

Guests Satisfaction and Loyalty for Hotels in the City of San Fernando, Pampanga, Philippines

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Introduction

In the increasing level of competitiveness in the hospitality industry, guest satisfaction and loyalty are highly significant for the success and sustainability of hotels. The City of San Fernando in Pampanga, Philippines known for its rich cultural heritage and vibrant tourism sector, presents a unique opportunity to explore how hotels can enhance the experiences of their guests. Identifying the factors that contribute to guest satisfaction can provide useful information for hospitality management.

The understanding of guest satisfaction and guest loyalty has considerable interest for both practitioners and academics of the hospitality industry. Practitioners need to cope up with the challenges of fast pace competition. Educators need to know the latest trends in service quality to provide the right skills and competencies for students

Customer satisfaction can give establishments with information to use for their daily operations to improve strategies on achieving cost efficiency gaining better performance as mentioned by Ilieska, (2016). It was also noted by Pham and Ahammad, (2017) that satisfied customers would repurchase and spread positive word of mouth influencing customer loyalty (Choi & Kim, 2013). It is therefore needed to identify determinants of customer satisfaction to elevate company performance.

On the other hand, guest loyalty according to Mugito (2016), will be realized if customer relationship determinants are perceived as positive by the guests and are found to benefit them.

The hospitality industry has been a part of the most competitive industries in the 21st century. This is the main reason on the continuous improvement of customer loyalty that led to the key aspects of magnifying competitiveness in the industry as well as ensuring sustainability of the business (Mubiri 2016). The biggest matter hotel management encountering is not only the provision of good services and quality products but also to maintain loyal customers (Kibeh, 2013). Loyal guest can be identify as a client with repeat business and has a positive attitude towards it (Zineldine, 2006).

It was also mentioned by Pearce and Robinson (2011) that “in the event that customers are satisfied with products or brands, they most likely become loyal customers and keep spreading good word of the hotel”. In case that guests are not satisfied, they will probably discontinue with the brand and will bad mouth the hotel with other clients. The hotel image is an important factor that influences advertising and create good impression.

While a lot of studies have explored guest satisfaction and loyalty in the global context, there is limited research specifically focusing on hotels in San Fernando, Pampanga. This gap highlights the need for localized insights that consider the cultural and socio-economic nuances of the region.

The main reason for the study was to determine the relationship between guest satisfaction and guest loyalty. Knowing how these two aspects can help administration, managers, and employees in improving the service quality. It can benefit not only the hoteliers but the whole hospitality industry including guests.

The study aimed to determine the relationship between guest satisfaction and guest loyalty in different hotels. It sought to answer the following specific questions:

1. What is the socio- demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational qualification and monthly income?
2. How may the respondents' hotel preference profile be described in terms of:
 - 2.1 Hotel visited
 - 2.2 Purpose of stay in the hotel
 - 2.3. Length of stay in the hotel
 - 2.4 Source of info about the hotel
 - 2.5 Reasons for choice of hotel?
3. How may the respondents' guest satisfaction be assessed in terms of:
 - 3.1. Front desk/Reception
 - 3.2. Guestroom
 - 3.3. Bar and Restaurant
 - 3.4 Ambiance
 - 3.5 Service Quality
 - 3.6 Overall guest satisfaction?
4. How may the respondents' guest loyalty ratings be assessed?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' ratings on guest satisfaction and guest loyalty?

Null hypothesis:

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between the respondents' assessment of guest satisfaction and guest loyalty.

The scope of the study highlights the satisfaction and loyalty of guests in hotels located in the City of San Fernando, Pampanga, Philippines through profiling their demographics, preferences, and assessment on reception, guestroom, food and beverage, ambiance, and price. The respondents comprised of guests who stayed at least one night in the hotel.

The study examined only the relationship between guest satisfaction and guest loyalty and excludes other factors such as economic conditions that may influence loyalty. It is delimited by its geographical area and only includes standard category hotel classification in the city. The study aims to provide useful insights for the improvement of hotel service quality thus enhancing guest satisfaction and loyalty.

The significance of the study does not only benefit the hotel management in the city but also different stakeholders in the hospitality industry. Hotel managers and employees can use the result to enhance service quality and aligned their offerings to exceed guest expectations improving both satisfaction and loyalty. Guests are likewise will stand to benefit from the enhanced service standards and overall experiences during their stay. The local government units, local tourism sector and tourism agencies will gain insights for the promotion of the city as an appealing destination, further boosting tourism and economic growth. Moreover, the study can serve as valuable resource for hospitality professors on what skills and competencies need to focus in order to produce career ready students. Lastly, the result of the study may provide necessary data for future researchers to capitalize on and conduct further studies about guest satisfaction and guest loyalty. This may also serve as a reference on guest behavior and hotel management strategies in similar localities.

