



**Strategy Implementation to Service Quality in Chain and Non-Chain Hotels and  
Resorts in Phuket**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of  
Master of Business Administration in Hospitality and Tourism Management  
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<b>ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์</b>	การประยุกต์ใช้กลยุทธ์เพื่อสนับสนุนคุณภาพการบริการในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทประเภทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ต
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### บทคัดย่อ

วิทยานิพนธ์เล่มนี้จัดทำขึ้นเพื่อค้นคว้าข้อบ่งชี้ถึงความแตกต่างของคุณภาพการบริการในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ต รวมไปถึงเพื่อเปรียบเทียบกลยุทธ์ที่ประยุกต์ใช้เพื่อสนับสนุนคุณภาพการบริการในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทประเภทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ต งานวิจัยฉบับนี้ใช้กระบวนการเก็บข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพเป็นเครื่องมือในการค้นคว้าหาคำตอบ จากการสัมภาษณ์ผู้จัดการ และหัวหน้างานในแผนกดำเนินการให้บริการโดยตรงแก่ลูกค้าในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่าย ตั้งแต่ช่วงเดือน พฤศจิกายน 2560 ถึง พฤษภาคม 2561 ใช้การเลือกสุ่มกลุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเจาะจงโดยผู้ให้ข้อมูลทั้งหมดจำนวนทั้งสิ้น 20 ท่าน

ผลจากการวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่ามีมิติทั้ง 5 ของคุณภาพการบริการ (Service Quality Dimensions) มีความสำคัญในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ต แต่ยังคงมีความแตกต่างในมิติของ “ความเชื่อถือ” (Reliability) ซึ่งโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่ายอ้างอิงถึง “มาตรฐานการปฏิบัติงาน” (SOP) ว่าเป็นสิ่งจำเป็นในการกระทำให้สำเร็จตามมาตรฐานการปฏิบัติงานที่ได้วางไว้ ในขณะที่โรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่ไม่มีเครือข่ายอ้างอิงถึง “มาตรฐานการปฏิบัติงาน” (SOP) ว่าเป็นเพียงแนวทางที่สามารถปรับเปลี่ยนได้ซึ่งขึ้นอยู่กับข้อจำกัดของลูกค้า

นอกจากนี้ผลจากการวิจัยยังเผยให้เห็นถึงกลยุทธ์ที่โรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ตใช้ร่วมกันในการประยุกต์เพื่อสนับสนุนคุณภาพการบริการ ได้แก่ กลยุทธ์คุณภาพ กลยุทธ์การดำเนินงานโรงแรม กลยุทธ์คู่แข่ง กลยุทธ์พนักงาน และกลยุทธ์การฝึกอบรม ในทางตรงกันข้ามโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่ายยังได้ใช้อีก 2 กลยุทธ์ ซึ่งมากกว่ากลยุทธ์ที่ถูกใช้ในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่ไม่มีเครือข่าย คือ กลยุทธ์ระดับโลก และ กลยุทธ์เชิงอนุรักษ์ธรรมชาติ

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้เป็นประโยชน์อย่างยิ่งในการเป็นแนวทางเพื่อพัฒนา และบำรุงรักษาคุณภาพการบริการในธุรกิจการบริการ ต่อโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีอยู่แล้ว และที่จะมีใน

อนาคต อีกทั้งสามารถนำผลการค้นคว้าจากวิจัยเล่มนี้ไปใช้เป็นข้อมูลเบื้องต้นประกอบการงานวิจัย  
เล่มอื่นๆต่อไป

**คำสำคัญ:** คุณภาพการบริการ, กลยุทธ์, โรงแรมและรีสอร์ทประเภทที่มีเครือข่าย,  
โรงแรมและรีสอร์ทประเภทที่ไม่มีเครือข่าย

<b>Thesis Title</b>	Strategy Implementation to Service Quality in Chain and Non-Chain Hotels and Resorts in Phuket
<b>Author</b>	Miss Supphakan Wattanasantikul
<b>Major Program</b>	Hospitality and Tourism Management (International Program)
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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to identify the service quality differences in chain and non chain hotels and resorts in Phuket as well as to compare strategies implement to service quality in chain and non chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Qualitative method has been applied to the study via in-depth interviews. 20 managers and supervisors, who work in operation departments, were the informants. The interviews were conducted from November 2017 to May 2018 by using purposive sampling methods.

The results indicated that service quality dimensions were concerned as important by chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket in term of service quality. However, chain hotels and resorts in Phuket referred “Reliability” dimension as “Standard Operating Procedure” (SOP), which to complete the SOP was a must. While non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket explained that the SOP was a guideline, which could be adjusted depending on customers’ conditions.

In addition, the results revealed that chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket used common strategies implemented to maintain service quality, which included quality strategy, hotel operational strategy, competitive strategy, employee strategy and training strategy. In contrast, there were two more strategies, which were used particularly in chain hotels and resorts in Phuket including global strategies and green strategy.

The results of this research are beneficial as a guiding tool for the current and future chain and non-chain hotels and resorts to develop and maintain service quality.

**Keyword:** Service Quality, Strategies, Chain hotels and resorts, Non-chain hotels and resorts

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## CHAPTER 1

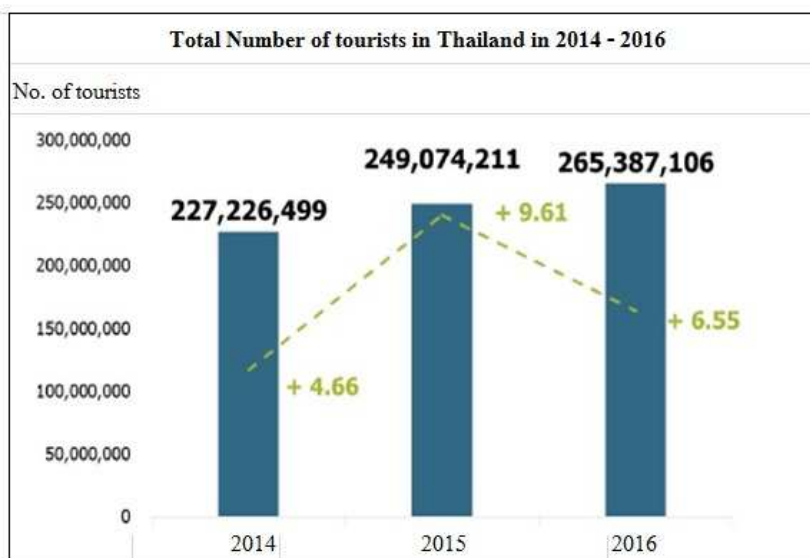
### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Phuket, the biggest island in the South of Thailand, is a tourist destination. Phuket was changed slightly from the Malay word “Bukit” meaning mountains. There are mountains located along beaches starting from the top to the bottom of the island. Tin mining was the main part of Phuket, but now the island has been occupied by hospitality and tourism industry. There are a number of tourists visiting Phuket included Thais and the noticeable number of foreigners in each year.

In 2016, there were 265,387,106 tourists in Thailand and 12,709,415 tourists in Phuket. One of basic needs for travelers is accommodations once the travelling is created. Furthermore, there are a number of hotels and resorts in Phuket. The information also provides the number of accommodations and their rooms in Phuket. There were 1,724 accommodations and 81,727 rooms in 2016 (Ministry of Tourism and Sports). Therefore, hospitality industry is one major part of Phuket.

Figure 1.1 Total numbers of tourists in Thailand in 2014 - 2016



Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports [https://www.mots.go.th/ewt\\_dl\\_link.php?nid=8848](https://www.mots.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=8848)

Table 1.1 Total numbers of tourists in 2014 - 2016

<b>Total Number of tourists in 2014 - 2016</b>		
<b>Province</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of tourists</b>
Phuket	2014	11,312,037
	2015	12,520,769
	2016	12,709,415

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports [https://www.mots.go.th/ewt\\_dl\\_link.php?nid=8848](https://www.mots.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=8848)

Table 1.2 Numbers of Accommodations and room(s) in Phuket in 2014 -2016

<b>Number of Accommodation in 2014 - 2016</b>		
<b>Phuket</b>		
<b>Years</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Room(s)</b>
2014	774	48,241
2015	1,744	82,962
2016	1,724	81,727

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports [https://www.mots.go.th/ewt\\_dl\\_link.php?nid=8848](https://www.mots.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=8848)

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Matching between providing quality service and perceived value of the customers is challenging which all hospitality companies around the globe are facing. The tangibles of services including food and physical facilities are easier to measure the quality when comparing to other intangible service. For example, employees' emotion, time and place. The pattern set in quality control was applied on tangible services by some of the quality management in the industry. According to the pattern, it ensures the continuity of standard quality. In fast food outlets like McDonalds, the quality of food and time of delivery ensures the quality of service and meets the customer expectations. (Benhura et al., 2012).

The importance of food and the service quality were underlined via many studies on hospitality. The integral component of hospitality is able to uplift and support tourism and hospitality industry to grow. Perception of customers in terms of the quality of services have a significant effect on their satisfaction and their loyalty. High quality service renders to more



qualified employees, which increase the level of customer satisfactions. Likewise, word of mouth creates revisiting customers (Sumaedi&Yarment, 2015)

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives**

1. To identify the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket
2. To compare strategies, implement to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The main issue of the study is to explore service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. SERVQUAL model was applied to address service quality of supervisors and managers in operation departments in order to achieve the service quality.

Therefore, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the most important dimension of service quality in chain hotels and resorts?
2. What is the most important dimension of service quality in non-chain hotels and resorts?
3. What are the existing strategies in terms of service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts?
4. How do chain and non-chain hotels and resorts implement service quality?

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study aims to provide the information about service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Furthermore, the study will be useful for hotels, resorts and other hospitality service providers in many ways;

1. To have a better understanding of service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.
2. To develop and improve the implementation in terms of service quality: this study can be used as a guideline for developing and improving the implementation in terms of

service which can become hotels and resorts' strategies to meet customers' expectations in order to bring success to organizations.

3. To explore the strategies which have been using in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts. It is also to implement service quality: this study provides the existing strategies in terms of service, which are applied to hotel and resort industries and also to people who are in management positions. Therefore, the strategies can lead the hotels and resorts to success or failure.

4. To be a guideline for other related businesses and to develop their services and products: the result of this study can be used by the management of hotels and resorts including any new investors who are interested in hotel and resort businesses for having a better idea on how to implement service quality which lead the companies to success.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

### **Scope of research**

The scope of this study covered chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket province.

### **Scope of Demography**

1. Supervisors, who service directly to customers, may work for Front department or Food and Beverage department or Housekeeping department. These three departments are front of the house which taking care of customers and completing customers' needs and expectations. They know how to service customers and how to implement service quality as well.

2. Management people in operation departments including Front Office department, Food and Beverage department and Housekeeping department are able to monitor service of staff for customers. In addition, those managers always implement service quality for customers.

### **Scope of Time**

This research has been conducted during June 2017 – May 2018. In-depth interview was conducted during November, 2017 – May, 2018.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Strategies** refer to the central question as what the reason is for leading companies to success or failure. To understand success, highlighting theory of the firm and an associated theory of strategy is a must. While the nature of companies and the environment in which they operate are crucial assumptions. The importance of the distinction between industry structures and relative positions can be explained that strategies, which will improve company while harming the others, can be chosen among other things (Porter, 1991).

**Service Quality** was defined as the well-known concept by Parasuraman et al., (1986, 1988) which is the difference between customers' expectations of service provider's performance and their evaluation of the services they received. If expectations are greater than performance, the perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customers' dissatisfaction occurs (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

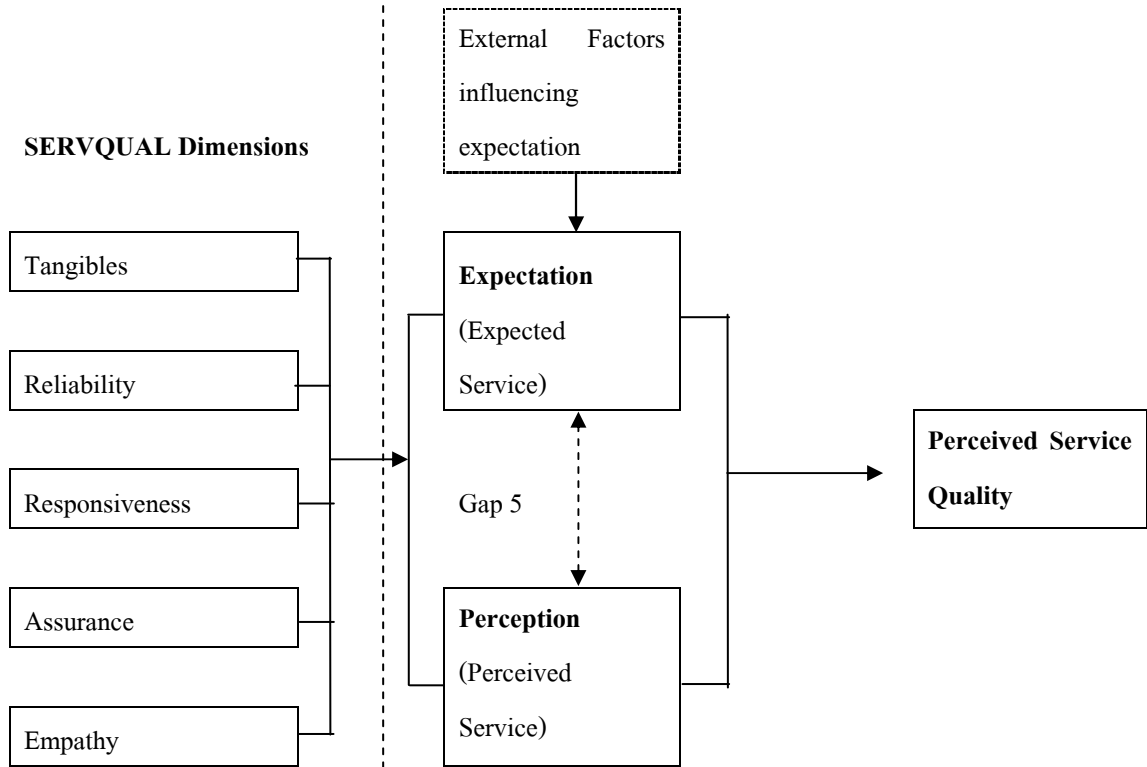
**Chain hotel** is a business as overseas market entry style which included a relationship between the entrant (the franchisor) and a host country body included the former transfers under legal contract. (Burton and Cross, 1995).

**Non-chain hotel** is a hotel owned by a person or a group of people which managed itself independently without joining any business organizations. Also, the hotel does not share chairman or management with other hotels including chains, franchisers, and hotel management companies. Each non-chain hotel located in specific area, and there is no any branch in specific area and domestic and international area. (SrithanaAnan, 2005).

### **1.7 Conceptual Framework**

This study has applied related theories and SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al., (1985).

Figure 1.2 SERVQUAL model



Source: Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V., & Berry, L. 1985

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purposes of the research are to identify factors implement to maintain service quality and to examine factors relationship. The research is planned to focus on the staffs those who provide service direct to customers in five stars hotels and resorts in Phuket include management people and operation staffs. Therefore, there will be related theories as following;

#### 2.1 Customer Expectation

#### 2.2 Customer Satisfaction

#### 2.3 Service Quality

##### 2.3.1 Definition and significance of Service Quality

##### 2.3.2 Dimensions of service Quality

##### 2.3.3 Service quality and the hospitality industry

#### 2.4 Strategies

##### 2.4.1 Dynamic theory of strategy

##### 2.4.2 Global strategies

##### 2.4.3 Quality strategy

##### 2.4.4 Hotel Operational strategy

##### 2.4.5 Hospitality competitive strategy in Phuket

##### 2.4.6 Employee strategic

##### 2.4.7 Green strategic

##### 2.4.8 Training Strategy

#### **2.1 Customer expectation**

Customer expectations can be defined as beliefs for service delivery which standard service can be served, and performance will be judges by customers. The reason is the customers compare the standard to the performance which the customers received. The first and the most significant step to deliver good service quality is knowing the expectations of customers. Losing a customer refers to being wrong for what customer want. Meanwhile, another company

takes the customer by hitting the customer expectation. The company may not survive among competitive market as being wrong. ( M.GangaBhavani, 2013)

One researcher who considered the customer expectation was Calvert (2001). He pointed out that understanding of customer expectation was significant to manage perception of customer as service quality and delivery.

Customer expectations was shape by previous experience as there were researchers proposed that a key of customer expectations were customer previous experience. (Bolton and Drew (1991)

## **2.2 Customer satisfaction**

Satisfaction is completing consumer expectations. A product or service feature is judged by satisfaction. They respond to pleasant level of consumer. It refers both under and over the consumer pleasant level. (Oliver, 1997) Two main conceptualizations of customer satisfactions are proposed by Bodet (2008). The first conceptualization refers to Oliver (1980) who points out that base on especially product or service transaction, the measurement of satisfaction can be defined as post-evaluation which related to specific decisions of buying. The second conceptualization is suggested by Anderson et al.,(1994) which is total increasing experiences of a consumer with a company, product or service. Satisfaction can be defined as emotional or cognitive (Yu and Dean, 2001). The researchers who agree with Yu and Dean are Jacobs and Solomon (1977), who propose that satisfaction can be defined as the feelings or attitudes for a product or service created post purchase or consumption.

## **2.3 Service quality**

### **2.3.1 Definition and significance of Service Quality**

Service quality is an intangible thing, but it exists in hospitality industry. When customers purchase for accommodation, the expectations include physical place and service which will be provided during the period. It cannot be denied that service quality relate to customer satisfactions.

Quality may be the most important and complex element of business strategy. Companies can be completed by quality. Moreover, quality is sought by customers. Quality is a transformer of markets. It is no doubt as a leading key to make customers happy and to provide more profits to companies and to increase the economic growth of nations. (Golder et al., 2012)

There are several definitions of service quality by Berry et al., (1990) as

1. Service quality evaluation is more difficult than product quality evaluation;

2. Customers' expectations compare with the actual service performance create the perception of service quality.

3. The distribution services process evaluation is one of quality assessment which not only the final result of the service.

One researcher who agrees with above researchers, who proposed the definitions, is Rahman who stated "service quality is not something that everyone does well" (2004). For business-to-business, service quality is significant important due to the impact from the service. (Pepur et al., 2013)

"Guests are the judges of service quality"(Parasuraman et al.,1991). The level of service quality will be judged by customers when the service meets whether cannot meet their expectations. It is intangible. In contrast, customers can feel that they satisfy with the service whether dissatisfy with. There are two distinct variables effect to customers' perceptions: customer expectations and service standards. The can overall service quality be indicated as primary by the gap between expectations and service standards/performance (Berry et al., 1994)

Service quality defined as a comparison between expectations and performance (Lewis and Mitchell, 1990).

The customers are the one who offer definition of quality. Also, the direction and degree of difference between the customer's expectations and perceptions is interpreted as receiving quality. (Parasuraman et al., 1988 quoted in Chen & Chang, 2005)".

Atilgan et al. (2003), Customer's overall impression is able to provide the definition of "service quality" to the relative efficiency of organization.

Gronroos (1984) suggests that customer perceptions of service quality can be divided into technical quality and functional quality. Technical quality focuses on the quality

evaluation of the core service that the buyer receives from the seller. Functional quality involves the evaluation of the service delivery process, which reflects the customer's experiences of service quality.

For a full understanding of service quality, there are three remarkable features, which well documented, of service must be acknowledge: intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability. (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

In conclusion, service quality is the intangible which occur between customer expectations and service standard/performance. Moreover, service quality will be provided by operation staffs and management people in front of the house in hotels and resorts. In addition, the level of service quality will be judged by customers which effect direct to customer satisfactions.

### **2.3.2 Dimensions of service Quality**

A complex network of several dimensions creates the result as service quality. Researchers have tried to identify the most significant components of service quality for years. Contributing to service quality can refers to identity of a variety of factors. (Beth SchlagelWuest, 2001.)

Beth SchlagelWuest (2001) also quoted in *Service Quality Management in Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure* (2001) that “Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988, 1994a) are among the most recognized researchers in the area of service quality. Their development and refinement of the SERVQUAL battery has produced a generic measure of service quality through the examination of twenty-two service items, which factor into five basic service dimesions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988, 1994a; Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml, 1991). The service dimensions consist of reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy”. The service provider's “ability to perform service dependably and accurately” is reflection of reliability. One of the most important service components for customer is “doing it right at the first time,” referring reliability. Providing service is one part of extension reliability promising and maintaining error-free records. Therefore, guests are misled toward undermining of tolerance and trust by overpromising. ( Parsuraman et al., 1988).

The “appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communications materials” is component of tangibles. (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Beth



SchlagelWuest (2001) also quoted in *Service Quality Management in Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure* (2001) that (Wagner, 1998) “As a core service component, tangibles still are considered. Holiday Inn explores the importance of tangibles by its recent evaluation and redefinition from customer’s feedback as they were “looking a little old”

Beth SchlagelWuest (2001) also quoted in *Service Quality Management in Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure* (2001) that “The ‘willingness to help customers and provide prompt service’ are representatives of responsiveness. (Parasurman et al., 1988). “today luxury is time” has been mentioned. (Watkins, 1998, p. 26). Consequently, for many guests, providing services in opportune manner by service providers is significant component of service.”

Bojanic et al., (1994) quoted that “The “knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence” are reflections of assurance. (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p. 23).

Feeling safe with employees is customer expectation in their transactions. The staff’s ability to reassure the customer can be discredited by inappropriate situations. They can be illustrated by entering guest rooms without knocking, confronting guests without appropriate identification or misguiding guests with inaccurate information. (Beth SchlagelWuest, 2001, P. 54). The “caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers” refer to empathy. (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988, p. 23). The statement, “If one looks at who is winning, it tends to be companies that see the guest as an individual” explains the importance of empathy. (Watkins, 1998, p. 26). According to customers’ demands that staffs see things by the same visions with them, more empathic manner is piloting to staffs by empathy training program supporting employees related to their guests illustrated by Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Select, and Holiday In Sunspree properties. (Wagner, 1998).

In the original SERVQUAL instrument, 10 categories were proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985)

Table 2.1 Ten Dimensions of Service Quality

No	Dimension	Definition
1	Reliability	Consistency of service performance and dependability
2	Responsiveness	The willingness of employee to provide services
3	Competence	Possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service
4	Access	Approachability and ease of contract
5	Courtesy	Politeness, respect, consideration, and friendliness of employees
6	Communications	Keeping customers informed in language they can understand and listening to them
7	Creditability	Trustworthiness, honesty and believability
8	Security	Freedom from danger, risk, or doubt
9	Understanding	Understanding customer's needs, providing individualized attention
10	Tangibles	Physical evidence of the service

One of the most widely used models in Service quality is the SERVQUAL that has been discussed in various literatures. The study of Parasuraman et al. (1995, 1998) suggests that service quality and its dimensions become a necessary and important factor that influenced guest satisfaction.

Table 2.2 The Definitions of the SERVQUAL Dimensions (Parasurama et al., 1988)

Dimension	Definition
1. Tangibility	Elements that can be observed physically: The aesthetics of physical facilities, tools, employees, and communications items.
2 Reliability	The capacity to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately. This dimension includes meeting promises pertaining to delivery, pricing, and complaint handling.
3. Responsiveness	The willingness to assist customers in a prompt maner. This dimension advocates positive service attitudes and requires personnel to pay attention to customer requests, questions, and complaints.
4. Assurance	The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence.
5. Empathy	The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers.

### 2.3.3 Service quality and the hospitality industry

Martin O'Neill (2001) has shown that hospitality environment for these days, ability of organization creating continually customers satisfactions reflects the company success. Increasingly, being value for money are over demanded by customers in terms of both the price/quality ratio and the product's actual quality or service provided. To guarantee market success, forcing is now applied to all types of hospitality organizations to stand back and take a long look hardly at the way of currently running the business by themselves.

Martin O'Neill (2001) found that as an effort to be success sustainable of competitive advantage, heavily investigation in a host of service quality improvement initiatives is now applied to hospitality organizations. The pattern of the majority of these initiatives illustrated by the British Standards Institute, the European Quality Award, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the Edward Deming Prize, or derivatives thereof. Furthermore, heavily investigation in rising quality standards through human resource development has been used for the hospitality industry. The initiatives refer to the Investors in People Award, the Welcome Host Initiative, and various vocational qualification schemes.

Oliver (1997) suggests that making organization friendlier to customers for these initiatives can refer to belonging to the total quality management movement, supporting organizational strategies and changes. In this context, "customer satisfaction is thought to be a natural outgrowth of optimal organizational design, and of instilling the appropriate organizational culture, personnel training and customer responsiveness within employee ranks. In short, it is believed that the attainment of satisfaction will be enhanced if these practices are followed"

"Customers have many different perceptions which are influenced by their education, up-bringing, experience and many other factors." (Van Der Wagen, 1994, p.4). Being professionals in hospitality which future depends on the customers' perception of actual service delivery, it is necessary for striving to gain an understanding of the customers' visions of service providers' performance. (Martin O'Neill, 2001)

"The idea is to stay ahead of the customer, to anticipate his or her needs ... so that when he or she articulates the need you have already planned for it and are ready (ahead of

the competition) to meet it.” (Bank, 1992, p.14). Martin O’Neill (2001) suggests that there is not any doubt in process for knowledge of customer perceptions’ service receiving.

Martin O’Neill (2001) concludes that it is simply stated “today’s hospitality professional must consider the measurement of service quality an integral part of any quality improvement exercise.”

## **2.4 Strategies**

### **2.4.1 Dynamic theory of strategy**

The central question in strategy could be what the reason is for leading companies to success or failure. Other questions, such as why companies differ, how they behave, how they choose strategies, and how they are managed, are inextricably encompassed by the causes of company success or failure. To understand success, highlighting theory of the firm and an associated theory of strategy is a must. Traditional answer of the strategy field, which offers the reason why companies succeed or fail, based on a set of largely implicit. While the nature of companies and the environment in which they operate are crucial assumptions. The importance of the distinction between industry structure and relative position can be explained that strategies, which will improve company while harming the other, can be chosen among other things. Moreover, for the origins of competitive advantage, the capabilities and likely behavior of competitive can determine the best strategy for company. At last, a sophisticated understanding of industry structure creates strategy for company (Porter, 1991).

### **2.4.2 Global strategies**

Regarding to global service in international hotel industry, providing clean and safe accommodations are needed while flexibility is also important in term of physical facilities in individual hotels accorded to local managers. Moreover, standardized policies were pursued by the leading franchised group more than the other brands. The consistency and the predictability are things which customers are looking for in a brand. Brand makes it recognizable as well.

In terms of service standards (rather than physical amenities), achieving standardization is what the hotels are seeking. The hotel executives pointed out that to maintain a consistent level of service was needed which method in place for each chain hotels would be applied to ensure for meeting standards.

In terms of information system, expectation of international chains hotels is making significant use of common global systems. For example, guest preferences can be stored by one hotel, which can be accessed by other hotels in the chain (Whitla et al., 2007)

### **2.4.3 Quality strategy**

According to quality-oriented strategies and strategic control system, there was an example as the U.S. Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The companies were required to develop a process for deploying and monitoring strategic quality plans (Department of Commerce, 1994). Starting the strategic quality implementation process was the translation of strategies and planning specific requirements and objectives for units of work. Three requirements were highlighted by the Baldrige criteria for effective monitoring of the strategic quality deployment process. The requirements consisted of following;

- Supplementing financial measure with non-financial indicators, which focused specifically on customer requirements, customer satisfaction and operational quality results.
- Performance relative of competitive benchmarks, which related to competitors or other industry leaders in order to establishing challenging while attainable targets and alert the organization to threats of competitive.
- Gathering of information was a must for identifying or anticipating of environmental changing, which may affect customer expectations, technological developments, changing customer segments or competitor actions. Therefore, the warning of potential threats, which may effect to the strategy plan of organization, must be provided (Ittner&Larcker, 1997).

### **2.4.4 Hotel Operational strategy**

Operational strategy literature has been contextualized in term of the hotel paradigms. Porter (1996) mentioned that operational Strategy is concerned with how the operation is organized to deliver to the right position. Operational strategy therefore focuses on issues of resources, processes, and people. Nowadays, is the plan for a long-term for a high degree of compatibility between these resources and the hotel's long-term corporate strategy (Slack & Lewis 2002).

#### **2.4.5 Hospitality competitive strategy in Phuket**

There are many licensed 5 star hotels in Phuket, present the diverse range of accommodation to suit the taste of arriving visitors in terms of elegance, class, quality service, and ambiance. As hotel competition in Phuket is high so using the operational strategy is one of the most important factors that lead the success of hotel managements in Phuket (Sriyam, 2010).

Zerenler et al. (2007) affirmed in order to stay competitive, the hotel should redefine the challenge of their basic strategies by rediscovering the sector they are in and creating something difference in their products and services. While, Porter (2008) mentioned that in order to be able to sell hotel products in a market of full competitor, one should have the capacity to meet the standard, demands, and expectations of the customers for instance; designing, the marketing trend and price, and promotion.

To conclusion, competitive strategy is became an important issue to obligate the differentiation occurred in customers 'demanding. Furthermore, hotel which can offer the products and services having new, unique, and different characteristics in the fastest way will be able to survive.

#### **2.4.6 Employee strategic**

It is a good reasons to consider investing in employee strategy, either fully or partially subsidized. Gagnon & Michael (2003); Hartline *et al.*, (2000). Explained that manpower is not the same task as other resource, it is because human is a live, critical, flexible but difficult to manage. While, Lam *et al.*, (2007) mentioned that human behavior is highly unpredictable, it differs not only from individual to individual but also the part of same individual at different points of time. However, Anderson (1989) suggested that "the main component of an organization or business is the human resources or 'People at work'. Human resources have been defined as, "the talents, skills, aptitudes, and creative abilities: whereas from the view point of the individual enterprise, they represent the total of the inherent abilities, acquired knowledge and skills as exemplified in the talents and aptitudes of its employees".

Nowadays, many hotel organization focus on human resources management in order to utilize the human resources so that it can be achieved very effectively and efficiently. It can be seen that many organization try to use this strategy in order to give better results. Furthermore, it also helps in achieving the objectives of Human Resources Management (HRM)

as well as, the Performance management includes activities to ensure that goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner.

#### **2.4.7 Green strategic**

Over the last decade year, many hotels businesses have increasingly changed, rapidly improved and adopted more and more on green strategies, in order to be a part of their operations. This is become a part of marketing declarations for the hotel to motivate customer to recognize (Millar & Baloglu, 2011).

Going green has become the important issue of the past several years and is continues to grow rapidly. The hotel industry is a large business sector, which means it plays a major role on positively contribution as well as changing the culture of environmental degradation in terms of the measure to reduce energy consumption (Fukey & Issac (2014). Many studies have indicated that the economic benefits of going green will provide various advantages in terms of gaining competitive advantage (being a leader in the sector, employee retention, recognition, customer loyalty, and increased the brand value).

It identified that the first green hotel launched by the intercontinental hotel group since year 2008. This was the world's first hotel with 100 percent ecologically-friendly. Their green features including: using of solar panels on rooftops, giving away nonperishable food to charities, wind power to generate electricity, furniture and fixtures made from recycled materials, rainwater harvesting system from the supply water in the toilets, and recycled glass windows, (Han *et al.*, 2010). Coming to our motherland Thailand, The Evason Phuket resort, which is certified by 'Green Leaf', this is one of the Eco label of green hotels and resorts. It demonstrated how environment-friendly upgrades made in older buildings can improve energy efficiency and reduce water use.

#### **2.4.8 Training Strategy**

Effective training is a necessity factor that helps employee able to develop the necessary skills in their position as well as improving the performance in the present jobs. As training helps improving new procedures. Noe & Peacock (2002) stated that employee training and development has become a major educational enterprise over the last three decades.

Armstrong (2001) stated that numerous organizational section suggest that people are the key for any successful business operation. It is becoming increasingly clear that no human

enterprise can succeed without properly skilled and knowledgeable human resource development professionals (Goldstein & Ford, 2002).

Employee development is critical for a short and long term of every business profit or non-profit (Noe & Peacock, 2002). Although the definitions of training strategy is broadly but the definition in the literature use as the term of human resource development (HRD), is rather than training and development (Slack & Lewis, 2002). It is mentioned as the changes in behavior that motivate the attainment of the goals and objectives of the organization.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative method was applied to this study to discover differences of chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket in terms of service quality and strategies in service quality. There were two main target groups which were chain hotels and resorts and non-chain hotels and resorts. This chapter explains the research methodology as following details;

- 3.1 Population
- 3.2 Sample and Sampling Method
- 3.3 Types of research
- 3.4 Research instruments
- 3.5 Data collection
- 3.6 Data analysis
- 3.7 Pretest Survey

#### **3.1 Target Population**

The research focuses on three departments included Front Office department, Food and Beverage department and Housekeeping department. The two target groups were described as following;

Group 1 : Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

Group 2 : Non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

#### **3.2 Sample and Sampling Method**

In order to explore qualitative answers, Purposive Sampling Method was applied to 7 chain hotels and resorts. Moreover, Convenience Sampling Method was applied to 5 non-chain hotels and resorts. Altogether, chain and non-chain hotels and resorts allowed the researcher had in-depth interview. The interviewees were managers and supervisors. In addition, existing strategies to maintain service quality were discussed during the interview.

### 3.3 Types of research

Qualitative method was used to explore answers all objectives for this study. In-depth interview was applied to a group of people who are at manager or supervisor level of Front office department, Food and Beverage department and Housekeeping department who monitor staff in each service parts and provide service directly to customers. Furthermore, one responsibility of the managers and supervisors is to maintain service quality for the departments.

### 3.4 Research instrument

In-depth interviews were conducted from manager and supervisor levels of operation department which were in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The main topics covered all dimensions of service quality and the strategies implement to maintain service qualities.

Parasuraman et al., (1985) created SERVQUAL dimension statements as following table;

Table 3.1 Original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements

Dimensions	Items	SERVQUAL Statement
Tangibles	1	The hotel / restaurant has modern looking equipment
	2	The physical facilities are visually appealing
	3	Employees are neat-appearing
	4	Materials associated with service are visually appealing
	5	Service is performed as promised
Reliability	6	Company shows interest to solve problems
	7	The service is performed right the first time
	8	Service is performed at the time promised
	9	There are no errors in the records
Responsiveness	10	Employees inform customers when service will be performed
	11	Employees give prompt service to customers
	12	Employees are willing to help customers
	13	Employees are never too busy to respond to requests

Table 3.1 Continued

Dimensions	Items	SERVQUAL Statement
Assurance	14	Behavior of employees to instill confidence in customers
	15	Customers feel safe in their transaction
	16	Employees are consistently courteous
	17	Employees have knowledge to answer customer's questions
Empathy	18	Restaurant gives individual attention
	19	Employees give personal attention to customers
	20	Restaurant understands specific needs of customers
	21	Restaurant has customer's interest at heart
	22	Operating hours are convenient to all customers

### 3.5 Data collection

The qualitative method was applied to this study to collect the data by using in-depth interview which was conducted during November 2017 until May 2018 from managers and supervisors, who have been in the positions at least 1 year. The interview was held upon the interviewees' convenience. It took approximately 60 minutes to achieve the interview checklist. Likewise, the questions were sent to the interviewees via email before the actual interview.

### 3.6 Data analysis

The open-ended interview questions revealed the findings of the research. Content analysis was applied as the method which enabled the researcher to examine the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts as well as strategies implemented to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.

### 3.7 Pretest of Survey Instrument

The necessary of interview questions is validity and understanding. Therefore, the interview checklist was modified after five interviews were conducted. Moreover, ranking of importance of service quality dimensions allowed the researcher to get more data

concerned about strategies in terms of servicequalities. In short, the interview questions were adjusted and corrected as suggestions, comments and feedbacks in order to make them suitable and appropriate for the research.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

In this chapter, the in-depth interviews with the selected key informants were applied to explore the main findings of primary data. The informants were related to Service Quality in hospitality in Chain and Non-Chain Hotel and Resort in Phuket. The interviews were conducted during the month of November 2017 to May 2018. Moreover, the pilot interview was conducted to ensure the respondents understood the questions which concerned to the accuracy of answer before conducting the in-depth interview.

The purpose of this study is to identify the differences of service quality and to compare strategies implement to service quality in Chain and Non-Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Taking the content analysis was applied to the results in order to response the major objectives as following;

1. To identify the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket
2. To compare strategies implement to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

#### 4.1 Profile of the informants

The purposive sampling technique was applied to the informants via obtaining in-depth interview with twenty of key informants which concerned to provide and monitor services to customers whom at least had 1-year experience in the position. There were two major related informants which including informants in chain hotels and resorts in Phuket and informants in non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. After the 20<sup>th</sup> interview, the findings were all similar which indicated the saturation point of the data had reached. Therefore, there was no further interview. Table 4.1 presented the summary of key informants as following;

Table 4.1 Summary of Key Informants Profile

key Informants	Designation / Position	No. of Informants
Chain Hotels and Resorts	Manager	5
	Supervisor	6
Non-Chain Hotels and Resorts	Manager	3
	Supervisor	6

## 4.2 Main Findings

Regarding to the interview, the informants were asked through each dimensions of service quality which based on the SERVQUAL Dimensions (Parasurama et al., 1988) from the literature review, and it was described as following;

**1. Tangibility** - Elements that can be observed physically: The aesthetics of physical facilities, tools, employees, and communications items.

**2. Reliability** - The capacity to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately. This dimension includes meeting promises pertaining to delivery, pricing, and complaint handling.

**3. Responsiveness** - The willingness to assist customers in a prompt manner. This dimension advocates positive service attitudes and requires personnel to pay attention to customer requests, questions, and complaints.

