



The factors affecting customer satisfaction and service quality: A study at Hoa Binh Phu Quoc resort Vietnam

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper was to determine the factors affecting customers' satisfaction at lodging services. A questionnaire was drafted, and there were 265 customers as respondents, who were using lodging services at Hoa Binh Phu Quoc Resort. Result shows that there are five key factors directly related to the customer satisfaction about lodging services: employees, value-added services, the convenience, the rooms and board, and pricing. At the same time, factors regarding food and drink safety do not affect the customers' satisfaction, which is a surprising finding. From the study, the authors recommended some possible solutions for managers at the resort in order to improve the customers' satisfaction levels when using lodging services at the resort in the future. The finding may be applicable to all resorts in the area as well.

Keywords: Customers' satisfaction, service quality, Hoa Binh Phu Quoc Resort, Vietnam.

Introduction

In the past years, tourism has become one of the key industries that has huge income possibilities in different regions. It also helps to create jobs for many people. In Kien Giang – Vietnam, Phu Quoc Island is one of the most famous tourist destinations in the country, attracting many tourists from all over the world. Therefore, it is a challenge for the Phu Quoc tourism industry to make their services somewhat different from other tourist destinations. Customers are becoming more and more demanding regarding service quality, especially with lodging services and other tourism related services. In this situation, hotels and resorts in Phu Quoc, particularly Hoa Binh Phu Quoc Resort, have no other choice but to try to improve their service quality on an ongoing basis.



In reality, Hoa Binh Phu Quoc Resort has invested and improved inter alia their infrastructure, the room systems, the pools, and employee trainings, in order to improve their customers' satisfaction when they come to the resort. However, to have an understanding of the customers' point of view, there needs to be further research that evaluates and analyzes these important factors; Such studies will allow researchers to make recommendations to the managers and the board of directors of major hospitality and tourism businesses in the futures. This is also the purpose of this limited study.

Literature review

Services and quality of tourism services

According to the Vietnam Tourism Law (2017), tourism is an activity of people occurring outside of their regular residency, in order to satisfy their needs for sightseeing, entertainment, and relaxing for a certain amount of time.

Service quality is an abstract definition that we cannot physically measure, therefore it causes many quarrels in different studies. Depending on the research objects and/or research environment, different authors have different definitions about service quality. In Vietnam Standard and ISO-9000, service quality is the appropriate level of service products satisfying the users' demands. However, in Lewis and Mitchell (1990); Asubonteng (1996); Wisniewiki & Donnelly (1996) and Nicolaidis (2008; 2012), service quality is a level of service can fulfill the needs, wants and expectations of the customers. In a different study, Edvardsson, Thomsson and Ovretveit (1994) state that service quality is a service that meet the customers' needs and satisfies their demands. However, Parasuraman (1985, 1988) suggested that service quality is the gap between customers' expectations about a service and their perception after using that service. This definition could also be considered as a complete and most accurate definition when considering service quality from the customers' point of view.

Customers' satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a feeling toward a product or service that is already being used. The customers' satisfaction is a feeling that results from a comparison between what a customers received from using a particular product/service with what he or she expects to receive prior to using that product/service. (Nicolaidis, 2008; Kotler & Keller, 2006)

Bachelet (1995) believes that customer satisfaction is a feeling and the reaction of a customer responding to his or her experience using a product/service. Oliver (1993) also thinks that customer satisfaction is considered as a comparison of the expectations before and after using a service. Kotler and Keller (2006) think that customer satisfaction can be reviewed at three levels:

- Not satisfied: when the customer's satisfaction level is less than expectations
- Satisfied: when the customer's satisfaction level is equal to expectations
- Very satisfied: when the customer's satisfaction level exceeds their expectations

Customers' satisfaction is a feeling that customers want to have after using a service/product. The expectations are generally formed before the customer makes a decision to use or buy the product, which is why service quality excellence is a very important thing (Nicolaidis, 2008; 2012). Expectations are formed based mainly on three factors: customer's experiences, recommendations from family or friends, and information from the seller.



