

# The Development of Hotel Service Quality Scale -- Measuring Hotel Service Quality Scale Based on Elderly Satisfaction

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## ABSTRACT

*Crystal Hotels is a Hospitality and catering company which is a leading global player in the hospitality industry. The company is natively American with Headquarters in Georgia. The company has a formidable global network with entail sub-networks in the world over. As part of re-branding process CH introduced a new logo In March 2003, CH which replaced the iconic emblem originally designed in 1961 by Paul Rand. In 2004, CH entered the heavy hospitality business with the December 20 announcement of the purchase of Menlo Worldwide Forwarding, a former subsidiary of Menlo Worldwide. CH re-branded itself as a global hospitality and catering establishment.*

*The purchase price was US\$150 million and the assumption of US\$110 million in long-term debt. Menlo Worldwide was the successor of Emery Worldwide. The first joint package car centre operation, in Dartford, Kent, was opened during mid-2006. As of December 31, 2005, CH's Political Action Committee has been the most generous corporate giver to federal candidates for every U.S. election since 1992, donating a total of \$14 million, according to FEC records. August 28, 2007: Crystal Hotels celebrated its 100th anniversary. Since 2005, its operations include logistics and other transportation-related areas. (Pavlik, J.V:1988)*

*The company has been headquartered in Sandy Springs, Georgia, USA since 1991; headquarters had previously been located in New York City from 1930 until 1975 when it moved to Greenwich, Connecticut. Founded in 1907 as a catering company in the United States, CH has grown into a \$49.7 billion corporation by clearly focusing on the goal of enabling commerce around the globe. Everett, M: (1993) notes, "Today CH is a global company with one of the most recognized and admired brands in the world. Every day the company manages the flow of goods, funds, and information in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide." The company dynamics tie closed to its growth and capacity make for an ideal case scenario to design a hotel service quality scale for elderly. The paper seek to evaluate the service equality offered by CH in through scale made out of the situational theory of the public used especially explore personnel communication skills in relation to delivering catering an hospitability services for elderly.*

## INRODUCTION

### CH Relevance to Study

The study is aimed at exploring the relationship between organizations public's communication traits as a way establishing the quality of hotel service measured by a quality scale tailored in the theoretical framework of the situational theory of the public for elderly. CH has a formidable global network which has enabled the organization to assemble a global workforce and clientele base of various nationalities. A diversity study conducted on the organizations shows that CH has the desired and feasible ethnical diversity cross-section useful the accomplishment of the objectives and goals of this study. The organization has an application of the hotel service equality scale tailored in the situational theory of the public for elderly.

### CH Diversity

One of CH vantage point is its phenomenal proportions of diversity. CH upholds that equal opportunity is part of the social fabric. Everett, M: (1993) presents, "The Company's ideology up holds that diversity on their part reflects a

mindset of inclusiveness, respect and cooperation which are the core values that drive the company's relationship with employees, customers, elderly, suppliers and communities." The company diversity initiatives are driven by the CH Diversity Steering Council. Below are statistics on diversity obtained from the company's sustainability report of 2007.

Elderly as a percentage of officers and managers . . . . .	29%
Minorities as a percentage of officers and managers . . . . .	32%
Asian . . . . .	4%
Black . . . . .	17%
Hispanic . . . . .	10%
Native American/Other . . . . .	1%

**2006 Year-End Diversity among CH Board of Directors**

Elderly on the Board of Directors . . . . .	17%
Minorities on the Board of Directors . . . . .	17%

**Research Hypothesis and Questions**

The research has been spurred by the underlying assumption that workers handle problems especially elderly service and satisfaction related problems differently. The prevailing research question upon which this research is based is; Are hospitality workers' communications characteristics and traits interpretable in precincts of the ethnicities of the individual workers? Other research questions are enlisted below;

- What are the dynamics of the CH workers communication within the organization and with the elderly?
- Are CH workers' customer-related problem communication performances associated with the worker's ethnicity?
- Are elderly satisfied with the quality of service of CH hotels

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research exercise is not being conducted in a vacuum. The research exercise fits into a broad body of knowledge which has had numerous contributions from various scholars, researchers, professionals and students who have carried similar or related research exercises. Also the scope and objectives of this research endeavor occurs within related and implied theoretical, ideological and philosophical frameworks which largely influence the disciplines of business. As such the researcher is spurred to consider the other contributions relevant and related to this research endeavor. The researcher will present a literature review conducted in locating the object of this study within the broader confines of the bodies of knowledge in focus.