Conceptual Framework

As shown in figure 1, the paradigm of this study is based on a similar study of Carev (2008) that examined the relationship between guest satisfaction and guest loyalty in the hotel. The study was made in Rochester Institute of Technology. This study focused on the respondents' hotel preference profile by determining the hotel visited, purpose of stay, length of stay, source of information about the hotel and reasons for choice of hotel. The guest satisfaction was assessed in terms of front desk, guestroom, bar and restaurant, ambiance, service quality and overall satisfaction. The guest satisfaction assessment was described in relation to guest loyalty.

The study is anchored on Customer Satisfaction Theory that a satisfied customer is a loyal customer. The concept of customer satisfaction is a vital aspect that must be taken into consideration when a company is trying to increase customer loyalty and better performance of the business. According to Dick and Basu (1994), the role of customer satisfaction in loyalty largely indicates that satisfaction is a key determinant of loyalty. Therefore, there is a link between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Each of the set of profiles was tested for its relationship. The respondents' guest hotel preference profile was tested for significant relationship with the respondents' guest satisfaction assessment and guest loyalty. The guest satisfaction assessment was tested for its relationship to guest loyalty.

Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

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Research Method

The research design of the study is descriptive correlational research since it focused on determining the relationship between guest satisfaction and guest loyalty.

The respondents of the study were guests who stayed at least overnight at different hotels in the City of San Fernando. The participant hotels are under the Standard category hotels. A total number of three hotels participated in the study.

The study will consider stratified random sampling. The sample size was determined from the total number of room occupancy of the participating hotels. With 279 number of respondents from a total 483 guest means there is a 95% chance that the real value was within 5% of the measured/surveyed value using the Raosoft Calculator.

Table 1: Number of Respondents

Hotel	Room Occupancy (Weekdays)	Room Occupancy (Weekends)	Total	Actual Respondents
Hotel A	10	20	100	92
Hotel B	12	15	93	87
Hotel C	35	50	290	100
Total			483	279

Research Instrument

The most applicable tool to profile the respondents is through survey questionnaire. The instrument was structured and designed to be easily be understood by the respondents allowing them to answer independently avoiding bias and influence from the researchers.

The questionnaire was adapted from the study made in Rochester Institute of Technology, a university in Rochester, New York USA entitled “Guest Satisfaction and Guest Loyalty Study for Hotel Industry”. A

few alterations were made in the instrument to make it simpler. The socio-demographic profile such as Civil Status, Occupation, Educational attainment and Income bracket was added. The Likert scale was made into 6-scale-rating instead of the five original scale, changing some of the phrases into statements.

The first part of the questionnaire (Section A) was intended to determine the demographic profile of the respondent: The second part (Section B) intends to know the respondent's hotel preference profile. The third part (Section C) is the respondents' assessment on guest satisfaction and the last part is about guest loyalty.

Administration of the Research

Though the instrument which was adapted from the study of Carev (2008) went through a series of validity and reliability testing as stated in the study, the researcher opted to have the modified questionnaire generated tested considering the number of alterations made. It was evaluated and validated by research experts prior to pilot testing conducted to 20 respondents.

The questionnaires were distributed to the guests through the front desk clerk of the hotel. To ensure that guests would have enough time to complete the survey, and for their convenience, the questionnaire was distributed and administered to the guest upon check out while waiting for their clearance.

Measurement Scale

For the third and last part of the questionnaire which focused on guest satisfaction and loyalty, a 6- point Likert scale is used to gauge the respondents' answers accurately. The researchers used the 6-point Likert Scale, a noticeably even number that would allow the respondents to answer truthfully and eliminate the tendency of the respondents to lean towards answering indecisively to neutral (Sullivan, 2013).

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentage, mean, and inferential statistics with Pearson correlation coefficient. Frequency count and percentage was employed to describe the profile of the respondents The Pearson correlation coefficient was used for respondents' guest satisfaction assessment and loyalty.