**4. Assurance** - The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence.

**5. Empathy** - The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers.

The interviewees responded though the SERVQUAL Dimensions as summarized below:

Table 4.2 Summary of key findings on the Chain Hotels and Resorts in Phuket

<b>Key Informants</b>	<b>Tangibles</b>	<b>Reliability</b>	<b>Responsiveness</b>	<b>Assurance</b>	<b>Empathy</b>
Chain Hotels and Resorts	First priority	No mistake during serving services	Being professional on duty	Important	Customers' conditions
	Keeping promises	Standard Operating Procedure	Willing to help customers	Knowledge and Skills	Customers' preferences
	Good Facilities	Standard is a MUST.	Rotation job tasks in case of unstable emotion	Product Knowledge of hotels and resorts	Providing things or service to customers without asking
	Good condition of guest's rooms		Taking leave if necessary	Gaining more knowledge and skills once start working	Convenient services hours
			Team supporting	Training by Brand standard	24 hours services

Table 4.3 Summary of key findings on the Non-Chain Hotels and Resorts in Phuket

Key Informants	Tangibles	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy
Non-Chain Hotels and Resorts	Good Facilities	Standard is a guideline.	Willing to help customers	Important	Customers' conditions
	Keeping promises	Standard Operating Procedure could be adjusted depending on customers' conditions.	Rotation job tasks in case of unstable emotion	Knowledge and Skills were not the core of service quality.	Customers' preferences
		Flexible service processes	Taking leave if necessary	Attitude was more important than knowledge and skills.	Go beyond customers' expectations.
			Team work	Gaining more knowledge and skills could be fulfilled once start working.	24 hours services
			Team supporting	Training	



### 4.3 Service Quality in Chain Hotels and Resort in Phuket.

#### 4.3.1 Tangibles

95 percent of chain hotels and resorts pointed out that the tangibles dimension is “very important” especially “keeping promises”. Regarding to original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements by Parasuraman et al., (1985), “Service is performed as promised” was mentioned as one statement of tangibles dimension. “Keeping promises” was significant described as the first priority by informants who worked for chain hotels and resorts. In addition, keeping promises was the highest level of focusing in this dimension among statements of tangibles.

*“Keeping promises is very important for us because it’s what our hotel is. The customers come with the expectations of receiving what we have promised by our reputation”.*

*“Keeping promises is the first priority. No matter what, we put it as the first priority”.*

*“Once hotels promised anything to customers, is a MUST to keep that promise”.*

*“Best service is the winner. Services make hotels different because any investors can build up hotels with good facilities in good location. The image of the brand and reputation is the promises, which the hotel must keep those promises for customers”.*

*“Keeping promise is the main key to gain trust from customers, and it can create the first impression. For example, the hotel informs customers that checking in time will be at 15:00 hrs., but if the hotel could not make it on time. It could make customers disappoint and negative attitude towards the whole part of the hotel especially the Japanese customers who seriously strict with being on time”.*

*“New hotels are increasing nowadays, so there are many choices for customers, but for staying in hotels, service is the most expecting thing from customers.”*

*“Customers can make decisions through brand of hotels and resorts as being a chain hotel carrying the promises for customers including good service standard, good condition of guest’s rooms, good and clean facility and cleanliness of the hotel especially customers who used to stay in a hotel or a resort in that brand before. Even though, they stayed in*

*different properties, but they expected the chain hotels and resorts to keep the promises of the brand”.*

*“Being staff in the hotel as servers, we will never let customers down by breaking the hotel promises”.*

The chain hotels and resorts also revealed that 95 percent of keeping promises were completed from all hotels and resorts promises. Furthermore, the informants explained that 5 percent of promises which could not be kept depending on hotels and resorts’ conditions, lacking of manpower and communication breakdown between staff and customers or staff and staff.

*“Sometimes, we can’t keep our promise. For the significant example, our hotel informs customers for checking in time is 14:00 hrs., but once the customers come to check in, the hotel can’t offer the room in time. Most of this situation would happen in high and peak season which create a number of “Back to Back”. “Back to Back” means the room that the previous guests will check out and there’ll be new guests come to check in in that room in the same day”.*

*“In January 2018 until March 2018, we hired 7 temporary staff as housekeepers. It helped us to complete the housekeeping job task including clean room for checking out guests to be ready for new checking in guests by 14:00 hrs. But there were 20 percent of checking in rooms, which were not ready by 14:00 hrs. especially in the day which there were staff took sick leave. It effected to the man power which made it tighter to manage”.*

*“Setting up a fruit plate in checking in room before guest arrival is the hotel’s standard, and Food and Beverage department is assigned to complete this standard. Once we are informed that the checking in room is clean by housekeeping department, F & B staff will go to that room for setting up a fruit plate. But in the high season, the number of checking in room is increasing while we still have the exactly number of staff. That’s why F&B team can’t set up the fruit plate for checking in room in time. It would be better if we could have more staff during any months with very high occupancy”.*

*“We have free shuttle bus from our resort to the beach for guests, we offer 2 rounds a day, and guests have to register at the front desk to confirm number of passengers one day in advance as limited seats. But sometimes there are guests more than the shuttle’s seats in*

*each round. Unfortunately, we can't offer more shuttle bus. It's our resort's limitation. Then, the best we can do is to offer help for booking a taxi if the guests want and willing to pay by themselves".*

*"One of our signature is our sunset rooftop bar. This signature is like one of our promise. Every guests come to our hotel with expecting to take a photo at our stunning rooftop bar, and we love to help them take photo up there as much as they want to make them happy with our hotel with unforgettable vacation. But some guests come to check in after the sunset and check out in the next morning which our sunset rooftop bar hasn't open yet. That makes some guests unhappy as they expected to take gorgeous photos up there but they couldn't. I think that could be one promise which we can't keep for all customers as our hotel's condition".*

*"Communication breakdown is one reason which our resort can't keep the promise in guest's perception. It happens sometimes between staff and customers during booking confirmation. Last week, I checked in guests when I informed them the villa number they got surprise. They said that they've already talked to reservation staff when they made a booking in exactly villa number. Then, I double checked with the reservation staff. The reservation staff explained that the guests requested for exactly villa number, but the staff's already informed them that we cannot confirm the villa number, but we might offer them if that villa number's available. Also, it was written in the document of booking confirmation which the reservation team 's already sent it to the guests via email. After that, I explained to the guest, but they get a little bit angry at our resort. They said that "Your resort promised me that I'd have that exactly villa number". After the guests was calm down for a while, I escorted them to the villa which our resort prepared for them if they could change their mind to stay in the prepared one. Finally, they agreed to stay in the prepared villa. This issue could be one promise that our resort can't keep for guests".*

*"Sometimes, communication breakdown between staff and staff could be reason that we can't keep promise to customers. For Muslim guests who come from the Middle East, once they made a booking, they requested the hotel to remove all alcohol from minibar in their room before their arrival. But somehow, housekeeping didn't receive that information. So, they didn't remove alcohol drinks from the minibar. Once the guests checked in they complained*

*about it, and it made them were unhappy. In my opinion, that was one of the reason why we can't keep promises for 100 percent".*

Relating to others statements of tangibles of the original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements as "The hotel / restaurant has modern looking equipment", "The physical facilities are visually appealing", facilities were mentioned by informants as important for dimension of tangibles in service quality. The informants revealed that good conditions of accommodation including clean and modern facilities could complete the customers' expectations.

*"Facilities in hotels are important as they're supposed to meet customers' expectations. The customers always expected facilities in hotels and resorts to be clean, modern beautiful".*

*"Customers expected clean and modern facilities from staying in a hotel. Guests' rooms must be clean and comfortable for resting. Those are what they pay for."*

*"One of the important factor for customers to choose a hotel is to experience good and modern facilities. Our resort provides private pool and Jacuzzi with Seaview for our guests which they could not have it from other hotels or resorts".*

*"No need for guests to stay with our hotel if our facilities don't be extraordinary for them. The hotel has swimming pool with small water park area for children which our main customers target is family. The parents prefer their children to enjoy our small water park area while they're relaxing by the pool than let their children to get in the sea during monsoon season with red flags are put on the beach as warning "DO NOT SWIM" by the government organization.*

*"We have the spectacular beach club as modern designed swimming pool and stylized sun bed area which blended with the pre-existing local tree. Famous DJs from around the world come to play their music for our guests while they're chilling at the swimming pool area with soul fulfilled cocktails. 90 percent of our guests come to stay in our resort is for getting new experiences and superb service as our reputation. We really sure that we're going to be the best beach club and entertainment complex spot for this area even though there're many luxury hotels in this area".*

### 4.3.2 Reliability

In term of “Reliability” dimension, it referred to ability of performing the dependably and accurately service by the service provider ( Parsuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988, P. 23). There were two main finding in this dimension which consisted of providing the right service without mistakes and completing standard operating procedure (SOP). The informants from Chain hotels and resorts explained that as service providers, the service has to performed in the right way for customers. The service providers will not create any mistake during offering service.

*“Being staff, we have to provide right service to customers which the services are supposed to be. Let’s say we were customers, and we’ve paid for air ticket, visa fee, transportation and how much we’d pay for the room rate. We have been waiting for this vacation. All’s not just come here to received wrong services or bad services. It should be the best vacation ever. Therefore, providing the right service is important for staff”.*

*“Working in a main dining restaurant in this hotel is challenging. The dinner could become both as the good dinner and the great dinner because of wine. Our recommendations for a bottle of wine can fulfil the guests’ dinner, and the recommendations have to base on the right matching between food and wine. Different type of wine can offer different results depending on kind of food. Even though, we serve the best dish in our restaurant, but if we recommend the wrong type of wine. It can decrease tasted and value of our best dish”.*

*“Offering wrong service even one time, it can destroy the trust from guests especially the guests who just arrived the hotel. “What would happen next? If staff give me the wrong service since the first day I arrived”. The guests may say that or they could be polite not to say it out loud, but they would feel unsecure with our service for sure. That’s why providing the right service is necessary”.*

*“I must be sure that new staff will service customers in the right way before allowing them to service the guests. I cannot let the new staff create mistake during serving the guests. It may create negative comments which effect the whole team of F & B department. No matter I assign a supervisor to service them, they would not 100 percent trust in our service. The guest would feel insecure because they ‘ve already received bad experience from our staff. Therefore, when we serve the service to the guests, we need to serve it in the right way”.*

Furthermore, standard operating procedure was significant mentioned by all informants from chain hotels and resorts. SOP stands for “Standard Operating Procedure”, which was described as the standard process for providing service, and staff has to follow the standards. Completing standard is a necessary. The chain hotels and resorts pointed out that to offer right service to customers; staff had to follow the brand standard. The brand standard of chain hotels and resorts creates identity of each brand. Customers may stay in different properties of one chain hotel or resort, but they expected to receive the same service standard.

In addition, the informants explained that the chain hotels and resorts had standard examiners for each brand including internal and external. Internal standard examiners could be head of departments in the property of the chain hotels and resorts. Those managers were assigned to check standard of service including facilities and actual services from staff. The internal standard examiners also were called MOD, which stands for “Manager On Duty”. Not only to check the standard of chain hotels and resorts, but also to be in charge instead of General Manager during the night time. External standard examiners could be any customers who stay in the chain hotels and resorts. The staff was not able to identify the external standard examiners among all customers. The external standard examiners were also called “Mystery Customers”. After checking out, the Mystery customers must report the results of the standard exam to the main part of the brand. Then, the property would receive the results from the main office of the brand. In case of completing brand standard, the property would receive compliment. But in case of there was any brand standard which could not completed, the property had to improve to meet the brand standard.

*“First of all, we need to start with the hotel standard. We have to follow our process to service customers. For me, I work in Front Office department, no matter what I have to offer welcome drinks and cold towels to guests who checking in to make them relax during their arrival”.*

*“The hotel has SOP especially in operation departments. SOP is a MUST. The hotel requires staff to completed the standard which controlled by our brand. That is our brand standard”.*

*“I have to take a call within 3 rings as front office team because it’s our SOP. Once we all are busy, but we have to support one another to take the call within 3 rings. We*

*never know that call would be MOD or general manager or not, which make a call to check our service standard. Also, if I need to transfer the line to other department, I have to make sure that the guest must hear the music on hold because it's the hotel standard. Every day I have to make a call by myself to check if there's music on hold or not when I start my working shift".*

*"As supervisor, one of my duty is to ensure that all job tasks are completed in my shift. There's a job tasks checklist for each shift. Staff must complete those tasks, and I have to check if they complete all job tasks. It's our SOP which is really support us to complete the service".*

*"The standard is a MUST. Providing the same service standard is very important for our resort. All we need is to meet customers' expectation. Many customers used to stay with our brand in different property before, and they would expect the same service standard from our property. At the beginning of this property, all operation staff was transfer from the original resort in different location of our brand to make sure that this property will provide exactly the same service standard as the original one. And, the staff who was transferred from the original resort can groom new staff to meet the resort's standard which is very important".*

*"One of the global brand standards of my hotel is greeting customers. There is exactly the same pattern of saying for every chain hotels of our brand. Staff must have eye contact when we are distant from customers for 15 steps length, and staff must smile and greet customers once we are distant from customers for 5 steps length. The brand will always send mystery customers to check our standard. They are external standard examiners, but we have no idea who would be one of them. They can be any customers. Having examiners from the brand is keeping the hotel's staff complete standard all times. We never know when we could service the mystery customers".*

*"There was an internal examiner who came from the main office of our hotel brand. He put a few screws in his bed before leaving his room for dinner, and it was time for turn down service. He tested us if our housekeeper who set the turn down service would really complete the standard or not. If not, our housekeeper would never found the screws, which might hurt him.*

*"Once I was assigned to be MOD, I have to stay overnight in one villa of the resort. I have to check the standard set up facilities in the villa including mini bar, bath*

*amenities, emergency flashlight and cleanliness of the villa due to the villa I stay it is one of our villa the guests will stay”*

### **4.3.3 Responsiveness**

In term of “Responsiveness” dimension, every informant from chain hotels and resorts mentioned “willing to help” during interviews. Willing to help customers was focused once the interview concerned to responsiveness dimension. It was common part of the interview and one statement of the original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements by Parasuraman et al., (1985) which was “Employees are willing to help customers”. Staff was expected to be professional once they were on duty, which including being willing to help customers all times. One informant revealed that in the chain hotel, there would be a reviewer team, who worked in Human Resources department, responded to review comments and feedback from trip advisor website. The reviewer team was assigned to seek for staff’s name which was mentioned as complement by customers on the trip advisor website. Therefore, Human Resources department offered recognition certificate to any staff whom received complement by customers on trip advisor website once a month. Likewise, there were other informants pointed out that the chain hotels and resorts considered comments and feedback from customers on trip advisor website as important.

*“Staff must always be willing to help customers as service providers. It’s what we do here. For the hospitality industry, willing to help is important. Customers always know that staff service sincerely or not during getting service. It’s something that you can’t fake. The customers would feel it anyway. That becomes the reason for the service providers to be willing to help customers all times once they are working”.*

*“The hotel expects all staff to perform as professional once they are on duty. In the service part, staff are supposed to be willing to help customers. You must be ready to work once you are on floor. This is how we service our guests”.*

*“All of us need to work by heart which means all of us have service mind. We’re willing to assist customers no matter small issue or huge issue. I remember, we had Korean honeymooners last month. They traveled by themselves, but not really speak English while we don’t speak Korean. Every time they showed up at the front desk, we always helped them to communicate by using google translate even though it took time to complete the whole*



*conversation, but we really loved to help them. All we wanted was to made them happy during they stayed with us because they chose our hotel for their special time which they could remember it for good”.*

*“There was a couple of guest had trouble during their stay. One of them had a serious illness. Then, our hotel provided transfer from the resort to the international hospital, and his wife, who was another guest, was going with him. The driver and I took them to the hospital, and she was worried about her husband all the way. During her husband was with a doctor, she seemed very worried and stressful. I was not sure if she was quite drunk at that time because she was drinking when the issue happened. Then, I talked to her to relief her stress, and I said “You can hug me if you really need someone now”. Suddenly, she hugged me and broke down in tears. I felt sorry for her. I was thinking if I were in her shoes which was so far away from home. They came this far to relax and create remarkable memory with her husband, but the bad thing happened. And she found herself alone to get through this issue. I just could not leave her alone at the hospital even though my working shift was over. I talk to my manager, and she allowed me to stay with the guests at the hospital. After 4 hours, everything was settled down. Then, I left the hospital”.*

*“HR team always checks Trip advisor, and they ‘ll looking for staff’s name mentioned by customers. The guests write comments and feedback of our hotel and our service on Trip advisor. It’s called “GUESTS’ VOICE”. If any staff get complement with name mentioned on Trip advisor by the guests, they will receive recognition certificate from HR. This happens once a month, and it is our good support to keep us work happily and always want to do our best”.*

*“Trip advisor is very important for our service part. There is a big board, which is put in front of our canteen, showing comments and feedback written on Trip advisor from our guests, and all staff can read it. It can become a huge issue for our hotel if we have negative comments or feedback about our service which is written on Trip advisor by our guests”.*

*“Front Office team will always approach customers after breakfast because the guests will come to ask for internal transfer from our outlet back to their villas, and it will be our chance to get feedback of our service and their satisfactions during stay. There were our*

*guests who wrote feedback to our resort on Trip adviser as “The villa was spectacular, but staff were something more than spectacular”. Every complement from the guests is special gift for us. No matter how tough it could be in that day, but if we get the complement sincerely from the guests, we could get through anything”.*

According to statement of “Employees are willing to help customers” from the original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements by Parasuraman et al., (1985). The chain hotels and resorts expect their staff to be professional for performance service once they are on duty. In case of staff are not ready to work due to unstable emotions, taking leave is allowed from supervisors or managers for staff, who are not ready to work as unstable emotions. Negative issue may cause unstable emotions for example staff are informed that their parents are in serious sickness before starting the working shift. Moreover, job tasks rotation can be applied to the team in case of some staff is in unstable emotions. Both of taking leave and job tasks rotation need support from all team members, and it makes team player skill is important. They always support one another to solve unexpected issues in order to perform best service for customers.

*“I would like to share an unstable emotion case of my team. My manager is Japanese, but he has been living in Thailand more than 10 years. He knows and understands Thai people very well. One day, one of my team members came to work with terrible sad emotion. We asked her what happened, and she told us that she just broke up with her boyfriend the night before. Then, we informed the manager. After talking to her, our manager let her took leave to recover her emotion. And she returned to work in the following day with better emotion, which supported her to be professional at work”.*

*“In the restaurant, man power is important for our service. I would talk to staff first and evaluate him or her if they are ready to work as normal or not. If they are not ready to work as normal, but they still can work in the different job tasks. I would swop them into the job task which less direct contact to customers or I would swop them into the back office. However, in case of staff cannot work properly even though in the back office, I would let them take leave in one condition, which is understanding of the team members”.*

*“As a manager, I prefer to allow staff who are not ready to work as unstable emotions to take leave rather than keep them stay to work. It may create bad atmosphere in the workplace, which can effect other colleges, and it may create bad value to customers once*

*they have to service the guests. We may lose man power which make our team facing difficult working shift, but I'm really sure that it will be better than keep them stay, which is forcing them to ruin environment of the team and provide bad service".*

*"My staff used to face the unstable emotion issue, and it made her could work in that day. I talked to her and let her take leave. I told her that "No need to tell me now when you will be back. Take your time and let me know tomorrow when you'll be back. But I expect you to be professional once you return to work, and you must perform service as the same when you are back on duty".*

#### **4.3.4 Assurance**

According to the definitions of the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al., (1988) in literature review, which defined "Assurance" dimension as the knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence. "Assurance" dimension was considered as "important" from the informants of chain hotels and resorts. The informants described "Knowledge and skills" as the foundation of service including product knowledge of the hotels and resorts and essential knowledge and skill of job tasks. The informants explained that knowledge and skill could be fulfilled once start working.

Hence, training was a key success for gaining knowledge and skills, which was provided by training section of Human Resources department and operation departments. Training team, who work in Human Resources department, responds training by brand standard including product knowledge of brand and hotel. It started since orientation was held for new staff because the first start of working in the chain hotels and resorts was staff orientation, and it might took 1 to 7 days depending to each brand in order to introduce the brand culture and the brand standard to new staff. Then, the new staff would become staff of the brand.

In addition, operation departments provided training within departments for staff. The internal training of operation departments was known as "OJT", which stand for "On The Job Training". The manager of each operation department could be the trainer or supervisors could be assigned to be the trainers for the training courses. The on the job training could be held at least for 1 hour for each training course depending on department availability, and the manager could allow staff to involve on the job training of different department if the training course was concerned to their job tasks. For example, Front Office manager could allow staff to involve

showing villa's facilities upon guest arrival training of Housekeeping department. Plus, Housekeeping manager could allow Butlers to involve Special Promotion for Valentines training by Spa department in order to offer information about spa and treatments for customers. However, both training by Human Resources department and by each operation department were controlled by brand standard, which differently depending on the chain of hotels and resorts.

*“If we have product knowledge, it can help us to flow the job smoothly. Being staff without the hotel's product knowledge, we can't offer any information for customers”.*

*“To gain hotel's product knowledge, I have to walk around the hotel to learn product knowledge, which can help me to provide better service. Actually, I have joined the hotel's orientation when I started to work here. That was the first start for every new staff, which took care by HR department, and it took 7 days. It was the best orientation I've ever joined compared to other hotels and resorts I used to work for. It helped me to know and understand the brand as what we are and who we are”.*

*“Not only the hotel's product knowledge that staff must have, but staff must have knowledge and skills in job tasks also. Knowledge and skills are required from anyone who would work as staff unless they would not pass the interview process of recruitment. I admit that knowledge and skills can be fulfilled once staff start to work. But before becoming staff in my team, you must have necessary knowledge and skills in the job tasks. I cannot allow anyone to be a staff in the Front Office department if they never experience job in Front Office before. I expected the ones who used to work in this position at least 1 year because they've already gain necessary knowledge and skills in Front Office. Those could be the ones who could be fulfilled knowledge and skills as staff of our hotel”.*

*“Knowledge and skills are important because good service reflects good knowledge of staff. Also, knowledge should be provided with service mind. In our team, we always share knowledge and skills among our team members to help one another to develop ourselves. Training and retraining is one in our things to do lists, we always do it at once a week. For my hotel, there was a policy, which indicates that the hotel's staff has to complete 50 hours training per year. HR will keep record of staff's training hour, and that is one of our brand standard”.*

*“The hotel’s brand standard controls staff for training, and 48 hours training must be completed by each staff per year. Supervisors are assigned to evaluate the brand standard of new staff, the manager gives staff knowledge, and the manager is the one who evaluate them and the brand standard in the department”.*

*“I really enjoy OJT. It helps me a lot for improving knowledge and skills of staff in my team. There are 30 % of new staff in my team, who need to be fulfilled by knowledge and skills even though they’d have basic knowledge and skills. The OJT also helps me to retrain some job tasks, which we don’t use it often. It can make all staff recognize the knowledge and skill they may already forgot”.*

*“There is a key person for OJT in every department in the resort, and the key person is supposed to be in supervisor level. I am the key person for Front Office department, and I have to complete at least 4 on the job training courses for staff in my department. There will be a meeting once a month for the key persons from every department in order to update the plan and the completed results of each department. It’s our brand standard”.*

*“I assigned the Housekeeping manager to send butlers to join OJT of Spa in Promotion for Valentines training. After the butlers received training for that course, they could offer information of our spa to the guests, as they were the closet staff to the guests, compared to other staff in the hotel”.*

#### **4.3.5 Empathy**

Relating to literature review in chapter 2, Parasuraman et al., (1988) stated the definition of “Empathy” dimension from the SEVQUAL dimensions that “The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers”. The main finding from the in-depth interview with supervisors and managers, who work in the chain hotels and resorts, was service hours, which were convenient for customers. It concerned to one statement of Empathy dimension, which was “Operating hours are convenient to all customers”. (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

The informants stated about 24 hours service which were provided by the hotel and resorts. As the results, there were common 24 hours services in all the chain hotels and resorts as following; security, Front Office, Housekeeping.

Besides, the informants also added explanation about individual attention to customers, which referred to customers' condition and customers' preferences. In hotel industry, service is one main expectation part from customers. Paying individual attention to customers' conditions is one way to meet their expectations. Some customers have health conditions such as gluten free, asthma or physical difficulty. Once staff pay individual to the customers' conditions, staff can offer service properly for those who have special conditions. Knowing customers' preferences can be beneficial for staff during service, and it can create customers' satisfaction. Staff can create impression of customers by offering their preferences.

*Security service is 24 hours service in the hotel, and our duty is to secure all part of the property including customers and staff”.*

*“Our security team works for 24 hours, and they very strict to the safety standard. Supervisor always give briefing the hotel’s updated information which concerned to work of security guards in the beginning of every work shift. Also, the manager of security department always attends morning brief among every head of departments with GM every day to update the hotel’s information in order to have the same big picture with all head of departments”.*

*“Having 24 hours security service is very important service which secures the hotel, and it makes customers feel safe when they stay with us. As our resort consists of many villas in 32 acer landscape, having security guards in proper spots, which cover all area, can gain trust from the guests to feel safe while they are relaxing in their villas”.*

*“I used to open the safety box for guests in their room at the night time, and I had to go to their room with a security guard as it was our standard. The thing started because a child of the guests put something inside and locked it, but she didn’t do it on purpose. It was her important thing, which was locked in the safety box, and she started to cry. The parents then called to the Front desk to ask us to open it for them. Due to our standard, in case of opening the safety box for the guests, one security guard and the guests must be witnesses in the scene. Once I opened the safety box, it turned out to be a bunny doll. Suddenly, the girl stopped crying. The parents told us that she couldn’t go to bed without her bunny. That’s why they couldn’t wait until the next morning”.*

*“Front desk is always ready to service customers 24 hours, and we provide staff around the clock to take care the guests. Some guests come to check in very late due to their international flights, and our Front Office department can service them properly. In case that there would be a group of Chinese customers come to check in in the early morning like 03:30 am. or 04.30 am., I would assign at least one staff who can speak Chinese to ensure that all check in processes are completed smoothly. The guests would receive essential information properly as well”.*

*“We don’t have Room Service for 24 hours, but we do have Front Office staff to service for 24 hours. The Front Office staff are allowed to have a key of the food cooler, which belongs to Food and Beverage department, and it contains variety of sandwich. That means the guests can have some sandwich in the late night while it not an operating time of the restaurants and room service”.*

*“While other operation departments are closed, Front Office department still stand by to service customers all times which is 24 hours. The guests could call us any time to get information or get help. One of our guests went to Patong beach, and he couldn’t talk to a taxi driver in Thai to come back to the resort at 4 am. in the early morning. Then, he called us and asked us to talk to the taxi driver. 40 minutes later, he arrived the resorts safely and said thank you to us when he got off the taxi at the Front Office area”.*

*“One night around 11 pm. when I was working at the front desk, I got a call from in house guests, and she asked us to clean her room because her little son threw potato chips all over her room instead of eating it. Then, I informed Housekeeping team, and they took care of it”.*

*“During the night, the guests may ask for anything to send to their villas. Some asked for more pillows, and some asked for more blankets. But some asked the housekeeper to set up the Jacuzzi, and we were willing to service them”.*

#### **4.4 Service Quality in Non-Chain Hotels and Resort in Phuket.**

##### **4.4.1 Tangibles**

100 percent of the informants from non-chain hotels and resorts pointed out that the tangibles dimension is “very important” especially “keeping promises”. It was considered as

the first priority. Relating to original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements by Parasuraman et al., (1985), “Service is performed as promised” was mentioned as one statement of tangibles dimension. “Keeping promises” was significant stated by the informants. Moreover, keeping promises was the highest level of focusing in this dimension among statements of tangibles.

*“Guests come to the resort because they would like to relax. Most of our customers come across the world for staying in our resort. Every moment is for relaxing expecting by the guests since they’ve stepped into our resort. Facilities are very important as we are on the island. There’s no other facilities on this island. Most of the time, the guests would stay and use facilities in the resort except enjoying the beach”.*

*“We welcome many Scandinavian guests, who have flown with long flight, every year. They would stay with us at least 2 weeks. That’s why the facilities of the resorts are very important. We have several restaurants in our resorts, which different kind of food would be serve there. The guests could have different atmosphere with different good food for dinner. And our spa is one of popular facilities for the guests. We really love it when the guests ask information about our spa, which allowed us to offer them our great facilities. I can tell that our spa is the best spa on the island”.*

*“We have the swimming pool with good service of staff, and we have the beach front restaurant, which it’s just a few steps from the beach. Our guests can enjoy cocktails at our Seaview bar. Plus, if the guests would like to have sun bath, they can enjoy it with the resorts’ sun beds, which were set in our property next to the beach in order to avoid crowded tourists on the beach. Chilling with our sun beds, which are only 1 meter away from the beach, can give exactly view of the beach just like laying down on the beach, but so much more convenient”.*

*“Staying in our resort is to have special time and experience extraordinary facilities. Our resort located in the ordinary area. Even though we are on the beach front, but this beach is not a good spot to enjoy the beach. It looks nice when it’s high tided, but it becomes a muddy beach when it’s low tided. Therefore, we offer our guests a private swimming pool or a private Jacuzzi in every single villa. Then, the guests can have value time by our facilities”.*

*“There are many hotels and resorts in the same level on this beach. It also gives customers many options to choose an accommodation. As an independent resort, we have to*



*make sure that our facilities will make our customers happy. We have to make sure that we have a chance to be the chosen one by customers, without the chain or global brands. Therefore, we have good facilities which can be competed with any chain hotels and resorts. We provide spa, black tiled swimming pool with children swimming pool, yoga classes, gym, tennis courts and water sports including beach games, beach volleyball, body board, paddle board, windsurfing, snorkeling, and we proud to say the last facilities for water sports is catamaran sailing”.*

*“Any promises the hotel has made for customers, the hotel must keep it. We informed our guests that check in time would be 2 pm. in the afternoon since the reservation team sent email to confirm their booking, then the hotel must prepare the room to be ready in time. Keeping promises is the first priority for us. If we can’t keep our promises to customers, they would be disappointed, which could make them not satisfy with our hotel, and they would never return to our hotel even though we would be the cheapest hotel in Phuket”.*

*“There were a couple of guests, who stay in our resort for their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. But only the husband remembered it, and he would like to surprise his wife. After talking to our staff, we informed him that we could set their villa as honeymoon set up and offered them a bottle of champagne in their living room while they were away for dinner. Also, he ordered a rose bouquet for his wife. After the dinner, the guests returned to their villa and found our staff with the rose bouquet. Next, they entered their villa, the husband told his wife that was their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She broke down in tear and suddenly hugged her husband witnessed by our staff, who took photos for them. The guests could not have unforgettable memory if we couldn’t keep the promises we’ve made for him”.*

*“I had a chance to take care a private candle light dinner in the guests’ villa. The male guest made a booking with informing our resort that he was going to propose his girlfriend, and he would discuss the details once he arrived. Of course, he asked all staff to keep it as a secret and said nothing about it to his girlfriend. He decided to propose her during the private candle light dinner, which he and I have already discussed. He asked me to put the ring into the plate instead of the main course, and we acted as normal before serving the main course. I was so happy once I heard the lady said “YES” and saw both of them happy. That could not happen if we can’t keep our promises to the customers”.*

#### 4.4.2 Reliability

According to literature review of “Reliability” dimension, it was described as ability of performing the dependably and accurately service by the service provider (Parsuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988, P. 23). The study found that the non-chain hotels and resorts have flexibility in service process. Furthermore, it referred to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) as guide lines. The informants explained that in non-chain hotels and resorts, the SOP could be adapted or adjusted depending on customers’ condition and situations. The one SOP could not be applied to all customers, and it could be adjusted to suit customers’ conditions and situations in order to complete service and create customers’ satisfactions.

*“We have more flexibility than the chain hotel because we are independent hotel. Service part can be flexible if needed, and it depends on customers’ conditions and situations. To make customers happy, we can be flexible for them. I used to work for the chain hotel which SOP is a must. One day, there was a problem with customers, I informed them that it was our SOP. He suddenly said “Are you a police? Come on this is a hotel!”. Anyway, we had to follow SOP, so we couldn’t allow what they asked for”.*

*“We have SOP as steps of our services, and we follow it. But in reality, SOP is not for every customer because some customers have different conditions. I would like to show you an example. One of our SOP for going to meet customers at the villa, staff have to make a call to the customers’ villas to let them know that the staff is going to the villa in 10 minutes. This SOP is useful for both sides, which includes customers and staff. But we used to have guests, who stayed with an infant. That made us not to follow that SOP because the ring of the phone in the villa would bother the infant, and the guests didn’t want that. The guests would always make a call herself to let us know once she needed our staff went to her villa, and it did work for the guests and for us to service her in her way”.*

*“Working at the front desk, it’s very important to have ID cards or passports of every guests during checking in. It’s our SOP due to the safety policy especially we are the resorts with private villas. But still, there were some cases, which we can’t follow that SOP. I used to handle some difficult guests travelling with family. After my staff informed them that it was our policy, they still denied to give us all ID cards, and they need to talk to the manager. Then, I had to adjust SOP into taking only 1 ID card as the main contact guest for the*

*family instead of taking ID cards of every guests. I needed to do it because the guests were furious at that time, and I didn't want thing to go wrong since arriving the resort. It could decrease the guests' satisfactions and create negative perceptions of the guests, which that were not what the resort want".*

*"Cold towels and cold drinking water must be prepared in the hotel's car, which is assigned to pick up the arrival guests from the international Phuket airport, and it's the SOP. But some guests ask for regular drinking water as they don't drink cold water, so I have to asked my manager to allow me to prepare the regular water along with cold water. In case that it happens, then I could provide the regular one to the guests".*

*"There were kayak service for our customers as self-paddle. The guests are required to book it in advance, and we're not allow to take the kayak to any island due to our SOP. But I cannot complete the mentioned SOP with three guests, who are sons of the owner of one resident in our property. They come here twice a year, and they've been coming here for last 5 years, which means they've grown up here. Now, they're like 20s something, and they love to take the kayak to nearby island, which are 2 kilometers away from our beach. They always do that every time they stay here. It was started since 2 years before. Our management team discussed this issue at that time and came up with the privilege only for these three guests".*

#### **4.4.3 Responsiveness**

"Responsiveness" dimension was defined as "The willingness to assist customers in a prompt manner. This dimension advocates positive service attitudes and requires personnel to pay attention to customer requests, questions, and complaints" by Parasuraman et al., (1988). The main finding of responsiveness dimension was "willing to help". 100 percent of the informants defined this dimension as "very important", and they all mentioned "Willing to help" as the main idea of this dimension". The informants explained that being willing to help customers was one important character of service providers. Staff could offer good service towards the attitude of being willing to help, and the service which came from this attitude would be sincere. Customers would receive service via staff's attitude, and the customers would create judgement for the service they actual received, which could be both way; positive and negative.

*"Being willing to help is very important. You can't work in service part without it. Once you were not willing to help customers, you can't hide it because it always comes out*

*from your face, your eye contact and your body language. It makes customers unhappy which we can't allow that to happen in our service”.*

*“It's very important to be willing to help if you would like to work in service part in a hotel. Service part referred to providing service to customers, and it need to be sincerely. Service is not something that you can fake. It's supposed to come from inside. It comes from your mind. Service job is not an easy job for anyone who don't have service mind and willing to help”.*

*“One thing that we can't teach anyone is being willing to help which is very important in hospitality industry. I can't teach anyone to be willing to help, and no one can teach me how to be willing to help. It's an attitude, and it's very important attitude for one who work in operation department which responds to serve direct service to customers”.*

*“Willing to help is one attitude I'm looking for in every candidates during interviews. One qualification I really need is being willing to help for anyone who could become my team member because I need team work. This positive attitude can help staff to become a good team member and solve problems easily”.*

Furthermore, the informants revealed that taking leave could happen in case of unstable emotions of staff if it was necessary. Regarding to the non-chain hotels and resorts expected their staff to be willing to assist customers all times, all staff are always willing to help during their duties. In contrast, there would be some difficult situations which effected to staff and made them cannot work properly due to unstable emotions. The informants pointed out that taking leave could be allowed by supervisors or managers if it was necessary for staff, who could not provide service properly as always. The managers and the supervisors would not force staff, who was not ready to work, to complete job tasks. But the managers and the supervisors would evaluate the staff if they could be able to work in other different job tasks. Then, the staff might be assigned to rotate themselves into the different job tasks, which there was less in contacting direct to customers such as document sections including auditing departure customers' bills for the following day, preparing documents for arrival customers for the following day and updating information of customers in house in the operation system.

*“One of my team member had a terrible argument with his wife before coming to work one day. He was so stress out, and he couldn't keep himself calm. I noticed that*

*during our briefing at the beginning of working shift. So, I talked to him after the briefing, and found that he couldn't work properly as a waiter in that day. I asked him if he could work in the back of the house as supporting steward team, and he agreed. It's better to let him work for some position without serve direct service to the guests. It's too risk, and something could go wrong if I sent someone with emotions to take care customers".*

*"Smiling with being willing to help is what customers always expect from the Front Office staff, but there was a staff who had a tough time when she came to work. She broke down in tears during the morning brief. Then, she explained that her dad was sent to a hospital last night, and she would go back home after work on that day. But it would take 7 hrs to get her home as her family didn't live in Phuket. We agreed to let her take leave immediately as we all understood her situations. I allowed her to leave right away. The other team members gave her hug before she left. They told her that "Don't worry! We got it". And they were willing to cover her job tasks for her. For me, it reflected that they did understand one another because we work as a team".*

Likewise, "Team work/ Working as a team" was mentioned by 100 percent of the informants as well. When it came to unstable emotion staff, who were not ready to work, all informant described that team work was very important for the staff who needed to take leave. Working as a team, it could support the whole team, which was the whole department. In case of this issue, the team could continue their work properly by supporting from every staff. It must come from understanding of all staff.

*"I can say that every single staff in my department have willing to help attitude because I interviewed them all, and I was very sure that they've had it. Then, I decided to let them join the team. As a small group of people who work in Front Office department, I needed everybody to help me to build up a team. Working as a team, we can work smoothly and we can solve any problem which could be problems of the guests or problems among ourselves".*

*"We work as a team, as a friends and as a family. We really care one another. Living on the island, your team becoming your family. We blended together, and we understand one another. That really support our work. We need a team player to join our team in order to complete job tasks smoothly. No matter there would be any situations, we can get it through together as a team.*

*“My team is very important for me, and they helped me to get through difficult time. One day, HR got a call from my son’s school. They told me that my son threw up a lot with high fever, and he was on the way to hospital. I was very stress out and worried like I never been before. My manager allowed me to leave even though it just was 1 hour after I started my shift. I remembered that I was assigned in the afternoon shift with more than 50% of arrival guests. Letting me to leave could make the team tough for work, but one of my team member offered herself to work overtime instead of me. They all agreed. I could not get it over without my team. Thank you them for being my team.”*

#### **4.4.4 Assurance**

The next dimension is “Assurance”, and it was defined in the definitions of the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al., (1988) as “The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence”. “Important” was the definition of “Assurance” dimension by the informants. Regarding to the interviews with supervisors and managers, who work for the non-chain hotels and resorts, the study found that the main idea of this dimension is knowledge and skills. The informants explained that the knowledge and skills in the job in term of service was important. Staff could complete service properly by having knowledge and skills in their job tasks.

