A PRELIMINARY STUDY TO DETERMINE THE ESSENTIAL FACILITIES REQUIRED FOR TOURISTS IN LANGKAWI

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by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance Test
CBD	Central Business District
CCTV	Closed-circuit television
IP	Internet Protocol
QFD	Quality Function Deployment
RFID	Radio Frequency Identification
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
TV	Television
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
VFM	Value for Money

KAJIAN AWAL UNTUK MENGENALPASTI FASILITI PENTING YANG DIPERLUKAN UNTUK PELANCONG DI LANGKAWI

ABSTRAK

Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji dan mengenal pasti fasiliti penting yang diperlukan untuk pelancong in Langkawi. Kajian ini juga menganalisis faktor-faktor yang boleh mempengaruhi dan meningkatkan populariti sesebuah hotel dan tahap kepuasan pelanggan berdasarkan beberapa kriteria yang disediakan oleh pihak hotel. Maklumat dan data telah diperolehi daripada pelbagai sumber termasuk kertas kajian dan jurnal yang lepas. Borang soal selidik telah digunakan untuk mengumpul maklumat. Hasil daripada analisis data menunjukkan bahawa majoriti responden setuju dengan kebanyakan ciri-ciri dan kemudahan yang disediakan oleh hotel untuk menjadi insentif dan boleh mempengaruhi keputusan mereka. Keputusan juga menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan orang mengutamakan beberapa faktor seperti kemudahan bilik, ciri keselamatan, lokasi dan rupa paras berbanding dengan kemudahan rekreasi dan hiburan. Hasil kajian ini diharapkan dapat membantu para pengusaha hotel untuk meningkatkan kualiti hotel mereka untuk menampung keperluan tetamu mereka. Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk membantu penyelidik dan pemaju masa depan mengenal pasti kualiti dan ciri-ciri sebuah hotel yang lebih sesuai dan sangat dituntut untuk membangunkan hotel dan resort yang lebih berkualiti untuk orang ramai.

A PRELIMINARY STUDY TO DETERMINE THE ESSENTIAL FACILITIES REQUIRED FOR TOURISTS IN LANGKAWI

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research is to study and determine the essential facilities required for tourists in Langkawi. This research analyses the factor which may increase a hotel's popularity and level of customer satisfaction based on certain criteria and features provided by the hotel management. Information and data were collected from various sources including past research papers and journals. Questionnaire surveys was used in gathering relevant data. The results from the data analysis shows that the majority of respondents seems to agree with most of the features and facilities provided by the hotel to be an incentive and may influence their decision making. The results also show that most people prioritize several factors such as room facilities, safety features, location and appearances over recreational and entertainment facilities. The results of this research is expected to help hoteliers to increase the quality of their hotels to accommodate the needs of their guests. This research also aims to assist future researchers and developers to identify the quality and traits of a hotel which are more preferable and are highly demanded in order to create a better hotel and resort for the public.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The building construction industry has always been a major part of any country's economy. With an approximated gross domestic production of about 6-9 percent in most developed countries such as the United States and other European countries (Chitkara, 1998), needless to say that the development market is one of the powerhouses of the global economy. The high rate of demand of the building construction practices are generally caused by requisition from the public for permanent residences or even temporary accommodations. As opposed to orthodox and smaller public building construction such as residential homes, larger-scaled construction projects usually involve multiple collaboration across numerous various disciplines. Several examples of these buildings are skyscrapers and multi-stories buildings. The similarities between the two types of construction is that their practices, resources, and technologies must conform to local building authority regulations and codes of practice.

