



Architectural Design Key Success Elements for Hostel Design

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Abstract

A hostel simply means shared accommodation. Instead of staying in a private room with a private bathroom, you stay in a dorm sharing the room with other people. Same goes for the bathroom. It means that it is a place where travelers sleep on a budget and share the space. However, over time, a hostel has become a hotspot for travelers to mingle. Hostels have evolved to be more than a bed to sleep. There are common areas, a kitchen to share, events, and now even private rooms. That being said: A hostel has always been and will always be: A place to meet other people! Besides the fact that a hostel is a budget accommodation, it is also an easy way to find fellow travelers whether it is for having a drink together, share travel tips, or whatever you fancy. A hostel comes in handy when traveling around and looking for fellow travelers, and then there is the ideological part of your questions “What is a Hostel.” It is a space to share, a community, a travel style, and even lifestyle. It is the home and the second home. After all: A hostel is a shared accommodation. This paper will use a mixed-use method to find the key elements of architectural design by 90 nonspecific participants through a specific questionnaire. It was found that a beautiful design is not the main factor but the location in the centric area not far from the public transportation together with the main key function such as a common area with free coffee and snack. Moreover, small privacy equipment such as personal shelf and personal lavatory are one of the main key factors that make the hostel successful.

Keywords: *Hostel, share accommodation, traveller, budget, life style, hostel design*

1. Introduction

The history of hostels starts in 1912 in Altena Castle, Germany. The teacher Richard Schirrmann created the first permanent so-called *Jugendherberge* or as we know “Youth Hostel.” It was Schirrmann’s idea to create a space where young pupils can spend the night out in nature and get together. In a cheap and close-to-nature way. It is very basic that everyone has to know. Now, It is apparent, from the beginning it was supposed to be: cheap, social, close-to-nature, and simple.

However, today the word trend of travelers has been changed. The gap between hostels and hotels is getting closer in terms of pricing. Many times, a traveler choose the accommodation by location and budget, so the cheap hotels and hostels become competitors. Following are a few differences between hostels and hotels. First, hostels are more traditionally budget-oriented. However, nowadays one can find cheaper hotel rooms than private hostel rooms. It all depends on the season and destination. Secondly, hostels have programs like book exchange, social events, and movie nights. Thirdly, hostels are more informal while hotels are more formal. Fourthly, hostels have social areas usually set up for people to mingle. Hotels are more private such that even the lounge is more for dining in private and having a drink. Lastly, hotels are usually higher quality – so at least the cliché. Comparing with the 5-Star hostels, one will learn that this is not the case anymore. Clearly that space and design elements in both architecture are difference such as the usage of the lobby, the type of the restaurant, facilities, bathroom types, and most importantly, room types.

Then, this paper will study about the key factor for the hostel design elements and spaces which must have in the hostel design program to make travelers choose, make a suggestion to another, and lastly for being a repeat customer themselves.



2. Objectives

The main objective of this paper is to investigate program requirements for the hostel design as follows:

1. The location where the hostel should be
2. The main functions the hostel must have
3. The key design elements the hostel must have

3. Materials and Methods

This research used a mixed method in three particular ways as follows:

1. Participant observation
2. Survey
3. Interview

90 nonspecific respondents from different nations and 6 hostels in 4 different countries are the sample of this paper. All respondents filled in the design survey providing specific information about the hostel design program which divided into 4 sessions and information as follows:

The first session: The basis biographic data such as Nationality, Gender, and Age. This session is to know the respondents' background.

The second session: Type of traveler data such as Number of travelers in each group, size and number of luggage, a period of stay, Room type booking, reasons for choosing, and Accessibility. This session is to know the category of travelers.

The third session: The general background knowledge about the hostel. The questions were: Have you ever stayed in any hostel before?, Will you get back here again?, and If you get the same rate for the hotel, will you still choose to stay in the hostel?

This session is for understanding the decision they made both before and after staying in the hostel.