Nevertheless, the informants revealed that even though knowledge and skills was important in service, but it was not the core of service. The necessary basic knowledge and skills was required from staff, who would start to work. However, the knowledge and skills could be fulfilled once the staff started working. They could learn new knowledge and gain more skills to be better service providers. Improving and developing themselves by gaining more knowledge and skills was possible. Learning by doing was applied to the staff in term of service.

*“Knowledge and skills are important. Of course, we can’t deny that fact. To work in any kind of jobs, knowledge and skills are always required. It helps us to do the jobs and to achieve the jobs. Not only to finish the job, but to achieve the jobs as well. It is one main important part in hospitality industry, and all staff need it. How could you work as the front desk without knowledge? No, you can’t. Just like we can’t bake a cake unless we know how to do it”.*

*“One of important foundation in service part is Knowledge. Once you have service mind, then you need knowledge to complete you to be ready as a staff in the service part.*

*It's important for me as a manager to choose new staff with essential knowledge to join our team. If I pick the one, who doesn't have any knowledge in our field, it would drag the team down. It could make us lose one man power in each shift to take care of him or her for giving knowledge instead of having one more man power."*

*"It'll be easy for you if you've already have basic knowledge. Then, you can gain more knowledge and more skills when you work. Even though the new staff used to work in the different hotel or resort before, they could relate their knowledge to our resort in service part. And the more they work the more knowledge and skills they get. Knowledge and skills can be fulfilled every day at work."*

*"I am willing to mentor new graduate staff, who have experience and knowledge in hospitality industry. Many chain hotels and resorts may require candidates with working experiences, but we're different. We welcome the new graduate ones. All we need is basic knowledge and skills in hospitality to help them develop themselves by gaining more knowledge and skills in hospitality".*

In addition, the informants explained that training could be beneficial for staff, who needed to be improved or developed. Training of the non-chain hotels and resorts could be divided into two main parts, which consisted of training by Human Resources department and training by each operation department. Training, which was held, by Human Resources department referred to the common majority knowledge for hospitality in each hotel or resort including new staff orientation, fire evacuation, CPR, first aid and English training. While training, which was held, within each department was "On The Job" training (OJT).

On the job training focused on knowledge and skills concerned specific to job task in each department. For example, Front Office department had telephone etiquette training, handling guests complains training, verifying guests credit cards training and currency exchange training. On the job training, which was held by Food and Beverage department, focused on specific knowledge and skills such as wine sommelier training, the hotel's signature drinks training, up selling training and wedding function training.

*"HR gives us product knowledge since we started to work in the orientation for new staff. It helped us to know the culture of our resort as dependent resort, what we are and who we are. Then, we join trainings within our department to learn more knowledge and skills".*

*“Training from HR is one of my favorite trainings because it gives me new knowledge. I don’t know anything about CPR before, but I’ve learnt it from first aid and CPR training by professional team from Bangkok Phuket International hospital, and it was held by HR. That training helped me and my team had more confident to service guests in the restaurant and the bar because our restaurant and bar are next to the swimming pool. If something go wrong, we are ready for it”.*

*“Before becoming a supervisor, I had little skill of English. But after I joined English class by HR for 3 years, my English was better along with my skills. Then, I got promoted to be a supervisor. I can say that my English’s better because of English class from HR”.*

*“Ten years ago, no one knows Tsunami. But now, I believe that every staff know what Tsunami is. Our hotel has Tsunami and fire evacuation training once a year, and it helps us know what to do if it happens. All department have learnt what to do as their responsibility to support one another. We have learnt so much from this training. Thank you HR team to give us this very useful training”.*

*“There are many trainings within our department, and they’re called OJT, On The Job, training. There are at least 4 courses in a month. Manager or supervisor would be the trainer for each OJT. Not only knowledge and skills we often use in our job tasks, but it includes retraining for something we may need even though we don’t use it a lot. Verifying guests’ credit cards training is one of my favorite because we don’t really use it often, and our staff would forget how to do it. It’s quite fun when we all try to figure it out. Our manage is always the trainer for this topic”.*

*“Up selling training is our popular OJT. Our team will learn how to up-selling our resort’s signature menu. Many staff from different department will be sent to join this course in Food and Beverage department because they can apply the knowledge and skills which provided from the training to their own job tasks. For example, Front Office and Housekeeping team can up sell their own products including our restaurants which would make our guests have special meals”.*

*“The difficult task of our job can be referred to how to handle guests’ complains. As front desk, we would be the first one the guests think of when they need to*



*complain. It's challenging task for us, and that's why we have to train handling guests' complains. There are many staff from other operation department come to join our OJT for this topic because it could happen in any operation department such as Food and Beverage department and Housekeeping department. We will do the role play for different situations, and the trainer is the manager. We need to learn how to handle their temperature during complaining and their problems. It's very helpful training for us as service provider".*

#### **4.4.5 Empathy**

Regarding to the definition of "Empathy" dimension, Parasuraman et al., (1988) described in the definitions of the SERVQUAL dimensions that "Empathy" referred to "The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers". The main finding in this dimension was the 24 hours service, which was significant mentioned by the informants from the non-chain hotels and resorts. The informants considered "Empathy" dimension as "very important" dimension.

*"The guests come here to relax, and that means our hotel is expected to be ready to service all times. That's why 24 hours service is very important for us. If we cannot offer service as the guests expected, we cannot call ourselves a good hotel. The service time should be convenient to all guests unless the guests would choose to stay in some other place instead of our hotel."*

*"We service the guests for 24 hours. We have Front Office team, Security team and Housekeeping team. We're always ready to serve the guests no matter what time they need. All those 24 hours service is for creating the guests' satisfaction, and it's very important for us".*

*"One qualification of a good resort is 24 hours service. You can't say that your hotel or resort is the good one without having 24 hours service. It's very important part of hospitality industry especially in hotel industry".*

*"Front Office team covers 24 hours service, and it's very important for the guests once they need any help. We will be the one who can respond to the guests in that time".*

*"Security is very important thing for hotel industry. We must secure our guests and our employees all times. Having proper security team is a must".*

*"I love that we have housekeeping service for 24 hours because some guests may need us to clean their room at the night time. Something could happen, and make*

*them can't sleep without cleaning it. Bed sheets could be changed during the late night sometimes. But no worry, our Housekeeping department service the guests for 24 hours".*

#### **4.5 Strategy implement to service quality in Chain and Non-Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket**

The study found that the Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket used strategy as following;

- Quality strategy
- Hotel Operational strategy
- Competitive strategy
- Employees strategy
- Training strategy

##### **4.5.1 Quality strategy**

According to quality-oriented strategies and strategic control system, there was an example as the U.S. Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The companies were required to develop a process for deploying and monitoring strategic quality plans (Department of Commerce, 1994). Three requirements were highlighted by the Baldrige criteria for effective monitoring of the strategic quality deployment process. One of them was supplementing financial measure with non-financial indicators, which focused specifically on customer requirements, customer satisfaction and operational quality results (Itiner & Larcker, 1997).

The uniqueness of service quality in the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts, the researcher found that the informants explained that "Friendliness" were their uniqueness. Moreover, the uniqueness of the chain and the non-chain hotels and resorts would gain trust from customers which would be beneficial for service part. How they maintain their uniqueness was making it as culture of hotels and resorts, which it would be transferred from previous staff to new staff. Those cultures reflexed important thing into processing of service, and good result were expected which was customers' satisfaction.

Furthermore, offering special services for repeating guests was one way to make them satisfied. One Front Office Manager described that free of charge A la cart menu would be provided in breakfast for repeating guests during stay in the hotel. Hence, one Room Division

Manager explained that free of charge transportation from the hotel to the Phuket international airport would be offered to repeating guests. The mentioned special service allowed hotels to reach beyond customers' expectation which created customers' satisfaction.

Regarding to another requirement from literature review, it was gathering of information was a must for identifying or anticipating of environmental changing, which may affect customer expectations (Itiner & Larcker, 1997).

The study also found that, most of the chain and the non-chain hotels and resorts arranged small events as "Management cocktails" which offered VIP guests to join afternoon event including free of charge drinks and some finger food with management team. The management cocktails allowed staff from the management team talked to VIP guest in order to getting information in terms of service and facilities of the hotels and resorts. Once the management team received feedback from customers, they could solve problems which came from negative feedback, and they could improve their service and facilities. One Room Division Manager stated that "Many our VIP guests are repeating guests, and they'll always let us know if there's something we can offer to them which make them happier or any problems that we should solve".

#### **4.5.2 Hotel Operational strategy**

The results showed that the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts used hotel operational strategy. Related to literature review, Operational strategy is concerned with how the operation is organized to deliver to the right position (Porter, 1996). The informants explained that process of hotels and resorts operations were designed to meet customers' expectations in order to create customers' satisfaction.

#### **4.5.3 Competitive strategy**

The informants revealed that competitive strategy was applied to chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in order to compete in service quality in hotel industry. Moreover, one Front Office Manager indicated that the hotels must be always ready to change and improve service and facilities to meet customers' expectation. Regarding to getting information from customers via emails including 2 emails which hotel would send to customers after checking in and after checking out, hotels would have feedback and comments both positive and negative way. Then, the changing or improving would be applied to the hotel. For example, the hotel

received comment from customers in 2017 about painting in guest rooms which was colorful. The customers commented that it made guest rooms looked cheap. Therefore, all guest rooms were repainted into classic color tone before high season arriving in October 2017.

#### **4.5.4 Employee strategy**

The study found that the “employee strategy” was applied to the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts. The informants described that the hotels and resorts tend to be willing to invest in employees in order to have those, who have knowledge and skills with inherent abilities. Most of the managers revealed that new staff receive higher salary because the hotels and resorts need their talent and skills. Therefore, investing in employees can create positive results for both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.

#### **4.5.5 Training strategy**

“Training strategy” was used to develop employees in the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The study found that training was one of majority section of hotel industry especially in term of service. Likewise, the all informant mentioned about training, which was held by both Human Resources department and each operation department. It included essential and useful training, and it supported staff to improve and develop themselves in order to providing service to customers.

### **4.6 Particular Strategy implement to service quality in Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket**

#### **4.6.1 Global Strategies**

Regarding to global strategies on standardized policies were pursued by the leading franchised group more than the other brands (Whitla et al., 2007), the results of interviewing showed that the chain hotels and resorts were controlled by SOP (standard operating procedures) of the brand. One Room Division Manager explained that there was a quality checklist which was strongly required from the brand to be completed. Likewise, one Front Office Manager informed that to meet the brand standard, the staff must complete 50 hours of training per year. It was also determined by the brand standard.

As literature review in terms of service standards (rather than physical amenities), achieving standardization is what the hotels are seeking. The hotel executives pointed out that to maintain a consistent level of service was needed which method in place for each chain

hotels would be applied to ensure for meeting standards (Whitla et al., 2007). One Front Office Manager stated that “The most important thing in service quality is consistency. Without it, we cannot say we have good service for customers. So, focusing on consistency in service quality is a must”.

In terms of information system, expectation of international chains hotels is making significant use of common global systems. For example, guest preferences can be stored by one hotel, which can be accessed by other hotels in the chain (Whitla et al., 2007), the study found that most of the chain hotels and resorts applied customers’ information for their different properties as sending promotion from different properties to customers’ emails.

#### **4.6.2 Green strategy**

According to literature review in chapter 2 in term of “Green strategy”, Millar & Baloglu (2011) explained that many hotels businesses have increasingly changed, rapidly improved and adopted more and more on green strategies, in order to be a part of their operations, over the last decade year. The study explored that the chain hotels and resorts used green strategy by involving projects, which concerned to environment. In addition, the informants from the chain hotels and resorts described that most of the chain hotels and resorts campaigned customers and staff to involve the 60 earth hour project, which campaigning people to turn off the unnecessary power during 20:30 – 21:30 hrs. for 60 minutes. Moreover, the informants revealed that the chain hotels and resorts involved the “GREEN LEAF FOUNDATION”, which has objectives as developing quality of environment and tourism industry at the same time.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is designed to conclude and discuss based on the results the survey, and it was followed by a discussion of the results based on the research objectives which were indentified in chapter 1 as following;

1. To identify the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket
2. To compare strategies, implement to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.

This study revealed the perspective of operation staff in service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Therefore, the researcher used the in-depth interview by taking interview with 20 informants through purposive sampling method. The concepts and theories of service quality were applied to this study. The concept of SERVQUAL Model with 5 dimensions of service quality best suited to realize the objectives of the study. The interviews were conducted via managers and supervisors who have been working in their position more than 1 year which indicated that they have already passed the 4 months probations. So, it can be said that the informants were qualified as staff, which provide and monitor services direct to customers.

Moreover, this study explored the strategies implement to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket, which the in-depth interview was applied for 20 managers and supervisors who hold responsibilities in operations departments (Front Office department or Food and Beverage department or Housekeeping department) in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.

#### 5.1 Conclusion

According to the interviews, it is very clear that service quality is important in term of service for chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. All five dimensions of SERVQUAL were mentioned by the informants during in-depth interviews. There are the service

quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket in dimensions of “Reliability” and “Assurance”.

“Empathy” dimension was concerned as the first priority for service providers especially keeping promises and facilities. Keeping promises is very important for chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The promises, which have been made by hotels and resorts through actual promises and the brand image, have to be kept by their own creators in order to gain trust from customers and create customers’ satisfactions.

“Reliability” dimension was different between chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was mentioned by all informants, but it was specified as a MUST by chain hotels and resorts while it was a guideline, which could be adjusted depending on customers’ conditions, for the non-chain hotels and resort.

“Responsiveness” dimension was explained as “Being willing to help customers” by both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Moreover, taking leave for staff, who could not work properly due to unstable emotions, would be allowed by supervisors or managers if it was necessary.

“Assurance” dimension was referred to “Knowledge and Skills” by both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. However, the chain hotels and resorts concerned the knowledge and skills as very important in term of service while the non-chain hotels and resorts referred it as important, but it was not the core of service.

“Empathy” dimension was describes as 24 hours service by both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. There were common 24 hours services in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket, which were Front Office, Security and Housekeeping service.

Furthermore, in term of strategy implemented to service quality, there were common strategies in chain and non-chain hotels as following;

- Quality strategy
- Hotel Operational strategy
- Competitive strategy
- Employees strategy
- Training strategy

In contrast, there were differences between chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. It referred to two strategies which were applied to chain hotels and resorts in Phuket particularly as following;

- Global Strategies
- Green strategy

Regarding to Berry et al., (1990) mentioned that one definition of service quality was customers' expectations compare with the actual service performance create the perception of service quality, it suits the service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The service quality and strategies implemented to service quality, which were used by the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts, were applied in order to meet customers' expectation after the actual service was performed.

## **5.2 Discussion**

The discussion part derived from the results of the research objectives. The results were collected via interviews 20 informants, who were service providers. Therefore, this part provides the study's overall view.

### **5.2.1 Objective 1 : To identify the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket**

As the results of the interview, there were differences in term of service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The significant differences consisted of two dimensions of service quality as "Reliability" and "Assurance".

According to the definition of the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al., (1988), Reliability was defined as "The capacity to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately. This dimension includes meeting promises pertaining to delivery, pricing, and complaint handling". The finding showed that chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket defined "Reliabilities" as "Standard Operating Procedure". The results revealed that the point of view of chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket toward standard operating procedure (SOP) were different. The standard operating procedure was concerned as a must via chain hotels and resorts' point of view while the point of view of non-chain hotels and resorts described the



standard operating procedure as a guideline, and it could be adjusted, which depended on customers' conditions.

Regarding to the definition of the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al., (1988), Assurance was defined as "The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence". The finding indicated that the chain hotels and resorts in Phuket referred knowledge and skills as very important while the knowledge and skills were referred as important, but it was not the core in term of service by the non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

In addition, for better understanding, the service quality differences between chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket were described in the following table.

Table 5.1 The service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

Dimensions	Chain	Non-Chain
<b>Tangible</b>	First priority	Good Facilities
	Keeping promises	Keeping promises
	Good Facilities	
	Good conditions of guest's room	
<b>Reliability</b>	No mistake during serving services	Standard is a guideline
	Standard Operating Procedure	Standard Operating Procedure could be adjusted depending on customers' conditions
	Standard is a MUST	Flexible service process
<b>Responsiveness</b>	Willing to help customers	Willing to help customers
	Being professional on duty	Rotation job tasks in case of unstable emotion
	Rotation job tasks in case of unstable emotion	Taking leave if necessary
	Take leave if necessary	Team supporting
	Team supporting	Team work

Table 5.1 Continued

Dimensions	Chain	Non-Chain
<b>Assurance</b>	Important	Important
	Knowledge and skills	Knowledge and skills
	Product Knowledge of hotels and resorts	Knowledge and skills were not the core of service quality
	Gaining more knowledge and skills once start working	Attitude was more important than knowledge and skills
	Training by Brand standard	Gaining more knowledge and skills could be fulfil once start working
<b>Empathy</b>	Customers' conditions	Customers' conditions
	Customers' preferences	Customers' preferences
	Providing things or service to customers without asking	Go beyond customers' expectations
	Convenient services hours	24 hours services
	24 hours services	

**5.2.2 Objective 2 : To compare strategies, implement to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.**

According to theory of strategy, Porter (1991) stated that the central question in strategy could be what the reason is for leading companies to success or failure. Other questions, such as why companies differ, how they behave, how they choose strategies, and how they are managed, are inextricably encompassed by the causes of company success or failure. There were common strategies, which used by both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket, consisted of strategies as following;

- Quality strategy
- Hotel Operational strategy
- Competitive strategy
- Employees strategy
- Training strategy

Interestingly, there were two strategies which were implemented by the chain hotels and resorts in Phuket particularly while the non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket did not applied those two strategies to their properties. The strategies were as following;

- Global Strategies
- Green strategy

Therefore, the chain hotels and resorts in Phuket ensure the customers' satisfaction by using more strategies implemented to service quality. The non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket used less strategies implemented to service quality comparing to the chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. For better understanding, there are strategies implemented to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in the following table.

Table 5.2 Strategies Implemented to Chain and Non-chain Hotels and Resorts in Phuket

Strategies	Chain	Non-chain
Quality strategy	√	√
Hotel Operational strategy	√	√
Competitive strategy	√	√
Employees strategy	√	√
Training strategy	√	√
Global Strategies	√	-
Green strategy	√	-

### 5.3 Recommendations for strategies implemented to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

It cannot be denied that service quality is important for hotels and resorts in term of service. To meet customers' expectations, focusing on service quality is necessary. "Reliability" dimension could be applied as more important for non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The standard operating procedure (SOP) could be more practical than it was in order to ensure the service part as reliability of non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Moreover, the dimension of "Assurance" could be more important for non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. It could be concerned as very important, which may offer new perspective to existing and new staff as service providers. Once the knowledge and skills become very important, it could support staff to achieve job tasks easily for non-chain hotels and resorts. The importance of knowledge and skills refer to training as the finding of the research. Then, the training hours can be increased to ensure staff would gain more knowledge and skills in order to create customers' satisfaction in non-chain hotels and resorts.

In term of strategy implement to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket, green strategy should be applied for non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. As the results, the green strategy was referred as trend at the present, and it can be beneficial for non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. This strategy can offer more options for customers to choosing accommodation which increases opportunity for the non-chain hotels and resort to be the chosen one.

#### **5.4 Limitation and suggestions for further study**

Firstly, this research collected interviews with 20 Thai informants. The 100 percent of informants are Thai nationality. The further research could focus on foreigner informants in order to ensure the results of the research even though the informants are different nationality. The different background may concern to mind set which effect to work process.

Moreover, this research focused on the part of service providers even though there were evaluations by customers informed via collecting data. The further research could focus on the part of customers who receive service from chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. In this way, the strategy implementation to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket would be accomplished

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## APPENDIX A

### List of the chain hotels and resorts interviews

HOTELS AND RESORTS	POSITION	NUMBER OF INFORMANTS
1. Swissotel Resort Phuket Kamala Beach	Room Division Manager	1
2. Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort	Front Office Manager	1
3. Centara Kata Resort Phuket	Front Office Manager	1
4. Sri panwa, Phuket	Front Office Executive	1
	Senior Estate Host (Front Office Supervisor)	1
5. Baba Beach Club, Phuket	Front Office Manager	1
6. JW Marriott Resort and Spa Phuket	Front Office Supervisor	1
7. Marriott Vacation Club	Front Office Supervisor	1
8. Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort	Restaurant Supervisor	1
	Assistant In Room Dining Manager & Acting Banquet Manager	1
9. Ramada Phuket Deevana	Front Office Supervisor	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>

## APPENDIX B

### List of the non-chain hotels and resorts interviews

HOTELS AND RERSOTS	POSITION	NO. OF IMFORMANTS
1. The Racha	Front Office Manager	1
2. The Chava Resort	Food and Beverage Supervisor	2
3. The Surin Phuket	Front Office Supervisor	1
4. The Pavilions Phuket	Food and Beverage Supervisor	1
	Front Office Supervisor	1
5. The Vijitt Resort Phuket	Food and Beverage Supervisor	1
	Front Office Supervisor	1
6. Malisa Villa Suites	Front Office Supervisor	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>

## APPENDIX C



### Interview Checklist

**Thesis Title : Strategies implement to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket**

---

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Supphakan Wattanasantikul and I am an MBA student of Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus. My final thesis at Prince of Songkla University deals with strategies of maintenance service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

I would be much obliged if we could arrange a meeting to discuss the topic. (Here attached you will find a document with a number of questions that I would like to bring up with you.)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Supphakan Wattanasantikul

---

### Questions

#### **Section 1 : Dimension of service quality**

1. In your opinion, what are service quality dimensions?

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Definition</b>
1. Tangibility	Elements that can be observed physically: The aesthetics of physical facilities, tools, employees, and communications items.
2 Reliability	The capacity to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately. This dimension includes meeting promises pertaining to delivery, pricing, and complaint handling.

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3. Responsiveness	The willingness to assist customers in a prompt manner. This dimension advocates positive service attitudes and requires personnel to pay attention to customer requests, questions, and complaints.
4. Assurance	The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence.
5. Empathy	The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers.

---

Source: The Definitions of the SERVQUAL Dimensions (Parasuraman et al., 1988)

---

Dimensions	Items	SERVQUAL Statement
Tangibles	1	The hotel / restaurant has modern looking equipment
	2	The physical facilities are visually appealing
	3	Employees are neat-appearing
	4	Materials associated with service are visually appealing
	5	Service is performed as promised
Reliability	6	Company shows interest to solve problems
	7	The service is performed right the first time
	8	Service is performed at the time promised
	9	There are no errors in the records
Responsiveness	10	Employees informs customers when service will be performed
	11	Employees give prompt service to customers
	12	Employees are willing to help customers
	13	Employees are never too busy to respond to request
Assurance	14	Behavior of employees to instill confidence in customers
	15	Customers feel safe in their transaction
	16	Employees are consistently courteous
	17	Employees have knowledge to answer customer's questions

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---

	18	Restaurant gives individual attention
	19	Employees gives personal attention to customers
Empathy	20	Restaurant understands specific needs of customers
	21	Restaurant has customer's interest at heart
	22	Operating hours are convenient to all customers

---

Source: Original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

### **Section 1 : Dimension of service quality (continued)**

#### 2. Tangibles

How important of performing service as promised to customers? What is the ration in percentage?

#### 3. Reliability

How important of providing service in the same standard to customers? Is (Are) there any service procedure?

#### 4. Responsiveness

Regarding to being willing to help customers all times, how do staff handle themseves in case of unstable emotion? Do staff receive any comments about being willing to help both positive and negative? If yes, please specific.

#### 5. Assurance

How important of skills and knowledge in job tasks? How do staff achieve their job tasks?

#### 6. Empathy

How important of convenient operating hours to all customers? Does the hotel has any 24 hours service? If yes, please specific

**Section 2 : Maintenance of service quality**

7. What is the hotel's uniqueness of service quality and how to maintain?
8. How to maintain service quality in the hotel?
9. What is the most important thing in service quality?
10. Is (are) there any services in the hotel should be improved and how?
11. How many percentages of retention customers due to service of the hotel and how to maintain this group of retention customers?
12. Is (are) there any suggestions?

**Section 3: Ranking of Service Quality Dimensions**

Kindly rank scale (1-5) where 1 is the most important dimension and 5 is the least dimension.

- ..... Tangibles
- ..... Reliability
- ..... Responsiveness
- ..... Assurance
- ..... Empathy

Thank you for your kind support



## Appendix D

### Certificate



**VITAE**

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**List of Publication and Proceeding**

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**Strategy Implementation to Service Quality in Chain and Non-Chain Hotels and  
Resorts in Phuket**

**Suphakan Wattanasantikul**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of  
Master of Business Administration in Hospitality and Tourism Management  
(International Program)**

**Prince of Songkla University**

**2018**

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Thesis Title      Strategy Implementation to Service Quality in Chain and Non-Chain Hotels  
and Resorts in Phuket

Author              MissSupphakan Wattanasantikul

Major Program    Hospitality and Tourism Management (International Program)

**Major Advisor****Examining Committee**

.....

(Dr. Prateep Wetprasit)

.....Chairperson

(Asst. Prof. Dr. Charoenchai Agmapisarn)

.....Committee

(Dr. Chatchavan Wongwattanakit)

.....Committee

(Dr. Prateep Wetprasit)

The Graduate School, Prince of Songkla University, has approved this thesis as partial of the requirements for the Master of Business Administration Degree in Hospitality and Tourism (International Program)

.....

(Prof. Dr. Damrongsak Faroongsamg)

Dean of Graduate School

This is to certify that the work here submitted is the result of the candidate's own investigations.  
Due acknowledgement has been made of any assistance received.

.....Signature

(Dr. Prateep Wetprasit)

Major Advisor

.....Signature

(MissSupphakan Wattanasantikul)

Candidate

I hereby certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any degree.

.....Signature

(MissSupphakan Wattanasantikul)

Candidate

<b>ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์</b>	การประยุกต์ใช้กลยุทธ์เพื่อสนับสนุนคุณภาพการบริการในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทประเภทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ต
<b>ผู้เขียน</b>	นางสาวศุภกานต์ วัฒนาลัยดิกุล
<b>สาขาวิชา</b>	การจัดการการบริการและการท่องเที่ยว (หลักสูตรนานาชาติ)
<b>ปีการศึกษา</b>	2560

### บทคัดย่อ

วิทยานิพนธ์เล่มนี้จัดทำขึ้นเพื่อค้นคว้าข้อบ่งชี้ถึงความแตกต่างของคุณภาพการบริการในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ต รวมไปถึงเพื่อเปรียบเทียบกลยุทธ์ที่ประยุกต์ใช้เพื่อสนับสนุนคุณภาพการบริการในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทประเภทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ต งานวิจัยฉบับนี้ใช้กระบวนการเก็บข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพเป็นเครื่องมือในการค้นคว้าหาคำตอบ จากการสัมภาษณ์ผู้จัดการ และหัวหน้างานในแผนกดำเนินการให้บริการโดยตรงแก่ลูกค้าในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่าย ตั้งแต่ช่วงเดือน พฤศจิกายน 2560 ถึง พฤษภาคม 2561 ใช้การเลือกสุ่มกลุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเจาะจงโดยผู้ให้ข้อมูลทั้งหมดจำนวนทั้งสิ้น 20 ท่าน

ผลจากการวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่ามีมิติทั้ง 5 ของคุณภาพการบริการ (Service Quality Dimensions) มีความสำคัญในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ต แต่ยังมี ความแตกต่างในมิติของ “ความเชื่อถือ” (Reliability) ซึ่งโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่ายอ้างถึง “มาตรฐานการปฏิบัติงาน” (SOP) ว่าเป็นสิ่งจำเป็นในการกระทำให้สำเร็จตามมาตรฐานการปฏิบัติงานที่ได้วางไว้ ในขณะที่โรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่ไม่มีเครือข่ายอ้างถึง “มาตรฐานการปฏิบัติงาน” (SOP) ว่าเป็นเพียงแนวทางที่สามารถปรับเปลี่ยนได้ซึ่งขึ้นอยู่กับข้อจำกัดของลูกค้า

นอกจากนี้ผลจากการวิจัยยังเผยให้เห็นถึงกลยุทธ์ที่โรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ตใช้ร่วมกันในการประยุกต์เพื่อสนับสนุนคุณภาพการบริการ ได้แก่ กลยุทธ์คุณภาพ กลยุทธ์การดำเนินงานโรงแรม กลยุทธ์คู่แข่ง กลยุทธ์พนักงาน และกลยุทธ์การฝึกอบรม ในทางตรงกันข้ามโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่ายยังได้ใช้อีก 2 กลยุทธ์ ซึ่งมากกว่ากลยุทธ์ที่ถูกใช้ในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่ไม่มีเครือข่าย คือ กลยุทธ์ระดับโลก และ กลยุทธ์เชิงอนุรักษ์ธรรมชาติ

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้เป็นประโยชน์อย่างยิ่งในการเป็นแนวทางเพื่อพัฒนา และบำรุงรักษาคุณภาพการบริการในธุรกิจการบริการ ต่อโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีอยู่แล้ว และที่จะมีใน

อนาคต อีกทั้งสามารถนำผลการค้นคว้าจากวิจัยเล่มนี้ไปใช้เป็นข้อมูลเบื้องต้นประกอบการงานวิจัย  
เล่มอื่นๆต่อไป

**คำสำคัญ:** คุณภาพการบริการ, กลยุทธ์, โรงแรมและรีสอร์ทประเภทที่มีเครือข่าย,  
โรงแรมและรีสอร์ทประเภทที่ไม่มีเครือข่าย



<b>Thesis Title</b>	Strategy Implementation to Service Quality in Chain and Non-Chain Hotels and Resorts in Phuket
<b>Author</b>	Miss Supphakan Wattanasantikul
<b>Major Program</b>	Hospitality and Tourism Management (International Program)
<b>Academic Year</b>	2018

### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to identify the service quality differences in chain and non chain hotels and resorts in Phuket as well as to compare strategies implement to service quality in chain and non chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Qualitative method has been applied to the study via in-depth interviews. 20 managers and supervisors, who work in operation departments, were the informants. The interviews were conducted from November 2017 to May 2018 by using purposive sampling methods.

The results indicated that service quality dimensions were concerned as important by chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket in term of service quality. However, chain hotels and resorts in Phuket referred “Reliability” dimension as “Standard Operating Procedure” (SOP), which to complete the SOP was a must. While non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket explained that the SOP was a guideline, which could be adjusted depending on customers’ conditions.

In addition, the results revealed that chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket used common strategies implemented to maintain service quality, which included quality strategy, hotel operational strategy, competitive strategy, employee strategy and training strategy. In contrast, there were two more strategies, which were used particularly in chain hotels and resorts in Phuket including global strategies and green strategy.

The results of this research are beneficial as a guiding tool for the current and future chain and non-chain hotels and resorts to develop and maintain service quality.

**Keyword:** Service Quality, Strategies, Chain hotels and resorts, Non-chain hotels and resorts

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## CHAPTER 1

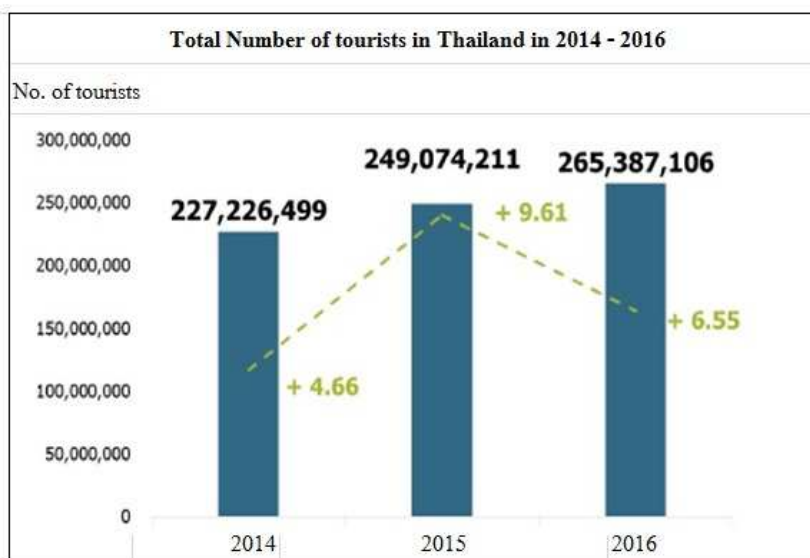
### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Phuket, the biggest island in the South of Thailand, is a tourist destination. Phuket was changed slightly from the Malay word “Bukit” meaning mountains. There are mountains located along beaches starting from the top to the bottom of the island. Tin mining was the main part of Phuket, but now the island has been occupied by hospitality and tourism industry. There are a number of tourists visiting Phuket included Thais and the noticeable number of foreigners in each year.

In 2016, there were 265,387,106 tourists in Thailand and 12,709,415 tourists in Phuket. One of basic needs for travelers is accommodations once the travelling is created. Furthermore, there are a number of hotels and resorts in Phuket. The information also provides the number of accommodations and their rooms in Phuket. There were 1,724 accommodations and 81,727 rooms in 2016 (Ministry of Tourism and Sports). Therefore, hospitality industry is one major part of Phuket.

Figure 1.1 Total numbers of tourists in Thailand in 2014 - 2016



Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports [https://www.mots.go.th/ewt\\_dl\\_link.php?nid=8848](https://www.mots.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=8848)

Table 1.1 Total numbers of tourists in 2014 - 2016

<b>Total Number of tourists in 2014 - 2016</b>		
<b>Province</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of tourists</b>
Phuket	2014	11,312,037
	2015	12,520,769
	2016	12,709,415

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports [https://www.mots.go.th/ewt\\_dl\\_link.php?nid=8848](https://www.mots.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=8848)

Table 1.2 Numbers of Accommodations and room(s) in Phuket in 2014 -2016

<b>Number of Accommodation in 2014 - 2016</b>		
<b>Phuket</b>		
<b>Years</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Room(s)</b>
2014	774	48,241
2015	1,744	82,962
2016	1,724	81,727

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports [https://www.mots.go.th/ewt\\_dl\\_link.php?nid=8848](https://www.mots.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=8848)

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Matching between providing quality service and perceived value of the customers is challenging which all hospitality companies around the globe are facing. The tangibles of services including food and physical facilities are easier to measure the quality when comparing to other intangible service. For example, employees' emotion, time and place. The pattern set in quality control was applied on tangible services by some of the quality management in the industry. According to the pattern, it ensures the continuity of standard quality. In fast food outlets like McDonalds, the quality of food and time of delivery ensures the quality of service and meets the customer expectations. (Benhura et al., 2012).

The importance of food and the service quality were underlined via many studies on hospitality. The integral component of hospitality is able to uplift and support tourism and hospitality industry to grow. Perception of customers in terms of the quality of services have a significant effect on their satisfaction and their loyalty. High quality service renders to more

qualified employees, which increase the level of customer satisfactions. Likewise, word of mouth creates revisiting customers (Sumaedi&Yarment, 2015)

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives**

1. To identify the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket
2. To compare strategies, implement to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The main issue of the study is to explore service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. SERVQUAL model was applied to address service quality of supervisors and managers in operation departments in order to achieve the service quality.

Therefore, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the most important dimension of service quality in chain hotels and resorts?
2. What is the most important dimension of service quality in non-chain hotels and resorts?
3. What are the existing strategies in terms of service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts?
4. How do chain and non-chain hotels and resorts implement service quality?

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study aims to provide the information about service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Furthermore, the study will be useful for hotels, resorts and other hospitality service providers in many ways;

1. To have a better understanding of service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.
2. To develop and improve the implementation in terms of service quality: this study can be used as a guideline for developing and improving the implementation in terms of

service which can become hotels and resorts' strategies to meet customers' expectations in order to bring success to organizations.

3. To explore the strategies which have been using in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts. It is also to implement service quality: this study provides the existing strategies in terms of service, which are applied to hotel and resort industries and also to people who are in management positions. Therefore, the strategies can lead the hotels and resorts to success or failure.

4. To be a guideline for other related businesses and to develop their services and products: the result of this study can be used by the management of hotels and resorts including any new investors who are interested in hotel and resort businesses for having a better idea on how to implement service quality which lead the companies to success.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

### **Scope of research**

The scope of this study covered chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket province.

### **Scope of Demography**

1. Supervisors, who service directly to customers, may work for Front department or Food and Beverage department or Housekeeping department. These three departments are front of the house which taking care of customers and completing customers' needs and expectations. They know how to service customers and how to implement service quality as well.

2. Management people in operation departments including Front Office department, Food and Beverage department and Housekeeping department are able to monitor service of staff for customers. In addition, those managers always implement service quality for customers.

### **Scope of Time**

This research has been conducted during June 2017 – May 2018. In-depth interview was conducted during November, 2017 – May, 2018.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Strategies** refer to the central question as what the reason is for leading companies to success or failure. To understand success, highlighting theory of the firm and an associated theory of strategy is a must. While the nature of companies and the environment in which they operate are crucial assumptions. The importance of the distinction between industry structures and relative positions can be explained that strategies, which will improve company while harming the others, can be chosen among other things (Porter, 1991).