The main goal of this research is to study and determine the factors and attributes affecting the rate of tourism and customer satisfaction of an accommodation and lodging establishment. For this research, a specific hotel will be taken into consideration with various data collected in accordance to the rate of customer satisfaction and general public opinions. The research focuses on the subject of hotel's marketing strategies and general attributes of the hotel itself such as the location,

design and aesthetics, public facilities, local amenities and more. The research also involves primarily towards the data collected from the hotels of Langkawi Island, Kedah Darul Aman as it is a rapidly developing tourism hotspot with the potential to become a model vacation getaway in Malaysia. Needless to say, the findings of this research aims to provide further assistance for local developers and stakeholders to obtain a better understanding on how to provide better facilities and accommodations for their patrons and to satisfy their needs.

1.2 Background

Originated somewhere in the nineteenth century, convenient short-term lodging services such as inns and taverns has always been a part of society in which the owner of a building provides a place for sleeping, rest, safety, food and shelter for travelers from all over the place (Stutts, 2001). In a way, it is also a business and commercial dealings with transactions between the trader and the customer. However, in recent years the historical local establishments have undergone changes where instead of only providing a temporary place to stay for weary travelers, hotels have become a tourism retreat where in addition to providing a safe place to stay, it also houses several facilities and amenities which are otherwise hard to come by.

The subject of matter in which hotels has becoming a standard vacation getaway for regular people is increasingly apparent in recent years where more people are going to hotels specifically to experience what the place has to offer. This trend started in the nineteenth century, where hotels started take over local towns. The industrial revolution, which began in the 1760s, assisted the development of hotels everywhere, mainly in mainland Europe, England and America (Levy-Bonvin, 2003).

In the nineties however, the advancement of technologies starts to make an impact. With the reductions in multinationals' travel budgets caused by the growing crisis in the Gulf, the early nineties were characterized by a recession in the hotel business. The incident forced hoteliers to develop more creative ways of attracting their guests such as special programs, special offers for "frequent travelers", high performance reservation systems, etc. During this time, the environment and energy conservation became a trump card in the marketing strategies of various branches. This is further aided by the green movement and even contributed to winning the loyalty of their clients while enabling them to safeguard their assets simultaneously (Levy-Bonvin, 2003).

Hotels in general differs in various aspects such as size, design, functionality and construction cost. Most of these major establishment companies even have set industry standards to classify different hotel categories. Most regular luxurious full-service hotel facility offers upscale amenities, complete accommodation services, restaurant on-site, and premium personalized services. Examples of these services are concierge, room service and clothes pressing staff (Kusluvan, 2003). Boutique hotels are usually smaller and independent, non-branded hotels that often contain basic upscale amenities. Small to medium-sized hotel establishments offer a limited amount of on-site amenities and rudimentary facilities. Finally, economy hotels are mostly small-sized hotel establishments that offer basic accommodations with little to no services (Yapp, 2012).

Fundamentally, the knowledge of hotel management and construction in accordance to its design aesthetics, marketing strategies, amenities and services may provide valuable data to local developers, building owners and construction companies in order to meet the requirements of their customers. Hopefully, with this research, the

data that was obtained from it will be able to aid the endeavors of hotel and lodging establishment developers and owners to create a better tourism hotspot and vacation retreats for local and foreign vacationers alike. Ultimately, this will help contribute to the nationwide tourism economy of our country.

1.3 Problem Statement

The concept of hotel originated in traditions of hospitality and providing temporary lodging services to travelers which dates back to ancient times. In recent years, hotel has evolved into a place where people can come accommodate not necessarily only for its lodging services, it can also be a place to relax and sightseeing. This creates a question of what is a hotel's basic requirement and services and how to take these factors into account to ensure the rate of satisfaction of the patrons and guests are adequate. When discussing the basic attributes of a hotel building, usually what comes to mind are contemporary physical characteristics and public services (Wuest, *et al.,* 1996). The general perceptions of hotel qualities are usually defined as the degree of which guests and patrons find the various services and facilities provided by the hotel as significant in contributing to their satisfaction level during the period of the stay at the hotel (Wuest, *et al.*, 1996).

