard double rooms (high demand), deluxe double rooms, standard twin rooms and standard triple rooms. All these four types of rooms have only one each left for the date of the weekend chosen. 15 Avenue Inn in WakafCheYeh provides its guests with double rooms (high demand), family rooms (which can fit in 3 adults) and a single room. They were almost fully booked that particular weekend as there was only one room available for booking.

Buddy Hotel in Seremban provides its guests with budget rooms, double rooms with private bathroom and triple rooms with bathroom. They were quite fully booked and there was only one room left for each type.

The 2-star hotels also have a high demand for their rooms despite poor rating given. Babylon Guest House in Bukit Bintang provides its guests with standard double rooms (high demand) and standard twin rooms. Each type of room has 5 rooms left unoccupied and not booked yet. Winsons Business Inn in Bukit Mertajam provides its guest with deluxe queen rooms (high demand, still has more rooms for booking), deluxe triple rooms (2 left) and deluxe queen rooms with two queen beds (2 left). Tiong Nam Hotel in Masai provides guests with standard double rooms (high demand), superior twin rooms, deluxe double rooms and family rooms.

All of which were almost fully booked but available for 2 rooms for each type so guests have a variety to choose from. Hotel Heaven Lodge in Bukit Bintang provides its guests with deluxe double rooms (high demand) and family rooms only for that weekend. Although being a deluxe double room with high demand, there are still 4 rooms left unoccupied and not yet booked except for family rooms which have been fully booked and only one room left available on that weekend. Old Penang Road-Trang Road in George Town provides its guests with family rooms, rooms with shared bathroom (queen rooms, double rooms, single rooms) and queen rooms only.

Although the double rooms with shared bathroom are of high demand, on that following weekend all rooms are fully booked even with low ratings. Intime, Hotel Kuchai Lama in Kuala Lumpur provides the guests

with standard twin rooms, deluxe double rooms (high demand) and deluxe triple rooms. On that weekend, the only available rooms with one left is the standard twin room and deluxe triple room. Even the deluxe double rooms have 2 rooms left available despite being in high demand. Grand M Hotel in Kota Kinabalu provides guests with standard double rooms and superior double or twin rooms only. Being high in demand, there are still 2 rooms left for that weekend. And around 4 rooms are unoccupied and not yet booked too.

Accordian Hotel Malacca in Melaka provides its guests with standard twin rooms (high demand), superior double or twin rooms, deluxe triple rooms and family rooms. Standard twin rooms and the superior double or twin rooms still haverooms left unoccupied and not yet booked. There are 5 rooms left in the deluxe triple rooms and 2 rooms left for the family room.

Hotel Legent in Kota Kinabalu provides its guests with twin rooms (high demand), double rooms and family rooms (that can fit 3 adults in). There was one single room left for the twin room, 3 rooms left for the double rooms and 2 rooms left for the family rooms for that weekend. Havana Guest House in Bukit Bintang provides its guests with standard twin rooms and standard double rooms (high demand) only left in the weekend chosen. Both types of rooms have only 2 rooms left available to be booked.

T-Hotel in Johor Bahru provides its guests with standard queen rooms, superior queen rooms and standard single rooms. Both double and family rooms each has 5 rooms left unoccupied and not yet booked. Grand City Hotel II in Kuantan provides its guests with deluxe doubles or twin rooms (high demand), standard family rooms, deluxe family rooms and a deluxe studio. Despite having only one type of room (deluxe double or twin room) on high demand, every other room still has 3 each unoccupied and not yet booked on that weekend.

Hotel Kajang in Selangor provides its guests with deluxe rooms (high demand), twin rooms, triple rooms and family rooms (that can fit in 4 adults). There are 2 rooms left not booked yet although it is high in demand from the customer. The rest of the rooms are only available for one each for the weekend. Lastly, is Hotel 168 in Kuala Lumpur. The hotel could not be reachable and it is unknown whether it is operating as usual or not.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The objectives of this research have been successfully achieved. Attributes of the poor rating hotels from 349 hotel reviews from 'Booking.com' were analysed and reported. The attributes under the "Room" category has been found the most influential dissatisfiers followed by the three other attributes namely "Hotel Staff", "Services" and lastly, "Environment". As for the actual performance, the availability of the rooms in each 22 hotels varies and they may not determine the poor ratings given to these hotels. These 22 hotels are in high demand for certain rooms because of peak periods for hoteliers.

According to Berezina, Bilgihan, Cobanoglu and Okumus (2015), all the 22 chosen hotels should analyze online reviews on a regular basis in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their property and their competitors too. The approach that was applied to the chosen 22 hotels in Malaysia in this research can also be utilized by the management of the 22 properties in order to track and understand the reputation of their establishment on the website Booking.com. This knowledge would allow hotel managers to realize where their strengths and weaknesses as well as their successes and service failures lie in the public's eye, and respond to them accordingly.

Aside from this, such a technique can assist hotels in monitoring the reputation and activity of their competitors as well. The attribute analysis must be utilized to discover what customers are saying about specific competitors and the services they provided. Such relationships may be found by building links around the name of the competitor, or through their product or service.

Moreover, the attribute approach may be undertaken at the group level if the management would like to make a comparison on hotel performance across different portfolios of hotels within the company. Similarly, this technique may be applied at the destination level in order to assist destination management organizations in their evaluation of the destination's strengths and weaknesses, and development of marketing campaigns.

Results of this research also can be used by the poorly rated hotels in improving their hotel service quality. Other than that, the results may also be useful to the participating websites in publishing reliable customer feedbacks on their website, especially the negative ones as this is not only the concern of a particular hotel operator, but also a concern towards the whole tourism industry of Malaysia.

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