**Service Quality** was defined as the well-known concept by Parasuraman et al., (1986, 1988) which is the difference between customers' expectations of service provider's performance and their evaluation of the services they received. If expectations are greater than performance, the perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customers' dissatisfaction occurs (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

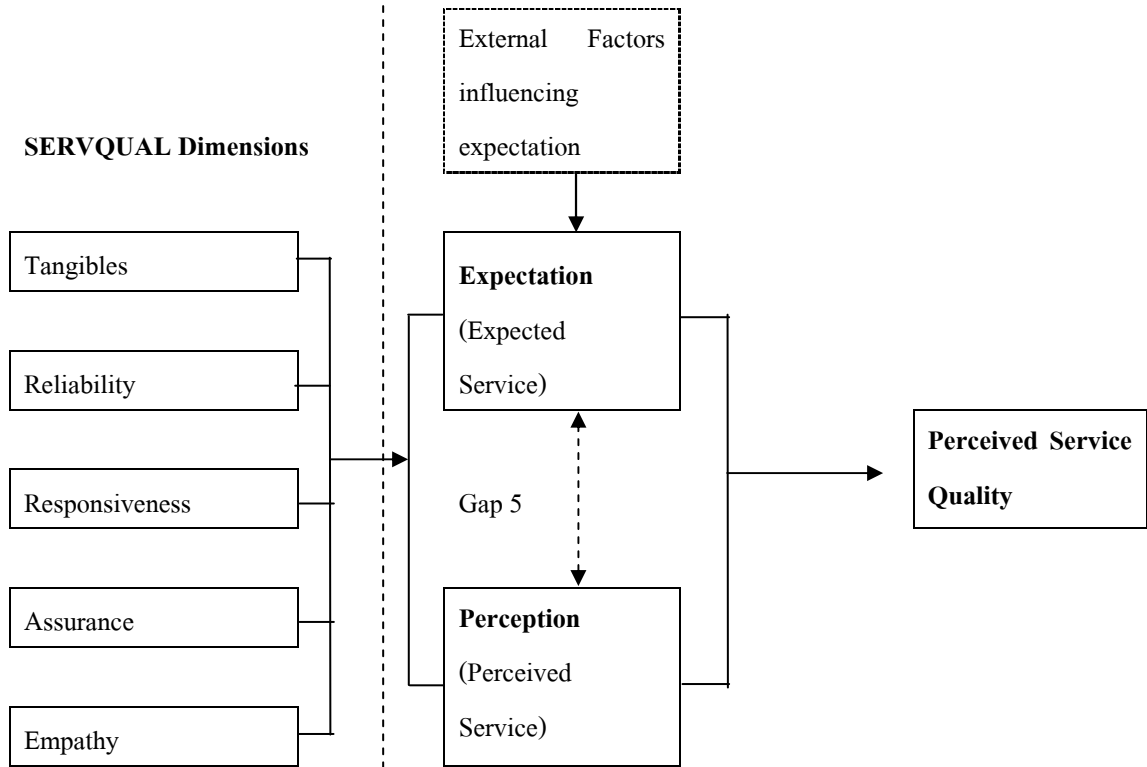
**Chain hotel** is a business as overseas market entry style which included a relationship between the entrant (the franchisor) and a host country body included the former transfers under legal contract. (Burton and Cross, 1995).

**Non-chain hotel** is a hotel owned by a person or a group of people which managed itself independently without joining any business organizations. Also, the hotel does not share chairman or management with other hotels including chains, franchisers, and hotel management companies. Each non-chain hotel located in specific area, and there is no any branch in specific area and domestic and international area. (SrithanaAnan, 2005).

### **1.7 Conceptual Framework**

This study has applied related theories and SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al., (1985).

Figure 1.2 SERVQUAL model



Source: Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V., & Berry, L. 1985

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purposes of the research are to identify factors implement to maintain service quality and to examine factors relationship. The research is planned to focus on the staffs those who provide service direct to customers in five stars hotels and resorts in Phuket include management people and operation staffs. Therefore, there will be related theories as following;

#### 2.1 Customer Expectation

#### 2.2 Customer Satisfaction

#### 2.3 Service Quality

##### 2.3.1 Definition and significance of Service Quality

##### 2.3.2 Dimensions of service Quality

##### 2.3.3 Service quality and the hospitality industry

#### 2.4 Strategies

##### 2.4.1 Dynamic theory of strategy

##### 2.4.2 Global strategies

##### 2.4.3 Quality strategy

##### 2.4.4 Hotel Operational strategy

##### 2.4.5 Hospitality competitive strategy in Phuket

##### 2.4.6 Employee strategic

##### 2.4.7 Green strategic

##### 2.4.8 Training Strategy

#### **2.1 Customer expectation**

Customer expectations can be defined as beliefs for service delivery which standard service can be served, and performance will be judges by customers. The reason is the customers compare the standard to the performance which the customers received. The first and the most significant step to deliver good service quality is knowing the expectations of customers. Losing a customer refers to being wrong for what customer want. Meanwhile, another company

takes the customer by hitting the customer expectation. The company may not survive among competitive market as being wrong. ( M.GangaBhavani, 2013)

One researcher who considered the customer expectation was Calvert (2001). He pointed out that understanding of customer expectation was significant to manage perception of customer as service quality and delivery.

Customer expectations was shape by previous experience as there were researchers proposed that a key of customer expectations were customer previous experience. (Bolton and Drew (1991)

## **2.2 Customer satisfaction**

Satisfaction is completing consumer expectations. A product or service feature is judged by satisfaction. They respond to pleasant level of consumer. It refers both under and over the consumer pleasant level. (Oliver, 1997) Two main conceptualizations of customer satisfactions are proposed by Bodet (2008). The first conceptualization refers to Oliver (1980) who points out that base on especially product or service transaction, the measurement of satisfaction can be defined as post-evaluation which related to specific decisions of buying. The second conceptualization is suggested by Anderson et al.,(1994) which is total increasing experiences of a consumer with a company, product or service. Satisfaction can be defined as emotional or cognitive (Yu and Dean, 2001). The researchers who agree with Yu and Dean are Jacobs and Solomon (1977), who propose that satisfaction can be defined as the feelings or attitudes for a product or service created post purchase or consumption.

## **2.3 Service quality**

### **2.3.1 Definition and significance of Service Quality**

Service quality is an intangible thing, but it exists in hospitality industry. When customers purchase for accommodation, the expectations include physical place and service which will be provided during the period. It cannot be denied that service quality relate to customer satisfactions.



Quality may be the most important and complex element of business strategy. Companies can be completed by quality. Moreover, quality is sought by customers. Quality is a transformer of markets. It is no doubt as a leading key to make customers happy and to provide more profits to companies and to increase the economic growth of nations. (Golder et al., 2012)

There are several definitions of service quality by Berry et al., (1990) as

1. Service quality evaluation is more difficult than product quality evaluation;

2. Customers' expectations compare with the actual service performance create the perception of service quality.

3. The distribution services process evaluation is one of quality assessment which not only the final result of the service.

One researcher who agrees with above researchers, who proposed the definitions, is Rahman who stated "service quality is not something that everyone does well" (2004). For business-to-business, service quality is significant important due to the impact from the service. (Pepur et al., 2013)

"Guests are the judges of service quality" (Parasuraman et al., 1991). The level of service quality will be judged by customers when the service meets whether cannot meet their expectations. It is intangible. In contrast, customers can feel that they satisfy with the service whether dissatisfy with. There are two distinct variables effect to customers' perceptions: customer expectations and service standards. The can overall service quality be indicated as primary by the gap between expectations and service standards/performance (Berry et al., 1994)

Service quality defined as a comparison between expectations and performance (Lewis and Mitchell, 1990).

The customers are the one who offer definition of quality. Also, the direction and degree of difference between the customer's expectations and perceptions is interpreted as receiving quality. (Parasuraman et al., 1988 quoted in Chen & Chang, 2005)".

Atilgan et al. (2003), Customer's overall impression is able to provide the definition of "service quality" to the relative efficiency of organization.

Gronroos (1984) suggests that customer perceptions of service quality can be divided into technical quality and functional quality. Technical quality focuses on the quality

evaluation of the core service that the buyer receives from the seller. Functional quality involves the evaluation of the service delivery process, which reflects the customer's experiences of service quality.

For a full understanding of service quality, there are three remarkable features, which well documented, of service must be acknowledge: intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability. (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

In conclusion, service quality is the intangible which occur between customer expectations and service standard/performance. Moreover, service quality will be provided by operation staffs and management people in front of the house in hotels and resorts. In addition, the level of service quality will be judged by customers which effect direct to customer satisfactions.

### **2.3.2 Dimensions of service Quality**

A complex network of several dimensions creates the result as service quality. Researchers have tried to identify the most significant components of service quality for years. Contributing to service quality can refers to identity of a variety of factors. (Beth SchlagelWuest, 2001.)

Beth SchlagelWuest (2001) also quoted in Service Quality Management in Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure (2001) that “ Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988, 1994a) are among the most recognized researchers in the area of service quality. Their development and refinement of the SERVQUAL battery has produced a generic measure of service quality through the examination of twenty-two service items, which factor into five basic service dimesions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988, 1994a; Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml, 1991). The service dimensions consist of reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy”. The service provider's “ability to perform service dependably and accurately” is reflection of reliability. One of the most important service components for customer is “doing it right at the first time,” referring reliability. Providing service is one part of extension reliability promising and maintaining error-free records. Therefore, guests are misled toward undermining of tolerance and trust by overpromising. ( Parsuraman et al., 1988).

The “appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communications materials” is component of tangibles. (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Beth

SchlagelWuest (2001) also quoted in *Service Quality Management in Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure* (2001) that (Wagner, 1998) “As a core service component, tangibles still are considered. Holiday Inn explores the importance of tangibles by its recent evaluation and redefinition from customer’s feedback as they were “looking a little old”

Beth SchlagelWuest (2001) also quoted in *Service Quality Management in Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure* (2001) that “The ‘willingness to help customers and provide prompt service’ are representatives of responsiveness. (Parasurman et al., 1988). “today luxury is time” has been mentioned. (Watkins, 1998, p. 26). Consequently, for many guests, providing services in opportune manner by service providers is significant component of service.”

Bojanic et al., (1994) quoted that “The “knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence” are reflections of assurance. (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p. 23).

Feeling safe with employees is customer expectation in their transactions. The staff’s ability to reassure the customer can be discredited by inappropriate situations. They can be illustrated by entering guest rooms without knocking, confronting guests without appropriate identification or misguiding guests with inaccurate information. (Beth SchlagelWuest, 2001, P. 54). The “caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers” refer to empathy. (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988, p. 23). The statement, “If one looks at who is winning, it tends to be companies that see the guest as an individual” explains the importance of empathy. (Watkins, 1998, p. 26). According to customers’ demands that staffs see things by the same visions with them, more empathic manner is piloting to staffs by empathy training program supporting employees related to their guests illustrated by Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Select, and Holiday In Sunspree properties. (Wagner, 1998).

In the original SERVQUAL instrument, 10 categories were proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985)

Table 2.1 Ten Dimensions of Service Quality

No	Dimension	Definition
1	Reliability	Consistency of service performance and dependability
2	Responsiveness	The willingness of employee to provide services
3	Competence	Possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service
4	Access	Approachability and ease of contract
5	Courtesy	Politeness, respect, consideration, and friendliness of employees
6	Communications	Keeping customers informed in language they can understand and listening to them
7	Creditability	Trustworthiness, honesty and believability
8	Security	Freedom from danger, risk, or doubt
9	Understanding	Understanding customer's needs, providing individualized attention
10	Tangibles	Physical evidence of the service

One of the most widely used models in Service quality is the SERVQUAL that has been discussed in various literatures. The study of Parasuraman et al. (1995, 1998) suggests that service quality and its dimensions become a necessary and important factor that influenced guest satisfaction.

Table 2.2 The Definitions of the SERVQUAL Dimensions (Parasurama et al., 1988)

Dimension	Definition
1. Tangibility	Elements that can be observed physically: The aesthetics of physical facilities, tools, employees, and communications items.
2 Reliability	The capacity to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately. This dimension includes meeting promises pertaining to delivery, pricing, and complaint handling.
3. Responsiveness	The willingness to assist customers in a prompt maner. This dimension advocates positive service attitudes and requires personnel to pay attention to customer requests, questions, and complaints.
4. Assurance	The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence.
5. Empathy	The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers.

### 2.3.3 Service quality and the hospitality industry

Martin O'Neill (2001) has shown that hospitality environment for these days, ability of organization creating continually customers satisfactions reflects the company success. Increasingly, being value for money are over demanded by customers in terms of both the price/quality ratio and the product's actual quality or service provided. To guarantee market success, forcing is now applied to all types of hospitality organizations to stand back and take a long look hardly at the way of currently running the business by themselves.

Martin O'Neill (2001) found that as an effort to be success sustainable of competitive advantage, heavily investigation in a host of service quality improvement initiatives is now applied to hospitality organizations. The pattern of the majority of these initiatives illustrated by the British Standards Institute, the European Quality Award, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the Edward Deming Prize, or derivatives thereof. Furthermore, heavily investigation in rising quality standards through human resource development has been used for the hospitality industry. The initiatives refer to the Investors in People Award, the Welcome Host Initiative, and various vocational qualification schemes.

Oliver (1997) suggests that making organization friendlier to customers for these initiatives can refer to belonging to the total quality management movement, supporting organizational strategies and changes. In this context, "customer satisfaction is thought to be a natural outgrowth of optimal organizational design, and of instilling the appropriate organizational culture, personnel training and customer responsiveness within employee ranks. In short, it is believed that the attainment of satisfaction will be enhanced if these practices are followed"

"Customers have many different perceptions which are influenced by their education, up-bringing, experience and many other factors." (Van Der Wagen, 1994, p.4). Being professionals in hospitality which future depends on the customers' perception of actual service delivery, it is necessary for striving to gain an understanding of the customers' visions of service providers' performance. (Martin O'Neill, 2001)

"The idea is to stay ahead of the customer, to anticipate his or her needs ... so that when he or she articulates the need you have already planned for it and are ready (ahead of

the competition) to meet it.” (Bank, 1992, p.14). Martin O’Neill (2001) suggests that there is not any doubt in process for knowledge of customer perceptions’ service receiving.

Martin O’Neill (2001) concludes that it is simply stated “today’s hospitality professional must consider the measurement of service quality an integral part of any quality improvement exercise.”

## **2.4 Strategies**

### **2.4.1 Dynamic theory of strategy**

The central question in strategy could be what the reason is for leading companies to success or failure. Other questions, such as why companies differ, how they behave, how they choose strategies, and how they are managed, are inextricably encompassed by the causes of company success or failure. To understand success, highlighting theory of the firm and an associated theory of strategy is a must. Traditional answer of the strategy field, which offers the reason why companies succeed or fail, based on a set of largely implicit. While the nature of companies and the environment in which they operate are crucial assumptions. The importance of the distinction between industry structure and relative position can be explained that strategies, which will improve company while harming the other, can be chosen among other things. Moreover, for the origins of competitive advantage, the capabilities and likely behavior of competitive can determine the best strategy for company. At last, a sophisticated understanding of industry structure creates strategy for company (Porter, 1991).

### **2.4.2 Global strategies**

Regarding to global service in international hotel industry, providing clean and safe accommodations are needed while flexibility is also important in term of physical facilities in individual hotels accorded to local managers. Moreover, standardized policies were pursued by the leading franchised group more than the other brands. The consistency and the predictability are things which customers are looking for in a brand. Brand makes it recognizable as well.

In terms of service standards (rather than physical amenities), achieving standardization is what the hotels are seeking. The hotel executives pointed out that to maintain a consistent level of service was needed which method in place for each chain hotels would be applied to ensure for meeting standards.

In terms of information system, expectation of international chains hotels is making significant use of common global systems. For example, guest preferences can be stored by one hotel, which can be accessed by other hotels in the chain (Whitla et al., 2007)

### **2.4.3 Quality strategy**

According to quality-oriented strategies and strategic control system, there was an example as the U.S. Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The companies were required to develop a process for deploying and monitoring strategic quality plans (Department of Commerce, 1994). Starting the strategic quality implementation process was the translation of strategies and planning specific requirements and objectives for units of work. Three requirements were highlighted by the Baldrige criteria for effective monitoring of the strategic quality deployment process. The requirements consisted of following;

- Supplementing financial measure with non-financial indicators, which focused specifically on customer requirements, customer satisfaction and operational quality results.
- Performance relative of competitive benchmarks, which related to competitors or other industry leaders in order to establishing challenging while attainable targets and alert the organization to threats of competitive.
- Gathering of information was a must for identifying or anticipating of environmental changing, which may affect customer expectations, technological developments, changing customer segments or competitor actions. Therefore, the warning of potential threats, which may effect to the strategy plan of organization, must be provided (Ittner&Larcker, 1997).

### **2.4.4 Hotel Operational strategy**

Operational strategy literature has been contextualized in term of the hotel paradigms. Porter (1996) mentioned that operational Strategy is concerned with how the operation is organized to deliver to the right position. Operational strategy therefore focuses on issues of resources, processes, and people. Nowadays, is the plan for a long-term for a high degree of compatibility between these resources and the hotel's long-term corporate strategy (Slack & Lewis 2002).

#### **2.4.5 Hospitality competitive strategy in Phuket**

There are many licensed 5 star hotels in Phuket, present the diverse range of accommodation to suit the taste of arriving visitors in terms of elegance, class, quality service, and ambiance. As hotel competition in Phuket is high so using the operational strategy is one of the most important factors that lead the success of hotel managements in Phuket (Sriyam, 2010).

Zerenler et al. (2007) affirmed in order to stay competitive, the hotel should redefine the challenge of their basic strategies by rediscovering the sector they are in and creating something difference in their products and services. While, Porter (2008) mentioned that in order to be able to sell hotel products in a market of full competitor, one should have the capacity to meet the standard, demands, and expectations of the customers for instance; designing, the marketing trend and price, and promotion.

To conclusion, competitive strategy is became an important issue to obligate the differentiation occurred in customers 'demanding. Furthermore, hotel which can offer the products and services having new, unique, and different characteristics in the fastest way will be able to survive.

#### **2.4.6 Employee strategic**

It is a good reasons to consider investing in employee strategy, either fully or partially subsidized. Gagnon & Michael (2003); Hartline *et al.*, (2000). Explained that manpower is not the same task as other resource, it is because human is a live, critical, flexible but difficult to manage. While, Lam *et al.*, (2007) mentioned that human behavior is highly unpredictable, it differs not only from individual to individual but also the part of same individual at different points of time. However, Anderson (1989) suggested that "the main component of an organization or business is the human resources or 'People at work'. Human resources have been defined as, "the talents, skills, aptitudes, and creative abilities: whereas from the view point of the individual enterprise, they represent the total of the inherent abilities, acquired knowledge and skills as exemplified in the talents and aptitudes of its employees".

Nowadays, many hotel organization focus on human resources management in order to utilize the human resources so that it can be achieved very effectively and efficiently. It can be seen that many organization try to use this strategy in order to give better results. Furthermore, it also helps in achieving the objectives of Human Resources Management (HRM)



as well as, the Performance management includes activities to ensure that goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner.

#### **2.4.7 Green strategic**

Over the last decade year, many hotels businesses have increasingly changed, rapidly improved and adopted more and more on green strategies, in order to be a part of their operations. This is become a part of marketing declarations for the hotel to motivate customer to recognize (Millar & Baloglu, 2011).

Going green has become the important issue of the past several years and is continues to grow rapidly. The hotel industry is a large business sector, which means it plays a major role on positively contribution as well as changing the culture of environmental degradation in terms of the measure to reduce energy consumption (Fukey & Issac (2014). Many studies have indicated that the economic benefits of going green will provide various advantages in terms of gaining competitive advantage (being a leader in the sector, employee retention, recognition, customer loyalty, and increased the brand value).

It identified that the first green hotel launched by the intercontinental hotel group since year 2008. This was the world's first hotel with 100 percent ecologically-friendly. Their green features including: using of solar panels on rooftops, giving away nonperishable food to charities, wind power to generate electricity, furniture and fixtures made from recycled materials, rainwater harvesting system from the supply water in the toilets, and recycled glass windows, (Han *et al.*, 2010). Coming to our motherland Thailand, The Evason Phuket resort, which is certified by 'Green Leaf', this is one of the Eco label of green hotels and resorts. It demonstrated how environment-friendly upgrades made in older buildings can improve energy efficiency and reduce water use.

#### **2.4.8 Training Strategy**

Effective training is a necessity factor that helps employee able to develop the necessary skills in their position as well as improving the performance in the present jobs. As training helps improving new procedures. Noe & Peacock (2002) stated that employee training and development has become a major educational enterprise over the last three decades.

Armstrong (2001) stated that numerous organizational section suggest that people are the key for any successful business operation. It is becoming increasingly clear that no human

enterprise can succeed without properly skilled and knowledgeable human resource development professionals (Goldstein & Ford, 2002).

Employee development is critical for a short and long term of every business profit or non-profit (Noe & Peacock, 2002). Although the definitions of training strategy is broadly but the definition in the literature use as the term of human resource development (HRD), is rather than training and development (Slack & Lewis, 2002). It is mentioned as the changes in behavior that motivate the attainment of the goals and objectives of the organization.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Qualitative method was applied to this study to discover differences of chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket in terms of service quality and strategies in service quality. There were two main target groups which were chain hotels and resorts and non-chain hotels and resorts. This chapter explains the research methodology as following details;

3.1 Population

3.2 Sample and Sampling Method

3.3 Types of research

3.4 Research instruments

3.5 Data collection

3.6 Data analysis

3.7 Pretest Survey

#### **3.1 Target Population**

The research focuses on three departments included Front Office department, Food and Beverage department and Housekeeping department. The two target groups were described as following;

Group 1 : Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

Group 2 : Non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

#### **3.2 Sample and Sampling Method**

In order to explore qualitative answers, Purposive Sampling Method was applied to 7 chain hotels and resorts. Moreover, Convenience Sampling Method was applied to 5 non-chain hotels and resorts. Altogether, chain and non-chain hotels and resorts allowed the researcher had in-depth interview. The interviewees were managers and supervisors. In addition, existing strategies to maintain service quality were discussed during the interview.

### 3.3 Types of research

Qualitative method was used to explore answers all objectives for this study. In-depth interview was applied to a group of people who are at manager or supervisor level of Front office department, Food and Beverage department and Housekeeping department who monitor staff in each service parts and provide service directly to customers. Furthermore, one responsibility of the managers and supervisors is to maintain service quality for the departments.

### 3.4 Research instrument

In-depth interviews were conducted from manager and supervisor levels of operation department which were in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The main topics covered all dimensions of service quality and the strategies implement to maintain service qualities.

Parasuraman et al., (1985) created SERVQUAL dimension statements as following table;

Table 3.1 Original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements

Dimensions	Items	SERVQUAL Statement
Tangibles	1	The hotel / restaurant has modern looking equipment
	2	The physical facilities are visually appealing
	3	Employees are neat-appearing
	4	Materials associated with service are visually appealing
	5	Service is performed as promised
Reliability	6	Company shows interest to solve problems
	7	The service is performed right the first time
	8	Service is performed at the time promised
	9	There are no errors in the records
Responsiveness	10	Employees inform customers when service will be performed
	11	Employees give prompt service to customers
	12	Employees are willing to help customers
	13	Employees are never too busy to respond to requests

Table 3.1 Continued

Dimensions	Items	SERVQUAL Statement
Assurance	14	Behavior of employees to instill confidence in customers
	15	Customers feel safe in their transaction
	16	Employees are consistently courteous
	17	Employees have knowledge to answer customer's questions
Empathy	18	Restaurant gives individual attention
	19	Employees give personal attention to customers
	20	Restaurant understands specific needs of customers
	21	Restaurant has customer's interest at heart
	22	Operating hours are convenient to all customers

### 3.5 Data collection

The qualitative method was applied to this study to collect the data by using in-depth interview which was conducted during November 2017 until May 2018 from managers and supervisors, who have been in the positions at least 1 year. The interview was held upon the interviewees' convenience. It took approximately 60 minutes to achieve the interview checklist. Likewise, the questions were sent to the interviewees via email before the actual interview.

### 3.6 Data analysis

The open-ended interview questions revealed the findings of the research. Content analysis was applied as the method which enabled the researcher to examine the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts as well as strategies implemented to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.

### 3.7 Pretest of Survey Instrument

The necessary of interview questions is validity and understanding. Therefore, the interview checklist was modified after five interviews were conducted. Moreover, ranking of importance of service quality dimensions allowed the researcher to get more data

concerned about strategies in terms of servicequalities. In short, the interview questions were adjusted and corrected as suggestions, comments and feedbacks in order to make them suitable and appropriate for the research.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

In this chapter, the in-depth interviews with the selected key informants were applied to explore the main findings of primary data. The informants were related to Service Quality in hospitality in Chain and Non-Chain Hotel and Resort in Phuket. The interviews were conducted during the month of November 2017 to May 2018. Moreover, the pilot interview was conducted to ensure the respondents understood the questions which concerned to the accuracy of answer before conducting the in-depth interview.

The purpose of this study is to identify the differences of service quality and to compare strategies implement to service quality in Chain and Non-Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Taking the content analysis was applied to the results in order to response the major objectives as following;

1. To identify the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket
2. To compare strategies implement to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

#### 4.1 Profile of the informants

The purposive sampling technique was applied to the informants via obtaining in-depth interview with twenty of key informants which concerned to provide and monitor services to customers whom at least had 1-year experience in the position. There were two major related informants which including informants in chain hotels and resorts in Phuket and informants in non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. After the 20<sup>th</sup> interview, the findings were all similar which indicated the saturation point of the data had reached. Therefore, there was no further interview. Table 4.1 presented the summary of key informants as following;

Table 4.1 Summary of Key Informants Profile

key Informants	Designation / Position	No. of Informants
Chain Hotels and Resorts	Manager	5
	Supervisor	6
Non-Chain Hotels and Resorts	Manager	3
	Supervisor	6

## 4.2 Main Findings

Regarding to the interview, the informants were asked through each dimensions of service quality which based on the SERVQUAL Dimensions (Parasurama et al., 1988) from the literature review, and it was described as following;

**1. Tangibility** - Elements that can be observed physically: The aesthetics of physical facilities, tools, employees, and communications items.

**2. Reliability** - The capacity to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately. This dimension includes meeting promises pertaining to delivery, pricing, and complaint handling.

**3. Responsiveness** - The willingness to assist customers in a prompt manner. This dimension advocates positive service attitudes and requires personnel to pay attention to customer requests, questions, and complaints.

**4. Assurance** - The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence.

**5. Empathy** - The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers.

The interviewees responded though the SERVQUAL Dimensions as summarized below:



Table 4.2 Summary of key findings on the Chain Hotels and Resorts in Phuket

<b>Key Informants</b>	<b>Tangibles</b>	<b>Reliability</b>	<b>Responsiveness</b>	<b>Assurance</b>	<b>Empathy</b>
Chain Hotels and Resorts	First priority	No mistake during serving services	Being professional on duty	Important	Customers' conditions
	Keeping promises	Standard Operating Procedure	Willing to help customers	Knowledge and Skills	Customers' preferences
	Good Facilities	Standard is a MUST.	Rotation job tasks in case of unstable emotion	Product Knowledge of hotels and resorts	Providing things or service to customers without asking
	Good condition of guest's rooms		Taking leave if necessary	Gaining more knowledge and skills once start working	Convenient services hours
			Team supporting	Training by Brand standard	24 hours services

Table 4.3 Summary of key findings on the Non-Chain Hotels and Resorts in Phuket

Key Informants	Tangibles	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy
Non-Chain Hotels and Resorts	Good Facilities	Standard is a guideline.	Willing to help customers	Important	Customers' conditions
	Keeping promises	Standard Operating Procedure could be adjusted depending on customers' conditions.	Rotation job tasks in case of unstable emotion	Knowledge and Skills were not the core of service quality.	Customers' preferences
		Flexible service processes	Taking leave if necessary	Attitude was more important than knowledge and skills.	Go beyond customers' expectations.
			Team work	Gaining more knowledge and skills could be fulfilled once start working.	24 hours services
			Team supporting	Training	

### 4.3 Service Quality in Chain Hotels and Resort in Phuket.

#### 4.3.1 Tangibles

95 percent of chain hotels and resorts pointed out that the tangibles dimension is “very important” especially “keeping promises”. Regarding to original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements by Parasuraman et al., (1985), “Service is performed as promised” was mentioned as one statement of tangibles dimension. “Keeping promises” was significant described as the first priority by informants who worked for chain hotels and resorts. In addition, keeping promises was the highest level of focusing in this dimension among statements of tangibles.

*“Keeping promises is very important for us because it’s what our hotel is. The customers come with the expectations of receiving what we have promised by our reputation”.*

*“Keeping promises is the first priority. No matter what, we put it as the first priority”.*

*“Once hotels promised anything to customers, is a MUST to keep that promise”.*

*“Best service is the winner. Services make hotels different because any investors can build up hotels with good facilities in good location. The image of the brand and reputation is the promises, which the hotel must keep those promises for customers”.*

*“Keeping promise is the main key to gain trust from customers, and it can create the first impression. For example, the hotel informs customers that checking in time will be at 15:00 hrs., but if the hotel could not make it on time. It could make customers disappoint and negative attitude towards the whole part of the hotel especially the Japanese customers who seriously strict with being on time”.*

*“New hotels are increasing nowadays, so there are many choices for customers, but for staying in hotels, service is the most expecting thing from customers.”*

*“Customers can make decisions through brand of hotels and resorts as being a chain hotel carrying the promises for customers including good service standard, good condition of guest’s rooms, good and clean facility and cleanliness of the hotel especially customers who used to stay in a hotel or a resort in that brand before. Even though, they stayed in*

*different properties, but they expected the chain hotels and resorts to keep the promises of the brand”.*

*“Being staff in the hotel as servers, we will never let customers down by breaking the hotel promises”.*

The chain hotels and resorts also revealed that 95 percent of keeping promises were completed from all hotels and resorts promises. Furthermore, the informants explained that 5 percent of promises which could not be kept depending on hotels and resorts’ conditions, lacking of manpower and communication breakdown between staff and customers or staff and staff.

*“Sometimes, we can’t keep our promise. For the significant example, our hotel informs customers for checking in time is 14:00 hrs., but once the customers come to check in, the hotel can’t offer the room in time. Most of this situation would happen in high and peak season which create a number of “Back to Back”. “Back to Back” means the room that the previous guests will check out and there’ll be new guests come to check in in that room in the same day”.*

*“In January 2018 until March 2018, we hired 7 temporary staff as housekeepers. It helped us to complete the housekeeping job task including clean room for checking out guests to be ready for new checking in guests by 14:00 hrs. But there were 20 percent of checking in rooms, which were not ready by 14:00 hrs. especially in the day which there were staff took sick leave. It effected to the man power which made it tighter to manage”.*

*“Setting up a fruit plate in checking in room before guest arrival is the hotel’s standard, and Food and Beverage department is assigned to complete this standard. Once we are informed that the checking in room is clean by housekeeping department, F & B staff will go to that room for setting up a fruit plate. But in the high season, the number of checking in room is increasing while we still have the exactly number of staff. That’s why F&B team can’t set up the fruit plate for checking in room in time. It would be better if we could have more staff during any months with very high occupancy”.*

*“We have free shuttle bus from our resort to the beach for guests, we offer 2 rounds a day, and guests have to register at the front desk to confirm number of passengers one day in advance as limited seats. But sometimes there are guests more than the shuttle’s seats in*

*each round. Unfortunately, we can't offer more shuttle bus. It's our resort's limitation. Then, the best we can do is to offer help for booking a taxi if the guests want and willing to pay by themselves".*

*"One of our signature is our sunset rooftop bar. This signature is like one of our promise. Every guests come to our hotel with expecting to take a photo at our stunning rooftop bar, and we love to help them take photo up there as much as they want to make them happy with our hotel with unforgettable vacation. But some guests come to check in after the sunset and check out in the next morning which our sunset rooftop bar hasn't open yet. That makes some guests unhappy as they expected to take gorgeous photos up there but they couldn't. I think that could be one promise which we can't keep for all customers as our hotel's condition".*

*"Communication breakdown is one reason which our resort can't keep the promise in guest's perception. It happens sometimes between staff and customers during booking confirmation. Last week, I checked in guests when I informed them the villa number they got surprise. They said that they've already talked to reservation staff when they made a booking in exactly villa number. Then, I double checked with the reservation staff. The reservation staff explained that the guests requested for exactly villa number, but the staff's already informed them that we cannot confirm the villa number, but we might offer them if that villa number's available. Also, it was written in the document of booking confirmation which the reservation team 's already sent it to the guests via email. After that, I explained to the guest, but they get a little bit angry at our resort. They said that "Your resort promised me that I'd have that exactly villa number". After the guests was calm down for a while, I escorted them to the villa which our resort prepared for them if they could change their mind to stay in the prepared one. Finally, they agreed to stay in the prepared villa. This issue could be one promise that our resort can't keep for guests".*

*"Sometimes, communication breakdown between staff and staff could be reason that we can't keep promise to customers. For Muslim guests who come from the Middle East, once they made a booking, they requested the hotel to remove all alcohol from minibar in their room before their arrival. But somehow, housekeeping didn't receive that information. So, they didn't remove alcohol drinks from the minibar. Once the guests checked in they complained*

*about it, and it made them were unhappy. In my opinion, that was one of the reason why we can't keep promises for 100 percent”.*

Relating to others statements of tangibles of the original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements as “The hotel / restaurant has modern looking equipment”, “The physical facilities are visually appealing”, facilities were mentioned by informants as important for dimension of tangibles in service quality. The informants revealed that good conditions of accommodation including clean and modern facilities could complete the customers' expectations.

*“Facilities in hotels are important as they're supposed to meet customers' expectations. The customers always expected facilities in hotels and resorts to be clean, modern beautiful”.*

*“Customers expected clean and modern facilities from staying in a hotel. Guests' rooms must be clean and comfortable for resting. Those are what they pay for.”*

*“One of the important factor for customers to choose a hotel is to experience good and modern facilities. Our resort provides private pool and Jacuzzi with Seaview for our guests which they could not have it from other hotels or resorts”.*

*“No need for guests to stay with our hotel if our facilities don't be extraordinary for them. The hotel has swimming pool with small water park area for children which our main customers target is family. The parents prefer their children to enjoy our small water park area while they're relaxing by the pool than let their children to get in the sea during monsoon season with red flags are put on the beach as warning “DO NOT SWIM” by the government organization.*

*“We have the spectacular beach club as modern designed swimming pool and stylized sun bed area which blended with the pre-existing local tree. Famous DJs from around the world come to play their music for our guests while they're chilling at the swimming pool area with soul fulfilled cocktails. 90 percent of our guests come to stay in our resort is for getting new experiences and superb service as our reputation. We really sure that we're going to be the best beach club and entertainment complex spot for this area even though there're many luxury hotels in this area”.*

### 4.3.2 Reliability

In term of “Reliability” dimension, it referred to ability of performing the dependably and accurately service by the service provider ( Parsuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988, P. 23). There were two main finding in this dimension which consisted of providing the right service without mistakes and completing standard operating procedure (SOP). The informants from Chain hotels and resorts explained that as service providers, the service has to performed in the right way for customers. The service providers will not create any mistake during offering service.

*“Being staff, we have to provide right service to customers which the services are supposed to be. Let’s say we were customers, and we’ve paid for air ticket, visa fee, transportation and how much we’d pay for the room rate. We have been waiting for this vacation. All’s not just come here to received wrong services or bad services. It should be the best vacation ever. Therefore, providing the right service is important for staff”.*

*“Working in a main dining restaurant in this hotel is challenging. The dinner could become both as the good dinner and the great dinner because of wine. Our recommendations for a bottle of wine can fulfil the guests’ dinner, and the recommendations have to base on the right matching between food and wine. Different type of wine can offer different results depending on kind of food. Even though, we serve the best dish in our restaurant, but if we recommend the wrong type of wine. It can decrease tasted and value of our best dish”.*

*“Offering wrong service even one time, it can destroy the trust from guests especially the guests who just arrived the hotel. “What would happen next? If staff give me the wrong service since the first day I arrived”. The guests may say that or they could be polite not to say it out loud, but they would feel unsecure with our service for sure. That’s why providing the right service is necessary”.*

*“I must be sure that new staff will service customers in the right way before allowing them to service the guests. I cannot let the new staff create mistake during serving the guests. It may create negative comments which effect the whole team of F & B department. No matter I assign a supervisor to service them, they would not 100 percent trust in our service. The guest would feel insecure because they ‘ve already received bad experience from our staff. Therefore, when we serve the service to the guests, we need to serve it in the right way”.*

Furthermore, standard operating procedure was significant mentioned by all informants from chain hotels and resorts. SOP stands for “Standard Operating Procedure”, which was described as the standard process for providing service, and staff has to follow the standards. Completing standard is a necessary. The chain hotels and resorts pointed out that to offer right service to customers; staff had to follow the brand standard. The brand standard of chain hotels and resorts creates identity of each brand. Customers may stay in different properties of one chain hotel or resort, but they expected to receive the same service standard.

In addition, the informants explained that the chain hotels and resorts had standard examiners for each brand including internal and external. Internal standard examiners could be head of departments in the property of the chain hotels and resorts. Those managers were assigned to check standard of service including facilities and actual services from staff. The internal standard examiners also were called MOD, which stands for “Manager On Duty”. Not only to check the standard of chain hotels and resorts, but also to be in charge instead of General Manager during the night time. External standard examiners could be any customers who stay in the chain hotels and resorts. The staff was not able to identify the external standard examiners among all customers. The external standard examiners were also called “Mystery Customers”. After checking out, the Mystery customers must report the results of the standard exam to the main part of the brand. Then, the property would receive the results from the main office of the brand. In case of completing brand standard, the property would receive compliment. But in case of there was any brand standard which could not completed, the property had to improve to meet the brand standard.