Some of these qualities which deemed as significant to the attraction level towards the public are physical appearance, room facilities, recreational facilities, entertainment facilities, security and safety features, and location. A good physical appearance of the hotel can leave a good first impression on the guest visiting the hotel, which can ensure their loyalty to the establishment (Högnäs, 2015). However, predicament usually occurs during the construction of the hotel which can be either

problem with the design itself or lack of development budget which can lead to watered-down design concept and lackluster physical appearances. This can be a major setback as if the destination loses its uniqueness, the guest's perception towards the place is replaced by the feeling of dullness which causes their tourism experience to become worthless for them (Högnäs, 2015).

An excellent room facilities and services can ensure a high rate of customer satisfaction if done properly. This includes various factors such as basic equipment, lightings, a good panoramic view, entertainments, air ventilations, comfortable seating and beds, as stated by Ruys and Wei (1999). This factor also ties with the hotel budgeting problem where it requires a high-level of coordination with the design and basic necessity of each rooms (Erkin, 2013). Another problem that may arises is that there are different clients with different needs and expectations. Some may not mind the lack of services and facilities; some may require high maintenance to meet their requirements to obtain an adequate level of satisfaction from them. This can be taxing to the hotel's budgets to satisfy the needs of each guest residing temporarily in the hotel.

Another factor that was taken into account is the entertainment and recreational facilities provided by the hotel. In this case, however, these types of facilities are considered less demanding compared to other hotel qualities. Most of hotel patrons usually visit for the lodging services and the hotel's atmospheric value. Nonetheless, it plays a significant role in attracting guests to the place. Examples of these entertainment and recreational services are gym, air conditioning, restaurant, Jacuzzis, swimming pool, and 24-hour room service (Akbaba, 2006; Fernandez and Bedia, 2004). The issue at hand here is that most of these services are borderline unnecessary

or redundant. Most cases are the hotel guests are not even aware of the extra services provided by the hotel during the period of their stay.

Lastly, the problem statement that was derived from this research which states the obstacles that may occur during the constructions and management of the hotel is listed below in a summarized form:

i. Monotonous design concept and lackluster physical appearance of hotel

ii. Hotel business industry deals with both service and production

iii. There are different clients with different needs and expectations

iv. Service that was directed at the customer provided goods are tangible and intangible by nature.

v. Tight budget and limited hotel resources.

vi. Most of the staff involved are unskilled labor compared to skilled labor.

vii. Relatively low level of wages which causes declining rate of satisfactory staff services.

1.4 Aim & Objective of Study

This dissertation is aimed to study the marketing strategies of hotels and resorts' structure, design and facilities that are popular among tourist in Langkawi. This research is expected to aid future hoteliers and developers to create a better hotel and accommodation services to meet the requirements of the public.

The objectives for this research are listed below:

i. To determine the factors affecting the rate of tourism and customer satisfaction of an accommodation and lodging establishment.
ii. To identify the priority and preference of hotel services and facilities according to the public in Malaysia.
iii. To propose the concern of building owners, architectural, construction departments about the quality and attributes of a hotel which are more preferable and highly demanded.

1.5 Scope of Study

The scope of this research focused on the types and qualities of a hotel building according to priority and preference made by the general public throughout the states of Malaysia. To narrow down the result, most of the research will be conducted within the country and focused specifically on Langkawi Island in the state of Kedah.

Since there may be many types of hotel buildings where these factors can be adopted into, the types of properties that will be focused on are mostly hotels and resorts in populated and concentrated tourism hotspots where there are a lot of sightseers and tourist from different place and background.

The types of respondents that will be involved are the general public and if possible, potential hotel guest and patrons. The respondents that are involved will be selected from different background with different opinions on the basic qualities and requirements of a hotel building.

1.6 Significance of Study

The importance of this research is to study and determine the factors and attributes affecting the rate of tourism and customer satisfaction of an accommodation and lodging establishment. according to the public's needs and preference for the hotel building construction and development sector. The outcome of this research can also be used to aid local hotel owners for their marketing strategies, building developers and architecture firms in their decision making and market study on the trends and preferences of hotel building in Malaysia in comparison to other countries.