The relationship between service quality and customers' satisfactions

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is an interesting topic for many researchers in the past decades; and many studies about customer satisfaction in the service industries have been carried-out in the last few years. Some researchers suggested that service quality and customer satisfaction have many similarities, therefore they can be used interchangeably with each other.

However, different researches have proved that these terms are two different topics, and two different definitions emerge yet they have a strong connection between them. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2000), customers' satisfactions are affected by factors such as: product quality, service quality, price, reality factors, and personal factors. As in the researches of Cronin and Taylor (1992), Nicolaidis (2008), and Spreng and Taylor (1996), it was shown that service quality does indeed lead to customer satisfaction. The reason is because service quality is related to the service being provided, whereas the satisfaction level is only evaluated after using a service.

Through the research read about satisfaction, service quality, the relationship between these two aspects, as well as other related researches, this study performed a linear regression model with some related variables such as:

- **Employees:** this is a variable that shows the employees' ability to serve the customers. Therefore, a good skill to serve is one of the key factor that would increase the customers' satisfaction about the services they received.

In the research of Nguyen Duy Quang (2001) it is indicated that, the "Staff" factor is one of the key factors that determine the customers' satisfaction about the service quality the obtain. In this research, this factor was omitted because it did not satisfy the statistical meaning. However, because of the necessary reason in the process of providing service in this particular paper, we decided to use this variable in the linear model.

Hypothesis H1: If Hoa Binh – Phu Quoc Resort's employees have good skills and ability to serve the customer, then the customers' satisfaction level will be high.

- **Rooms and board:** this is the first factor related to the resort's infrastructure at the readiness level to provide lodging services to the customers. Therefore, rooms and board would be a factor that could increase the customers' satisfaction about the services they received.

In the researches of Nguyen Duy Quang (2011), Nicolaidis (2008), Le Thi Kim Ngoc (2015), and Le Huu Trang (2007), "Physical facilities" and "lodging hotels" are two of the important factors that affect the customers' satisfaction relating to service provision.

In this paper, we also decided to use the "room and board quality" factors as one of the factors that could change the customers' satisfaction when using services at Hoa Binh – Phu Quoc resort.

Hypothesis H2: If the rooms and board of the resort is good, then the customers' satisfaction is likely to be high.

- **Foods and Beverage:** this is also a very important factor because besides staying at the hotel for a long time, customers need to use the food and drinks provided by the hotel. Foods and drink can directly affect the customers' health and well-being. Nicolaidis and Grobler, (2017) say that the well-being of tourists can be connected to the quality of life which can be defined in a assortment of ways, including the association between quality of life and life satisfaction, the quality of life, self-realization and fulfilment. In one of his studies, Nguyen Duy Quang (2011) determined that this is one of the key factors that affect the customers' satisfaction.



Hypothesis H3: If the foods and drinks at Hoa Binh – Phu Quoc are good, then the customers' satisfaction is likely to be high.

- **Value-added services:** In the tourism activities, beside the main ones which are lodging and foods, other value-added services such as dry-cleaning, tourism information services, fitness, massage, karaoke and other services within the hotel would contribute to increase the quality of service offered.

Hypothesis H4: If the value-added services at Hoa Binh – Phu Quoc are good, then the customers' satisfaction is high.

- **Convenience:** This is also considered as a very important factor in tourism industry and it could be one of the key factor leading to the decision of choosing a tourist destination. In this research model, the authors considered this factor as affecting the customers' satisfaction because it is related to the hotel's distance to other important places such as for example, the airport or a shopping mall.

Hypothesis H5: The more convenience at Hoa Binh – Phu Quoc compared to other hotels, the higher will be their customers' satisfaction.

- **Security:** From the tourism industry perspective, no customer would choose a destination place that would not consider the security factors. When using lodging and other services at the hotel, the safety factors are always the factors that have the most influence on customer satisfaction. Therefore, the authors agreed with Nguyen Duy Quang (2011) in choosing this factor as an influence factor in this model.

Hypothesis H6: If the security of Hoa Binh – Phu Quoc is high, then the customers' satisfaction is high.

- **Price sensitive:** With any products, pricing is always an important factor that has the most influence on the customer satisfaction. This is not about how high or low the price is, but it is about how reasonable and how clear the price appears to the customers. Therefore, reasonable prices would increase the customers' satisfaction toward the services they received.