The fourth session: Specific requirement questions such as architectural and interior design impression level, The most frequent used space in the hostel, The less used space in the hostel, The most used equipment and facility in the hostel by frequency such as personal locker, personal shelf, bed lamp, television, lavatory, common room, library, bar, and restaurant, and suggestions for spaces or any element required. This session is to understand the respondents' behavior on architectural and interior design that influence them.

Another material besides the survey is floor plans and pictures which have been used for analyzing the overall architectural and interior design to understand the basic design function and usage including the decoration and styling of the choosing hotel.

The last material is a map which is one of the most important materials for understanding the overall context and surrounding of the hostel.

4. Results and Discussion

From 90 respondents sharing 15 survey sheets for 6 surveyed hostels in 4 different countries, the results by the surveyed hostel are as following:

4.1 The Funtastic beach hostel, Danang, Vietnam. Rack rate 200THB per night per bed.

This hostel is a 2-unit row house with 7 stories and a rooftop. While the ground floor is the pizzeria, the hostel's main floor is located on the first floor including a lobby, living room, common room, and kitchen. There are 11 dormitory rooms in total. 5 rooms are on the 2nd-4th floors, of which 4 rooms have 4 beds, and 1 room has 6 beds. Another two 8-bed dormitory rooms are on the 5th floor. Moreover, there is one shared bathroom on every floor. Lastly, the laundry service and the bar are on the rooftop.

Location and accessibility: The hostel is 10-15 minutes by taxi from the airport and 5 minutes by walk from the tourist attractions, surrounded by public facilities and restaurants.

The basis biographic data: 90% are Asian Nationalities, Ages between 20-25 years old.

The second session: Type of traveler data:



82% of them were traveling in a group of between 6-8 persons, 100% of their luggage size is 7 kg, 94% of them stayed for 2-3 nights, 82% booked six-to-eight-bed mixed dormitory room, 100% accessed by taxi, and 94% of the travelers made a decision by the hostel's location.

The third session: The general background knowledge about the hostel:

94% used to stay in the hostel before, 94% will not get back to stay here again, and 100% of them will stay in the hotel if they can get the same rate.

The fourth session: Specific:

The most frequently used facilities are personal lavatory and the common room at 94%, Bed lamp and personal television at 88%, bar and restaurant at 70%, and personal shelf and locker at 76%. Most of them suggested that there are good qualities of beds and bathrooms. See Figure 1.

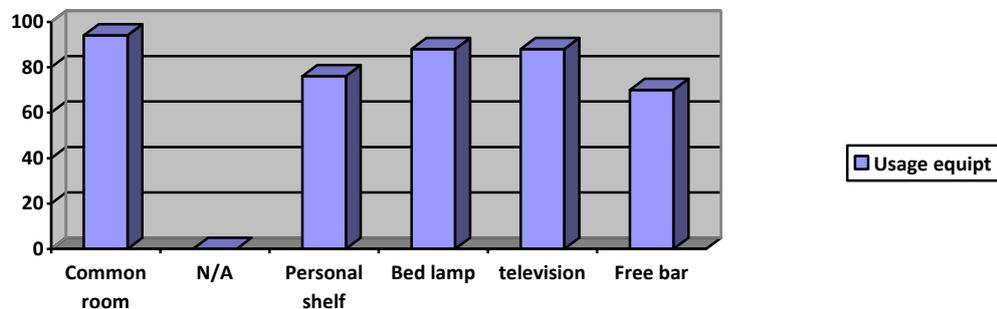


Figure 1 The usage function at The Funtastic beach hostel, Danang, Vietnam

Suggestion and comments: 94% of the respondents have insufficient common space and number of shared furniture. At the same time, positive comments are that the place is full of facilities and good services.