The gap of knowledge in the general concept regarding hotel design and management strategies may also be present. Since local and foreign tourists are the target consumers for our hotel and resort establishments, the knowledge to educate and increase the awareness of hoteliers and developers on the subject of matter is very crucial which leads to the starting of this research which is to determine the required data and information to fill them in. Hopefully, the result derived from this dissertation will divulge to the local hotel companies regarding strategized hotel development planning and effective marketing tactics to ensure a better future for Malaysia's tourism sector.

1.7 Research Outline

The working process of this study is presented in self-contained chapters. This dissertation consists of five (5) different chapters with varying number of subchapters in each of them. The chapters are listed as follows in order of appearance sequence of each chapter:

1.7.1 Introduction

The first main chapter in this dissertation. The basic functions of this chapter is to provide a general overview of this research. Research background introduces the study by providing an overall insight to the materials regarding the study and the procedures involved in completing it. Continued by the problem statement which is where the research states the obstacle for this research and outlining the imaginable cause and effect that may be relevant to this research. This chapter also introduces research objectives, scope and

limitation of study, significance of research, and research methodology. Finally, this chapter also includes a summary of each chapter followed by a conclusion.

1.7.2 Literature Review

Literature review consists of data and information gathered from other sources of similar researches that has been done beforehand and was taken into this research for additional explanation on the subject. The previous studies that were used are mostly accepted from multiple sources from other countries such as Europe, United States, Australia, etc. and also from local sources. However, this research will be focusing on studies from local regions concerning issues that are related to hotel design planning and marketing strategies. It will be addressing all matters such as definition, application, quality, significance, characteristics, attributes, and other related topics.

1.7.3 Research Methodology and Case Study

This chapter will be discussing about the research design and methodology used for this research to acquire data and information important to the research. The chapter also addresses the type of data methods used. Questionnaire survey questions are also presented here and other research related data collection methods. The instruments of research and methods of investigation are also defined in this chapter. The case study that was selected for this research was further expanded in this part of the research to see any resemblances regarding the same subject to obtain data that can be helpful to

this study. Methodology deals with the investigation techniques with more in-depth and comprehensiveness. The design or research is explained further and broken down with more detailed clarification to make it easier for others to understand.

1.7.4 Research Analysis and Findings

This chapter analyses the collected data and information to prove of its legitimacy and present the outcome obtained from this study within the related analysis. The primary data that were attained from interviews and questionnaire surveys are analyzed to obtain results for the conclusions in the next section. The discoveries are then broken down and expanded further to create a solution to remedy the problem statement of this study. The data findings in this chapter may be presented in various forms and technique such as table, graph and chart. From the results an explanation can be derived to conclude the research.

1.7.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

All the results obtained from the previous chapter will be summarized in this chapter. The researcher will also state whether the objectives of this research has been met or not based on the outcome of the study. Then, a few recommendations will be written based on the results regarding ways to improve and fix the issue. In this chapter also the researcher will address several suggestion and recommendation regarding the subject for the

consideration of specific group of people and authority so that it can be used to rectify the problem.

1.8 Summary

The general objective of this research is to determine the best approach for the decision-making for hotel building design concepts in the construction industry and study about specific marketing trends and strategies and its advantages and benefits to allow hoteliers to make better decision in their planning towards a more organized and effective way which accommodates the public's needs and requirements. This research also aims to encourage and assist potential hotel and resort owners to develop a better accommodation and lodging establishments with adequate and upscale facilities and services in order to create a haven of tourism hotspots and vacation getaways for both local and foreign visitors.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The marketing strategies that can be adopted by hotel owners and operators must be dependent on the needs of the hotel patrons and visitors. To satisfy the requirements of the hotel patrons, it is imperative for the hoteliers to understand their needs and then, satisfy those needs. This chapter deliberates the two most important elements in marketing strategies formulation, those are understanding, and then, meeting the needs of the hotel patrons.