*“First of all, we need to start with the hotel standard. We have to follow our process to service customers. For me, I work in Front Office department, no matter what I have to offer welcome drinks and cold towels to guests who checking in to make them relax during their arrival”.*

*“The hotel has SOP especially in operation departments. SOP is a MUST. The hotel requires staff to completed the standard which controlled by our brand. That is our brand standard”.*

*“I have to take a call within 3 rings as front office team because it’s our SOP. Once we all are busy, but we have to support one another to take the call within 3 rings. We*



*never know that call would be MOD or general manager or not, which make a call to check our service standard. Also, if I need to transfer the line to other department, I have to make sure that the guest must hear the music on hold because it's the hotel standard. Every day I have to make a call by myself to check if there's music on hold or not when I start my working shift".*

*"As supervisor, one of my duty is to ensure that all job tasks are completed in my shift. There's a job tasks checklist for each shift. Staff must complete those tasks, and I have to check if they complete all job tasks. It's our SOP which is really support us to complete the service".*

*"The standard is a MUST. Providing the same service standard is very important for our resort. All we need is to meet customers' expectation. Many customers used to stay with our brand in different property before, and they would expect the same service standard from our property. At the beginning of this property, all operation staff was transfer from the original resort in different location of our brand to make sure that this property will provide exactly the same service standard as the original one. And, the staff who was transferred from the original resort can groom new staff to meet the resort's standard which is very important".*

*"One of the global brand standards of my hotel is greeting customers. There is exactly the same pattern of saying for every chain hotels of our brand. Staff must have eye contact when we are distant from customers for 15 steps length, and staff must smile and greet customers once we are distant from customers for 5 steps length. The brand will always send mystery customers to check our standard. They are external standard examiners, but we have no idea who would be one of them. They can be any customers. Having examiners from the brand is keeping the hotel's staff complete standard all times. We never know when we could service the mystery customers".*

*"There was an internal examiner who came from the main office of our hotel brand. He put a few screws in his bed before leaving his room for dinner, and it was time for turn down service. He tested us if our housekeeper who set the turn down service would really complete the standard or not. If not, our housekeeper would never found the screws, which might hurt him.*

*"Once I was assigned to be MOD, I have to stay overnight in one villa of the resort. I have to check the standard set up facilities in the villa including mini bar, bath*

*amenities, emergency flashlight and cleanliness of the villa due to the villa I stay it is one of our villa the guests will stay”*

### **4.3.3 Responsiveness**

In term of “Responsiveness” dimension, every informant from chain hotels and resorts mentioned “willing to help” during interviews. Willing to help customers was focused once the interview concerned to responsiveness dimension. It was common part of the interview and one statement of the original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements by Parasuraman et al., (1985) which was “Employees are willing to help customers”. Staff was expected to be professional once they were on duty, which including being willing to help customers all times. One informant revealed that in the chain hotel, there would be a reviewer team, who worked in Human Resources department, responded to review comments and feedback from trip advisor website. The reviewer team was assigned to seek for staff’s name which was mentioned as complement by customers on the trip advisor website. Therefore, Human Resources department offered recognition certificate to any staff whom received complement by customers on trip advisor website once a month. Likewise, there were other informants pointed out that the chain hotels and resorts considered comments and feedback from customers on trip advisor website as important.

*“Staff must always be willing to help customers as service providers. It’s what we do here. For the hospitality industry, willing to help is important. Customers always know that staff service sincerely or not during getting service. It’s something that you can’t fake. The customers would feel it anyway. That becomes the reason for the service providers to be willing to help customers all times once they are working”.*

*“The hotel expects all staff to perform as professional once they are on duty. In the service part, staff are supposed to be willing to help customers. You must be ready to work once you are on floor. This is how we service our guests”.*

*“All of us need to work by heart which means all of us have service mind. We’re willing to assist customers no matter small issue or huge issue. I remember, we had Korean honeymooners last month. They traveled by themselves, but not really speak English while we don’t speak Korean. Every time they showed up at the front desk, we always helped them to communicate by using google translate even though it took time to complete the whole*

*conversation, but we really loved to help them. All we wanted was to made them happy during they stayed with us because they chose our hotel for their special time which they could remember it for good”.*

*“There was a couple of guest had trouble during their stay. One of them had a serious illness. Then, our hotel provided transfer from the resort to the international hospital, and his wife, who was another guest, was going with him. The driver and I took them to the hospital, and she was worried about her husband all the way. During her husband was with a doctor, she seemed very worried and stressful. I was not sure if she was quite drunk at that time because she was drinking when the issue happened. Then, I talked to her to relief her stress, and I said “You can hug me if you really need someone now”. Suddenly, she hugged me and broke down in tears. I felt sorry for her. I was thinking if I were in her shoes which was so far away from home. They came this far to relax and create remarkable memory with her husband, but the bad thing happened. And she found herself alone to get through this issue. I just could not leave her alone at the hospital even though my working shift was over. I talk to my manager, and she allowed me to stay with the guests at the hospital. After 4 hours, everything was settled down. Then, I left the hospital”.*

*“HR team always checks Trip advisor, and they ‘ll looking for staff’s name mentioned by customers. The guests write comments and feedback of our hotel and our service on Trip advisor. It’s called “GUESTS’ VOICE”. If any staff get complement with name mentioned on Trip advisor by the guests, they will receive recognition certificate from HR. This happens once a month, and it is our good support to keep us work happily and always want to do our best”.*

*“Trip advisor is very important for our service part. There is a big board, which is put in front of our canteen, showing comments and feedback written on Trip advisor from our guests, and all staff can read it. It can become a huge issue for our hotel if we have negative comments or feedback about our service which is written on Trip advisor by our guests”.*

*“Front Office team will always approach customers after breakfast because the guests will come to ask for internal transfer from our outlet back to their villas, and it will be our chance to get feedback of our service and their satisfactions during stay. There were our*

*guests who wrote feedback to our resort on Trip adviser as “The villa was spectacular, but staff were something more than spectacular”. Every complement from the guests is special gift for us. No matter how tough it could be in that day, but if we get the complement sincerely from the guests, we could get through anything”.*

According to statement of “Employees are willing to help customers” from the original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements by Parasuraman et al., (1985). The chain hotels and resorts expect their staff to be professional for performance service once they are on duty. In case of staff are not ready to work due to unstable emotions, taking leave is allowed from supervisors or managers for staff, who are not ready to work as unstable emotions. Negative issue may cause unstable emotions for example staff are informed that their parents are in serious sickness before starting the working shift. Moreover, job tasks rotation can be applied to the team in case of some staff is in unstable emotions. Both of taking leave and job tasks rotation need support from all team members, and it makes team player skill is important. They always support one another to solve unexpected issues in order to perform best service for customers.

*“I would like to share an unstable emotion case of my team. My manager is Japanese, but he has been living in Thailand more than 10 years. He knows and understands Thai people very well. One day, one of my team members came to work with terrible sad emotion. We asked her what happened, and she told us that she just broke up with her boyfriend the night before. Then, we informed the manager. After talking to her, our manager let her took leave to recover her emotion. And she returned to work in the following day with better emotion, which supported her to be professional at work”.*

*“In the restaurant, man power is important for our service. I would talk to staff first and evaluate him or her if they are ready to work as normal or not. If they are not ready to work as normal, but they still can work in the different job tasks. I would swop them into the job task which less direct contact to customers or I would swop them into the back office. However, in case of staff cannot work properly even though in the back office, I would let them take leave in one condition, which is understanding of the team members”.*

*“As a manager, I prefer to allow staff who are not ready to work as unstable emotions to take leave rather than keep them stay to work. It may create bad atmosphere in the workplace, which can effect other colleges, and it may create bad value to customers once*

*they have to service the guests. We may lose man power which make our team facing difficult working shift, but I'm really sure that it will be better than keep them stay, which is forcing them to ruin environment of the team and provide bad service".*

*"My staff used to face the unstable emotion issue, and it made her could work in that day. I talked to her and let her take leave. I told her that "No need to tell me now when you will be back. Take your time and let me know tomorrow when you'll be back. But I expect you to be professional once you return to work, and you must perform service as the same when you are back on duty".*

#### **4.3.4 Assurance**

According to the definitions of the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al., (1988) in literature review, which defined "Assurance" dimension as the knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence. "Assurance" dimension was considered as "important" from the informants of chain hotels and resorts. The informants described "Knowledge and skills" as the foundation of service including product knowledge of the hotels and resorts and essential knowledge and skill of job tasks. The informants explained that knowledge and skill could be fulfilled once start working.

Hence, training was a key success for gaining knowledge and skills, which was provided by training section of Human Resources department and operation departments. Training team, who work in Human Resources department, responds training by brand standard including product knowledge of brand and hotel. It started since orientation was held for new staff because the first start of working in the chain hotels and resorts was staff orientation, and it might took 1 to 7 days depending to each brand in order to introduce the brand culture and the brand standard to new staff. Then, the new staff would become staff of the brand.

In addition, operation departments provided training within departments for staff. The internal training of operation departments was known as "OJT", which stand for "On The Job Training". The manager of each operation department could be the trainer or supervisors could be assigned to be the trainers for the training courses. The on the job training could be held at least for 1 hour for each training course depending on department availability, and the manager could allow staff to involve on the job training of different department if the training course was concerned to their job tasks. For example, Front Office manager could allow staff to involve

showing villa's facilities upon guest arrival training of Housekeeping department. Plus, Housekeeping manager could allow Butlers to involve Special Promotion for Valentines training by Spa department in order to offer information about spa and treatments for customers. However, both training by Human Resources department and by each operation department were controlled by brand standard, which differently depending on the chain of hotels and resorts.

*“If we have product knowledge, it can help us to flow the job smoothly. Being staff without the hotel's product knowledge, we can't offer any information for customers”.*

*“To gain hotel's product knowledge, I have to walk around the hotel to learn product knowledge, which can help me to provide better service. Actually, I have joined the hotel's orientation when I started to work here. That was the first start for every new staff, which took care by HR department, and it took 7 days. It was the best orientation I've ever joined compared to other hotels and resorts I used to work for. It helped me to know and understand the brand as what we are and who we are”.*

*“Not only the hotel's product knowledge that staff must have, but staff must have knowledge and skills in job tasks also. Knowledge and skills are required from anyone who would work as staff unless they would not pass the interview process of recruitment. I admit that knowledge and skills can be fulfilled once staff start to work. But before becoming staff in my team, you must have necessary knowledge and skills in the job tasks. I cannot allow anyone to be a staff in the Front Office department if they never experience job in Front Office before. I expected the ones who used to work in this position at least 1 year because they've already gain necessary knowledge and skills in Front Office. Those could be the ones who could be fulfilled knowledge and skills as staff of our hotel”.*

*“Knowledge and skills are important because good service reflects good knowledge of staff. Also, knowledge should be provided with service mind. In our team, we always share knowledge and skills among our team members to help one another to develop ourselves. Training and retraining is one in our things to do lists, we always do it at once a week. For my hotel, there was a policy, which indicates that the hotel's staff has to complete 50 hours training per year. HR will keep record of staff's training hour, and that is one of our brand standard”.*

*“The hotel’s brand standard controls staff for training, and 48 hours training must be completed by each staff per year. Supervisors are assigned to evaluate the brand standard of new staff, the manager gives staff knowledge, and the manager is the one who evaluate them and the brand standard in the department”.*

*“I really enjoy OJT. It helps me a lot for improving knowledge and skills of staff in my team. There are 30 % of new staff in my team, who need to be fulfilled by knowledge and skills even though they’d have basic knowledge and skills. The OJT also helps me to retrain some job tasks, which we don’t use it often. It can make all staff recognize the knowledge and skill they may already forgot”.*

*“There is a key person for OJT in every department in the resort, and the key person is supposed to be in supervisor level. I am the key person for Front Office department, and I have to complete at least 4 on the job training courses for staff in my department. There will be a meeting once a month for the key persons from every department in order to update the plan and the completed results of each department. It’s our brand standard”.*

*“I assigned the Housekeeping manager to send butlers to join OJT of Spa in Promotion for Valentines training. After the butlers received training for that course, they could offer information of our spa to the guests, as they were the closet staff to the guests, compared to other staff in the hotel”.*

#### **4.3.5 Empathy**

Relating to literature review in chapter 2, Parasuraman et al., (1988) stated the definition of “Empathy” dimension from the SEVQUAL dimensions that “The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers”. The main finding from the in-depth interview with supervisors and managers, who work in the chain hotels and resorts, was service hours, which were convenient for customers. It concerned to one statement of Empathy dimension, which was “Operating hours are convenient to all customers”. (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

The informants stated about 24 hours service which were provided by the hotel and resorts. As the results, there were common 24 hours services in all the chain hotels and resorts as following; security, Front Office, Housekeeping.

Besides, the informants also added explanation about individual attention to customers, which referred to customers' condition and customers' preferences. In hotel industry, service is one main expectation part from customers. Paying individual attention to customers' conditions is one way to meet their expectations. Some customers have health conditions such as gluten free, asthma or physical difficulty. Once staff pay individual to the customers' conditions, staff can offer service properly for those who have special conditions. Knowing customers' preferences can be beneficial for staff during service, and it can create customers' satisfaction. Staff can create impression of customers by offering their preferences.

*Security service is 24 hours service in the hotel, and our duty is to secure all part of the property including customers and staff”.*

*“Our security team works for 24 hours, and they very strict to the safety standard. Supervisor always give briefing the hotel's updated information which concerned to work of security guards in the beginning of every work shift. Also, the manager of security department always attends morning brief among every head of departments with GM every day to update the hotel's information in order to have the same big picture with all head of departments”.*

*“Having 24 hours security service is very important service which secures the hotel, and it makes customers feel safe when they stay with us. As our resort consists of many villas in 32 acer landscape, having security guards in proper spots, which cover all area, can gain trust from the guests to feel safe while they are relaxing in their villas”.*

*“I used to open the safety box for guests in their room at the night time, and I had to go to their room with a security guard as it was our standard. The thing started because a child of the guests put something inside and locked it, but she didn't do it on purpose. It was her important thing, which was locked in the safety box, and she started to cry. The parents then called to the Front desk to ask us to open it for them. Due to our standard, in case of opening the safety box for the guests, one security guard and the guests must be witnesses in the scene. Once I opened the safety box, it turned out to be a bunny doll. Suddenly, the girl stopped crying. The parents told us that she couldn't go to bed without her bunny. That's why they couldn't wait until the next morning”.*



*“Front desk is always ready to service customers 24 hours, and we provide staff around the clock to take care the guests. Some guests come to check in very late due to their international flights, and our Front Office department can service them properly. In case that there would be a group of Chinese customers come to check in in the early morning like 03:30 am. or 04.30 am., I would assign at least one staff who can speak Chinese to ensure that all check in processes are completed smoothly. The guests would receive essential information properly as well”.*

*“We don’t have Room Service for 24 hours, but we do have Front Office staff to service for 24 hours. The Front Office staff are allowed to have a key of the food cooler, which belongs to Food and Beverage department, and it contains variety of sandwich. That means the guests can have some sandwich in the late night while it not an operating time of the restaurants and room service”.*

*“While other operation departments are closed, Front Office department still stand by to service customers all times which is 24 hours. The guests could call us any time to get information or get help. One of our guests went to Patong beach, and he couldn’t talk to a taxi driver in Thai to come back to the resort at 4 am. in the early morning. Then, he called us and asked us to talk to the taxi driver. 40 minutes later, he arrived the resorts safely and said thank you to us when he got off the taxi at the Front Office area”.*

*“One night around 11 pm. when I was working at the front desk, I got a call from in house guests, and she asked us to clean her room because her little son threw potato chips all over her room instead of eating it. Then, I informed Housekeeping team, and they took care of it”.*

*“During the night, the guests may ask for anything to send to their villas. Some asked for more pillows, and some asked for more blankets. But some asked the housekeeper to set up the Jacuzzi, and we were willing to service them”.*

#### **4.4 Service Quality in Non-Chain Hotels and Resort in Phuket.**

##### **4.4.1 Tangibles**

100 percent of the informants from non-chain hotels and resorts pointed out that the tangibles dimension is “very important” especially “keeping promises”. It was considered as

the first priority. Relating to original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements by Parasuraman et al., (1985), “Service is performed as promised” was mentioned as one statement of tangibles dimension. “Keeping promises” was significant stated by the informants. Moreover, keeping promises was the highest level of focusing in this dimension among statements of tangibles.

*“Guests come to the resort because they would like to relax. Most of our customers come across the world for staying in our resort. Every moment is for relaxing expecting by the guests since they’ve stepped into our resort. Facilities are very important as we are on the island. There’s no other facilities on this island. Most of the time, the guests would stay and use facilities in the resort except enjoying the beach”.*

*“We welcome many Scandinavian guests, who have flown with long flight, every year. They would stay with us at least 2 weeks. That’s why the facilities of the resorts are very important. We have several restaurants in our resorts, which different kind of food would be serve there. The guests could have different atmosphere with different good food for dinner. And our spa is one of popular facilities for the guests. We really love it when the guests ask information about our spa, which allowed us to offer them our great facilities. I can tell that our spa is the best spa on the island”.*

*“We have the swimming pool with good service of staff, and we have the beach front restaurant, which it’s just a few steps from the beach. Our guests can enjoy cocktails at our Seaview bar. Plus, if the guests would like to have sun bath, they can enjoy it with the resorts’ sun beds, which were set in our property next to the beach in order to avoid crowded tourists on the beach. Chilling with our sun beds, which are only 1 meter away from the beach, can give exactly view of the beach just like laying down on the beach, but so much more convenient”.*

*“Staying in our resort is to have special time and experience extraordinary facilities. Our resort located in the ordinary area. Even though we are on the beach front, but this beach is not a good spot to enjoy the beach. It looks nice when it’s high tided, but it becomes a muddy beach when it’s low tided. Therefore, we offer our guests a private swimming pool or a private Jacuzzi in every single villa. Then, the guests can have value time by our facilities”.*

*“There are many hotels and resorts in the same level on this beach. It also gives customers many options to choose an accommodation. As an independent resort, we have to*

*make sure that our facilities will make our customers happy. We have to make sure that we have a chance to be the chosen one by customers, without the chain or global brands. Therefore, we have good facilities which can be competed with any chain hotels and resorts. We provide spa, black tiled swimming pool with children swimming pool, yoga classes, gym, tennis courts and water sports including beach games, beach volleyball, body board, paddle board, windsurfing, snorkeling, and we proud to say the last facilities for water sports is catamaran sailing”.*

*“Any promises the hotel has made for customers, the hotel must keep it. We informed our guests that check in time would be 2 pm. in the afternoon since the reservation team sent email to confirm their booking, then the hotel must prepare the room to be ready in time. Keeping promises is the first priority for us. If we can’t keep our promises to customers, they would be disappointed, which could make them not satisfy with our hotel, and they would never return to our hotel even though we would be the cheapest hotel in Phuket”.*

*“There were a couple of guests, who stay in our resort for their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. But only the husband remembered it, and he would like to surprise his wife. After talking to our staff, we informed him that we could set their villa as honeymoon set up and offered them a bottle of champagne in their living room while they were away for dinner. Also, he ordered a rose bouquet for his wife. After the dinner, the guests returned to their villa and found our staff with the rose bouquet. Next, they entered their villa, the husband told his wife that was their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She broke down in tear and suddenly hugged her husband witnessed by our staff, who took photos for them. The guests could not have unforgettable memory if we couldn’t keep the promises we’ve made for him”.*

*“I had a chance to take care a private candle light dinner in the guests’ villa. The male guest made a booking with informing our resort that he was going to propose his girlfriend, and he would discuss the details once he arrived. Of course, he asked all staff to keep it as a secret and said nothing about it to his girlfriend. He decided to propose her during the private candle light dinner, which he and I have already discussed. He asked me to put the ring into the plate instead of the main course, and we acted as normal before serving the main course. I was so happy once I heard the lady said “YES” and saw both of them happy. That could not happen if we can’t keep our promises to the customers”.*

#### 4.4.2 Reliability

According to literature review of “Reliability” dimension, it was described as ability of performing the dependably and accurately service by the service provider (Parsuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988, P. 23). The study found that the non-chain hotels and resorts have flexibility in service process. Furthermore, it referred to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) as guide lines. The informants explained that in non-chain hotels and resorts, the SOP could be adapted or adjusted depending on customers’ condition and situations. The one SOP could not be applied to all customers, and it could be adjusted to suit customers’ conditions and situations in order to complete service and create customers’ satisfactions.

*“We have more flexibility than the chain hotel because we are independent hotel. Service part can be flexible if needed, and it depends on customers’ conditions and situations. To make customers happy, we can be flexible for them. I used to work for the chain hotel which SOP is a must. One day, there was a problem with customers, I informed them that it was our SOP. He suddenly said “Are you a police? Come on this is a hotel!”. Anyway, we had to follow SOP, so we couldn’t allow what they asked for”.*

*“We have SOP as steps of our services, and we follow it. But in reality, SOP is not for every customer because some customers have different conditions. I would like to show you an example. One of our SOP for going to meet customers at the villa, staff have to make a call to the customers’ villas to let them know that the staff is going to the villa in 10 minutes. This SOP is useful for both sides, which includes customers and staff. But we used to have guests, who stayed with an infant. That made us not to follow that SOP because the ring of the phone in the villa would bother the infant, and the guests didn’t want that. The guests would always make a call herself to let us know once she needed our staff went to her villa, and it did work for the guests and for us to service her in her way”.*

*“Working at the front desk, it’s very important to have ID cards or passports of every guests during checking in. It’s our SOP due to the safety policy especially we are the resorts with private villas. But still, there were some cases, which we can’t follow that SOP. I used to handle some difficult guests travelling with family. After my staff informed them that it was our policy, they still denied to give us all ID cards, and they need to talk to the manager. Then, I had to adjust SOP into taking only 1 ID card as the main contact guest for the*

*family instead of taking ID cards of every guests. I needed to do it because the guests were furious at that time, and I didn't want thing to go wrong since arriving the resort. It could decrease the guests' satisfactions and create negative perceptions of the guests, which that were not what the resort want".*

*"Cold towels and cold drinking water must be prepared in the hotel's car, which is assigned to pick up the arrival guests from the international Phuket airport, and it's the SOP. But some guests ask for regular drinking water as they don't drink cold water, so I have to asked my manager to allow me to prepare the regular water along with cold water. In case that it happens, then I could provide the regular one to the guests".*

*"There were kayak service for our customers as self-paddle. The guests are required to book it in advance, and we're not allow to take the kayak to any island due to our SOP. But I cannot complete the mentioned SOP with three guests, who are sons of the owner of one resident in our property. They come here twice a year, and they've been coming here for last 5 years, which means they've grown up here. Now, they're like 20s something, and they love to take the kayak to nearby island, which are 2 kilometers away from our beach. They always do that every time they stay here. It was started since 2 years before. Our management team discussed this issue at that time and came up with the privilege only for these three guests".*

#### **4.4.3 Responsiveness**

"Responsiveness" dimension was defined as "The willingness to assist customers in a prompt manner. This dimension advocates positive service attitudes and requires personnel to pay attention to customer requests, questions, and complaints" by Parasuraman et al., (1988). The main finding of responsiveness dimension was "willing to help". 100 percent of the informants defined this dimension as "very important", and they all mentioned "Willing to help" as the main idea of this dimension". The informants explained that being willing to help customers was one important character of service providers. Staff could offer good service towards the attitude of being willing to help, and the service which came from this attitude would be sincere. Customers would receive service via staff's attitude, and the customers would create judgement for the service they actual received, which could be both way; positive and negative.

*"Being willing to help is very important. You can't work in service part without it. Once you were not willing to help customers, you can't hide it because it always comes out*

*from your face, your eye contact and your body language. It makes customers unhappy which we can't allow that to happen in our service”.*

*“It's very important to be willing to help if you would like to work in service part in a hotel. Service part referred to providing service to customers, and it need to be sincerely. Service is not something that you can fake. It's supposed to come from inside. It comes from your mind. Service job is not an easy job for anyone who don't have service mind and willing to help”.*

*“One thing that we can't teach anyone is being willing to help which is very important in hospitality industry. I can't teach anyone to be willing to help, and no one can teach me how to be willing to help. It's an attitude, and it's very important attitude for one who work in operation department which responds to serve direct service to customers”.*

*“Willing to help is one attitude I'm looking for in every candidates during interviews. One qualification I really need is being willing to help for anyone who could become my team member because I need team work. This positive attitude can help staff to become a good team member and solve problems easily”.*

Furthermore, the informants revealed that taking leave could happen in case of unstable emotions of staff if it was necessary. Regarding to the non-chain hotels and resorts expected their staff to be willing to assist customers all times, all staff are always willing to help during their duties. In contrast, there would be some difficult situations which effected to staff and made them cannot work properly due to unstable emotions. The informants pointed out that taking leave could be allowed by supervisors or managers if it was necessary for staff, who could not provide service properly as always. The managers and the supervisors would not force staff, who was not ready to work, to complete job tasks. But the managers and the supervisors would evaluate the staff if they could be able to work in other different job tasks. Then, the staff might be assigned to rotate themselves into the different job tasks, which there was less in contacting direct to customers such as document sections including auditing departure customers' bills for the following day, preparing documents for arrival customers for the following day and updating information of customers in house in the operation system.

*“One of my team member had a terrible argument with his wife before coming to work one day. He was so stress out, and he couldn't keep himself calm. I noticed that*

*during our briefing at the beginning of working shift. So, I talked to him after the briefing, and found that he couldn't work properly as a waiter in that day. I asked him if he could work in the back of the house as supporting steward team, and he agreed. It's better to let him work for some position without serve direct service to the guests. It's too risk, and something could go wrong if I sent someone with emotions to take care customers".*

*"Smiling with being willing to help is what customers always expect from the Front Office staff, but there was a staff who had a tough time when she came to work. She broke down in tears during the morning brief. Then, she explained that her dad was sent to a hospital last night, and she would go back home after work on that day. But it would take 7 hrs to get her home as her family didn't live in Phuket. We agreed to let her take leave immediately as we all understood her situations. I allowed her to leave right away. The other team members gave her hug before she left. They told her that "Don't worry! We got it". And they were willing to cover her job tasks for her. For me, it reflected that they did understand one another because we work as a team".*

Likewise, "Team work/ Working as a team" was mentioned by 100 percent of the informants as well. When it came to unstable emotion staff, who were not ready to work, all informant described that team work was very important for the staff who needed to take leave. Working as a team, it could support the whole team, which was the whole department. In case of this issue, the team could continue their work properly by supporting from every staff. It must come from understanding of all staff.

*"I can say that every single staff in my department have willing to help attitude because I interviewed them all, and I was very sure that they've had it. Then, I decided to let them join the team. As a small group of people who work in Front Office department, I needed everybody to help me to build up a team. Working as a team, we can work smoothly and we can solve any problem which could be problems of the guests or problems among ourselves".*

*"We work as a team, as a friends and as a family. We really care one another. Living on the island, your team becoming your family. We blended together, and we understand one another. That really support our work. We need a team player to join our team in order to complete job tasks smoothly. No matter there would be any situations, we can get it through together as a team.*

*“My team is very important for me, and they helped me to get through difficult time. One day, HR got a call from my son’s school. They told me that my son threw up a lot with high fever, and he was on the way to hospital. I was very stress out and worried like I never been before. My manager allowed me to leave even though it just was 1 hour after I started my shift. I remembered that I was assigned in the afternoon shift with more than 50% of arrival guests. Letting me to leave could make the team tough for work, but one of my team member offered herself to work overtime instead of me. They all agreed. I could not get it over without my team. Thank you them for being my team.”*

#### **4.4.4 Assurance**

The next dimension is “Assurance”, and it was defined in the definitions of the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al., (1988) as “The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence”. “Important” was the definition of “Assurance” dimension by the informants. Regarding to the interviews with supervisors and managers, who work for the non-chain hotels and resorts, the study found that the main idea of this dimension is knowledge and skills. The informants explained that the knowledge and skills in the job in term of service was important. Staff could complete service properly by having knowledge and skills in their job tasks.

Nevertheless, the informants revealed that even though knowledge and skills was important in service, but it was not the core of service. The necessary basic knowledge and skills was required from staff, who would start to work. However, the knowledge and skills could be fulfilled once the staff started working. They could learn new knowledge and gain more skills to be better service providers. Improving and developing themselves by gaining more knowledge and skills was possible. Learning by doing was applied to the staff in term of service.

*“Knowledge and skills are important. Of course, we can’t deny that fact. To work in any kind of jobs, knowledge and skills are always required. It helps us to do the jobs and to achieve the jobs. Not only to finish the job, but to achieve the jobs as well. It is one main important part in hospitality industry, and all staff need it. How could you work as the front desk without knowledge? No, you can’t. Just like we can’t bake a cake unless we know how to do it”.*

*“One of important foundation in service part is Knowledge. Once you have service mind, then you need knowledge to complete you to be ready as a staff in the service part.*



*It's important for me as a manager to choose new staff with essential knowledge to join our team. If I pick the one, who doesn't have any knowledge in our field, it would drag the team down. It could make us lose one man power in each shift to take care of him or her for giving knowledge instead of having one more man power."*

*"It'll be easy for you if you've already have basic knowledge. Then, you can gain more knowledge and more skills when you work. Even though the new staff used to work in the different hotel or resort before, they could relate their knowledge to our resort in service part. And the more they work the more knowledge and skills they get. Knowledge and skills can be fulfilled every day at work."*

*"I am willing to mentor new graduate staff, who have experience and knowledge in hospitality industry. Many chain hotels and resorts may require candidates with working experiences, but we're different. We welcome the new graduate ones. All we need is basic knowledge and skills in hospitality to help them develop themselves by gaining more knowledge and skills in hospitality".*

In addition, the informants explained that training could be beneficial for staff, who needed to be improved or developed. Training of the non-chain hotels and resorts could be divided into two main parts, which consisted of training by Human Resources department and training by each operation department. Training, which was held, by Human Resources department referred to the common majority knowledge for hospitality in each hotel or resort including new staff orientation, fire evacuation, CPR, first aid and English training. While training, which was held, within each department was "On The Job" training (OJT).

On the job training focused on knowledge and skills concerned specific to job task in each department. For example, Front Office department had telephone etiquette training, handling guests complains training, verifying guests credit cards training and currency exchange training. On the job training, which was held by Food and Beverage department, focused on specific knowledge and skills such as wine sommelier training, the hotel's signature drinks training, up selling training and wedding function training.

*"HR gives us product knowledge since we started to work in the orientation for new staff. It helped us to know the culture of our resort as dependent resort, what we are and who we are. Then, we join trainings within our department to learn more knowledge and skills".*

*“Training from HR is one of my favorite trainings because it gives me new knowledge. I don’t know anything about CPR before, but I’ve learnt it from first aid and CPR training by professional team from Bangkok Phuket International hospital, and it was held by HR. That training helped me and my team had more confident to service guests in the restaurant and the bar because our restaurant and bar are next to the swimming pool. If something go wrong, we are ready for it”.*

*“Before becoming a supervisor, I had little skill of English. But after I joined English class by HR for 3 years, my English was better along with my skills. Then, I got promoted to be a supervisor. I can say that my English’s better because of English class from HR”.*

*“Ten years ago, no one knows Tsunami. But now, I believe that every staff know what Tsunami is. Our hotel has Tsunami and fire evacuation training once a year, and it helps us know what to do if it happens. All department have learnt what to do as their responsibility to support one another. We have learnt so much from this training. Thank you HR team to give us this very useful training”.*

*“There are many trainings within our department, and they’re called OJT, On The Job, training. There are at least 4 courses in a month. Manager or supervisor would be the trainer for each OJT. Not only knowledge and skills we often use in our job tasks, but it includes retraining for something we may need even though we don’t use it a lot. Verifying guests’ credit cards training is one of my favorite because we don’t really use it often, and our staff would forget how to do it. It’s quite fun when we all try to figure it out. Our manage is always the trainer for this topic”.*

*“Up selling training is our popular OJT. Our team will learn how to up-selling our resort’s signature menu. Many staff from different department will be sent to join this course in Food and Beverage department because they can apply the knowledge and skills which provided from the training to their own job tasks. For example, Front Office and Housekeeping team can up sell their own products including our restaurants which would make our guests have special meals”.*

*“The difficult task of our job can be referred to how to handle guests’ complains. As front desk, we would be the first one the guests think of when they need to*

*complain. It's challenging task for us, and that's why we have to train handling guests' complains. There are many staff from other operation department come to join our OJT for this topic because it could happen in any operation department such as Food and Beverage department and Housekeeping department. We will do the role play for different situations, and the trainer is the manager. We need to learn how to handle their temperature during complaining and their problems. It's very helpful training for us as service provider".*

#### **4.4.5 Empathy**

Regarding to the definition of "Empathy" dimension, Parasuraman et al., (1988) described in the definitions of the SERVQUAL dimensions that "Empathy" referred to "The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers". The main finding in this dimension was the 24 hours service, which was significant mentioned by the informants from the non-chain hotels and resorts. The informants considered "Empathy" dimension as "very important" dimension.

*"The guests come here to relax, and that means our hotel is expected to be ready to service all times. That's why 24 hours service is very important for us. If we cannot offer service as the guests expected, we cannot call ourselves a good hotel. The service time should be convenient to all guests unless the guests would choose to stay in some other place instead of our hotel."*

*"We service the guests for 24 hours. We have Front Office team, Security team and Housekeeping team. We're always ready to serve the guests no matter what time they need. All those 24 hours service is for creating the guests' satisfaction, and it's very important for us".*

*"One qualification of a good resort is 24 hours service. You can't say that your hotel or resort is the good one without having 24 hours service. It's very important part of hospitality industry especially in hotel industry".*

*"Front Office team covers 24 hours service, and it's very important for the guests once they need any help. We will be the one who can respond to the guests in that time".*

*"Security is very important thing for hotel industry. We must secure our guests and our employees all times. Having proper security team is a must".*

*"I love that we have housekeeping service for 24 hours because some guests may need us to clean their room at the night time. Something could happen, and make*

*them can't sleep without cleaning it. Bed sheets could be changed during the late night sometimes. But no worry, our Housekeeping department service the guests for 24 hours".*

#### **4.5 Strategy implement to service quality in Chain and Non-Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket**

The study found that the Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket used strategy as following;

- Quality strategy
- Hotel Operational strategy
- Competitive strategy
- Employees strategy
- Training strategy

##### **4.5.1 Quality strategy**

According to quality-oriented strategies and strategic control system, there was an example as the U.S. Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The companies were required to develop a process for deploying and monitoring strategic quality plans (Department of Commerce, 1994). Three requirements were highlighted by the Baldrige criteria for effective monitoring of the strategic quality deployment process. One of them was supplementing financial measure with non-financial indicators, which focused specifically on customer requirements, customer satisfaction and operational quality results (Itiner & Larcker, 1997).

The uniqueness of service quality in the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts, the researcher found that the informants explained that "Friendliness" were their uniqueness. Moreover, the uniqueness of the chain and the non-chain hotels and resorts would gain trust from customers which would be beneficial for service part. How they maintain their uniqueness was making it as culture of hotels and resorts, which it would be transferred from previous staff to new staff. Those cultures reflexed important thing into processing of service, and good result were expected which was customers' satisfaction.

Furthermore, offering special services for repeating guests was one way to make them satisfied. One Front Office Manager described that free of charge A la cart menu would be provided in breakfast for repeating guests during stay in the hotel. Hence, one Room Division

Manager explained that free of charge transportation from the hotel to the Phuket international airport would be offered to repeating guests. The mentioned special service allowed hotels to reach beyond customers' expectation which created customers' satisfaction.

Regarding to another requirement from literature review, it was gathering of information was a must for identifying or anticipating of environmental changing, which may affect customer expectations (Itiner & Larcker, 1997).

The study also found that, most of the chain and the non-chain hotels and resorts arranged small events as "Management cocktails" which offered VIP guests to join afternoon event including free of charge drinks and some finger food with management team. The management cocktails allowed staff from the management team talked to VIP guest in order to getting information in terms of service and facilities of the hotels and resorts. Once the management team received feedback from customers, they could solve problems which came from negative feedback, and they could improve their service and facilities. One Room Division Manager stated that "Many our VIP guests are repeating guests, and they'll always let us know if there's something we can offer to them which make them happier or any problems that we should solve".

#### **4.5.2 Hotel Operational strategy**

The results showed that the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts used hotel operational strategy. Related to literature review, Operational strategy is concerned with how the operation is organized to deliver to the right position (Porter, 1996). The informants explained that process of hotels and resorts operations were designed to meet customers' expectations in order to create customers' satisfaction.

#### **4.5.3 Competitive strategy**

The informants revealed that competitive strategy was applied to chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in order to compete in service quality in hotel industry. Moreover, one Front Office Manager indicated that the hotels must be always ready to change and improve service and facilities to meet customers' expectation. Regarding to getting information from customers via emails including 2 emails which hotel would send to customers after checking in and after checking out, hotels would have feedback and comments both positive and negative way. Then, the changing or improving would be applied to the hotel. For example, the hotel

received comment from customers in 2017 about painting in guest rooms which was colorful. The customers commented that it made guest rooms looked cheap. Therefore, all guest rooms were repainted into classic color tone before high season arriving in October 2017.

#### **4.5.4 Employee strategy**

The study found that the “employee strategy” was applied to the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts. The informants described that the hotels and resorts tend to be willing to invest in employees in order to have those, who have knowledge and skills with inherent abilities. Most of the managers revealed that new staff receive higher salary because the hotels and resorts need their talent and skills. Therefore, investing in employees can create positive results for both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.

#### **4.5.5 Training strategy**

“Training strategy” was used to develop employees in the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The study found that training was one of majority section of hotel industry especially in term of service. Likewise, the all informant mentioned about training, which was held by both Human Resources department and each operation department. It included essential and useful training, and it supported staff to improve and develop themselves in order to providing service to customers.

### **4.6 Particular Strategy implement to service quality in Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket**

#### **4.6.1 Global Strategies**

Regarding to global strategies on standardized policies were pursued by the leading franchised group more than the other brands (Whitla et al., 2007), the results of interviewing showed that the chain hotels and resorts were controlled by SOP (standard operating procedures) of the brand. One Room Division Manager explained that there was a quality checklist which was strongly required from the brand to be completed. Likewise, one Front Office Manager informed that to meet the brand standard, the staff must complete 50 hours of training per year. It was also determined by the brand standard.

As literature review in terms of service standards (rather than physical amenities), achieving standardization is what the hotels are seeking. The hotel executives pointed out that to maintain a consistent level of service was needed which method in place for each chain

hotels would be applied to ensure for meeting standards (Whitla et al., 2007). One Front Office Manager stated that “The most important thing in service quality is consistency. Without it, we cannot say we have good service for customers. So, focusing on consistency in service quality is a must”.

In terms of information system, expectation of international chains hotels is making significant use of common global systems. For example, guest preferences can be stored by one hotel, which can be accessed by other hotels in the chain (Whitla et al., 2007), the study found that most of the chain hotels and resorts applied customers’ information for their different properties as sending promotion from different properties to customers’ emails.

#### **4.6.2 Green strategy**

According to literature review in chapter 2 in term of “Green strategy”, Millar & Baloglu (2011) explained that many hotels businesses have increasingly changed, rapidly improved and adopted more and more on green strategies, in order to be a part of their operations, over the last decade year. The study explored that the chain hotels and resorts used green strategy by involving projects, which concerned to environment. In addition, the informants from the chain hotels and resorts described that most of the chain hotels and resorts campaigned customers and staff to involve the 60 earth hour project, which campaigning people to turn off the unnecessary power during 20:30 – 21:30 hrs. for 60 minutes. Moreover, the informants revealed that the chain hotels and resorts involved the “GREEN LEAF FOUNDATION”, which has objectives as developing quality of environment and tourism industry at the same time.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is designed to conclude and discuss based on the results the survey, and it was followed by a discussion of the results based on the research objectives which were indentified in chapter 1 as following;

1. To identify the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket
2. To compare strategies, implement to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.