To have clear descriptive of the respondents' guest satisfaction and guest loyalty, the scale used was as follows:

Table 2. Likert Scale Descriptive Equivalent

Numerical Rating	Scale of margin	Verbal Interpretation	
1	1.00 - 1.49	Very Dissatisfied (VD)	Strongly disagree (SD)
2	1.5 - 2.49	Dissatisfied (D)	Disagree (D)
3	2.5 - 3.49	Dissatisfied to limited extent (DLE)	Disagree to a limited extent (DLE)
4	3.5 – 4.49	Satisfied to a limited extent (SLE)	Agree to a limited extent (ALE)

5	4.5 - 5.49	Satisfied (S)	Agree (A)
6	5.5 - 6.00	Very satisfied (VS)	Strongly agree (SA)

Ethical Consideration

The researchers adhered to ethical guidelines and underwent scrutiny to the school Research and Ethics board before the start of the investigation. In accordance with this, the information was provided to the study participants in order to inform them of the study's goals. To safeguard the respondents' identities, the data gathered from them will be handled in a confidential and anonymous manner. An informed consent was given prior to the actual survey. The respondent's involvement was entirely voluntary, and can withdraw anytime. All collected information and data will be stored for a period of 1 year before disposal through paper shredding.

Results

Table 3 results showed that 52% of the respondents belong to ages 21-30 years, 58.8% are female, and 59.5 %are married. The respondents' educational attainment are mostly college graduate with 87.1% and the table also shows that 92.1% are employed with 43.7% income bracket of Php20,001 to 30,000. This indicates that most of the respondents are millennials, with only minimal differences between the sexes. It also suggests that most respondents are well educated, employed, and can afford to have an overnight stay in a hotel.

Table 3. Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=279)

Category	f	%		Category	f	%
Age bracket				Educational Attainment		
21 to 30	145	52.0		High School	1	0.4
31 to 40	103	36.9		College	243	87.1
41 to 50	30	10.8		Master's and PhD	34	12.2
51 to 60	1	0.4		Others	1	0.4
Sex				Occupation		
Male	115	41.2		Employed	257	92.1
Female	164	58.8		Self-employed	21	7.5
				Students	1	0.4
Civil Status				Monthly Income		
Single	113	40.5		Php 20,000 and below	89	31.9
Married	166	59.5		Php 20,001	122	43.7

				to 30,000		
				Php 30,001 to 40,000	41	14.7
				Php 40,001 to 50,000	17	6.1

Table 4 presents the percentage distribution of hotel preference profiles. As the table shows, the majority of the respondents visited Hotel 1, followed by Hotel 2 and Hotel 3.

The table also revealed that the purpose of stay for most guests is for leisure and business. Based on John Walker Hospitality Management (2017) book, the main reason for people who travel is for leisure and business. This only proves that most of the respondents wanted to have some leisure time. According to Mushimiymana (2017), it gives you a break from the daily grind. Detoxifying the mind in this way creates room for great ideas to flourish.

It also shows that overnight stay is the most common length of stay of the respondents since most of the respondents are employed and needed to be back at work after a day off from the office. The source of information about the hotel is coming mostly from family and friends. The study likewise revealed that the price is the number one major reason for choosing the hotel. This is mainly because most of the respondents have an income bracket of Php 20,001 – 30,000. Accessibility of the hotel, vacation, and relaxation are also some of the considerations in choosing the hotel. Based on Sax Insights (2016), the price remains the most influential decision driver in selecting a product or service.

Table 4. Respondents' Hotel Preference Profile

Category	f	%		Category	f	%
Hotel Visited				Source of Information about the Hotel		
Hotel 1	92	33.0		Travel agency	5	1.8
Hotel 2	87	31.2		Advertisement	65	23.3
Hotel 3	100	35.8		Family and friends	144	51.6
				Previous stay	39	14.0
Purpose of Stay				Internet	26	9.3
Business	63	22.6				
Leisure	135	48.4		Reasons for Choice of Hotel		
Both business and leisure	31	11.1		Price	103	36.9
Personal	33	11.8		Category	13	4.7
Conference	15	5.4		Recommended	32	11.5
Others	2	0.7		Vacation and relaxation	66	23.7
				Accessibility	65	23.3

Length of Stay						
overnight	192	68.8				
2 to 3 nights	57	20.4				
4 to 5 nights	17	6.1				
6 to 7 nights	12	4.3				
others	1	0.4				

Table 5 depicts the assessment of the respondents' on guest satisfaction, using the 6 Likert scales presented in Table 2. Front desk reception indicators show that with a mean of 4.79 and standard deviation of 0.94 the verbal interpretation is satisfied. The guestroom has a mean of 4.67 and a standard deviation of 0.74. Restaurant and bar with a mean of 4.54 and standard deviation of 0.55, Ambiance with a mean of 4.70 and standard deviation of 0.73. Service Quality has a 4.76 mean and 0.67 standard deviations. Overall, Guest satisfaction is 4.71 mean and 0.73 standard deviation. All of these have a verbal interpretation of Satisfied. As the table implies, the respondents are satisfied with the value of the price paid to the overall hotel experience. Reynolds (2018) also points out that guest satisfaction may happen when the perceived expectations are met and exceeded. However, the lowest mean 4.33 in the assessment is attributed in food and beverage services of food attendant in Restaurant and Bar with a verbal interpretation of satisfied to a limited extent. This is an indication that services are not that consistent when it comes to promptness and quickness of the standard category hotel. As mentioned by Schynder (2019), delivering great and consistent service, all the time is a major policy of five-star hotels.