With many types of establishments and various physical factor to be taken into account, the main goal of this research is to determine what features and physical aesthetic that ensures a good rate of customer satisfactions for a specific tourism oriented location. As such, this chapter intends to outline these physical attributes and factors in which could aid our local hoteliers and developers to create a better accommodations and hotel facilities.

2.2 Hotel Physical Attributes

Kandampully & Suhartanto (2000) defines tourism as a unique product as it is composite in nature, an amalgam of the tangible and intangible that includes

everything that tourists experience. Both business and leisure guests use hotels. It is important that hotels deliver appropriate bundle of benefits for all guest segments (Ramanathan, 2012). As hotels are related closely to tourism, it is important to look into the subject matter in a crucial way. There are two aspects of hotel; which are physical attributes and services. According to Wuest *et al*. (1996), perceptions of hotel attributes is defined as the degree to which travelers find various services and facilities important in promoting their satisfaction with hotel stays.

In general, the higher the star rating, the higher is the expected level of service and facilities in a hotel (Ramanathan, 2012). Briggs (2007) have argued that star grading schemes and associated standards are largely driven by physical facilities of the hotels, and that these schemes do not adequately take into account customer service orientation of hotels. On the other hand, Lewis (1985) found that quality, security and image were perceived as important in affecting a lodging choice; and leisure travelers were more concerned with quietness, service quality and location. Knutson (1988) suggested some consistent criteria apply across different classes of hotels, such as cleanliness, location, a safe and secure environment. First-rate attributes of the hotel will lead to an excellent customer satisfaction. Few studies had been made regarding the issue. To improve services, hotels need to focus on individual attributes as well as overall satisfaction. The subtopics below will explain thoroughly about the physical attributes that play a massive role of a hotel.

2.2.1 Room Facilities

As hotel rooms are where customers spent most of their time at, the room must possess an outstanding quality. Room facilities such as better

lighting, safety features in the bathroom, easy to handle door knobs, comfortable, supporting mattresses and chairs were among the main concerns (Ruys & Wei, 1999). Taninecz (1990) pointed out that cleanliness, comfortable mattresses and quality towels were considered to be important hotel attributes. Chang and Tarn (2008) perceived that consumers pay more attention to physical representation, while physical tangibility helps improve satisfaction with hotel services. Jones and Lockwood (1989) identified bedroom facilities as one of the four most important attribute categories for hotels. Zhang (2011) carried out a study that reveals that travelers consider room quality as the most influential factor on their willingness to pay for an economy hotel. To satisfy this category of customers, economy hotels should focus investments on the quality of their hotel rooms, which could include, for instance, room design, facilities, and temperature control.

The most ideal hotel room is the one that can give benefits and ease to both mature and young travelers. For instance, mature travelers differ in needs, attributes, desire and behavior compared to young travelers (Ananth, 1992). As what stated by Ananth (1992), "grab bars and supports in bathroom" and "nightlight in bathroom" are more important to mature travelers than to young travelers. Other attributes highly valued by mature travelers also include extra blankets, short hair carpets, user-friendly door handles, clear signs for specific locations such as medical facilities, public areas, doorways and restaurants, wide doors to accommodate wheelchairs, dietary menus, relatively early meal times, non-smoking rooms, and small portions of food (Marvel, 1999). In addition, according to Marvel (1999), hotel companies should provide easy to read TV channel guides, TV remote controls, telephones with large buttons,

telephones with large buttons, lever-type door handles and water taps, handy shower sets, and shower grab bars. Callan and Bowman (2000) emphasize on few attributes in terms of room facilities such as shower safety bars, comfort of bedrooms, interior decoration, the provision of clear signs and information, safety, space and lighting.