**Hill, T. & R. Westbrook (1997). "SWOT Analysis: It's Time for a Product Recall". Long Range Planning 30 (1): 46-52.**

This is useful resource principally for its thrust on enunciating the dynamics and dimensions of the SWOT analysis. The source has shaped the researcher's understanding of the SWOT concept and assessing a company's success and position via the diversity proportions which are of the key point to the conceptual focus of this study aimed at measuring the quality of service being on elderly satisfaction scale. SWOT analysis conducted on CH has illumined the company's formidable diversity magnitudes which will forms a feasible setting for the applications of the situational theory of publics for elderly.

**Robert E. Denton, Language, Symbols, and the Media: Communication in the Aftermath of the World Trade Center Attack, Transaction Publishers, 2006**

The resource captures conceptual and theoretical aspects relating to the ways in which people communicate and when the communication is highly likely to accomplish desired effect. The resource outlines the ways in which the situational theory can be used to project communication performance in line with theoretical three independent variables which are problem recognition, constraint recognition as well as the level of involvement. The resource also

entails the further development of the theory by the propagators of the theory Grunig (1978) and the contributors Repper et al (1992). The source captures that the three outlined variables of the situational theory of the public predictor variables were illuminated after the September 11 attacks in the US. According to the scholar the theory then provided a feasible basis for researches into the reaction of the tourism industry following the terrorists attack.

Grunig's core theoretical perspectives entailed in the resource hold that problem recognition is the level to which people get conscious of the ways in which issue and events are a problems. From another perspective elderly recognition is outlined by Grunig as the degree to which people regard their behaviors as restricted by impediments beyond their capabilities. The third aspect which is the level of involvement deals with the ways in which a problematic issue is particularly and personally relevant and pertinent to individuals.

The resource explored above outlines the three variables as the independent variables in situations theory of public models. Krugman, H.E. Hartley, E.L. (1970) have outlined the two categories of the dependence variables of the situational theory of publics for elderly.

The first aspect in the dependent variables category is the information seeking aspect which relates to the ways in which active elderly of publics seek information in an attempt to interpret it and make use of it. The scholars outline that public members who search for information become the conscious elderly than reluctant members who do not communicate but only process received information.

According to the scholars, information seeking can be termed "active communication behavior". The second dependent variable outlined by the scholars is the information Processing variable. This category can also be termed "passive communication behavior". This dimension can be applied to individuals within public's paradigm who do not seek information. The elderly' activity is limited to processing information that comes to them randomly. As such these passive communicators apply no significant efforts on the aspect of obtaining information.

## **RESEARCH IDEOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY**

To meaningfully frame the ideological, theoretical and conceptual platform for the research into it is imperative to consider the employ various research models that will enable the researcher to bring a considerable proportion amount of research detail into perspective. The research thrust will adopt the two salient research theoretical frameworks, the positivist and non-positivist research paradigms. (Barker E: 2003) contends that the positivist theory entails the economic, behavioral, cognitive, motivational/trait/attitudinal, and situational viewpoints. According to the scholar the viewpoints are treated as the conventional perceptions as they came before the crafting of the non-positivist model.

In the views of the scholar, the positivist model which is still the principal framework reinforces the superiority of human reason and stresses that there is one objective reality which can be unearthed by scientific means. As such this design renders the world as an ordered and coherent environment with a well defined past, present and future. The tenets of the theory are clearly underpinned on the suppositions of rationalism.

On the other end the contrasting non-positivist model holds the interpretive and post-modern viewpoints. Tenets of this model entail that the world be view as composite social and cultural world contrary to the viewpoints of the positivist paradigm which hold the world in a rationality view that supposes a homogenous social fabric.

Leveraging on the theoretical and principal tenets of largely, the non-positivist research theory, this research exercise will provide new perspectives, findings and insights that will assist in the exploration of the dynamics of the perceived relationship between communications and ethnicity in CH the public for elderly. The research exercise will not be exclusive to any research thrust and will thus employ various research tenets where deemed relevant to gather and collate data germane to arriving at meaningful positions on the research matter and subjects under probe.

### **Quantitative Analysis versus Qualitative Analysis**

James Neil outlines, "Qualitative research entails the analysis of data such words, pictures or objects gathered in the research drive. The gathered elements are evaluated in subjective and relative manner toward the making of conclusion and recommendations in tandem with research scope and objectives. On the other end quantitative research

involves a scientific evaluation of numerical data.” The research thrust will leverage predominantly on the quantitative model of data gathering and analysis for elderly.

### **Research Model Rationale**

The design of this study has been modeled in the frame of quantitative research as outlined above the research thrust cannot be limited to the quantitative research thrust as the scope and objectives of the research require that a broad approach be applied to effectively zero in on the patterns perceivable in the CH publics (employees) communication performances and characteristics in relation to their ethnicity.