According to a research of Nguyen Duy Quang (2011) and Le Thi Kim Ngoc (2015), the "pricing" factor has a direct affect on the customers' satisfaction. According their point of view, good pricing is considered as that which is reasonable, has clarity, and is fair to the customers.

Hypothesis 7: If the price sensitivity about the services at Hoa Binh – Phu Quoc is good, then the customers' satisfaction will be high.

The research model is presented as follows:

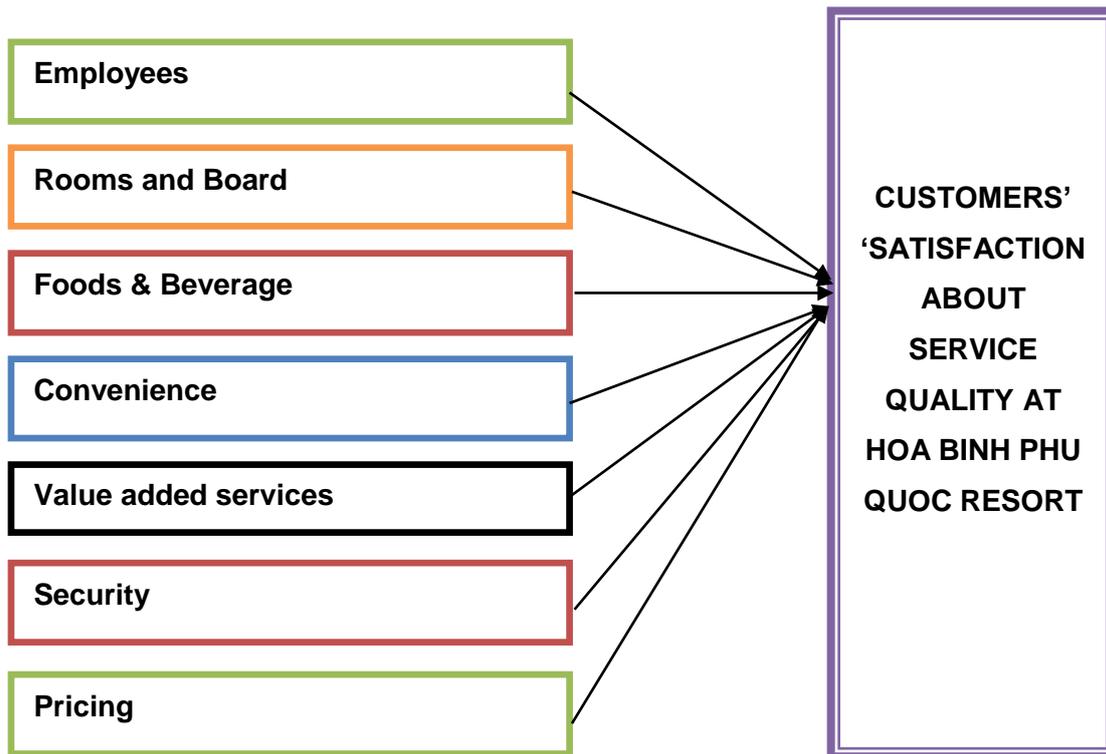


Figure 1. The literary research model

Source: Compiled by the authors

Research methods

Sampling methods and data entry

This research was carried out using 300 customers as respondents. They were all used the lodging services as Hoa Binh - Phu Quoc resort from 11/2018 to 04/2019. There were 300 questionnaires sent out, 270 of them were answered and returned. The questionnaires were delivered directly to the customers at the front desk, welcome area, pools, and restaurants where the customers had the time to answer the questions. The questionnaires were developed based on a wide range of sample selection from expert interviews, group discussions with 10 customers and a pre-designed questionnaire. The sample were selected on a wide scope, randomly, and by convenience from the customers at the resort. Within the sample of 300 questionnaires, there were some uncompleted surveys because the customers did not finish answering all the questions, therefore, the final sample size was reduced to $n = 265$.