This study revealed the perspective of operation staff in service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Therefore, the researcher used the in-depth interview by taking interview with 20 informants through purposive sampling method. The concepts and theories of service quality were applied to this study. The concept of SERVQUAL Model with 5 dimensions of service quality best suited to realize the objectives of the study. The interviews were conducted via managers and supervisors who have been working in their position more than 1 year which indicated that they have already passed the 4 months probations. So, it can be said that the informants were qualified as staff, which provide and monitor services direct to customers.

Moreover, this study explored the strategies implement to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket, which the in-depth interview was applied for 20 managers and supervisors who hold responsibilities in operations departments (Front Office department or Food and Beverage department or Housekeeping department) in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.

#### 5.1 Conclusion

According to the interviews, it is very clear that service quality is important in term of service for chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. All five dimensions of SERVQUAL were mentioned by the informants during in-depth interviews. There are the service



quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket in dimensions of “Reliability” and “Assurance”.

“Empathy” dimension was concerned as the first priority for service providers especially keeping promises and facilities. Keeping promises is very important for chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The promises, which have been made by hotels and resorts through actual promises and the brand image, have to be kept by their own creators in order to gain trust from customers and create customers’ satisfactions.

“Reliability” dimension was different between chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was mentioned by all informants, but it was specified as a MUST by chain hotels and resorts while it was a guideline, which could be adjusted depending on customers’ conditions, for the non-chain hotels and resort.

“Responsiveness” dimension was explained as “Being willing to help customers” by both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Moreover, taking leave for staff, who could not work properly due to unstable emotions, would be allowed by supervisors or managers if it was necessary.

“Assurance” dimension was referred to “Knowledge and Skills” by both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. However, the chain hotels and resorts concerned the knowledge and skills as very important in term of service while the non-chain hotels and resorts referred it as important, but it was not the core of service.

“Empathy” dimension was describes as 24 hours service by both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. There were common 24 hours services in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket, which were Front Office, Security and Housekeeping service.

Furthermore, in term of strategy implemented to service quality, there were common strategies in chain and non-chain hotels as following;

- Quality strategy
- Hotel Operational strategy
- Competitive strategy
- Employees strategy
- Training strategy

In contrast, there were differences between chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. It referred to two strategies which were applied to chain hotels and resorts in Phuket particularly as following;

- Global Strategies
- Green strategy

Regarding to Berry et al., (1990) mentioned that one definition of service quality was customers' expectations compare with the actual service performance create the perception of service quality, it suits the service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The service quality and strategies implemented to service quality, which were used by the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts, were applied in order to meet customers' expectation after the actual service was performed.

## **5.2 Discussion**

The discussion part derived from the results of the research objectives. The results were collected via interviews 20 informants, who were service providers. Therefore, this part provides the study's overall view.

### **5.2.1 Objective 1 : To identify the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket**

As the results of the interview, there were differences in term of service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The significant differences consisted of two dimensions of service quality as "Reliability" and "Assurance".

According to the definition of the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al., (1988), Reliability was defined as "The capacity to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately. This dimension includes meeting promises pertaining to delivery, pricing, and complaint handling". The finding showed that chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket defined "Reliabilities" as "Standard Operating Procedure". The results revealed that the point of view of chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket toward standard operating procedure (SOP) were different. The standard operating procedure was concerned as a must via chain hotels and resorts' point of view while the point of view of non-chain hotels and resorts described the

standard operating procedure as a guideline, and it could be adjusted, which depended on customers' conditions.

Regarding to the definition of the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al., (1988), Assurance was defined as "The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence". The finding indicated that the chain hotels and resorts in Phuket referred knowledge and skills as very important while the knowledge and skills were referred as important, but it was not the core in term of service by the non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

In addition, for better understanding, the service quality differences between chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket were described in the following table.

Table 5.1 The service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

Dimensions	Chain	Non-Chain
<b>Tangible</b>	First priority	Good Facilities
	Keeping promises	Keeping promises
	Good Facilities	
	Good conditions of guest's room	
<b>Reliability</b>	No mistake during serving services	Standard is a guideline
	Standard Operating Procedure	Standard Operating Procedure could be adjusted depending on customers' conditions
	Standard is a MUST	Flexible service process
<b>Responsiveness</b>	Willing to help customers	Willing to help customers
	Being professional on duty	Rotation job tasks in case of unstable emotion
	Rotation job tasks in case of unstable emotion	Taking leave if necessary
	Take leave if necessary	Team supporting
	Team supporting	Team work

Table 5.1 Continued

Dimensions	Chain	Non-Chain
<b>Assurance</b>	Important	Important
	Knowledge and skills	Knowledge and skills
	Product Knowledge of hotels and resorts	Knowledge and skills were not the core of service quality
	Gaining more knowledge and skills once start working	Attitude was more important than knowledge and skills
	Training by Brand standard	Gaining more knowledge and skills could be fulfil once start working
		Training
<b>Empathy</b>	Customers' conditions	Customers' conditions
	Customers' preferences	Customers' preferences
	Providing things or service to customers without asking	Go beyond customers' expectations
	Convenient services hours	24 hours services
	24 hours services	

**5.2.2 Objective 2 : To compare strategies, implement to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.**

According to theory of strategy, Porter (1991) stated that the central question in strategy could be what the reason is for leading companies to success or failure. Other questions, such as why companies differ, how they behave, how they choose strategies, and how they are managed, are inextricably encompassed by the causes of company success or failure. There were common strategies, which used by both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket, consisted of strategies as following;

- Quality strategy
- Hotel Operational strategy
- Competitive strategy
- Employees strategy
- Training strategy

Interestingly, there were two strategies which were implemented by the chain hotels and resorts in Phuket particularly while the non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket did not applied those two strategies to their properties. The strategies were as following;

- Global Strategies
- Green strategy

Therefore, the chain hotels and resorts in Phuket ensure the customers' satisfaction by using more strategies implemented to service quality. The non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket used less strategies implemented to service quality comparing to the chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. For better understanding, there are strategies implemented to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in the following table.

Table 5.2 Strategies Implemented to Chain and Non-chain Hotels and Resorts in Phuket

Strategies	Chain	Non-chain
Quality strategy	√	√
Hotel Operational strategy	√	√
Competitive strategy	√	√
Employees strategy	√	√
Training strategy	√	√
Global Strategies	√	-
Green strategy	√	-

### 5.3 Recommendations for strategies implemented to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

It cannot be denied that service quality is important for hotels and resorts in term of service. To meet customers' expectations, focusing on service quality is necessary. "Reliability" dimension could be applied as more important for non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The standard operating procedure (SOP) could be more practical than it was in order to ensure the service part as reliability of non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Moreover, the dimension of "Assurance" could be more important for non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. It could be concerned as very important, which may offer new perspective to existing and new staff as service providers. Once the knowledge and skills become very important, it could support staff to achieve job tasks easily for non-chain hotels and resorts. The importance of knowledge and skills refer to training as the finding of the research. Then, the training hours can be increased to ensure staff would gain more knowledge and skills in order to create customers' satisfaction in non-chain hotels and resorts.

In term of strategy implement to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket, green strategy should be applied for non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. As the results, the green strategy was referred as trend at the present, and it can be beneficial for non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. This strategy can offer more options for customers to choosing accommodation which increases opportunity for the non-chain hotels and resort to be the chosen one.

#### **5.4 Limitation and suggestions for further study**

Firstly, this research collected interviews with 20 Thai informants. The 100 percent of informants are Thai nationality. The further research could focus on foreigner informants in order to ensure the results of the research even though the informants are different nationality. The different background may concern to mind set which effect to work process.

Moreover, this research focused on the part of service providers even though there were evaluations by customers informed via collecting data. The further research could focus on the part of customers who receive service from chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. In this way, the strategy implementation to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket would be accomplished



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## APPENDIX A

### List of the chain hotels and resorts interviews

HOTELS AND RESORTS	POSITION	NUMBER OF INFORMANTS
1. Swissotel Resort Phuket Kamala Beach	Room Division Manager	1
2. Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort	Front Office Manager	1
3. Centara Kata Resort Phuket	Front Office Manager	1
4. Sri panwa, Phuket	Front Office Executive	1
	Senior Estate Host (Front Office Supervisor)	1
5. Baba Beach Club, Phuket	Front Office Manager	1
6. JW Marriott Resort and Spa Phuket	Front Office Supervisor	1
7. Marriott Vacation Club	Front Office Supervisor	1
8. Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort	Restaurant Supervisor	1
	Assistant In Room Dining Manager & Acting Banquet Manager	1
9. Ramada Phuket Deevana	Front Office Supervisor	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>

## APPENDIX B

### List of the non-chain hotels and resorts interviews

HOTELS AND RERSOTS	POSITION	NO. OF IMFORMANTS
1. The Racha	Front Office Manager	1
2. The Chava Resort	Food and Beverage Supervisor	2
3. The Surin Phuket	Front Office Supervisor	1
4. The Pavilions Phuket	Food and Beverage Supervisor	1
	Front Office Supervisor	1
5. The Vijitt Resort Phuket	Food and Beverage Supervisor	1
	Front Office Supervisor	1
6. Malisa Villa Suites	Front Office Supervisor	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>

## APPENDIX C



### Interview Checklist

**Thesis Title : Strategies implement to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket**

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Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Supphakan Wattanasantikul and I am an MBA student of Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus. My final thesis at Prince of Songkla University deals with strategies of maintenance service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

I would be much obliged if we could arrange a meeting to discuss the topic. (Here attached you will find a document with a number of questions that I would like to bring up with you.)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Supphakan Wattanasantikul

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### Questions

#### **Section 1 : Dimension of service quality**

1. In your opinion, what are service quality dimensions?

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Definition</b>
1. Tangibility	Elements that can be observed physically: The aesthetics of physical facilities, tools, employees, and communications items.
2 Reliability	The capacity to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately. This dimension includes meeting promises pertaining to delivery, pricing, and complaint handling.

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3. Responsiveness	The willingness to assist customers in a prompt manner. This dimension advocates positive service attitudes and requires personnel to pay attention to customer requests, questions, and complaints.
4. Assurance	The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence.
5. Empathy	The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers.

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Source: The Definitions of the SERVQUAL Dimensions (Parasuraman et al., 1988)

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Dimensions	Items	SERVQUAL Statement
Tangibles	1	The hotel / restaurant has modern looking equipment
	2	The physical facilities are visually appealing
	3	Employees are neat-appearing
	4	Materials associated with service are visually appealing
	5	Service is performed as promised
Reliability	6	Company shows interest to solve problems
	7	The service is performed right the first time
	8	Service is performed at the time promised
	9	There are no errors in the records
Responsiveness	10	Employees informs customers when service will be performed
	11	Employees give prompt service to customers
	12	Employees are willing to help customers
	13	Employees are never too busy to respond to request
Assurance	14	Behavior of employees to instill confidence in customers
	15	Customers feel safe in their transaction
	16	Employees are consistently courteous
	17	Employees have knowledge to answer customer's questions

---



---

	18	Restaurant gives individual attention
	19	Employees gives personal attention to customers
Empathy	20	Restaurant understands specific needs of customers
	21	Restaurant has customer's interest at heart
	22	Operating hours are convenient to all customers

---

Source: Original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

### **Section 1 : Dimension of service quality (continued)**

#### 2. Tangibles

How important of performing service as promised to customers? What is the ration in percentage?

#### 3. Reliability

How important of providing service in the same standard to customers? Is (Are) there any service procedure?

#### 4. Responsiveness

Regarding to being willing to help customers all times, how do staff handle themseves in case of unstable emotion? Do staff receive any comments about being willing to help both positive and negative? If yes, please specific.

#### 5. Assurance

How important of skills and knowledge in job tasks? How do staff achieve their job tasks?

#### 6. Empathy

How important of convenient operating hours to all customers? Does the hotel has any 24 hours service? If yes, please specific

**Section 2 : Maintenance of service quality**

7. What is the hotel's uniqueness of service quality and how to maintain?
8. How to maintain service quality in the hotel?
9. What is the most important thing in service quality?
10. Is (are) there any services in the hotel should be improved and how?
11. How many percentages of retention customers due to service of the hotel and how to maintain this group of retention customers?
12. Is (are) there any suggestions?

**Section 3: Ranking of Service Quality Dimensions**

Kindly rank scale (1-5) where 1 is the most important dimension and 5 is the least dimension.

- ..... Tangibles
- ..... Reliability
- ..... Responsiveness
- ..... Assurance
- ..... Empathy

Thank you for your kind support

## Appendix D

### Certificate



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**Strategy Implementation to Service Quality in Chain and Non-Chain Hotels and  
Resorts in Phuket**

**Suphakan Wattanasantikul**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of  
Master of Business Administration in Hospitality and Tourism Management  
(International Program)**

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**2018**

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Thesis Title      Strategy Implementation to Service Quality in Chain and Non-Chain Hotels  
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This is to certify that the work here submitted is the result of the candidate's own investigations.  
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Candidate

I hereby certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any degree.

.....Signature

(MissSupphakan Wattanasantikul)

Candidate



<b>ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์</b>	การประยุกต์ใช้กลยุทธ์เพื่อสนับสนุนคุณภาพการบริการในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทประเภทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ต
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### บทคัดย่อ

วิทยานิพนธ์เล่มนี้จัดทำขึ้นเพื่อค้นคว้าข้อบ่งชี้ถึงความแตกต่างของคุณภาพการบริการในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ต รวมไปถึงเพื่อเปรียบเทียบกลยุทธ์ที่ประยุกต์ใช้เพื่อสนับสนุนคุณภาพการบริการในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทประเภทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ต งานวิจัยฉบับนี้ใช้กระบวนการเก็บข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพเป็นเครื่องมือในการค้นคว้าหาคำตอบ จากการสัมภาษณ์ผู้จัดการ และหัวหน้างานในแผนกดำเนินการให้บริการโดยตรงแก่ลูกค้าในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่าย ตั้งแต่ช่วงเดือน พฤศจิกายน 2560 ถึง พฤษภาคม 2561 ใช้การเลือกสุ่มกลุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเจาะจงโดยผู้ให้ข้อมูลทั้งหมดจำนวนทั้งสิ้น 20 ท่าน

ผลจากการวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่ามีมิติทั้ง 5 ของคุณภาพการบริการ (Service Quality Dimensions) มีความสำคัญในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ต แต่ยังคงมีความแตกต่างในมิติของ “ความเชื่อถือ” (Reliability) ซึ่งโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่ายอ้างอิงถึง “มาตรฐานการปฏิบัติงาน” (SOP) ว่าเป็นสิ่งจำเป็นในการกระทำให้สำเร็จตามมาตรฐานการปฏิบัติงานที่ได้วางไว้ ในขณะที่โรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่ไม่มีเครือข่ายอ้างอิงถึง “มาตรฐานการปฏิบัติงาน” (SOP) ว่าเป็นเพียงแนวทางที่สามารถปรับเปลี่ยนได้ซึ่งขึ้นอยู่กับข้อจำกัดของลูกค้า

นอกจากนี้ผลจากการวิจัยยังเผยให้เห็นถึงกลยุทธ์ที่โรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่าย และไม่มีเครือข่ายในจังหวัดภูเก็ตใช้ร่วมกันในการประยุกต์เพื่อสนับสนุนคุณภาพการบริการ ได้แก่ กลยุทธ์คุณภาพ กลยุทธ์การดำเนินงานโรงแรม กลยุทธ์คู่แข่ง กลยุทธ์พนักงาน และกลยุทธ์การฝึกอบรม ในทางตรงกันข้ามโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีเครือข่ายยังได้ใช้อีก 2 กลยุทธ์ ซึ่งมากกว่ากลยุทธ์ที่ถูกใช้ในโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่ไม่มีเครือข่าย คือ กลยุทธ์ระดับโลก และ กลยุทธ์เชิงอนุรักษ์ธรรมชาติ

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้เป็นประโยชน์อย่างยิ่งในการเป็นแนวทางเพื่อพัฒนา และบำรุงรักษาคุณภาพการบริการในธุรกิจการบริการ ต่อโรงแรมและรีสอร์ทที่มีอยู่แล้ว และที่จะมีใน

อนาคต อีกทั้งสามารถนำผลการค้นคว้าจากวิจัยเล่มนี้ไปใช้เป็นข้อมูลเบื้องต้นประกอบการงานวิจัย  
เล่มอื่นๆต่อไป

**คำสำคัญ:** คุณภาพการบริการ, กลยุทธ์, โรงแรมและรีสอร์ทประเภทที่มีเครือข่าย,  
โรงแรมและรีสอร์ทประเภทที่ไม่มีเครือข่าย

<b>Thesis Title</b>	Strategy Implementation to Service Quality in Chain and Non-Chain Hotels and Resorts in Phuket
<b>Author</b>	Miss Supphakan Wattanasantikul
<b>Major Program</b>	Hospitality and Tourism Management (International Program)
<b>Academic Year</b>	2018

### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to identify the service quality differences in chain and non chain hotels and resorts in Phuket as well as to compare strategies implement to service quality in chain and non chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Qualitative method has been applied to the study via in-depth interviews. 20 managers and supervisors, who work in operation departments, were the informants. The interviews were conducted from November 2017 to May 2018 by using purposive sampling methods.

The results indicated that service quality dimensions were concerned as important by chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket in term of service quality. However, chain hotels and resorts in Phuket referred “Reliability” dimension as “Standard Operating Procedure” (SOP), which to complete the SOP was a must. While non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket explained that the SOP was a guideline, which could be adjusted depending on customers’ conditions.

In addition, the results revealed that chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket used common strategies implemented to maintain service quality, which included quality strategy, hotel operational strategy, competitive strategy, employee strategy and training strategy. In contrast, there were two more strategies, which were used particularly in chain hotels and resorts in Phuket including global strategies and green strategy.

The results of this research are beneficial as a guiding tool for the current and future chain and non-chain hotels and resorts to develop and maintain service quality.

**Keyword:** Service Quality, Strategies, Chain hotels and resorts, Non-chain hotels and resorts

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## CHAPTER 1

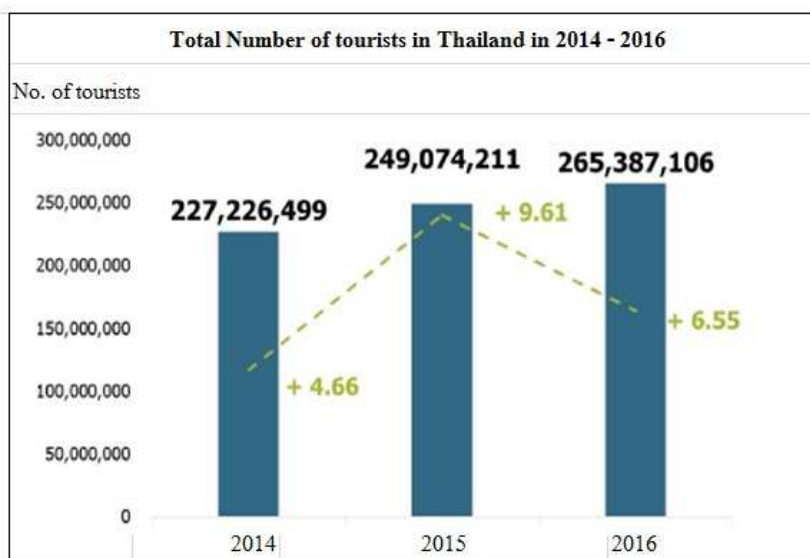
### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Phuket, the biggest island in the South of Thailand, is a tourist destination. Phuket was changed slightly from the Malay word “Bukit” meaning mountains. There are mountains located along beaches starting from the top to the bottom of the island. Tin mining was the main part of Phuket, but now the island has been occupied by hospitality and tourism industry. There are a number of tourists visiting Phuket included Thais and the noticeable number of foreigners in each year.

In 2016, there were 265,387,106 tourists in Thailand and 12,709,415 tourists in Phuket. One of basic needs for travelers is accommodations once the travelling is created. Furthermore, there are a number of hotels and resorts in Phuket. The information also provides the number of accommodations and their rooms in Phuket. There were 1,724 accommodations and 81,727 rooms in 2016 (Ministry of Tourism and Sports). Therefore, hospitality industry is one major part of Phuket.

Figure 1.1 Total numbers of tourists in Thailand in 2014 - 2016



Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports [https://www.mots.go.th/ewt\\_dl\\_link.php?nid=8848](https://www.mots.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=8848)

Table 1.1 Total numbers of tourists in 2014 - 2016

<b>Total Number of tourists in 2014 - 2016</b>		
<b>Province</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of tourists</b>
Phuket	2014	11,312,037
	2015	12,520,769
	2016	12,709,415

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports [https://www.mots.go.th/ewt\\_dl\\_link.php?nid=8848](https://www.mots.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=8848)

Table 1.2 Numbers of Accommodations and room(s) in Phuket in 2014 -2016

<b>Number of Accommodation in 2014 - 2016</b>		
<b>Phuket</b>		
<b>Years</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Room(s)</b>
2014	774	48,241
2015	1,744	82,962
2016	1,724	81,727

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports [https://www.mots.go.th/ewt\\_dl\\_link.php?nid=8848](https://www.mots.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=8848)

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Matching between providing quality service and perceived value of the customers is challenging which all hospitality companies around the globe are facing. The tangibles of services including food and physical facilities are easier to measure the quality when comparing to other intangible service. For example, employees' emotion, time and place. The pattern set in quality control was applied on tangible services by some of the quality management in the industry. According to the pattern, it ensures the continuity of standard quality. In fast food outlets like McDonalds, the quality of food and time of delivery ensures the quality of service and meets the customer expectations. (Benhura et al., 2012).

The importance of food and the service quality were underlined via many studies on hospitality. The integral component of hospitality is able to uplift and support tourism and hospitality industry to grow. Perception of customers in terms of the quality of services have a significant effect on their satisfaction and their loyalty. High quality service renders to more

qualified employees, which increase the level of customer satisfactions. Likewise, word of mouth creates revisiting customers (Sumaedi&Yarment, 2015)

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives**

1. To identify the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket
2. To compare strategies, implement to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The main issue of the study is to explore service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. SERVQUAL model was applied to address service quality of supervisors and managers in operation departments in order to achieve the service quality.

Therefore, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the most important dimension of service quality in chain hotels and resorts?
2. What is the most important dimension of service quality in non-chain hotels and resorts?
3. What are the existing strategies in terms of service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts?
4. How do chain and non-chain hotels and resorts implement service quality?

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study aims to provide the information about service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Furthermore, the study will be useful for hotels, resorts and other hospitality service providers in many ways;

1. To have a better understanding of service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.
2. To develop and improve the implementation in terms of service quality: this study can be used as a guideline for developing and improving the implementation in terms of

service which can become hotels and resorts' strategies to meet customers' expectations in order to bring success to organizations.

3. To explore the strategies which have been using in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts. It is also to implement service quality: this study provides the existing strategies in terms of service, which are applied to hotel and resort industries and also to people who are in management positions. Therefore, the strategies can lead the hotels and resorts to success or failure.

4. To be a guideline for other related businesses and to develop their services and products: the result of this study can be used by the management of hotels and resorts including any new investors who are interested in hotel and resort businesses for having a better idea on how to implement service quality which lead the companies to success.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

### **Scope of research**

The scope of this study covered chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket province.

### **Scope of Demography**

1. Supervisors, who service directly to customers, may work for Front department or Food and Beverage department or Housekeeping department. These three departments are front of the house which taking care of customers and completing customers' needs and expectations. They know how to service customers and how to implement service quality as well.

2. Management people in operation departments including Front Office department, Food and Beverage department and Housekeeping department are able to monitor service of staff for customers. In addition, those managers always implement service quality for customers.

### **Scope of Time**

This research has been conducted during June 2017 – May 2018. In-depth interview was conducted during November, 2017 – May, 2018.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Strategies** refer to the central question as what the reason is for leading companies to success or failure. To understand success, highlighting theory of the firm and an associated theory of strategy is a must. While the nature of companies and the environment in which they operate are crucial assumptions. The importance of the distinction between industry structures and relative positions can be explained that strategies, which will improve company while harming the others, can be chosen among other things (Porter, 1991).

**Service Quality** was defined as the well-known concept by Parasuraman et al., (1986, 1988) which is the difference between customers' expectations of service provider's performance and their evaluation of the services they received. If expectations are greater than performance, the perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customers' dissatisfaction occurs (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

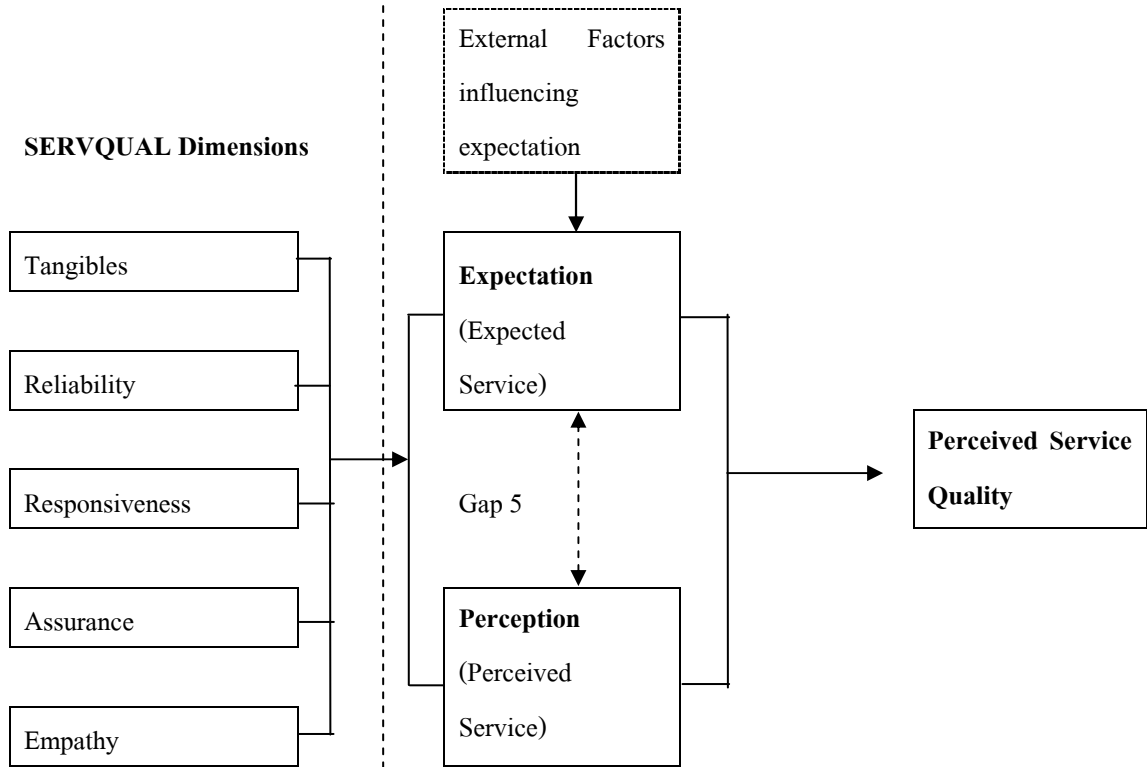
**Chain hotel** is a business as overseas market entry style which included a relationship between the entrant (the franchisor) and a host country body included the former transfers under legal contract. (Burton and Cross, 1995).

**Non-chain hotel** is a hotel owned by a person or a group of people which managed itself independently without joining any business organizations. Also, the hotel does not share chairman or management with other hotels including chains, franchisers, and hotel management companies. Each non-chain hotel located in specific area, and there is no any branch in specific area and domestic and international area. (SrithanaAnan, 2005).

### **1.7 Conceptual Framework**

This study has applied related theories and SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al., (1985).

Figure 1.2 SERVQUAL model



Source: Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V., & Berry, L. 1985



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purposes of the research are to identify factors implement to maintain service quality and to examine factors relationship. The research is planned to focus on the staffs those who provide service direct to customers in five stars hotels and resorts in Phuket include management people and operation staffs. Therefore, there will be related theories as following;

#### 2.1 Customer Expectation

#### 2.2 Customer Satisfaction

#### 2.3 Service Quality

##### 2.3.1 Definition and significance of Service Quality

##### 2.3.2 Dimensions of service Quality

##### 2.3.3 Service quality and the hospitality industry

#### 2.4 Strategies

##### 2.4.1 Dynamic theory of strategy

##### 2.4.2 Global strategies

##### 2.4.3 Quality strategy

##### 2.4.4 Hotel Operational strategy

##### 2.4.5 Hospitality competitive strategy in Phuket

##### 2.4.6 Employee strategic

##### 2.4.7 Green strategic

##### 2.4.8 Training Strategy

#### **2.1 Customer expectation**

Customer expectations can be defined as beliefs for service delivery which standard service can be served, and performance will be judges by customers. The reason is the customers compare the standard to the performance which the customers received. The first and the most significant step to deliver good service quality is knowing the expectations of customers. Losing a customer refers to being wrong for what customer want. Meanwhile, another company

takes the customer by hitting the customer expectation. The company may not survive among competitive market as being wrong. ( M.GangaBhavani, 2013)

One researcher who considered the customer expectation was Calvert (2001). He pointed out that understanding of customer expectation was significant to manage perception of customer as service quality and delivery.

Customer expectations was shape by previous experience as there were researchers proposed that a key of customer expectations were customer previous experience. (Bolton and Drew (1991)

## **2.2 Customer satisfaction**

Satisfaction is completing consumer expectations. A product or service feature is judged by satisfaction. They respond to pleasant level of consumer. It refers both under and over the consumer pleasant level. (Oliver, 1997) Two main conceptualizations of customer satisfactions are proposed by Bodet (2008). The first conceptualization refers to Oliver (1980) who points out that base on especially product or service transaction, the measurement of satisfaction can be defined as post-evaluation which related to specific decisions of buying. The second conceptualization is suggested by Anderson et al.,(1994) which is total increasing experiences of a consumer with a company, product or service. Satisfaction can be defined as emotional or cognitive (Yu and Dean, 2001). The researchers who agree with Yu and Dean are Jacobs and Solomon (1977), who propose that satisfaction can be defined as the feelings or attitudes for a product or service created post purchase or consumption.

## **2.3 Service quality**

### **2.3.1 Definition and significance of Service Quality**

Service quality is an intangible thing, but it exists in hospitality industry. When customers purchase for accommodation, the expectations include physical place and service which will be provided during the period. It cannot be denied that service quality relate to customer satisfactions.

Quality may be the most important and complex element of business strategy. Companies can be completed by quality. Moreover, quality is sought by customers. Quality is a transformer of markets. It is no doubt as a leading key to make customers happy and to provide more profits to companies and to increase the economic growth of nations. (Golder et al., 2012)

There are several definitions of service quality by Berry et al., (1990) as

1. Service quality evaluation is more difficult than product quality evaluation;

2. Customers' expectations compare with the actual service performance create the perception of service quality.

3. The distribution services process evaluation is one of quality assessment which not only the final result of the service.

One researcher who agrees with above researchers, who proposed the definitions, is Rahman who stated "service quality is not something that everyone does well" (2004). For business-to-business, service quality is significant important due to the impact from the service. (Pepur et al., 2013)

"Guests are the judges of service quality" (Parasuraman et al., 1991). The level of service quality will be judged by customers when the service meets whether cannot meet their expectations. It is intangible. In contrast, customers can feel that they satisfy with the service whether dissatisfy with. There are two distinct variables effect to customers' perceptions: customer expectations and service standards. The can overall service quality be indicated as primary by the gap between expectations and service standards/performance (Berry et al., 1994)

Service quality defined as a comparison between expectations and performance (Lewis and Mitchell, 1990).

The customers are the one who offer definition of quality. Also, the direction and degree of difference between the customer's expectations and perceptions is interpreted as receiving quality. (Parasuraman et al., 1988 quoted in Chen & Chang, 2005)".

Atilgan et al. (2003), Customer's overall impression is able to provide the definition of "service quality" to the relative efficiency of organization.

Gronroos (1984) suggests that customer perceptions of service quality can be divided into technical quality and functional quality. Technical quality focuses on the quality

evaluation of the core service that the buyer receives from the seller. Functional quality involves the evaluation of the service delivery process, which reflects the customer's experiences of service quality.

For a full understanding of service quality, there are three remarkable features, which well documented, of service must be acknowledge: intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability. (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

In conclusion, service quality is the intangible which occur between customer expectations and service standard/performance. Moreover, service quality will be provided by operation staffs and management people in front of the house in hotels and resorts. In addition, the level of service quality will be judged by customers which effect direct to customer satisfactions.

### **2.3.2 Dimensions of service Quality**

A complex network of several dimensions creates the result as service quality. Researchers have tried to identify the most significant components of service quality for years. Contributing to service quality can refers to identity of a variety of factors. (Beth SchlagerWuest, 2001.)

Beth SchlagerWuest (2001) also quoted in Service Quality Management in Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure (2001) that “ Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988, 1994a) are among the most recognized researchers in the area of service quality. Their development and refinement of the SERVQUAL battery has produced a generic measure of service quality through the examination of twenty-two service items, which factor into five basic service dimesions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988, 1994a; Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml, 1991). The service dimensions consist of reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy”. The service provider's “ability to perform service dependably and accurately” is reflection of reliability. One of the most important service components for customer is “doing it right at the first time,” referring reliability. Providing service is one part of extension reliability promising and maintaining error-free records. Therefore, guests are misled toward undermining of tolerance and trust by overpromising. ( Parsuraman et al., 1988).

The “appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communications materials” is component of tangibles. (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Beth

SchlagelWuest (2001) also quoted in *Service Quality Management in Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure* (2001) that (Wagner, 1998) “As a core service component, tangibles still are considered. Holiday Inn explores the importance of tangibles by its recent evaluation and redefinition from customer’s feedback as they were “looking a little old”

Beth SchlagelWuest (2001) also quoted in *Service Quality Management in Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure* (2001) that “The ‘willingness to help customers and provide prompt service’ are representatives of responsiveness. (Parasurman et al., 1988). “today luxury is time” has been mentioned. (Watkins, 1998, p. 26). Consequently, for many guests, providing services in opportune manner by service providers is significant component of service.”

Bojanic et al., (1994) quoted that “The “knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence” are reflections of assurance. (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p. 23).

Feeling safe with employees is customer expectation in their transactions. The staff’s ability to reassure the customer can be discredited by inappropriate situations. They can be illustrated by entering guest rooms without knocking, confronting guests without appropriate identification or misguiding guests with inaccurate information. (Beth SchlagelWuest, 2001, P. 54). The “caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers” refer to empathy. (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988, p. 23). The statement, “If one looks at who is winning, it tends to be companies that see the guest as an individual” explains the importance of empathy. (Watkins, 1998, p. 26). According to customers’ demands that staffs see things by the same visions with them, more empathic manner is piloting to staffs by empathy training program supporting employees related to their guests illustrated by Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Select, and Holiday In Sunspree properties. (Wagner, 1998).

In the original SERVQUAL instrument, 10 categories were proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985)

Table 2.1 Ten Dimensions of Service Quality

No	Dimension	Definition
1	Reliability	Consistency of service performance and dependability
2	Responsiveness	The willingness of employee to provide services
3	Competence	Possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service
4	Access	Approachability and ease of contract
5	Courtesy	Politeness, respect, consideration, and friendliness of employees
6	Communications	Keeping customers informed in language they can understand and listening to them
7	Creditability	Trustworthiness, honesty and believability
8	Security	Freedom from danger, risk, or doubt
9	Understanding	Understanding customer's needs, providing individualized attention
10	Tangibles	Physical evidence of the service

One of the most widely used models in Service quality is the SERVQUAL that has been discussed in various literatures. The study of Parasuraman et al. (1995, 1998) suggests that service quality and its dimensions become a necessary and important factor that influenced guest satisfaction.

Table 2.2 The Definitions of the SERVQUAL Dimensions (Parasurama et al., 1988)

Dimension	Definition
1. Tangibility	Elements that can be observed physically: The aesthetics of physical facilities, tools, employees, and communications items.
2 Reliability	The capacity to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately. This dimension includes meeting promises pertaining to delivery, pricing, and complaint handling.
3. Responsiveness	The willingness to assist customers in a prompt maner. This dimension advocates positive service attitudes and requires personnel to pay attention to customer requests, questions, and complaints.
4. Assurance	The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence.
5. Empathy	The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers.

### 2.3.3 Service quality and the hospitality industry

Martin O'Neill (2001) has shown that hospitality environment for these days, ability of organization creating continually customers satisfactions reflects the company success. Increasingly, being value for money are over demanded by customers in terms of both the price/quality ratio and the product's actual quality or service provided. To guarantee market success, forcing is now applied to all types of hospitality organizations to stand back and take a long look hardly at the way of currently running the business by themselves.

Martin O'Neill (2001) found that as an effort to be success sustainable of competitive advantage, heavily investigation in a host of service quality improvement initiatives is now applied to hospitality organizations. The pattern of the majority of these initiatives illustrated by the British Standards Institute, the European Quality Award, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the Edward Deming Prize, or derivatives thereof. Furthermore, heavily investigation in rising quality standards through human resource development has been used for the hospitality industry. The initiatives refer to the Investors in People Award, the Welcome Host Initiative, and various vocational qualification schemes.

Oliver (1997) suggests that making organization friendlier to customers for these initiatives can refer to belonging to the total quality management movement, supporting organizational strategies and changes. In this context, "customer satisfaction is thought to be a natural outgrowth of optimal organizational design, and of instilling the appropriate organizational culture, personnel training and customer responsiveness within employee ranks. In short, it is believed that the attainment of satisfaction will be enhanced if these practices are followed"

"Customers have many different perceptions which are influenced by their education, up-bringing, experience and many other factors." (Van Der Wagen, 1994, p.4). Being professionals in hospitality which future depends on the customers' perception of actual service delivery, it is necessary for striving to gain an understanding of the customers' visions of service providers' performance. (Martin O'Neill, 2001)

"The idea is to stay ahead of the customer, to anticipate his or her needs ... so that when he or she articulates the need you have already planned for it and are ready (ahead of

the competition) to meet it.” (Bank, 1992, p.14). Martin O’Neill (2001) suggests that there is not any doubt in process for knowledge of customer perceptions’ service receiving.