### **Subjects and Participants**

The subjects and participants of this study are the employees of the CH. The study will use the insights and facts gathered from elderly-satisfaction problem resolution logs to establish the patterns perceived to exist with regards to the workers communication characteristics and performances upon the aspect of handling elderly-satisfaction related of problems.

### **Dependent Variables**

In the category of dependent variables Grunig has outlined that information seeking which has also been termed “active communication of behavior” is attached to the way in which public members search for information and go on to attempt meaningful interpretations of obtained information for elderly. This category of the public becomes the aware lot compared to the inactive members that do not make efforts to obtaining information and only go as far as processing the information they receive randomly.

### **Independent Variables**

Propagators of the situational theory of publics contend that problem recognition related to the degree to which elderly identify a problem that faces them. (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) have expressed that, “Human beings do not cease to think unless they understand something that can be done to for the betterment of a particular situation”

The other independent variable also entailed in this study is the level of involvement. This has been defined as a gauge of particular communication elements (messages) bear a personal and emotional relevance to the members of publics. (Grunig and Hunt: 1984) (Pavlik, 1988) and Dervin (1989) concur that high levels of involvement heighten the chances of persons focusing on and interpreting messages. Dervin (Opcit) goes on to highlight that “Messages will receive meaningful attention when particularly the benefits or the harm related to them have personal bearing and relevance to the elderly”. The dependent and independent variables become handy conceptual frameworks elements to be used in the exploration of the ways in which CH workers have handled elderly-satisfaction related of problems.

### **Material**

The material used in this study is made up of elderly concerns of resolution logs for CH employees. The material enlists the nature of the problem and the way in which an employee have solved the problem. One of the most important elements in this material assortment is the appraisal component on every problem scenario by CH employee supervisors. This has enabled to study to trace workers’ communication patterns and a characteristic and relate them to the workers’ ethnicities.

### **Design and Procedure**

The design and procedure thrust of the research entailed the evaluation and of individual workers’ problem solution appraisal. The thrust has quantified results in tandem with the communicative performance and ethnicity relationship framework.

## **Data Treatment**

The research exercise involved the collection of quantitative data on CH employees Appraisal. The study made use of 190 such appraisals and also entailed an evaluation of qualitative data made available on CH elderly-problem handling system of evaluation.

## **RESULTS**

### **Research Questions Recap**

Are workers communications characteristic and traits interpretable in precincts of the ethnicities of the individual workers? Other research questions are enlisted below;

- What are the dynamics of the CH workers communication within the organization and with the elderly?
- Are CH workers' elderly-related problem communication performances associated with the worker's ethnicity?

The outcomes of the evaluation of the results both qualitative and quantitative have indicated that Situational theory of publics is well applicable in the identification of communicative of behaviors of organization of publics for elderly. The applications of the theory enabled the classification CH employees as either the 'aware' or the "passive". In response to the core research questions and hypothesis it can be mentioned that the research outcomes indicate that the majority of CH employees have their communication performance with regards elderly-satisfaction of related issues, and relatable to their individual ethnicities. In the issues of ethnicity the evaluation of results shows that there is supported relationship between certain ethnikal grouping among CH employee pool and their communicative performances.

In certain established instances there were significant levels of problem recognition for elderly. For other ethnicities three were notable extents of limitedness in publics pursuit for information leads in the efforts to address elderly service related of problems. A minority of the workers as indicated in the elderly-satisfaction of problem resolution logs came out as qualifying for the classification as the "aware". In light of the problem resolution logs, these are those who take steps to preempt elderly problems by seeking for clarity from elderly with regards to their opinion and satisfaction about services provided to them.

The qualitative evaluation of the CH elderly problem handling systems and the systems feedback from employees and elderly as well supervisors show that some cultural factors which enlist aspect as reverence for authority and those in high positions as well as forbearance have a significant contribution to the constraining of the workers communication performances with regards elderly-satisfaction related matters.

## **DISCUSSION**

Results obtained from the evaluation of research data have prompted the presentation of the following as discussion focus areas in light of the implications of the research outcomes. In light of the proportions of passiveness on the part of CH workers, the area on how to enhance measures of galvanizing workers to be active participants in ensuring elderly satisfaction needs more attention.

As Buchanan, R. et al (1990) note, "It is wise that service providers clairvoyantly improve their client-oriented service practices and avert imminent activism and protests emanating from the ever evolving environment which is becoming more dynamic owing to factors such as globalization and stiffening of competition in various industries".