Research methods

The authors used two main research methods: qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative method was based on analyzing, evaluating, and summarizing different researches and documents, and adjusting the measurements to suit with Hoa Binh - Phu Quoc resort. Adjusting the measurements was done after deep conversations with managers in the resort and group discussions with 10 customers using lodging services at the resort.

The quantitative method was performed based on collecting data from the questionnaires and processing the data with SPSS to analyze the data: detailed analysis, Cronbach's Alpha analysis, EFA analysis, and multiple regression analysis.



Analyzing research data

Detailed analysis of the research samples

SPSS 20.0 was used to perform this analysis using the 265 customers and the detailed information about the research sample appears in the table below:

Table 1. Descriptive statistics about the samples

No.	Characteristic	Frequency	Rate (%)
Gender			
1	Male	90	34.0
2	Female	175	66.0
	Total	265	100.0
Age group			
1	Under 30 years old	47	17.7
2	From 30 to 40 years old	61	23.0
3	From 41 to 50 years old	84	31.7
4	From 51 to 60 years old	41	15.5
5	Over 60 years old	32	12.1
	Total	265	100.0
Marital Status			
1	Single	83	31.3
2	Married – no kids	88	33.2
3	Married with kids	94	35.5
	Total	265	100.0
Income			
1	Under 10 million VND / month	98	37.0
2	10 to 15 million VND / month	88	33.2
3	15 to 20 million VND / month	51	19.2
4	Above 20 million VND / month	28	10.6
	Total	265	100.0
Education level			
1	High school	83	31.3
2	University	114	43.0
3	Graduated	68	25.7
	Total	265	100.0
Occupation			
1	Government employees	68	25.7
2	Business employees	87	32.8
3	Self-employed	110	41.5
	Total	265	100.0
Number of time using service at the resort			
1	First time	130	49.1
2	2 times	70	26.4
3	3 times	41	15.5
4	More than 3 times	24	9.1
	Total	265	100.0

Source: Analyzing result from SPSS



Cronbach's Alpha Analysis

The result from Cronbach's Alpha analysis at table 2 indicate that the Cronbach's Alpha > 0.6 and the corrected item total correlation 0.3. Therefore, this shows that the sample is reliable and can be used in the EFA analysis.

Table 2. Results of testing of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of scales

Measurements	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Employees (NV)	5	.906
Food & Beverage (DATU)	4	.896
Value-added services (GTGT)	5	.895
Security (AN)	4	.856
Convenience (STL)	4	.901
Rooms (PN)	5	.898
Pricing (GC)	4	.834
Satisfaction (SHL)	5	.942

Source: Analyzing result from SPSS

EFA Analysis

Analyzing results using EFA:

From the research results, data was analyzed using SPSS software. After deleting a factor loading of less than 0.5, the final analyzing results were as follows:

Table 3. Results of testing of EFA of independent scales

Observed variable	Factors						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NV5	.848						
NV2	.836						
NV4	.833						
NV3	.825						
NV1	.805						
PN2		.887					
PN5		.854					
PN1		.845					
PN3		.835					
PN4		.759					
GTGT4			.902				
GTGT2			.874				
GTGT1			.837				
GTGT3			.812				
GTGT5			.682				
STL1				.919			
STL4				.861			
STL2				.840			
STL3				.812			
DATU1					.931		
DATU4					.914		
DATU3					.758		
DATU2					.736		
AN1						.827	
AN3						.781	
AN4						.777	
AN2						.699	
GC4							.796

GC1							.726
GC3							.709
GC2							.708
KMO = 0.829 > 0.5; Bartlett's Chi-Square = 5790.923; Sig = 0.000 < 0.05; AVE = 73.44% > 50%							

Source: Analyzing result using SPSS

Analyzing the result showed that KMO = 0,829 > 0.5, Bartlett test of Sphericity had a p-value is 0,000 < 0,05, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is 73,44% > 50% (model 3), factor loading is greater than 0.5, the observed factors created 5 factors. Therefore, the data using in the model is useful.