Table 5. Assessment of Respondents' Guest Satisfaction

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Front Desk Reception			
The front desk clerks are courteous.	4.73	1.08	Satisfied
The front desk clerks are friendly.	4.73	1.08	Satisfied
The reception of the front desk clerks is quick and efficient.	4.87	0.79	Satisfied
I like the physical appearance of the reception area.	4.80	0.89	Satisfied
TOTAL MEAN	4.79	0.94	Satisfied
Guestroom			
The ability of the personnel in providing service is prompt.	4.75	0.87	Satisfied
The room amenities are complete.	4.51	0.87	Satisfied
The room provides comfort and relaxation.	4.70	0.90	Satisfied
The room is clean.	4.75	0.83	Satisfied
The room is well-organized.	4.66	0.82	Satisfied
TOTAL MEAN	4.67	0.74	Satisfied
Restaurant and Bar			
The food and beverage attendants are courteous.	4.48	0.67	Satisfied
The food and beverage attendants are friendly.	4.46	0.67	Satisfied

The food and beverage attendants' service is quick and prompt.	4.33	0.80	Satisfied to a Limited Extent
The quality of food being served is good.	4.72	0.60	Satisfied
The quantity of food served is acceptable.	4.63	0.64	Satisfied
The ambience of the F & B area is good.	4.63	0.65	Satisfied
TOTAL MEAN	4.54	0.55	Satisfied
Ambience			
The interior design of the hotel is good.	4.65	0.86	Satisfied
The hotel location is accessible.	4.70	0.75	Satisfied
The hotel's atmosphere is relaxing.	4.76	0.88	Satisfied
TOTAL MEAN	4.70	0.73	Satisfied
Service Quality			
The service quality expectation based on the hotel category was met.	4.76	0.67	Satisfied
TOTAL MEAN	4.76	0.67	Satisfied
Guest Satisfaction			
Overall I am satisfied with the hotel.	4.74	0.78	Satisfied
I am satisfied with the price value paid to the overall hotel experience.	4.81	0.74	Satisfied
TOTAL MEAN	4.78	0.73	Satisfied

Table 6 shows the respondents' guest loyalty ratings on hotels. Guest Loyalty indicator has a 4.24 mean and a standard deviation of 0.83 with a verbal interpretation of Agree to a Limited Extent. The table also reveals that respondents agree to say positive things about the hotel with a mean of 4.90, respondents agree to a limited extent when recommending the hotel to family and friends. Respondents also agree to a limited extent in considering repurchasing the hotel with a mean of 3.81 and standard deviation of 1.05. The respondent agreed to a limited extent when it comes to considering the hotel as their first choice on next travel with a mean of 3.59. This indicates that respondents agree to say positive things about the hotels however the lowest mean may be attributed to respondents' choice of hotel depending on the location of their next travel since accessibility is one of the major considerations in choosing a hotel. According to HMG Hospitality (2017), typically the most important reason people choose hotels is location.

Table 6. Assessment of Respondents' Guest Loyalty

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Guest Loyalty			
I say positive things about this hotel to others.	4.90	0.64	Agree
I would highly recommend the hotel to my friends and family.	4.33	1.11	Agree to a Limited Extent
I am considering repurchasing this hotel.	3.81	1.05	Agree to a Limited Extent
I believe this is a good hotel.	4.57	0.95	Agree
I consider this hotel to be my first choice when I	3.59	1.07	Agree to a Limited Extent

travel next time.			
TOTAL MEAN	4.24	0.83	Agree to a Limited Extent

Table 7 shows the relationships between the respondent's ratings on guest satisfaction and guest loyalty regarding the hotels. Referring to the table below, the relationship between the two variables can be considered existent as the findings interpret that there is a high positive correlation between guest satisfaction and Guest Loyalty. The null hypothesis was rejected by the findings of the study. This supports Pearce and Robinson's (2011) study indicating that if there is satisfaction among customers with products, they most likely become loyal customers and spread positive word of mouth.