These facilities can help to create a senior-friendly hotel and increase customers' loyalty and satisfaction. On the other hand, young travelers have different needs and attributes. For them, one of the priorities would be for the room to have equipped gadgets and technology. They are more concerned about in-room technologies provide by the hotels and often go for a comfortable and simple place, instead of luxurious and grand-looking (Callan & Bowman, 2000). Family guests would prefer to stay in a room where it is children-friendly, especially is they have small children. The room furniture need to be located strategically such as it will not cause any harm to the children while the room sockets need to be hidden behind a bed or a small lamp table. Hotel staffs should remind the guests to keep their children safe if they choose to stay in a balcony room as it may be not safe for the children to go outside the balcony without any guidance (Callan & Bowman, 2000). Another thing to be concerned of is the lack facilities provided for big families. As most hotels provide rooms only up to four guests, those that have five to six members in a family need a larger accommodation than that. To overcome the problem, adjoining rooms, connecting rooms and suites are some of the facilities expected from the guests (Callan, 1996). Figure 2.1 shows the Imperial Delhi Hotel in India where the hotel emphasizes on the interior design aspect of the

room. The various room of the hotel is equipped with sophisticated furniture and luxurious furnishings.

Figure 2.1: The Imperial Delhi hotel in India has a spacious room design which are popular among travelling families. **(Yuen, 2013)**

Cleanliness of the room, in one form or another, has been identified as the most important factor (Callan, 1996). Several studies suggested that the absence of hygienic condition of the hotel rooms lead to disappointment and dissatisfaction of the guests. Therefore, adequate number of hotel staffs are needed to ensure that every hotel room is being cleaned thoroughly after the guests' stay. It is also one of the trigger points of the customers' purchase decision. Based on a study carried out by Lockyer (2005), cleanliness in terms of condition, smell, facilities are the basic expectations of guests. It is vital to change the bed sheets after every guest's stay. In this case, the laundry system in a hotel must be efficient to ensure that adequate clean sheets are available every time. Based on guests' perspective, curtains indicate the overall cleanliness of the room. On the other hand, windows and furnishings are the indicators of care for guests' comfort. Most hotel rooms are ornamented with

various picture frames, vase, portraits and drawings. They are important as promotional materials. Keeping the amenities clean and pest-free and possible can be a key factor in distinguishing establishment from competitors. Hoteliers must acknowledge the concern of the travelers for cleanliness and allocate resources adequately to the housekeeping area (Brody, 2016).

Some guests might be very particular about the cleanliness of the room, specifically those that suffered from the fear of microorganisms and germs. Hedge (2016) proved that some guests are likely to be sick from coming into contact with each of the items found in a hotel room such as doorknobs, handles, telephone, switches and television remote. Furthermore, they are willing to pay a premium price to be provided with a better cleaning service. When customers see frequent media reports about health risks related to germs and/or disease, the perceived risk (as well as the real risk in specific cases) of travel may increase (Colwell, *et al*., 1996). However, hotels can prove that they prioritize cleanliness of their places and convince their hotel customers to stay without having to agonize about the risks.

When guests arrive with high expectations due to high prices or a high star category, they demand more in terms of quality (Mogelonsky, 2014). Monty and Skidmore (2003) conducted research into the bed-and-breakfast market and identified the determinants as a hot tub, a private bath, and a larger room. A pioneer study by Hartman (1989) stated that business travelers exhibit a willingness to pay for amenities such as room service and facilities, availability of free parking, and guaranteed reservations in a luxury hotel. Travelers like comfortable beds and chairs; quiet, efficient climate-control

systems; ample work space; long telephone cords; and adequate lighting that is well-placed (Lewis and Nightingale, 1991).