EFA analysis on customers' satisfaction - measure of logistics quality

Table 4. Results of testing of EFA of d scales

Variable Component Matrix	Factor
HL4	.952
HL5	.904
HL2	.899
HL3	.879
HL1	.871
KMO = 0.901 > 0.5, Bartlett's Chi-Square = 440.459, Sig = 0.000 < 0.05, AVE = 81.262 % > 50%	

Source: Analysis result using SPSS

Analysis of results using EFA showed that KMO = 0,901 > 0.5, Bartlett's had a p-value which equals 0.000 < 0.05, AVE 73,44 % > 50%, the observed variables form only 1 factor (table 4) therefore EFA analysis is useful.

In conclusion, after performing EFA measure of factor adequacy, no factor was changed. Therefore, the research model remained as it was in the initial model.

Regression analysis result

From table 5, there were 5 meaningful factors statistically. They were: Employees (NHANVIEN), Value-added services(DVGIATANG), Convenience (SUTIENLOI), Rooms (PHONGNGHI), pricing (CAMNHANGIA). The regression function is determined as:

$$SUHAILONG = 0.203 * NHANVIEN + 0.202 * DVGIATANG + 0.174 * SUTIENLOI + 0.256 * PHONGNGHI + 0.352 * CAMNHANGIA$$

Table 5. Regression analysis result

Model	Factor		Beta	t	Value (Sig.)	Tolerance	VIF
	β	Std. error					
(Constant)	-.568	.339		-1.677	.095		
NHANVIEN	.180	.043	.203	4.155	.000	.846	1.182
DVGIATANG	.185	.043	.202	4.285	.000	.916	1.092
SUTIENLOI	.150	.041	.174	3.677	.000	.905	1.105
PHONGNGHI	.232	.043	.256	5.335	.000	.883	1.132
CAMNHANGIA	.522	.079	.352	6.575	.000	.706	1.416
R Square Change		0.475					
R ² Adj.		0.465					
F		46.901					
Sig. F		0.000 ^a					

Source : Analyzing result using SPSS

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based upon the quantitative research about the factors affecting the customers' satisfaction on service quality at Hoa Binh Phu Quoc resort, there are some important conclusions as follow:



When the customers' satisfaction about the services at Hoa Binh - Phu Quoc was independently reviewed under each separate factor, the "pricing" factor was the one with the highest satisfaction. Following "pricing" was "rooms and boards", "employees", "value-added services". Factor "convenience" had the lowest satisfaction level. The dependent factor "overall satisfaction" which scored at 4.4898 points by the customers was considered a high score in the Likert measurements.

When comparing the satisfaction based on customers' geographic orientation, with a 95%, the result showed: beside the age group which did not have any significance difference, other groups such as gender, occupation, income, marital status, and education level, all had difference in satisfaction levels about the service quality at Hoa Binh - Phu Quoc resort.

The research results indicated that factors "Foods and beverage" and "Security" do not affect the customers' satisfaction because of these reasons:

Hoa Binh – Phu Quoc resort has received comments from the customers about the food and drinks on offer at the resort. It is not is diverse enough, and the menu tends to repeat itself many times within a short period; the local specialty dishes are not included much and did not satisfy the customers' demands. In addition, the restaurants' decor was not considered to be attractive.

Regarding security, although being rated as a 4 star resort, security procedures at Hoa Binh – Phu Quoc were still not tight enough. The procedures to confirm if the customers were using the correct rooms were still too simple. There is also a weakness in that thieves can trick employees to get the customers' keys and steal their goods in the rooms.

From these comments combined with the data from the survey, these two factors did not meet the statistical requirements because the sig data > 0.05 therefore they were deleted from the final research model.

To improve the customers' satisfaction about the service quality at Hoa Binh – Phu Quoc resort, the managers need to pay attention to the issues related to: pricing, employees, facilities and the room system, value-added services, and convenience when using the services. Details are as follows:

Pricing: Hoa Binh – Phu Quoc resort should use different promotion methods, and discounts for the low point season to increase rooms and other facilities' usage. Different room types need to have different prices, convenience, equipment in the room, and services provided need careful consideration. For example, the VIP rooms with the highest prices should come with complementary services such as wake up calls, meeting reminders, local tours, etc. depending of course on the trip's purpose of the customers.

About the rooms and the board system, in the future, Hoa Binh - Phu Quoc resort should pay attention on remodeling on the low point season, and then rearrange the rooms to create a new environment for customers who are using resort many times. The resort should pay attention to this group of customers by issuing membership cards, and should let them stay in new rooms to create the excitement for customers every time they come to the resort.