Martin O’Neill (2001) concludes that it is simply stated “today’s hospitality professional must consider the measurement of service quality an integral part of any quality improvement exercise.”

## **2.4 Strategies**

### **2.4.1 Dynamic theory of strategy**

The central question in strategy could be what the reason is for leading companies to success or failure. Other questions, such as why companies differ, how they behave, how they choose strategies, and how they are managed, are inextricably encompassed by the causes of company success or failure. To understand success, highlighting theory of the firm and an associated theory of strategy is a must. Traditional answer of the strategy field, which offers the reason why companies succeed or fail, based on a set of largely implicit. While the nature of companies and the environment in which they operate are crucial assumptions. The importance of the distinction between industry structure and relative position can be explained that strategies, which will improve company while harming the other, can be chosen among other things. Moreover, for the origins of competitive advantage, the capabilities and likely behavior of competitive can determine the best strategy for company. At last, a sophisticated understanding of industry structure creates strategy for company (Porter, 1991).

### **2.4.2 Global strategies**

Regarding to global service in international hotel industry, providing clean and safe accommodations are needed while flexibility is also important in term of physical facilities in individual hotels accorded to local managers. Moreover, standardized policies were pursued by the leading franchised group more than the other brands. The consistency and the predictability are things which customers are looking for in a brand. Brand makes it recognizable as well.

In terms of service standards (rather than physical amenities), achieving standardization is what the hotels are seeking. The hotel executives pointed out that to maintain a consistent level of service was needed which method in place for each chain hotels would be applied to ensure for meeting standards.



In terms of information system, expectation of international chains hotels is making significant use of common global systems. For example, guest preferences can be stored by one hotel, which can be accessed by other hotels in the chain (Whitla et al., 2007)

### **2.4.3 Quality strategy**

According to quality-oriented strategies and strategic control system, there was an example as the U.S. Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The companies were required to develop a process for deploying and monitoring strategic quality plans (Department of Commerce, 1994). Starting the strategic quality implementation process was the translation of strategies and planning specific requirements and objectives for units of work. Three requirements were highlighted by the Baldrige criteria for effective monitoring of the strategic quality deployment process. The requirements consisted of following;

- Supplementing financial measure with non-financial indicators, which focused specifically on customer requirements, customer satisfaction and operational quality results.
- Performance relative of competitive benchmarks, which related to competitors or other industry leaders in order to establishing challenging while attainable targets and alert the organization to threats of competitive.
- Gathering of information was a must for identifying or anticipating of environmental changing, which may affect customer expectations, technological developments, changing customer segments or competitor actions. Therefore, the warning of potential threats, which may effect to the strategy plan of organization, must be provided (Ittner&Larcker, 1997).

### **2.4.4 Hotel Operational strategy**

Operational strategy literature has been contextualized in term of the hotel paradigms. Porter (1996) mentioned that operational Strategy is concerned with how the operation is organized to deliver to the right position. Operational strategy therefore focuses on issues of resources, processes, and people. Nowadays, is the plan for a long-term for a high degree of compatibility between these resources and the hotel's long-term corporate strategy (Slack & Lewis 2002).

#### **2.4.5 Hospitality competitive strategy in Phuket**

There are many licensed 5 star hotels in Phuket, present the diverse range of accommodation to suit the taste of arriving visitors in terms of elegance, class, quality service, and ambiance. As hotel competition in Phuket is high so using the operational strategy is one of the most important factors that lead the success of hotel managements in Phuket (Sriyam, 2010).

Zerenler et al. (2007) affirmed in order to stay competitive, the hotel should redefine the challenge of their basic strategies by rediscovering the sector they are in and creating something difference in their products and services. While, Porter (2008) mentioned that in order to be able to sell hotel products in a market of full competitor, one should have the capacity to meet the standard, demands, and expectations of the customers for instance; designing, the marketing trend and price, and promotion.

To conclusion, competitive strategy is became an important issue to obligate the differentiation occurred in customers 'demanding. Furthermore, hotel which can offer the products and services having new, unique, and different characteristics in the fastest way will be able to survive.

#### **2.4.6 Employee strategic**

It is a good reasons to consider investing in employee strategy, either fully or partially subsidized. Gagnon & Michael (2003); Hartline *et al.*, (2000). Explained that manpower is not the same task as other resource, it is because human is a live, critical, flexible but difficult to manage. While, Lam *et al.*, (2007) mentioned that human behavior is highly unpredictable, it differs not only from individual to individual but also the part of same individual at different points of time. However, Anderson (1989) suggested that "the main component of an organization or business is the human resources or 'People at work'. Human resources have been defined as, "the talents, skills, aptitudes, and creative abilities: whereas from the view point of the individual enterprise, they represent the total of the inherent abilities, acquired knowledge and skills as exemplified in the talents and aptitudes of its employees".

Nowadays, many hotel organization focus on human resources management in order to utilize the human resources so that it can be achieved very effectively and efficiently. It can be seen that many organization try to use this strategy in order to give better results. Furthermore, it also helps in achieving the objectives of Human Resources Management (HRM)

as well as, the Performance management includes activities to ensure that goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner.

#### **2.4.7 Green strategic**

Over the last decade year, many hotels businesses have increasingly changed, rapidly improved and adopted more and more on green strategies, in order to be a part of their operations. This is become a part of marketing declarations for the hotel to motivate customer to recognize (Millar & Baloglu, 2011).

Going green has become the important issue of the past several years and is continues to grow rapidly. The hotel industry is a large business sector, which means it plays a major role on positively contribution as well as changing the culture of environmental degradation in terms of the measure to reduce energy consumption (Fukey & Issac (2014). Many studies have indicated that the economic benefits of going green will provide various advantages in terms of gaining competitive advantage (being a leader in the sector, employee retention, recognition, customer loyalty, and increased the brand value).

It identified that the first green hotel launched by the intercontinental hotel group since year 2008. This was the world's first hotel with 100 percent ecologically-friendly. Their green features including: using of solar panels on rooftops, giving away nonperishable food to charities, wind power to generate electricity, furniture and fixtures made from recycled materials, rainwater harvesting system from the supply water in the toilets, and recycled glass windows, (Han *et al.*, 2010). Coming to our motherland Thailand, The Evason Phuket resort, which is certified by 'Green Leaf', this is one of the Eco label of green hotels and resorts. It demonstrated how environment-friendly upgrades made in older buildings can improve energy efficiency and reduce water use.

#### **2.4.8 Training Strategy**

Effective training is a necessity factor that helps employee able to develop the necessary skills in their position as well as improving the performance in the present jobs. As training helps improving new procedures. Noe & Peacock (2002) stated that employee training and development has become a major educational enterprise over the last three decades.

Armstrong (2001) stated that numerous organizational section suggest that people are the key for any successful business operation. It is becoming increasingly clear that no human

enterprise can succeed without properly skilled and knowledgeable human resource development professionals (Goldstein & Ford, 2002).

Employee development is critical for a short and long term of every business profit or non-profit (Noe & Peacock, 2002). Although the definitions of training strategy is broadly but the definition in the literature use as the term of human resource development (HRD), is rather than training and development (Slack & Lewis, 2002). It is mentioned as the changes in behavior that motivate the attainment of the goals and objectives of the organization.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Qualitative method was applied to this study to discover differences of chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket in terms of service quality and strategies in service quality. There were two main target groups which were chain hotels and resorts and non-chain hotels and resorts. This chapter explains the research methodology as following details;

3.1 Population

3.2 Sample and Sampling Method

3.3 Types of research

3.4 Research instruments

3.5 Data collection

3.6 Data analysis

3.7 Pretest Survey

#### **3.1 Target Population**

The research focuses on three departments included Front Office department, Food and Beverage department and Housekeeping department. The two target groups were described as following;

Group 1 : Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

Group 2 : Non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

#### **3.2 Sample and Sampling Method**

In order to explore qualitative answers, Purposive Sampling Method was applied to 7 chain hotels and resorts. Moreover, Convenience Sampling Method was applied to 5 non-chain hotels and resorts. Altogether, chain and non-chain hotels and resorts allowed the researcher had in-depth interview. The interviewees were managers and supervisors. In addition, existing strategies to maintain service quality were discussed during the interview.

### 3.3 Types of research

Qualitative method was used to explore answers all objectives for this study. In-depth interview was applied to a group of people who are at manager or supervisor level of Front office department, Food and Beverage department and Housekeeping department who monitor staff in each service parts and provide service directly to customers. Furthermore, one responsibility of the managers and supervisors is to maintain service quality for the departments.

### 3.4 Research instrument

In-depth interviews were conducted from manager and supervisor levels of operation department which were in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The main topics covered all dimensions of service quality and the strategies implement to maintain service qualities.

Parasuraman et al., (1985) created SERVQUAL dimension statements as following table;

Table 3.1 Original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements

Dimensions	Items	SERVQUAL Statement
Tangibles	1	The hotel / restaurant has modern looking equipment
	2	The physical facilities are visually appealing
	3	Employees are neat-appearing
	4	Materials associated with service are visually appealing
	5	Service is performed as promised
Reliability	6	Company shows interest to solve problems
	7	The service is performed right the first time
	8	Service is performed at the time promised
	9	There are no errors in the records
Responsiveness	10	Employees inform customers when service will be performed
	11	Employees give prompt service to customers
	12	Employees are willing to help customers
	13	Employees are never too busy to respond to requests

Table 3.1 Continued

Dimensions	Items	SERVQUAL Statement
Assurance	14	Behavior of employees to instill confidence in customers
	15	Customers feel safe in their transaction
	16	Employees are consistently courteous
	17	Employees have knowledge to answer customer's questions
Empathy	18	Restaurant gives individual attention
	19	Employees give personal attention to customers
	20	Restaurant understands specific needs of customers
	21	Restaurant has customer's interest at heart
	22	Operating hours are convenient to all customers

### 3.5 Data collection

The qualitative method was applied to this study to collect the data by using in-depth interview which was conducted during November 2017 until May 2018 from managers and supervisors, who have been in the positions at least 1 year. The interview was held upon the interviewees' convenience. It took approximately 60 minutes to achieve the interview checklist. Likewise, the questions were sent to the interviewees via email before the actual interview.

### 3.6 Data analysis

The open-ended interview questions revealed the findings of the research. Content analysis was applied as the method which enabled the researcher to examine the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts as well as strategies implemented to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.

### 3.7 Pretest of Survey Instrument

The necessary of interview questions is validity and understanding. Therefore, the interview checklist was modified after five interviews were conducted. Moreover, ranking of importance of service quality dimensions allowed the researcher to get more data

concerned about strategies in terms of servicequalities. In short, the interview questions were adjusted and corrected as suggestions, comments and feedbacks in order to make them suitable and appropriate for the research.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

In this chapter, the in-depth interviews with the selected key informants were applied to explore the main findings of primary data. The informants were related to Service Quality in hospitality in Chain and Non-Chain Hotel and Resort in Phuket. The interviews were conducted during the month of November 2017 to May 2018. Moreover, the pilot interview was conducted to ensure the respondents understood the questions which concerned to the accuracy of answer before conducting the in-depth interview.

The purpose of this study is to identify the differences of service quality and to compare strategies implement to service quality in Chain and Non-Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Taking the content analysis was applied to the results in order to response the major objectives as following;

1. To identify the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket
2. To compare strategies implement to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

#### **4.1 Profile of the informants**

The purposive sampling technique was applied to the informants via obtaining in-depth interview with twenty of key informants which concerned to provide and monitor services to customers whom at least had 1-year experience in the position. There were two major related informants which including informants in chain hotels and resorts in Phuket and informants in non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. After the 20<sup>th</sup> interview, the findings were all similar which indicated the saturation point of the data had reached. Therefore, there was no further interview. Table 4.1 presented the summary of key informants as following;

Table 4.1 Summary of Key Informants Profile

key Informants	Designation / Position	No. of Informants
Chain Hotels and Resorts	Manager	5
	Supervisor	6
Non-Chain Hotels and Resorts	Manager	3
	Supervisor	6

## 4.2 Main Findings

Regarding to the interview, the informants were asked through each dimensions of service quality which based on the SERVQUAL Dimensions (Parasurama et al., 1988) from the literature review, and it was described as following;

**1. Tangibility** - Elements that can be observed physically: The aesthetics of physical facilities, tools, employees, and communications items.

**2. Reliability** - The capacity to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately. This dimension includes meeting promises pertaining to delivery, pricing, and complaint handling.

**3. Responsiveness** - The willingness to assist customers in a prompt manner. This dimension advocates positive service attitudes and requires personnel to pay attention to customer requests, questions, and complaints.

**4. Assurance** - The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence.

**5. Empathy** - The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers.

The interviewees responded though the SERVQUAL Dimensions as summarized below:

Table 4.2 Summary of key findings on the Chain Hotels and Resorts in Phuket

<b>Key Informants</b>	<b>Tangibles</b>	<b>Reliability</b>	<b>Responsiveness</b>	<b>Assurance</b>	<b>Empathy</b>
Chain Hotels and Resorts	First priority	No mistake during serving services	Being professional on duty	Important	Customers' conditions
	Keeping promises	Standard Operating Procedure	Willing to help customers	Knowledge and Skills	Customers' preferences
	Good Facilities	Standard is a MUST.	Rotation job tasks in case of unstable emotion	Product Knowledge of hotels and resorts	Providing things or service to customers without asking
	Good condition of guest's rooms		Taking leave if necessary	Gaining more knowledge and skills once start working	Convenient services hours
			Team supporting	Training by Brand standard	24 hours services

Table 4.3 Summary of key findings on the Non-Chain Hotels and Resorts in Phuket

<b>Key Informants</b>	<b>Tangibles</b>	<b>Reliability</b>	<b>Responsiveness</b>	<b>Assurance</b>	<b>Empathy</b>
Non-Chain Hotels and Resorts	Good Facilities	Standard is a guideline.	Willing to help customers	Important	Customers' conditions
	Keeping promises	Standard Operating Procedure could be adjusted depending on customers' conditions.	Rotation job tasks in case of unstable emotion	Knowledge and Skills were not the core of service quality.	Customers' preferences
		Flexible service processes	Taking leave if necessary	Attitude was more important than knowledge and skills.	Go beyond customers' expectations.
			Team work	Gaining more knowledge and skills could be fulfilled once start working.	24 hours services
			Team supporting	Training	

### 4.3 Service Quality in Chain Hotels and Resort in Phuket.

#### 4.3.1 Tangibles

95 percent of chain hotels and resorts pointed out that the tangibles dimension is “very important” especially “keeping promises”. Regarding to original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements by Parasuraman et al., (1985), “Service is performed as promised” was mentioned as one statement of tangibles dimension. “Keeping promises” was significant described as the first priority by informants who worked for chain hotels and resorts. In addition, keeping promises was the highest level of focusing in this dimension among statements of tangibles.

*“Keeping promises is very important for us because it’s what our hotel is. The customers come with the expectations of receiving what we have promised by our reputation”.*

*“Keeping promises is the first priority. No matter what, we put it as the first priority”.*

*“Once hotels promised anything to customers, is a MUST to keep that promise”.*

*“Best service is the winner. Services make hotels different because any investors can build up hotels with good facilities in good location. The image of the brand and reputation is the promises, which the hotel must keep those promises for customers”.*

*“Keeping promise is the main key to gain trust from customers, and it can create the first impression. For example, the hotel informs customers that checking in time will be at 15:00 hrs., but if the hotel could not make it on time. It could make customers disappoint and negative attitude towards the whole part of the hotel especially the Japanese customers who seriously strict with being on time”.*

*“New hotels are increasing nowadays, so there are many choices for customers, but for staying in hotels, service is the most expecting thing from customers.”*

*“Customers can make decisions through brand of hotels and resorts as being a chain hotel carrying the promises for customers including good service standard, good condition of guest’s rooms, good and clean facility and cleanliness of the hotel especially customers who used to stay in a hotel or a resort in that brand before. Even though, they stayed in*

*different properties, but they expected the chain hotels and resorts to keep the promises of the brand”.*

*“Being staff in the hotel as servers, we will never let customers down by breaking the hotel promises”.*

The chain hotels and resorts also revealed that 95 percent of keeping promises were completed from all hotels and resorts promises. Furthermore, the informants explained that 5 percent of promises which could not be kept depending on hotels and resorts’ conditions, lacking of manpower and communication breakdown between staff and customers or staff and staff.

*“Sometimes, we can’t keep our promise. For the significant example, our hotel informs customers for checking in time is 14:00 hrs., but once the customers come to check in, the hotel can’t offer the room in time. Most of this situation would happen in high and peak season which create a number of “Back to Back”. “Back to Back” means the room that the previous guests will check out and there’ll be new guests come to check in in that room in the same day”.*

*“In January 2018 until March 2018, we hired 7 temporary staff as housekeepers. It helped us to complete the housekeeping job task including clean room for checking out guests to be ready for new checking in guests by 14:00 hrs. But there were 20 percent of checking in rooms, which were not ready by 14:00 hrs. especially in the day which there were staff took sick leave. It effected to the man power which made it tighter to manage”.*

*“Setting up a fruit plate in checking in room before guest arrival is the hotel’s standard, and Food and Beverage department is assigned to complete this standard. Once we are informed that the checking in room is clean by housekeeping department, F & B staff will go to that room for setting up a fruit plate. But in the high season, the number of checking in room is increasing while we still have the exactly number of staff. That’s why F&B team can’t set up the fruit plate for checking in room in time. It would be better if we could have more staff during any months with very high occupancy”.*

*“We have free shuttle bus from our resort to the beach for guests, we offer 2 rounds a day, and guests have to register at the front desk to confirm number of passengers one day in advance as limited seats. But sometimes there are guests more than the shuttle’s seats in*

*each round. Unfortunately, we can't offer more shuttle bus. It's our resort's limitation. Then, the best we can do is to offer help for booking a taxi if the guests want and willing to pay by themselves".*

*"One of our signature is our sunset rooftop bar. This signature is like one of our promise. Every guests come to our hotel with expecting to take a photo at our stunning rooftop bar, and we love to help them take photo up there as much as they want to make them happy with our hotel with unforgettable vacation. But some guests come to check in after the sunset and check out in the next morning which our sunset rooftop bar hasn't open yet. That makes some guests unhappy as they expected to take gorgeous photos up there but they couldn't. I think that could be one promise which we can't keep for all customers as our hotel's condition".*

*"Communication breakdown is one reason which our resort can't keep the promise in guest's perception. It happens sometimes between staff and customers during booking confirmation. Last week, I checked in guests when I informed them the villa number they got surprise. They said that they've already talked to reservation staff when they made a booking in exactly villa number. Then, I double checked with the reservation staff. The reservation staff explained that the guests requested for exactly villa number, but the staff's already informed them that we cannot confirm the villa number, but we might offer them if that villa number's available. Also, it was written in the document of booking confirmation which the reservation team 's already sent it to the guests via email. After that, I explained to the guest, but they get a little bit angry at our resort. They said that "Your resort promised me that I'd have that exactly villa number". After the guests was calm down for a while, I escorted them to the villa which our resort prepared for them if they could change their mind to stay in the prepared one. Finally, they agreed to stay in the prepared villa. This issue could be one promise that our resort can't keep for guests".*

*"Sometimes, communication breakdown between staff and staff could be reason that we can't keep promise to customers. For Muslim guests who come from the Middle East, once they made a booking, they requested the hotel to remove all alcohol from minibar in their room before their arrival. But somehow, housekeeping didn't receive that information. So, they didn't remove alcohol drinks from the minibar. Once the guests checked in they complained*

*about it, and it made them were unhappy. In my opinion, that was one of the reason why we can't keep promises for 100 percent”.*

Relating to others statements of tangibles of the original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements as “The hotel / restaurant has modern looking equipment”, “The physical facilities are visually appealing”, facilities were mentioned by informants as important for dimension of tangibles in service quality. The informants revealed that good conditions of accommodation including clean and modern facilities could complete the customers' expectations.

*“Facilities in hotels are important as they're supposed to meet customers' expectations. The customers always expected facilities in hotels and resorts to be clean, modern beautiful”.*

*“Customers expected clean and modern facilities from staying in a hotel. Guests' rooms must be clean and comfortable for resting. Those are what they pay for.”*

*“One of the important factor for customers to choose a hotel is to experience good and modern facilities. Our resort provides private pool and Jacuzzi with Seaview for our guests which they could not have it from other hotels or resorts”.*

*“No need for guests to stay with our hotel if our facilities don't be extraordinary for them. The hotel has swimming pool with small water park area for children which our main customers target is family. The parents prefer their children to enjoy our small water park area while they're relaxing by the pool than let their children to get in the sea during monsoon season with red flags are put on the beach as warning “DO NOT SWIM” by the government organization.*

*“We have the spectacular beach club as modern designed swimming pool and stylized sun bed area which blended with the pre-existing local tree. Famous DJs from around the world come to play their music for our guests while they're chilling at the swimming pool area with soul fulfilled cocktails. 90 percent of our guests come to stay in our resort is for getting new experiences and superb service as our reputation. We really sure that we're going to be the best beach club and entertainment complex spot for this area even though there're many luxury hotels in this area”.*



### 4.3.2 Reliability

In term of “Reliability” dimension, it referred to ability of performing the dependably and accurately service by the service provider ( Parsuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988, P. 23). There were two main finding in this dimension which consisted of providing the right service without mistakes and completing standard operating procedure (SOP). The informants from Chain hotels and resorts explained that as service providers, the service has to performed in the right way for customers. The service providers will not create any mistake during offering service.

*“Being staff, we have to provide right service to customers which the services are supposed to be. Let’s say we were customers, and we’ve paid for air ticket, visa fee, transportation and how much we’d pay for the room rate. We have been waiting for this vacation. All’s not just come here to received wrong services or bad services. It should be the best vacation ever. Therefore, providing the right service is important for staff”.*

*“Working in a main dining restaurant in this hotel is challenging. The dinner could become both as the good dinner and the great dinner because of wine. Our recommendations for a bottle of wine can fulfil the guests’ dinner, and the recommendations have to base on the right matching between food and wine. Different type of wine can offer different results depending on kind of food. Even though, we serve the best dish in our restaurant, but if we recommend the wrong type of wine. It can decrease tasted and value of our best dish”.*

*“Offering wrong service even one time, it can destroy the trust from guests especially the guests who just arrived the hotel. “What would happen next? If staff give me the wrong service since the first day I arrived”. The guests may say that or they could be polite not to say it out loud, but they would feel unsecure with our service for sure. That’s why providing the right service is necessary”.*

*“I must be sure that new staff will service customers in the right way before allowing them to service the guests. I cannot let the new staff create mistake during serving the guests. It may create negative comments which effect the whole team of F & B department. No matter I assign a supervisor to service them, they would not 100 percent trust in our service. The guest would feel insecure because they ‘ve already received bad experience from our staff. Therefore, when we serve the service to the guests, we need to serve it in the right way”.*

Furthermore, standard operating procedure was significant mentioned by all informants from chain hotels and resorts. SOP stands for “Standard Operating Procedure”, which was described as the standard process for providing service, and staff has to follow the standards. Completing standard is a necessary. The chain hotels and resorts pointed out that to offer right service to customers; staff had to follow the brand standard. The brand standard of chain hotels and resorts creates identity of each brand. Customers may stay in different properties of one chain hotel or resort, but they expected to receive the same service standard.

In addition, the informants explained that the chain hotels and resorts had standard examiners for each brand including internal and external. Internal standard examiners could be head of departments in the property of the chain hotels and resorts. Those managers were assigned to check standard of service including facilities and actual services from staff. The internal standard examiners also were called MOD, which stands for “Manager On Duty”. Not only to check the standard of chain hotels and resorts, but also to be in charge instead of General Manager during the night time. External standard examiners could be any customers who stay in the chain hotels and resorts. The staff was not able to identify the external standard examiners among all customers. The external standard examiners were also called “Mystery Customers”. After checking out, the Mystery customers must report the results of the standard exam to the main part of the brand. Then, the property would receive the results from the main office of the brand. In case of completing brand standard, the property would receive compliment. But in case of there was any brand standard which could not completed, the property had to improve to meet the brand standard.

*“First of all, we need to start with the hotel standard. We have to follow our process to service customers. For me, I work in Front Office department, no matter what I have to offer welcome drinks and cold towels to guests who checking in to make them relax during their arrival”.*

*“The hotel has SOP especially in operation departments. SOP is a MUST. The hotel requires staff to completed the standard which controlled by our brand. That is our brand standard”.*

*“I have to take a call within 3 rings as front office team because it’s our SOP. Once we all are busy, but we have to support one another to take the call within 3 rings. We*

*never know that call would be MOD or general manager or not, which make a call to check our service standard. Also, if I need to transfer the line to other department, I have to make sure that the guest must hear the music on hold because it's the hotel standard. Every day I have to make a call by myself to check if there's music on hold or not when I start my working shift".*

*"As supervisor, one of my duty is to ensure that all job tasks are completed in my shift. There's a job tasks checklist for each shift. Staff must complete those tasks, and I have to check if they complete all job tasks. It's our SOP which is really support us to complete the service".*

*"The standard is a MUST. Providing the same service standard is very important for our resort. All we need is to meet customers' expectation. Many customers used to stay with our brand in different property before, and they would expect the same service standard from our property. At the beginning of this property, all operation staff was transfer from the original resort in different location of our brand to make sure that this property will provide exactly the same service standard as the original one. And, the staff who was transferred from the original resort can groom new staff to meet the resort's standard which is very important".*

*"One of the global brand standards of my hotel is greeting customers. There is exactly the same pattern of saying for every chain hotels of our brand. Staff must have eye contact when we are distant from customers for 15 steps length, and staff must smile and greet customers once we are distant from customers for 5 steps length. The brand will always send mystery customers to check our standard. They are external standard examiners, but we have no idea who would be one of them. They can be any customers. Having examiners from the brand is keeping the hotel's staff complete standard all times. We never know when we could service the mystery customers".*

*"There was an internal examiner who came from the main office of our hotel brand. He put a few screws in his bed before leaving his room for dinner, and it was time for turn down service. He tested us if our housekeeper who set the turn down service would really complete the standard or not. If not, our housekeeper would never found the screws, which might hurt him.*

*"Once I was assigned to be MOD, I have to stay overnight in one villa of the resort. I have to check the standard set up facilities in the villa including mini bar, bath*

*amenities, emergency flashlight and cleanliness of the villa due to the villa I stay it is one of our villa the guests will stay”*

### **4.3.3 Responsiveness**

In term of “Responsiveness” dimension, every informant from chain hotels and resorts mentioned “willing to help” during interviews. Willing to help customers was focused once the interview concerned to responsiveness dimension. It was common part of the interview and one statement of the original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements by Parasuraman et al., (1985) which was “Employees are willing to help customers”. Staff was expected to be professional once they were on duty, which including being willing to help customers all times. One informant revealed that in the chain hotel, there would be a reviewer team, who worked in Human Resources department, responded to review comments and feedback from trip advisor website. The reviewer team was assigned to seek for staff’s name which was mentioned as complement by customers on the trip advisor website. Therefore, Human Resources department offered recognition certificate to any staff whom received complement by customers on trip advisor website once a month. Likewise, there were other informants pointed out that the chain hotels and resorts considered comments and feedback from customers on trip advisor website as important.

*“Staff must always be willing to help customers as service providers. It’s what we do here. For the hospitality industry, willing to help is important. Customers always know that staff service sincerely or not during getting service. It’s something that you can’t fake. The customers would feel it anyway. That becomes the reason for the service providers to be willing to help customers all times once they are working”.*

*“The hotel expects all staff to perform as professional once they are on duty. In the service part, staff are supposed to be willing to help customers. You must be ready to work once you are on floor. This is how we service our guests”.*

*“All of us need to work by heart which means all of us have service mind. We’re willing to assist customers no matter small issue or huge issue. I remember, we had Korean honeymooners last month. They traveled by themselves, but not really speak English while we don’t speak Korean. Every time they showed up at the front desk, we always helped them to communicate by using google translate even though it took time to complete the whole*

*conversation, but we really loved to help them. All we wanted was to made them happy during they stayed with us because they chose our hotel for their special time which they could remember it for good”.*

*“There was a couple of guest had trouble during their stay. One of them had a serious illness. Then, our hotel provided transfer from the resort to the international hospital, and his wife, who was another guest, was going with him. The driver and I took them to the hospital, and she was worried about her husband all the way. During her husband was with a doctor, she seemed very worried and stressful. I was not sure if she was quite drunk at that time because she was drinking when the issue happened. Then, I talked to her to relief her stress, and I said “You can hug me if you really need someone now”. Suddenly, she hugged me and broke down in tears. I felt sorry for her. I was thinking if I were in her shoes which was so far away from home. They came this far to relax and create remarkable memory with her husband, but the bad thing happened. And she found herself alone to get through this issue. I just could not leave her alone at the hospital even though my working shift was over. I talk to my manager, and she allowed me to stay with the guests at the hospital. After 4 hours, everything was settled down. Then, I left the hospital”.*

*“HR team always checks Trip advisor, and they ‘ll looking for staff’s name mentioned by customers. The guests write comments and feedback of our hotel and our service on Trip advisor. It’s called “GUESTS’ VOICE”. If any staff get complement with name mentioned on Trip advisor by the guests, they will receive recognition certificate from HR. This happens once a month, and it is our good support to keep us work happily and always want to do our best”.*

*“Trip advisor is very important for our service part. There is a big board, which is put in front of our canteen, showing comments and feedback written on Trip advisor from our guests, and all staff can read it. It can become a huge issue for our hotel if we have negative comments or feedback about our service which is written on Trip advisor by our guests”.*

*“Front Office team will always approach customers after breakfast because the guests will come to ask for internal transfer from our outlet back to their villas, and it will be our chance to get feedback of our service and their satisfactions during stay. There were our*

*guests who wrote feedback to our resort on Trip adviser as “The villa was spectacular, but staff were something more than spectacular”. Every complement from the guests is special gift for us. No matter how tough it could be in that day, but if we get the complement sincerely from the guests, we could get through anything”.*

According to statement of “Employees are willing to help customers” from the original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements by Parasuraman et al., (1985). The chain hotels and resorts expect their staff to be professional for performance service once they are on duty. In case of staff are not ready to work due to unstable emotions, taking leave is allowed from supervisors or managers for staff, who are not ready to work as unstable emotions. Negative issue may cause unstable emotions for example staff are informed that their parents are in serious sickness before starting the working shift. Moreover, job tasks rotation can be applied to the team in case of some staff is in unstable emotions. Both of taking leave and job tasks rotation need support from all team members, and it makes team player skill is important. They always support one another to solve unexpected issues in order to perform best service for customers.

*“I would like to share an unstable emotion case of my team. My manager is Japanese, but he has been living in Thailand more than 10 years. He knows and understands Thai people very well. One day, one of my team members came to work with terrible sad emotion. We asked her what happened, and she told us that she just broke up with her boyfriend the night before. Then, we informed the manager. After talking to her, our manager let her took leave to recover her emotion. And she returned to work in the following day with better emotion, which supported her to be professional at work”.*

*“In the restaurant, man power is important for our service. I would talk to staff first and evaluate him or her if they are ready to work as normal or not. If they are not ready to work as normal, but they still can work in the different job tasks. I would swop them into the job task which less direct contact to customers or I would swop them into the back office. However, in case of staff cannot work properly even though in the back office, I would let them take leave in one condition, which is understanding of the team members”.*

*“As a manager, I prefer to allow staff who are not ready to work as unstable emotions to take leave rather than keep them stay to work. It may create bad atmosphere in the workplace, which can effect other colleges, and it may create bad value to customers once*

*they have to service the guests. We may lose man power which make our team facing difficult working shift, but I'm really sure that it will be better than keep them stay, which is forcing them to ruin environment of the team and provide bad service".*

*"My staff used to face the unstable emotion issue, and it made her could work in that day. I talked to her and let her take leave. I told her that "No need to tell me now when you will be back. Take your time and let me know tomorrow when you'll be back. But I expect you to be professional once you return to work, and you must perform service as the same when you are back on duty".*

#### **4.3.4 Assurance**

According to the definitions of the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al., (1988) in literature review, which defined "Assurance" dimension as the knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence. "Assurance" dimension was considered as "important" from the informants of chain hotels and resorts. The informants described "Knowledge and skills" as the foundation of service including product knowledge of the hotels and resorts and essential knowledge and skill of job tasks. The informants explained that knowledge and skill could be fulfilled once start working.

Hence, training was a key success for gaining knowledge and skills, which was provided by training section of Human Resources department and operation departments. Training team, who work in Human Resources department, responds training by brand standard including product knowledge of brand and hotel. It started since orientation was held for new staff because the first start of working in the chain hotels and resorts was staff orientation, and it might took 1 to 7 days depending to each brand in order to introduce the brand culture and the brand standard to new staff. Then, the new staff would become staff of the brand.

In addition, operation departments provided training within departments for staff. The internal training of operation departments was known as "OJT", which stand for "On The Job Training". The manager of each operation department could be the trainer or supervisors could be assigned to be the trainers for the training courses. The on the job training could be held at least for 1 hour for each training course depending on department availability, and the manager could allow staff to involve on the job training of different department if the training course was concerned to their job tasks. For example, Front Office manager could allow staff to involve

showing villa's facilities upon guest arrival training of Housekeeping department. Plus, Housekeeping manager could allow Butlers to involve Special Promotion for Valentines training by Spa department in order to offer information about spa and treatments for customers. However, both training by Human Resources department and by each operation department were controlled by brand standard, which differently depending on the chain of hotels and resorts.

*“If we have product knowledge, it can help us to flow the job smoothly. Being staff without the hotel's product knowledge, we can't offer any information for customers”.*

*“To gain hotel's product knowledge, I have to walk around the hotel to learn product knowledge, which can help me to provide better service. Actually, I have joined the hotel's orientation when I started to work here. That was the first start for every new staff, which took care by HR department, and it took 7 days. It was the best orientation I've ever joined compared to other hotels and resorts I used to work for. It helped me to know and understand the brand as what we are and who we are”.*

*“Not only the hotel's product knowledge that staff must have, but staff must have knowledge and skills in job tasks also. Knowledge and skills are required from anyone who would work as staff unless they would not pass the interview process of recruitment. I admit that knowledge and skills can be fulfilled once staff start to work. But before becoming staff in my team, you must have necessary knowledge and skills in the job tasks. I cannot allow anyone to be a staff in the Front Office department if they never experience job in Front Office before. I expected the ones who used to work in this position at least 1 year because they've already gain necessary knowledge and skills in Front Office. Those could be the ones who could be fulfilled knowledge and skills as staff of our hotel”.*

*“Knowledge and skills are important because good service reflects good knowledge of staff. Also, knowledge should be provided with service mind. In our team, we always share knowledge and skills among our team members to help one another to develop ourselves. Training and retraining is one in our things to do lists, we always do it at once a week. For my hotel, there was a policy, which indicates that the hotel's staff has to complete 50 hours training per year. HR will keep record of staff's training hour, and that is one of our brand standard”.*



*“The hotel’s brand standard controls staff for training, and 48 hours training must be completed by each staff per year. Supervisors are assigned to evaluate the brand standard of new staff, the manager gives staff knowledge, and the manager is the one who evaluate them and the brand standard in the department”.*

*“I really enjoy OJT. It helps me a lot for improving knowledge and skills of staff in my team. There are 30 % of new staff in my team, who need to be fulfilled by knowledge and skills even though they’d have basic knowledge and skills. The OJT also helps me to retrain some job tasks, which we don’t use it often. It can make all staff recognize the knowledge and skill they may already forgot”.*

*“There is a key person for OJT in every department in the resort, and the key person is supposed to be in supervisor level. I am the key person for Front Office department, and I have to complete at least 4 on the job training courses for staff in my department. There will be a meeting once a month for the key persons from every department in order to update the plan and the completed results of each department. It’s our brand standard”.*

*“I assigned the Housekeeping manager to send butlers to join OJT of Spa in Promotion for Valentines training. After the butlers received training for that course, they could offer information of our spa to the guests, as they were the closet staff to the guests, compared to other staff in the hotel”.*

#### **4.3.5 Empathy**

Relating to literature review in chapter 2, Parasuraman et al., (1988) stated the definition of “Empathy” dimension from the SEVQUAL dimensions that “The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers”. The main finding from the in-depth interview with supervisors and managers, who work in the chain hotels and resorts, was service hours, which were convenient for customers. It concerned to one statement of Empathy dimension, which was “Operating hours are convenient to all customers”. (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

The informants stated about 24 hours service which were provided by the hotel and resorts. As the results, there were common 24 hours services in all the chain hotels and resorts as following; security, Front Office, Housekeeping.

Besides, the informants also added explanation about individual attention to customers, which referred to customers' condition and customers' preferences. In hotel industry, service is one main expectation part from customers. Paying individual attention to customers' conditions is one way to meet their expectations. Some customers have health conditions such as gluten free, asthma or physical difficulty. Once staff pay individual to the customers' conditions, staff can offer service properly for those who have special conditions. Knowing customers' preferences can be beneficial for staff during service, and it can create customers' satisfaction. Staff can create impression of customers by offering their preferences.