The placement of lightings should be according to convenience and suitability. Some of the guest room lighting needs are at the bathroom mirror, in the closet or clothes storage area, by each side of the bed with the adequate distance within each other, at the desk and at the entry hall (Joo, 2009). The lightings should be easy to maintain, and not easily broken or damaged. The color of the lights must not be too bright for eyes as there are guests that are too sensitive to light, and not too dim as it will make movement and activities more difficult (Joo, 2009). For instance, if there is guest that stay at the hotel who is on a business trip, and needs to do some late night reading and researching. The light must provide enough brightness according to the guest's necessity. A hotel room is no longer just a place to sleep in, it has become a multifunctional space where guests sleep, eat, work and relax; thus, the lighting scheme needs to reflect the variety of uses and generate the correct light levels to meet with the guest's needs (Joo, 2009).

While furnishings are an important part of the physical environment, very little research has been done that focuses specifically on this one element (Countryman & Jang, 2006). However, it is included in all of the atmospheric and servicescape models (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999) but may be referred to using different terminology depending on the physical setting being studied. In most cases, guests prefer to have less furniture in their rooms, but enough place to store their belongings, such as clothes and food. Room furnishing includes overall comfort, ease and convenience of the guests. When picking out room furniture, it is important to first focus on the basic essentials. A comfortable

bed is the most important essential and the best thing to provide to the guests. For an apartment-style hotel, a sofa bed can be placed in the living room, as it is a space-friendly furniture. Few other essentials include a chest of drawers, a big desk and a luggage rack.

When designing hotel rooms, choosing the right bathroom toiletries is just as important as choosing the right bedding. The amenities that guests find in their rooms should be equal to, or better than what they have in their homes. On the luxury side, hotels should provide amenities that evoke a sense of a special experience (Donzé & Fujioka, 2017). As a result, guests often expect to have high-end bath products. For the bathroom, guests seek the familiarity of home, which means consumer brands, but not necessarily spa-level treatment. Some personal care amenities include shampoo, deodorant soap, face soap, hair conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrush and mouthwash (Rowe, 1995). Some extra towels, robes and shower caps are also amenities that can be supplied for the guests' use. As the competition to provide bathroom amenities if getting fierce among the hotel companies, they have invested more time, effort and money to choose the perfect amenities, suitable for the guests' particular necessities. Item brands also play a role in giving impact to the guests' expectations. Some hotels took the opportunity by teaming up with celebrities to lend their names to the bathroom products. Bathroom amenities may not able to change the guest's whole perspective on viewing the hotel in a more fascinated way, but giving them the small pleasure everywhere throughout their stay might help them to consider a second purchase on the hotel in future.

Lockyer (2002) suggested that among the top amenities that influence the customer's purchase of the hotel is the access to the cooking facilities. Some guests are tired of having to eat out for every meal. Others are also trying to save up their budget on food, especially during a vacation or a backpacking trip as they intend to spend their money on other things (Lockyer, 2002). Guests with small children often refuse to go out at night to have dinner, especially when it is already passing their children's bedtime. To please and satisfy the guests, hotel managers should provide basic cooking facilities for their usage. When choosing for the right utensils, safety of the guests must be the top priority on the list (Lockyer, 2002). Some of the utensils that are easy and suitable to use for short trips include a water heater, a small refrigerator to stock up instant food and fruits, and a rice cooker. To prevent any damages or injuries among the guests, the most efficient way to observe their safety is to locate a smoke detector in the hotel rooms, specifically near the cooking area. However, there are some hotels that provide extended stay rooms which have a full set of kitchenettes for cooking. This type of room is recommended for long-staying guests, either on business or leisure purpose (Lockyer, 2002).

2.2.2 Recreational Facilities

Engagement in regular physical activity has been associated with a variety of health benefits (Dwyer, 2011). The presence of people being active, absence of illegal activities, good aesthetics, and the availability of amenities (McCormack *et al*., 2010) have been found to encourage facility use. What was once considered as a luxury facility for hotels has quickly become a necessity to keep the guests in their regular routines and in delight, such as pools, gym,

spa and etc. These facilities are part of the mainstay for positive business and pleasure stays. Saelens *et al*. (2006) focused mainly on the characteristics of parks, trails and playgrounds. In contrast, Cavnar *et al*., (2004) audit tool examined a variety of recreational facilities, but it focused only on their safety, maintenance and condition.