Hoa Binh - Phu Quoc resort also needs to pay attention to employees training. Developing an employees' evaluation system using KPIs, wage points, commission, etc. is non-negotiable. The resort also needs to have an attractive compensation package, a good working environment, and essentially, promotion prospects for good employees.

Improvement in the value-added services at the hotel is needed by working with vocational schools and experts in the field of health consulting, fitness and then training employees. Sending the employees to different training courses to improve their productivity, skills, and gaining of new knowledge about service provision is vital.



Paying more attention on improving the convenience for customers by means of airport transportation services is important. The resort should have bus services at certain times to take customers to different tourist places around the resort.

Analyzing results using EFA and Cronbach's Alpha showed that food and security factors do have an effect on the customers' satisfaction at Hoa Binh - Phu Quoc resort. However, in the regression analysis, these factors did not qualify in the analysis requirements.

This research was performed within a short period of time from 11/2018 to the 1st quarter of 2019 at Hoa Binh - Phu Quoc resort, and only with domestic customers, not foreign customers and this is a limitation. The regression model has adjusted R^2 equal 47.5% meaning that this model could only explain 47.5% of the change in customers' satisfaction about the service quality at Hoa Binh - Phu Quoc, the remaining 52.5% is unexplained.

The customers' satisfaction could also be affected by different factors not considered in this study, however in this research, the author only discussed the 5 factors above, there are numerous different factors that have not been discussed.

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APPENDIX: Measurement model

Note	Measurement	Reference
Measurement about Employees		
NV1	Receptionist serve customers on check-in, and the check-out is conducted quickly	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
NV2	Resort's employees dress properly	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
NV3	Resort's employees are friendly and enthusiastic	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
NV4	Resort's employees quickly understand the customers' needs	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
NV5	Resort's employees provide services to customers and followed the guidelines	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
Measurement of Rooms and board		
PN1	Rooms are clean and presentable	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
PN2	Resorts have clean restrooms	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
PN3	The air-conditioning system and beds are comfortable	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
PN4	Other equipment in the room (safes, refrigerator...)	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
PN5	Video & audio system is good	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)



Measurement of Foods & Beverage

DATU1	The resort provides enough necessary common foods & beverage (water/coffee)	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
DATU2	Foods and beverage at the resort are safe to consume and tasty	Authors' development
DATU3	The restaurant environment is nice and attractive	Le Thi Kim Ngoc (2015)
DATU4	Foods and beverage represent the local specialty and cuisines.	Authors' development

Measurement of Value-added services

GTGT1	Room services and laundry services are good	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
GTGT2	Fitness equipment meet the standard	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
GTGT3	Entertainment areas in the resorts are good	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
GTGT4	Transportation services are good	Authors' development
GTGT5	Supporting services for customer to tour other destinations, provide information to customers	Authors' development

Measurement of the Convenience

STL1	Resort location is convenient for coming in and out	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011) and authors' suggestion
STL2	Personal care facilities are always available (massage, sauna, gym etc.)	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
STL3	Pools are always ready to serve the customers	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
STL4	Easy transportation from the resort to other local tourist destination	Authors' development

Measurement of Security

AN1	The resort provides a peaceful and safe environment	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
AN2	Personal security is reasonable	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
AN3	The fire alarm system is well equipped and functions	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011) and authors' suggestion
AN4	Key systems and other security layers are well functioning	Authors' development

Measurement of Pricing

GC1	Room pricing is reasonable	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
GC2	Foods and beverage are consistent with the listed prices	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
GC3	Pricing of other services are reasonable	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
GC4	Frequently provide discount programs for customers	Lê Thị Kim Ngoc (2015)

Measurement of overall satisfaction

HL1	You satisfy with the services at the resort	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
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HL2	Your expectations about the services at the resort are met	Nguyen Duy Quang (2011)
HL3	You will continue to use the resort's service in the future	Authors' development
HL4	You will refer the resort to your friends	Authors' development
HL5	Overall you are pleased when using the services at the resort	Authors' development