*Security service is 24 hours service in the hotel, and our duty is to secure all part of the property including customers and staff”.*

*“Our security team works for 24 hours, and they very strict to the safety standard. Supervisor always give briefing the hotel's updated information which concerned to work of security guards in the beginning of every work shift. Also, the manager of security department always attends morning brief among every head of departments with GM every day to update the hotel's information in order to have the same big picture with all head of departments”.*

*“Having 24 hours security service is very important service which secures the hotel, and it makes customers feel safe when they stay with us. As our resort consists of many villas in 32 acer landscape, having security guards in proper spots, which cover all area, can gain trust from the guests to feel safe while they are relaxing in their villas”.*

*“I used to open the safety box for guests in their room at the night time, and I had to go to their room with a security guard as it was our standard. The thing started because a child of the guests put something inside and locked it, but she didn't do it on purpose. It was her important thing, which was locked in the safety box, and she started to cry. The parents then called to the Front desk to ask us to open it for them. Due to our standard, in case of opening the safety box for the guests, one security guard and the guests must be witnesses in the scene. Once I opened the safety box, it turned out to be a bunny doll. Suddenly, the girl stopped crying. The parents told us that she couldn't go to bed without her bunny. That's why they couldn't wait until the next morning”.*

*“Front desk is always ready to service customers 24 hours, and we provide staff around the clock to take care the guests. Some guests come to check in very late due to their international flights, and our Front Office department can service them properly. In case that there would be a group of Chinese customers come to check in in the early morning like 03:30 am. or 04.30 am., I would assign at least one staff who can speak Chinese to ensure that all check in processes are completed smoothly. The guests would receive essential information properly as well”.*

*“We don’t have Room Service for 24 hours, but we do have Front Office staff to service for 24 hours. The Front Office staff are allowed to have a key of the food cooler, which belongs to Food and Beverage department, and it contains variety of sandwich. That means the guests can have some sandwich in the late night while it not an operating time of the restaurants and room service”.*

*“While other operation departments are closed, Front Office department still stand by to service customers all times which is 24 hours. The guests could call us any time to get information or get help. One of our guests went to Patong beach, and he couldn’t talk to a taxi driver in Thai to come back to the resort at 4 am. in the early morning. Then, he called us and asked us to talk to the taxi driver. 40 minutes later, he arrived the resorts safely and said thank you to us when he got off the taxi at the Front Office area”.*

*“One night around 11 pm. when I was working at the front desk, I got a call from in house guests, and she asked us to clean her room because her little son threw potato chips all over her room instead of eating it. Then, I informed Housekeeping team, and they took care of it”.*

*“During the night, the guests may ask for anything to send to their villas. Some asked for more pillows, and some asked for more blankets. But some asked the housekeeper to set up the Jacuzzi, and we were willing to service them”.*

#### **4.4 Service Quality in Non-Chain Hotels and Resort in Phuket.**

##### **4.4.1 Tangibles**

100 percent of the informants from non-chain hotels and resorts pointed out that the tangibles dimension is “very important” especially “keeping promises”. It was considered as

the first priority. Relating to original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements by Parasuraman et al., (1985), “Service is performed as promised” was mentioned as one statement of tangibles dimension. “Keeping promises” was significant stated by the informants. Moreover, keeping promises was the highest level of focusing in this dimension among statements of tangibles.

*“Guests come to the resort because they would like to relax. Most of our customers come across the world for staying in our resort. Every moment is for relaxing expecting by the guests since they’ve stepped into our resort. Facilities are very important as we are on the island. There’s no other facilities on this island. Most of the time, the guests would stay and use facilities in the resort except enjoying the beach”.*

*“We welcome many Scandinavian guests, who have flown with long flight, every year. They would stay with us at least 2 weeks. That’s why the facilities of the resorts are very important. We have several restaurants in our resorts, which different kind of food would be serve there. The guests could have different atmosphere with different good food for dinner. And our spa is one of popular facilities for the guests. We really love it when the guests ask information about our spa, which allowed us to offer them our great facilities. I can tell that our spa is the best spa on the island”.*

*“We have the swimming pool with good service of staff, and we have the beach front restaurant, which it’s just a few steps from the beach. Our guests can enjoy cocktails at our Seaview bar. Plus, if the guests would like to have sun bath, they can enjoy it with the resorts’ sun beds, which were set in our property next to the beach in order to avoid crowded tourists on the beach. Chilling with our sun beds, which are only 1 meter away from the beach, can give exactly view of the beach just like laying down on the beach, but so much more convenient”.*

*“Staying in our resort is to have special time and experience extraordinary facilities. Our resort located in the ordinary area. Even though we are on the beach front, but this beach is not a good spot to enjoy the beach. It looks nice when it’s high tided, but it becomes a muddy beach when it’s low tided. Therefore, we offer our guests a private swimming pool or a private Jacuzzi in every single villa. Then, the guests can have value time by our facilities”.*

*“There are many hotels and resorts in the same level on this beach. It also gives customers many options to choose an accommodation. As an independent resort, we have to*

*make sure that our facilities will make our customers happy. We have to make sure that we have a chance to be the chosen one by customers, without the chain or global brands. Therefore, we have good facilities which can be competed with any chain hotels and resorts. We provide spa, black tiled swimming pool with children swimming pool, yoga classes, gym, tennis courts and water sports including beach games, beach volleyball, body board, paddle board, windsurfing, snorkeling, and we proud to say the last facilities for water sports is catamaran sailing”.*

*“Any promises the hotel has made for customers, the hotel must keep it. We informed our guests that check in time would be 2 pm. in the afternoon since the reservation team sent email to confirm their booking, then the hotel must prepare the room to be ready in time. Keeping promises is the first priority for us. If we can’t keep our promises to customers, they would be disappointed, which could make them not satisfy with our hotel, and they would never return to our hotel even though we would be the cheapest hotel in Phuket”.*

*“There were a couple of guests, who stay in our resort for their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. But only the husband remembered it, and he would like to surprise his wife. After taking to our staff, we informed him that we could set their villa as honeymoon set up and offered them a bottle of champagne in their living room while they were away for dinner. Also, he ordered a rose bouquet for his wife. After the dinner, the guests returned to their villa and found our staff with the rose bouquet. Next, they entered their villa, the husband told his wife that was their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She broke down in tear and suddenly hugged her husband witnessed by our staff, who took photos for them. The guests could not have unforgettable memory if we couldn’t keep the promises we’ve made for him”.*

*“I had a chance to take care a private candle light dinner in the guests’ villa. The male guest made a booking with informing our resort that he was going to propose his girlfriend, and he would discuss the details once he arrived. Of course, he asked all staff to keep it as a secret and said nothing about it to his girlfriend. He decided to propose her during the private candle light dinner, which he and I have already discussed. He asked me to put the ring into the plate instead of the main course, and we acted as normal before serving the main course. I was so happy once I heard the lady said “YES” and saw both of them happy. That could not happen if we can’t keep our promises to the customers”.*

#### 4.4.2 Reliability

According to literature review of “Reliability” dimension, it was described as ability of performing the dependably and accurately service by the service provider (Parsuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988, P. 23). The study found that the non-chain hotels and resorts have flexibility in service process. Furthermore, it referred to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) as guide lines. The informants explained that in non-chain hotels and resorts, the SOP could be adapted or adjusted depending on customers’ condition and situations. The one SOP could not be applied to all customers, and it could be adjusted to suit customers’ conditions and situations in order to complete service and create customers’ satisfactions.

*“We have more flexibility than the chain hotel because we are independent hotel. Service part can be flexible if needed, and it depends on customers’ conditions and situations. To make customers happy, we can be flexible for them. I used to work for the chain hotel which SOP is a must. One day, there was a problem with customers, I informed them that it was our SOP. He suddenly said “Are you a police? Come on this is a hotel!”. Anyway, we had to follow SOP, so we couldn’t allow what they asked for”.*

*“We have SOP as steps of our services, and we follow it. But in reality, SOP is not for every customer because some customers have different conditions. I would like to show you an example. One of our SOP for going to meet customers at the villa, staff have to make a call to the customers’ villas to let them know that the staff is going to the villa in 10 minutes. This SOP is useful for both sides, which includes customers and staff. But we used to have guests, who stayed with an infant. That made us not to follow that SOP because the ring of the phone in the villa would bother the infant, and the guests didn’t want that. The guests would always make a call herself to let us know once she needed our staff went to her villa, and it did work for the guests and for us to service her in her way”.*

*“Working at the front desk, it’s very important to have ID cards or passports of every guests during checking in. It’s our SOP due to the safety policy especially we are the resorts with private villas. But still, there were some cases, which we can’t follow that SOP. I used to handle some difficult guests travelling with family. After my staff informed them that it was our policy, they still denied to give us all ID cards, and they need to talk to the manager. Then, I had to adjust SOP into taking only 1 ID card as the main contact guest for the*

*family instead of taking ID cards of every guests. I needed to do it because the guests were furious at that time, and I didn't want thing to go wrong since arriving the resort. It could decrease the guests' satisfactions and create negative perceptions of the guests, which that were not what the resort want".*

*"Cold towels and cold drinking water must be prepared in the hotel's car, which is assigned to pick up the arrival guests from the international Phuket airport, and it's the SOP. But some guests ask for regular drinking water as they don't drink cold water, so I have to asked my manager to allow me to prepare the regular water along with cold water. In case that it happens, then I could provide the regular one to the guests".*

*"There were kayak service for our customers as self-paddle. The guests are required to book it in advance, and we're not allow to take the kayak to any island due to our SOP. But I cannot complete the mentioned SOP with three guests, who are sons of the owner of one resident in our property. They come here twice a year, and they've been coming here for last 5 years, which means they've grown up here. Now, they're like 20s something, and they love to take the kayak to nearby island, which are 2 kilometers away from our beach. They always do that every time they stay here. It was started since 2 years before. Our management team discussed this issue at that time and came up with the privilege only for these three guests".*

#### **4.4.3 Responsiveness**

"Responsiveness" dimension was defined as "The willingness to assist customers in a prompt manner. This dimension advocates positive service attitudes and requires personnel to pay attention to customer requests, questions, and complaints" by Parasuraman et al., (1988). The main finding of responsiveness dimension was "willing to help". 100 percent of the informants defined this dimension as "very important", and they all mentioned "Willing to help" as the main idea of this dimension". The informants explained that being willing to help customers was one important character of service providers. Staff could offer good service towards the attitude of being willing to help, and the service which came from this attitude would be sincere. Customers would receive service via staff's attitude, and the customers would create judgement for the service they actual received, which could be both way; positive and negative.

*"Being willing to help is very important. You can't work in service part without it. Once you were not willing to help customers, you can't hide it because it always comes out*

*from your face, your eye contact and your body language. It makes customers unhappy which we can't allow that to happen in our service”.*

*“It's very important to be willing to help if you would like to work in service part in a hotel. Service part referred to providing service to customers, and it need to be sincerely. Service is not something that you can fake. It's supposed to come from inside. It comes from your mind. Service job is not an easy job for anyone who don't have service mind and willing to help”.*

*“One thing that we can't teach anyone is being willing to help which is very important in hospitality industry. I can't teach anyone to be willing to help, and no one can teach me how to be willing to help. It's an attitude, and it's very important attitude for one who work in operation department which responds to serve direct service to customers”.*

*“Willing to help is one attitude I'm looking for in every candidates during interviews. One qualification I really need is being willing to help for anyone who could become my team member because I need team work. This positive attitude can help staff to become a good team member and solve problems easily”.*

Furthermore, the informants revealed that taking leave could happen in case of unstable emotions of staff if it was necessary. Regarding to the non-chain hotels and resorts expected their staff to be willing to assist customers all times, all staff are always willing to help during their duties. In contrast, there would be some difficult situations which effected to staff and made them cannot work properly due to unstable emotions. The informants pointed out that taking leave could be allowed by supervisors or managers if it was necessary for staff, who could not provide service properly as always. The managers and the supervisors would not force staff, who was not ready to work, to complete job tasks. But the managers and the supervisors would evaluate the staff if they could be able to work in other different job tasks. Then, the staff might be assigned to rotate themselves into the different job tasks, which there was less in contacting direct to customers such as document sections including auditing departure customers' bills for the following day, preparing documents for arrival customers for the following day and updating information of customers in house in the operation system.

*“One of my team member had a terrible argument with his wife before coming to work one day. He was so stress out, and he couldn't keep himself calm. I noticed that*



*during our briefing at the beginning of working shift. So, I talked to him after the briefing, and found that he couldn't work properly as a waiter in that day. I asked him if he could work in the back of the house as supporting steward team, and he agreed. It's better to let him work for some position without serve direct service to the guests. It's too risk, and something could go wrong if I sent someone with emotions to take care customers".*

*"Smiling with being willing to help is what customers always expect from the Front Office staff, but there was a staff who had a tough time when she came to work. She broke down in tears during the morning brief. Then, she explained that her dad was sent to a hospital last night, and she would go back home after work on that day. But it would take 7 hrs to get her home as her family didn't live in Phuket. We agreed to let her take leave immediately as we all understood her situations. I allowed her to leave right away. The other team members gave her hug before she left. They told her that "Don't worry! We got it". And they were willing to cover her job tasks for her. For me, it reflected that they did understand one another because we work as a team".*

Likewise, "Team work/ Working as a team" was mentioned by 100 percent of the informants as well. When it came to unstable emotion staff, who were not ready to work, all informant described that team work was very important for the staff who needed to take leave. Working as a team, it could support the whole team, which was the whole department. In case of this issue, the team could continue their work properly by supporting from every staff. It must come from understanding of all staff.

*"I can say that every single staff in my department have willing to help attitude because I interviewed them all, and I was very sure that they've had it. Then, I decided to let them join the team. As a small group of people who work in Front Office department, I needed everybody to help me to build up a team. Working as a team, we can work smoothly and we can solve any problem which could be problems of the guests or problems among ourselves".*

*"We work as a team, as a friends and as a family. We really care one another. Living on the island, your team becoming your family. We blended together, and we understand one another. That really support our work. We need a team player to join our team in order to complete job tasks smoothly. No matter there would be any situations, we can get it through together as a team.*

*“My team is very important for me, and they helped me to get through difficult time. One day, HR got a call from my son’s school. They told me that my son threw up a lot with high fever, and he was on the way to hospital. I was very stress out and worried like I never been before. My manager allowed me to leave even though it just was 1 hour after I started my shift. I remembered that I was assigned in the afternoon shift with more than 50% of arrival guests. Letting me to leave could make the team tough for work, but one of my team member offered herself to work overtime instead of me. They all agreed. I could not get it over without my team. Thank you them for being my team.”*

#### **4.4.4 Assurance**

The next dimension is “Assurance”, and it was defined in the definitions of the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al., (1988) as “The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence”. “Important” was the definition of “Assurance” dimension by the informants. Regarding to the interviews with supervisors and managers, who work for the non-chain hotels and resorts, the study found that the main idea of this dimension is knowledge and skills. The informants explained that the knowledge and skills in the job in term of service was important. Staff could complete service properly by having knowledge and skills in their job tasks.

Nevertheless, the informants revealed that even though knowledge and skills was important in service, but it was not the core of service. The necessary basic knowledge and skills was required from staff, who would start to work. However, the knowledge and skills could be fulfilled once the staff started working. They could learn new knowledge and gain more skills to be better service providers. Improving and developing themselves by gaining more knowledge and skills was possible. Learning by doing was applied to the staff in term of service.

*“Knowledge and skills are important. Of course, we can’t deny that fact. To work in any kind of jobs, knowledge and skills are always required. It helps us to do the jobs and to achieve the jobs. Not only to finish the job, but to achieve the jobs as well. It is one main important part in hospitality industry, and all staff need it. How could you work as the front desk without knowledge? No, you can’t. Just like we can’t bake a cake unless we know how to do it”.*

*“One of important foundation in service part is Knowledge. Once you have service mind, then you need knowledge to complete you to be ready as a staff in the service part.*

*It's important for me as a manager to choose new staff with essential knowledge to join our team. If I pick the one, who doesn't have any knowledge in our field, it would drag the team down. It could make us lose one man power in each shift to take care of him or her for giving knowledge instead of having one more man power."*

*"It'll be easy for you if you've already have basic knowledge. Then, you can gain more knowledge and more skills when you work. Even though the new staff used to work in the different hotel or resort before, they could relate their knowledge to our resort in service part. And the more they work the more knowledge and skills they get. Knowledge and skills can be fulfilled every day at work."*

*"I am willing to mentor new graduate staff, who have experience and knowledge in hospitality industry. Many chain hotels and resorts may require candidates with working experiences, but we're different. We welcome the new graduate ones. All we need is basic knowledge and skills in hospitality to help them develop themselves by gaining more knowledge and skills in hospitality".*

In addition, the informants explained that training could be beneficial for staff, who needed to be improved or developed. Training of the non-chain hotels and resorts could be divided into two main parts, which consisted of training by Human Resources department and training by each operation department. Training, which was held, by Human Resources department referred to the common majority knowledge for hospitality in each hotel or resort including new staff orientation, fire evacuation, CPR, first aid and English training. While training, which was held, within each department was "On The Job" training (OJT).

On the job training focused on knowledge and skills concerned specific to job task in each department. For example, Front Office department had telephone etiquette training, handling guests complains training, verifying guests credit cards training and currency exchange training. On the job training, which was held by Food and Beverage department, focused on specific knowledge and skills such as wine sommelier training, the hotel's signature drinks training, up selling training and wedding function training.

*"HR gives us product knowledge since we started to work in the orientation for new staff. It helped us to know the culture of our resort as dependent resort, what we are and who we are. Then, we join trainings within our department to learn more knowledge and skills".*

*“Training from HR is one of my favorite trainings because it gives me new knowledge. I don’t know anything about CPR before, but I’ve learnt it from first aid and CPR training by professional team from Bangkok Phuket International hospital, and it was held by HR. That training helped me and my team had more confident to service guests in the restaurant and the bar because our restaurant and bar are next to the swimming pool. If something go wrong, we are ready for it”.*

*“Before becoming a supervisor, I had little skill of English. But after I joined English class by HR for 3 years, my English was better along with my skills. Then, I got promoted to be a supervisor. I can say that my English’s better because of English class from HR”.*

*“Ten years ago, no one knows Tsunami. But now, I believe that every staff know what Tsunami is. Our hotel has Tsunami and fire evacuation training once a year, and it helps us know what to do if it happens. All department have learnt what to do as their responsibility to support one another. We have learnt so much from this training. Thank you HR team to give us this very useful training”.*

*“There are many trainings within our department, and they’re called OJT, On The Job, training. There are at least 4 courses in a month. Manager or supervisor would be the trainer for each OJT. Not only knowledge and skills we often use in our job tasks, but it includes retraining for something we may need even though we don’t use it a lot. Verifying guests’ credit cards training is one of my favorite because we don’t really use it often, and our staff would forget how to do it. It’s quite fun when we all try to figure it out. Our manage is always the trainer for this topic”.*

*“Up selling training is our popular OJT. Our team will learn how to up-selling our resort’s signature menu. Many staff from different department will be sent to join this course in Food and Beverage department because they can apply the knowledge and skills which provided from the training to their own job tasks. For example, Front Office and Housekeeping team can up sell their own products including our restaurants which would make our guests have special meals”.*

*“The difficult task of our job can be referred to how to handle guests’ complains. As front desk, we would be the first one the guests think of when they need to*

*complain. It's challenging task for us, and that's why we have to train handling guests' complains. There are many staff from other operation department come to join our OJT for this topic because it could happen in any operation department such as Food and Beverage department and Housekeeping department. We will do the role play for different situations, and the trainer is the manager. We need to learn how to handle their temperature during complaining and their problems. It's very helpful training for us as service provider".*

#### **4.4.5 Empathy**

Regarding to the definition of "Empathy" dimension, Parasuraman et al., (1988) described in the definitions of the SERVQUAL dimensions that "Empathy" referred to "The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers". The main finding in this dimension was the 24 hours service, which was significant mentioned by the informants from the non-chain hotels and resorts. The informants considered "Empathy" dimension as "very important" dimension.

*"The guests come here to relax, and that means our hotel is expected to be ready to service all times. That's why 24 hours service is very important for us. If we cannot offer service as the guests expected, we cannot call ourselves a good hotel. The service time should be convenient to all guests unless the guests would choose to stay in some other place instead of our hotel."*

*"We service the guests for 24 hours. We have Front Office team, Security team and Housekeeping team. We're always ready to serve the guests no matter what time they need. All those 24 hours service is for creating the guests' satisfaction, and it's very important for us".*

*"One qualification of a good resort is 24 hours service. You can't say that your hotel or resort is the good one without having 24 hours service. It's very important part of hospitality industry especially in hotel industry".*

*"Front Office team covers 24 hours service, and it's very important for the guests once they need any help. We will be the one who can respond to the guests in that time".*

*"Security is very important thing for hotel industry. We must secure our guests and our employees all times. Having proper security team is a must".*

*"I love that we have housekeeping service for 24 hours because some guests may need us to clean their room at the night time. Something could happen, and make*

*them can't sleep without cleaning it. Bed sheets could be changed during the late night sometimes. But no worry, our Housekeeping department service the guests for 24 hours".*

#### **4.5 Strategy implement to service quality in Chain and Non-Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket**

The study found that the Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket used strategy as following;

- Quality strategy
- Hotel Operational strategy
- Competitive strategy
- Employees strategy
- Training strategy

##### **4.5.1 Quality strategy**

According to quality-oriented strategies and strategic control system, there was an example as the U.S. Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The companies were required to develop a process for deploying and monitoring strategic quality plans (Department of Commerce, 1994). Three requirements were highlighted by the Baldrige criteria for effective monitoring of the strategic quality deployment process. One of them was supplementing financial measure with non-financial indicators, which focused specifically on customer requirements, customer satisfaction and operational quality results (Itiner & Larcker, 1997).

The uniqueness of service quality in the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts, the researcher found that the informants explained that "Friendliness" were their uniqueness. Moreover, the uniqueness of the chain and the non-chain hotels and resorts would gain trust from customers which would be beneficial for service part. How they maintain their uniqueness was making it as culture of hotels and resorts, which it would be transferred from previous staff to new staff. Those cultures reflexed important thing into processing of service, and good result were expected which was customers' satisfaction.

Furthermore, offering special services for repeating guests was one way to make them satisfied. One Front Office Manager described that free of charge A la cart menu would be provided in breakfast for repeating guests during stay in the hotel. Hence, one Room Division

Manager explained that free of charge transportation from the hotel to the Phuket international airport would be offered to repeating guests. The mentioned special service allowed hotels to reach beyond customers' expectation which created customers' satisfaction.

Regarding to another requirement from literature review, it was gathering of information was a must for identifying or anticipating of environmental changing, which may affect customer expectations (Itiner & Larcker, 1997).

The study also found that, most of the chain and the non-chain hotels and resorts arranged small events as "Management cocktails" which offered VIP guests to join afternoon event including free of charge drinks and some finger food with management team. The management cocktails allowed staff from the management team talked to VIP guest in order to getting information in terms of service and facilities of the hotels and resorts. Once the management team received feedback from customers, they could solve problems which came from negative feedback, and they could improve their service and facilities. One Room Division Manager stated that "Many our VIP guests are repeating guests, and they'll always let us know if there's something we can offer to them which make them happier or any problems that we should solve".

#### **4.5.2 Hotel Operational strategy**

The results showed that the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts used hotel operational strategy. Related to literature review, Operational strategy is concerned with how the operation is organized to deliver to the right position (Porter, 1996). The informants explained that process of hotels and resorts operations were designed to meet customers' expectations in order to create customers' satisfaction.

#### **4.5.3 Competitive strategy**

The informants revealed that competitive strategy was applied to chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in order to compete in service quality in hotel industry. Moreover, one Front Office Manager indicated that the hotels must be always ready to change and improve service and facilities to meet customers' expectation. Regarding to getting information from customers via emails including 2 emails which hotel would send to customers after checking in and after checking out, hotels would have feedback and comments both positive and negative way. Then, the changing or improving would be applied to the hotel. For example, the hotel

received comment from customers in 2017 about painting in guest rooms which was colorful. The customers commented that it made guest rooms looked cheap. Therefore, all guest rooms were repainted into classic color tone before high season arriving in October 2017.

#### **4.5.4 Employee strategy**

The study found that the “employee strategy” was applied to the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts. The informants described that the hotels and resorts tend to be willing to invest in employees in order to have those, who have knowledge and skills with inherent abilities. Most of the managers revealed that new staff receive higher salary because the hotels and resorts need their talent and skills. Therefore, investing in employees can create positive results for both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.

#### **4.5.5 Training strategy**

“Training strategy” was used to develop employees in the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The study found that training was one of majority section of hotel industry especially in term of service. Likewise, the all informant mentioned about training, which was held by both Human Resources department and each operation department. It included essential and useful training, and it supported staff to improve and develop themselves in order to providing service to customers.

### **4.6 Particular Strategy implement to service quality in Chain hotels and resorts in Phuket**

#### **4.6.1 Global Strategies**

Regarding to global strategies on standardized policies were pursued by the leading franchised group more than the other brands (Whitla et al., 2007), the results of interviewing showed that the chain hotels and resorts were controlled by SOP (standard operating procedures) of the brand. One Room Division Manager explained that there was a quality checklist which was strongly required from the brand to be completed. Likewise, one Front Office Manager informed that to meet the brand standard, the staff must complete 50 hours of training per year. It was also determined by the brand standard.

As literature review in terms of service standards (rather than physical amenities), achieving standardization is what the hotels are seeking. The hotel executives pointed out that to maintain a consistent level of service was needed which method in place for each chain



hotels would be applied to ensure for meeting standards (Whitla et al., 2007). One Front Office Manager stated that “The most important thing in service quality is consistency. Without it, we cannot say we have good service for customers. So, focusing on consistency in service quality is a must”.

In terms of information system, expectation of international chains hotels is making significant use of common global systems. For example, guest preferences can be stored by one hotel, which can be accessed by other hotels in the chain (Whitla et al., 2007), the study found that most of the chain hotels and resorts applied customers’ information for their different properties as sending promotion from different properties to customers’ emails.

#### **4.6.2 Green strategy**

According to literature review in chapter 2 in term of “Green strategy”, Millar & Baloglu (2011) explained that many hotels businesses have increasingly changed, rapidly improved and adopted more and more on green strategies, in order to be a part of their operations, over the last decade year. The study explored that the chain hotels and resorts used green strategy by involving projects, which concerned to environment. In addition, the informants from the chain hotels and resorts described that most of the chain hotels and resorts campaigned customers and staff to involve the 60 earth hour project, which campaigning people to turn off the unnecessary power during 20:30 – 21:30 hrs. for 60 minutes. Moreover, the informants revealed that the chain hotels and resorts involved the “GREEN LEAF FOUNDATION”, which has objectives as developing quality of environment and tourism industry at the same time.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is designed to conclude and discuss based on the results the survey, and it was followed by a discussion of the results based on the research objectives which were indentified in chapter 1 as following;

1. To identify the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket
2. To compare strategies, implement to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.

This study revealed the perspective of operation staff in service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Therefore, the researcher used the in-depth interview by taking interview with 20 informants through purposive sampling method. The concepts and theories of service quality were applied to this study. The concept of SERVQUAL Model with 5 dimensions of service quality best suited to realize the objectives of the study. The interviews were conducted via managers and supervisors who have been working in their position more than 1 year which indicated that they have already passed the 4 months probations. So, it can be said that the informants were qualified as staff, which provide and monitor services direct to customers.

Moreover, this study explored the strategies implement to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket, which the in-depth interview was applied for 20 managers and supervisors who hold responsibilities in operations departments (Front Office department or Food and Beverage department or Housekeeping department) in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.

#### 5.1 Conclusion

According to the interviews, it is very clear that service quality is important in term of service for chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. All five dimensions of SERVQUAL were mentioned by the informants during in-depth interviews. There are the service

quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket in dimensions of “Reliability” and “Assurance”.

“Empathy” dimension was concerned as the first priority for service providers especially keeping promises and facilities. Keeping promises is very important for chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The promises, which have been made by hotels and resorts through actual promises and the brand image, have to be kept by their own creators in order to gain trust from customers and create customers’ satisfactions.

“Reliability” dimension was different between chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was mentioned by all informants, but it was specified as a MUST by chain hotels and resorts while it was a guideline, which could be adjusted depending on customers’ conditions, for the non-chain hotels and resort.

“Responsiveness” dimension was explained as “Being willing to help customers” by both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Moreover, taking leave for staff, who could not work properly due to unstable emotions, would be allowed by supervisors or managers if it was necessary.

“Assurance” dimension was referred to “Knowledge and Skills” by both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. However, the chain hotels and resorts concerned the knowledge and skills as very important in term of service while the non-chain hotels and resorts referred it as important, but it was not the core of service.

“Empathy” dimension was describes as 24 hours service by both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. There were common 24 hours services in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket, which were Front Office, Security and Housekeeping service.

Furthermore, in term of strategy implemented to service quality, there were common strategies in chain and non-chain hotels as following;

- Quality strategy
- Hotel Operational strategy
- Competitive strategy
- Employees strategy
- Training strategy

In contrast, there were differences between chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. It referred to two strategies which were applied to chain hotels and resorts in Phuket particularly as following;

- Global Strategies
- Green strategy

Regarding to Berry et al., (1990) mentioned that one definition of service quality was customers' expectations compare with the actual service performance create the perception of service quality, it suits the service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The service quality and strategies implemented to service quality, which were used by the chain and non-chain hotels and resorts, were applied in order to meet customers' expectation after the actual service was performed.

## **5.2 Discussion**

The discussion part derived from the results of the research objectives. The results were collected via interviews 20 informants, who were service providers. Therefore, this part provides the study's overall view.

### **5.2.1 Objective 1 : To identify the service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket**

As the results of the interview, there were differences in term of service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The significant differences consisted of two dimensions of service quality as "Reliability" and "Assurance".

According to the definition of the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al., (1988), Reliability was defined as "The capacity to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately. This dimension includes meeting promises pertaining to delivery, pricing, and complaint handling". The finding showed that chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket defined "Reliabilities" as "Standard Operating Procedure". The results revealed that the point of view of chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket toward standard operating procedure (SOP) were different. The standard operating procedure was concerned as a must via chain hotels and resorts' point of view while the point of view of non-chain hotels and resorts described the

standard operating procedure as a guideline, and it could be adjusted, which depended on customers' conditions.

Regarding to the definition of the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al., (1988), Assurance was defined as "The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence". The finding indicated that the chain hotels and resorts in Phuket referred knowledge and skills as very important while the knowledge and skills were referred as important, but it was not the core in term of service by the non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

In addition, for better understanding, the service quality differences between chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket were described in the following table.

Table 5.1 The service quality differences in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

Dimensions	Chain	Non-Chain
<b>Tangible</b>	First priority	Good Facilities
	Keeping promises	Keeping promises
	Good Facilities	
	Good conditions of guest's room	
<b>Reliability</b>	No mistake during serving services	Standard is a guideline
	Standard Operating Procedure	Standard Operating Procedure could be adjusted depending on customers' conditions
	Standard is a MUST	Flexible service process
<b>Responsiveness</b>	Willing to help customers	Willing to help customers
	Being professional on duty	Rotation job tasks in case of unstable emotion
	Rotation job tasks in case of unstable emotion	Taking leave if necessary
	Take leave if necessary	Team supporting
	Team supporting	Team work

Table 5.1 Continued

Dimensions	Chain	Non-Chain
<b>Assurance</b>	Important	Important
	Knowledge and skills	Knowledge and skills
	Product Knowledge of hotels and resorts	Knowledge and skills were not the core of service quality
	Gaining more knowledge and skills once start working	Attitude was more important than knowledge and skills
	Training by Brand standard	Gaining more knowledge and skills could be fulfil once start working
<b>Empathy</b>	Customers' conditions	Customers' conditions
	Customers' preferences	Customers' preferences
	Providing things or service to customers without asking	Go beyond customers' expectations
	Convenient services hours	24 hours services
	24 hours services	

**5.2.2 Objective 2 : To compare strategies, implement to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket.**

According to theory of strategy, Porter (1991) stated that the central question in strategy could be what the reason is for leading companies to success or failure. Other questions, such as why companies differ, how they behave, how they choose strategies, and how they are managed, are inextricably encompassed by the causes of company success or failure. There were common strategies, which used by both chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket, consisted of strategies as following;

- Quality strategy
- Hotel Operational strategy
- Competitive strategy
- Employees strategy
- Training strategy

Interestingly, there were two strategies which were implemented by the chain hotels and resorts in Phuket particularly while the non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket did not applied those two strategies to their properties. The strategies were as following;

- Global Strategies
- Green strategy

Therefore, the chain hotels and resorts in Phuket ensure the customers' satisfaction by using more strategies implemented to service quality. The non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket used less strategies implemented to service quality comparing to the chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. For better understanding, there are strategies implemented to service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in the following table.



Table 5.2 Strategies Implemented to Chain and Non-chain Hotels and Resorts in Phuket

Strategies	Chain	Non-chain
Quality strategy	√	√
Hotel Operational strategy	√	√
Competitive strategy	√	√
Employees strategy	√	√
Training strategy	√	√
Global Strategies	√	-
Green strategy	√	-

### 5.3 Recommendations for strategies implemented to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

It cannot be denied that service quality is important for hotels and resorts in term of service. To meet customers' expectations, focusing on service quality is necessary. "Reliability" dimension could be applied as more important for non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. The standard operating procedure (SOP) could be more practical than it was in order to ensure the service part as reliability of non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. Moreover, the dimension of "Assurance" could be more important for non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. It could be concerned as very important, which may offer new perspective to existing and new staff as service providers. Once the knowledge and skills become very important, it could support staff to achieve job tasks easily for non-chain hotels and resorts. The importance of knowledge and skills refer to training as the finding of the research. Then, the training hours can be increased to ensure staff would gain more knowledge and skills in order to create customers' satisfaction in non-chain hotels and resorts.

In term of strategy implement to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket, green strategy should be applied for non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. As the results, the green strategy was referred as trend at the present, and it can be beneficial for non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. This strategy can offer more options for customers to choosing accommodation which increases opportunity for the non-chain hotels and resort to be the chosen one.

#### **5.4 Limitation and suggestions for further study**

Firstly, this research collected interviews with 20 Thai informants. The 100 percent of informants are Thai nationality. The further research could focus on foreigner informants in order to ensure the results of the research even though the informants are different nationality. The different background may concern to mind set which effect to work process.

Moreover, this research focused on the part of service providers even though there were evaluations by customers informed via collecting data. The further research could focus on the part of customers who receive service from chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket. In this way, the strategy implementation to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket would be accomplished

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## APPENDIX A

### List of the chain hotels and resorts interviews

HOTELS AND RESORTS	POSITION	NUMBER OF INFORMANTS
1. Swissotel Resort Phuket Kamala Beach	Room Division Manager	1
2. Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort	Front Office Manager	1
3. Centara Kata Resort Phuket	Front Office Manager	1
4. Sri panwa, Phuket	Front Office Executive	1
	Senior Estate Host (Front Office Supervisor)	1
5. Baba Beach Club, Phuket	Front Office Manager	1
6. JW Marriott Resort and Spa Phuket	Front Office Supervisor	1
7. Marriott Vacation Club	Front Office Supervisor	1
8. Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort	Restaurant Supervisor	1
	Assistant In Room Dining Manager & Acting Banquet Manager	1
9. Ramada Phuket Deevana	Front Office Supervisor	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>

## APPENDIX B

### List of the non-chain hotels and resorts interviews

HOTELS AND RERSOTS	POSITION	NO. OF IMFORMANTS
1. The Racha	Front Office Manager	1
2. The Chava Resort	Food and Beverage Supervisor	2
3. The Surin Phuket	Front Office Supervisor	1
4. The Pavilions Phuket	Food and Beverage Supervisor	1
	Front Office Supervisor	1
5. The Vijitt Resort Phuket	Food and Beverage Supervisor	1
	Front Office Supervisor	1
6. Malisa Villa Suites	Front Office Supervisor	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>



## APPENDIX C



### Interview Checklist

**Thesis Title : Strategies implement to maintain service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket**

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Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Supphakan Wattanasantikul and I am an MBA student of Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus. My final thesis at Prince of Songkla University deals with strategies of maintenance service quality in chain and non-chain hotels and resorts in Phuket

I would be much obliged if we could arrange a meeting to discuss the topic. (Here attached you will find a document with a number of questions that I would like to bring up with you.)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Supphakan Wattanasantikul

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### Questions

#### **Section 1 : Dimension of service quality**

1. In your opinion, what are service quality dimensions?

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Definition</b>
1. Tangibility	Elements that can be observed physically: The aesthetics of physical facilities, tools, employees, and communications items.
2 Reliability	The capacity to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately. This dimension includes meeting promises pertaining to delivery, pricing, and complaint handling.

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3. Responsiveness	The willingness to assist customers in a prompt manner. This dimension advocates positive service attitudes and requires personnel to pay attention to customer requests, questions, and complaints.
4. Assurance	The knowledge and civility of employees and their capability of exercising trust and confidence.
5. Empathy	The caring attitude and individualized attention given by an organization to its customers.

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Source: The Definitions of the SERVQUAL Dimensions (Parasuraman et al., 1988)

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Dimensions	Items	SERVQUAL Statement
Tangibles	1	The hotel / restaurant has modern looking equipment
	2	The physical facilities are visually appealing
	3	Employees are neat-appearing
	4	Materials associated with service are visually appealing
	5	Service is performed as promised
Reliability	6	Company shows interest to solve problems
	7	The service is performed right the first time
	8	Service is performed at the time promised
	9	There are no errors in the records
Responsiveness	10	Employees informs customers when service will be performed
	11	Employees give prompt service to customers
	12	Employees are willing to help customers
	13	Employees are never too busy to respond to request
Assurance	14	Behavior of employees to instill confidence in customers
	15	Customers feel safe in their transaction
	16	Employees are consistently courteous
	17	Employees have knowledge to answer customer's questions

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	18	Restaurant gives individual attention
	19	Employees gives personal attention to customers
Empathy	20	Restaurant understands specific needs of customers
	21	Restaurant has customer's interest at heart
	22	Operating hours are convenient to all customers

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Source: Original SERVQUAL 5 dimension statements (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

### **Section 1 : Dimension of service quality (continued)**

#### 2. Tangibles

How important of performing service as promised to customers? What is the ration in percentage?

#### 3. Reliability

How important of providing service in the same standard to customers? Is (Are) there any service procedure?

#### 4. Responsiveness

Regarding to being willing to help customers all times, how do staff handle themseves in case of unstable emotion? Do staff receive any comments about being willing to help both positive and negative? If yes, please specific.

#### 5. Assurance

How important of skills and knowledge in job tasks? How do staff achieve their job tasks?

#### 6. Empathy

How important of convenient operating hours to all customers? Does the hotel has any 24 hours service? If yes, please specific

**Section 2 : Maintenance of service quality**

7. What is the hotel's uniqueness of service quality and how to maintain?
8. How to maintain service quality in the hotel?
9. What is the most important thing in service quality?
10. Is (are) there any services in the hotel should be improved and how?
11. How many percentages of retention customers due to service of the hotel and how to maintain this group of retention customers?
12. Is (are) there any suggestions?

**Section 3: Ranking of Service Quality Dimensions**

Kindly rank scale (1-5) where 1 is the most important dimension and 5 is the least dimension.

- ..... Tangibles
- ..... Reliability
- ..... Responsiveness
- ..... Assurance
- ..... Empathy

Thank you for your kind support

## Appendix D

### Certificate



**VITAE**

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**Student ID** 5630120019

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