Some guests may even select their hotels based on the recreational facilities provided, as they are their main priorities in choosing their stay. As travelers have begun to realize that travelling may not be the healthiest thing to do, people start to look for healthy travel. Therefore, it is the hotel's responsibility to provide one i.e. hotels need to position themselves to accommodate what their guests need, and in this term, by providing adequate recreational facilities (Costa *et al.*, 2004). Some of the recreational facilities that are usually provided by the hotels include tennis courts, table tennis courts, badminton courts, basketball courts, volleyball courts, soccer pitches, squash courts, walking trails, bike lanes, playgrounds for children, weight training gyms, cardio training gyms, sport climbing walls, and swimming pools (Lee *et al,* 2013). Sport groups consumers are a group of people who seek more than just a hotel room during a vacation. They are more concerned about recreational facilities provided by the hotel.

Outdoor swimming pool is a haven for guests, especially those who stay for leisure purpose (Costa *et al.*, 2004). Daytime social and recreational activities at many hotels center around the pool and cabanas. Few types of pools are mainly provided by the hotels; a heated indoor pool, a shallower children's pool, a paddling pool for toddlers and infants, and a large outdoor pool (Chan & Lam, 2003). Outdoor pools are sometimes located at the topmost

of the hotel building. The reason of having a rooftop pool is to maximize guests' need of privacy. However, the safety of the guests should be taken into consideration too. Before building an outdoor pool, the installation and construction of the pool must be studied carefully as the physical weight of the water and the water retaining structure of the pool shell might affect the hotel building (Chan & Lam, 2003). Some of the pools are also constructed above the ground. These types of pools are usually at the backside of the hotel. Some of the factors that guests expect from hotel pools include: policy (i.e., regulations imposed on facility users), conditions of toilets and changing rooms (i.e., provision of clean toilets and hot showers), social environment (i.e., crowdedness of the facility) and management (i.e., regular maintenance practices) (Ryan & Huimin, 2007).

Swimming pools and changing rooms are two things that come together. The changing rooms have to obey few guidelines, such as the hygiene, having security as well as the presence of showers and other supportive equipment e.g. hair dryers, paper towels. Many believe that these measures may contribute to the general impression of the cleanliness and safety of the recreational facilities and hence affect usage (Ryan & Huimin, 2007). Figure 2.2 shows the Rooftop Pool at the Andaz West Hollywood Hotel where the pool is located at the top of the high-rise building. The rooftop pool was constructed with distinguished guests in mind which is evident by the classy urban exterior furnishings and a good view of the Sunset Strip and Hollywood Hills (TheRooftopGuide.com, 2019).

Figure 2.2: The Rooftop Pool at the Andaz West Hollywood Hotel.
(TheRooftopGuide.com, 2019)

Travel and fitness have strong ties in the hotel industry. With the increased importance placed on staying active and healthy, hotel operators are wise to assist their guests in maintaining their healthy routines during their stay. Hotel guests expect fitness centers to have a range of exercise machines (Butwin, 1982). Most hotels provide gymnasium as a facility for the guests. To be considered as a hotel gym, it has to be located inside the hotel building or within an adjacent building. Few criteria of a good gymnasium are the appropriate size of the facility, equipment quantities, multisport options and overall ambience. Hotel companies should recognize the need for having a quality fitness facility in hotels (Heung, 2000). While golf may not be the most intense workout, guests enjoy it along with the cardiovascular machines like treadmills, elliptical, stationary bikes, yoga mats, a universal machine and free weights (Piotrowski & Rogers, 2012).