Table 7. Relationship between the respondents' ratings on guest satisfaction and guest loyalty

Relationship between	r	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Guest Satisfaction and Guest Loyalty	.858**	.000	Reject Ho	High Positive Correlation

Discussions

The study aimed to determine the relationship between guest satisfaction and guest loyalty in different hotels. The socio-demographic profile of the respondents was identified. To determine the relationship between guest satisfaction and guest loyalty in different hotels. Test of relationship using Pearson correlation coefficient and some implication of the Likert scale was applied in the data.

The study revealed that the majority of the respondents were in the age bracket of 21-30 years old and were followed by those in the age group of 31-40. More than half of the respondents were female but only minimal difference between the two sexes, the respondents were well distributed. Moreover, more than half of the respondents were married, but with little to no difference in number with those who are single. The respondents were mostly college graduates with over a third having a Master's degree and a fifth of them having a Doctorate. Most of the respondents were employed with a monthly income between Php20,001 – 30,000.

The distribution of the respondents' can be almost equally divided between the three hotels. The findings showed that almost half of the respondents stayed in hotels for the reason of leisure and more than a fifth of them do so because of business. An overnight stay is the most common length of time that respondents spend in hotels and majority of them gained information about the establishments from family and friends. Price was the respondent's top reason when it came to choosing a hotel aside from accessibility, vacation, and relaxation.

When it comes to guest satisfaction, the three standard category hotels delivered. Guests were satisfied with all aspects of their stay from the front desk or reception, guestroom, bar, and restaurant to the ambiance and service quality. The respondents of the different hotels had rather similar views when it came to indicators of guest loyalty. Most of them agreed to say positive things about the hotels however

their agreement became limited when it came to hotel recommendation to family and friends and availing of the services from these hotels.

The findings resulted in the rejection of the null hypotheses thus proving that there was a high positive correlation between guest satisfaction and guest loyalty.

Based from the summary of data gathered, here are the conclusions:

Hotel patrons today are mostly young, educated, and employed. People commonly spend a night in hotels for either business or leisure. Friends and family are the main sources of information about such establishments and price is the main consideration when it comes to choosing a hotel.

Guests are satisfied with most aspects of standard category hotels but according to some of the respondents' inconsistencies and mediocre services are still existent.

Good service will prompt customers to say positive things about the hotels however, the majority of customers are reluctant when it comes to recommending the hotels to others, repurchasing the services, and making the hotel their first choice for their next travels.

There is a significant relationship between the respondents' ratings on guest satisfaction and guest loyalty. This means that the higher the level of guest satisfaction is, the stronger the guest loyalty will be.

Recommendations:

Hoteliers, hotel managers, and hotel marketers create more attractive and well-thought-out marketing strategies about the demographic segmentation usage of hotel guests revealed in this study that would be able to attract the interest of well-rounded and hopefully loyal customers.

The offerings of reasonable overnight deals for guests that are suitable for either leisurely or business stays. This would attract more guests and make the hotel an easy and convenient choice for possible customers. Another recommendation is for hospitality marketers to take advantage of the fact that friends and family are the main sources of information about hotels. Focusing on this bit of information could bring about the development of a very effective marketing strategy that would broaden the market of the industry. Encourage satisfied guests to leave positive reviews on online platforms and social media. You can offer small incentives such as discounts for a future stay in exchange for a review.

The practice of consistency with the staff's service to make sure that customers have the same quality of satisfaction as other guests to further improve hotel ratings. It is also recommended that guests preview hotel services and facilities with the comments and ratings of the hotels' past customers.

Create a loyalty program that rewards guests for returning or referring others to the hotel. This can increase the likelihood of repurchasing and recommending the hotel to others

Based from the findings of the study on assessment on guest satisfaction, it is highly recommended to use the results as basis in maintaining quality services in the future. Address the inconsistencies and mediocre services that were highlighted. Hotels should implement regular training programs to ensure that all staff members provide consistent, high-quality service across all touchpoints.

The study shows that although customers were satisfied with their stay at the hotels and will be saying positive things about the establishment, their loyalty especially with regards to indicators such as recommending the hotel to others and patronizing the services again was rather limited. A recommendation for future researchers would be to study such coincidences and possibly figure out why customers are reluctant when it comes to these indicators.

Future researchers should also consider to focus on a different hotel classification such as the 3-star, 4-star and 5-star category hotel as this may have bearing on the perception and assessment of the guests on satisfaction and loyalty.

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