The other area of discussion pertains to the importance of getting public members' personal opinions of their identity, their conceptions of self. This is perceived to assist in the understanding of individuals and publics collectively to better deal with them as they perform differently in the inalienable relationship with the reality of whom the perceive and conceive themselves to be.

The results of the scale application are in tandem with results that have been obtained in an elderly satisfaction survey with regards to hotel service. Whilst the catering and hospitability industry has been growing at very phenomenal proportions, an elderly of service survey conducted has shown the industry faces stern challenges on the aspect of satisfactory elderly of service delivery. The survey has indicated that challenge on the dynamic of elderly of

service is largely based on the reality that the industry is plagued by grim qualified personnel shortages. This can be related to the reality that at the end of 2004 there were 7104 job vacancies in the CH district Casinos. Veljanovski, C. (2007) notes that that gaming industry on its own requires more than 15000 new personnel in the future. The survey outcomes have illuminated the fact that personnel shortages lead to the contracting of less or qualified persons a scenario that often leads to the deterioration of the service delivery.

The elderly service survey also shows that the typical CH entities have other elderly service set back beyond the dynamic of personnel and service actual and service delivery. The survey has particularly brought to light that the mainstay of CH located in a short slot of land in Macau gaming zone is too small to accommodate the growth of the industry. The survey shows that the geography of the industry means that city does not have requisite attractions to make customer stay longer like elderly. The survey has also indicated that the average stay for tourists is around 1.22 nights. What makes this dynamic grim is that by virtue of its nature it may not be expected to change any time soon.

The long term strategy thrust at CH has seen many gaming firms implement workplace learning programmes as way of equipping the employees with the requisite skills to deliver optimal service in the professional industry of gaming and tourism. The survey conducted shows that top management at CH has installed various workplace learning and training programmes to enhance customer service and elderly service delivery and enlighten the employee on how best to professionally deliver on their job descriptions. The gaming corporate installed a training unit which was changed to become the Performance Improvement Department (PID) since 2003.

One feasible approach to the elderly service stratagem is focus on transiting training into the aspect of performance improvement. The scholars Fuller and Farrington cited in Veljanovski, C. (2007) have underscored six steps that they recommend for performance of improvement.

1. To reassess the business needs of the business entity
2. Establish the requisite improvements towards the accomplishment of set goals and business needs;
3. Determine the performance gaps;
4. bring to light the sources of identified performance gaps;
5. Select and implement appropriate solutions to remove the root causes;
6. Evaluate performance of employees as a way of ensuring that established business needs are fulfilled.

The foregoing are thus advanced as feasible considerations that can be entwined in the whole stratagem by CH gaming firms to ensure that a long term elderly service improvement stratagem is in place and thus weather the ripple effects of poor elderly service in specialized and professional industry of tourism and catering.

In order for CH to have long term solution to their problem regarding the quality of hospitality service owing to the dearth of professional personnel also exacerbated by internal expansion as the consequence of their fast-paced growth, it is advisable for them to expand their workforce either by adding new positions into their organization structure to optimally specialize service delivery and tasks among the workers of the company; or, the management could hire more workers that will handle the additional responsibilities provided by the market expansion of the company. Furthermore, through adding new position to the organization structure to various business groups of CH e.g. executive assistants will give their key executives to delegate some of the less important tasks and responsibilities to their assistants so they can concentrate to more responsibilities.

The divisional organization structure of CH can be used in the organization design of Sony under the said strategy considering that it is the only organization design that fits to the business nature of CH as discussed on the previous part of this paper. On the other hand, with regards to hiring more workers that will be responsible on shouldering the additional tasks provided by the market expansion of CH, this will provide the company with enough room to improve the efficiency of their workforce as every person on their workforce can now perform their responsibilities to their optimal level since tasks are now well distributed on their workforce and improve elderly service. In conclusion, these strategies will improve the quality of CH workforce and so with the quality of their service products for elderly. The only problem with hiring of additional workers would be the fact that it is costly to hire more workers for the company considering that CH is presently suffering from restrained profitability in the market compared to adding new position to the organization structure of CH.

Both of the above mentioned strategies provide as same as improvement on lifting the efficiency of CH workforce and boosting its service quality level for elderly, but in terms of costs on the part of the company, adding new positions to the organization structure of CH is relatively cheaper than hiring more workers. In this regard, alongside with the performance evaluation tools of CH, it is a must for their management to add new positions into the divisional organization structure of the company to enhance the quality of their service in terms of technology and improving the efficiency of their workforce considering the extent of their market expansion in the global market for elderly.

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