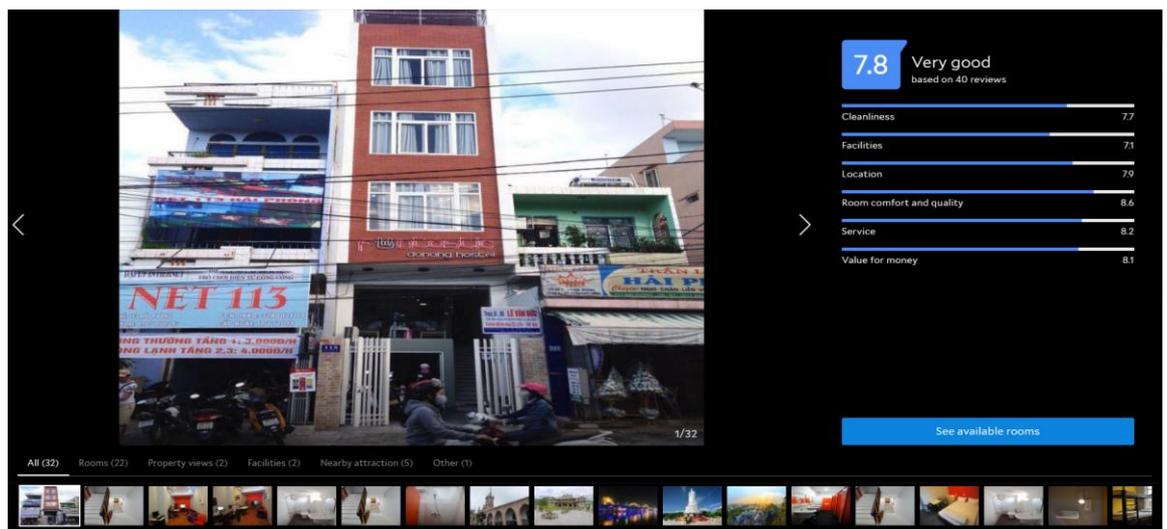


Figure 2 The Funtastic beach hostel, Danang, Vietnam

4.2 Mintea hostel, Hue city, Vietnam. Rack rate 200THB per night per bed.

The hostel is a 4-story row house having 15 dormitory rooms with 4 bulked beds in the mixed dormitory room and shared bathrooms on each floor. The main floor is located on the ground floor with a common area and cafeteria.



Location and accessibility: The hostel is located in the city center 5 minutes by walk from any tourist attraction and surrounded by public facilities and restaurants. A shuttle bus from the airport is also available.

The basis biographic data: 94% are Asian Nationalities, Ages between 21-26 years old.

The second session: Type of traveler data:

94% of them were traveling in a group of between 6-8 persons, 100% of their luggage size is 7 kg, 94% of them stayed for 1-2 nights, 82% booked a bulked bed in a mixed dormitory room, 100% accessed by a shuttle bus from Danang airport, and 100% made a decision by the location.

The third session: The general background knowledge about the hostel:

100% never stay in the hostel before, none of them will get back to stay here again, and 100% of them will stay in the hotel if they can get the same rate.

The fourth session: Specific:

The most frequently used facilities are the common room at 94% and personal shelf, television, and library at 64%; however, a bed lamp is not available here. See Figure 3.

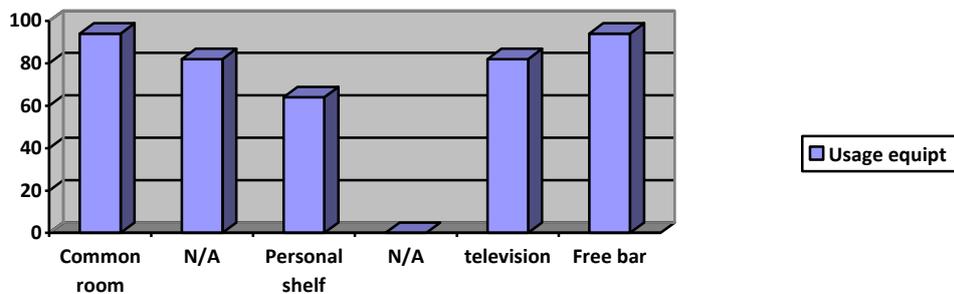


Figure 3 Usage function at The Mintea hostel, Hue city, Vietnam

Positive comments here are cheap price and convenience while negative comments concern the corridor and too small common area.

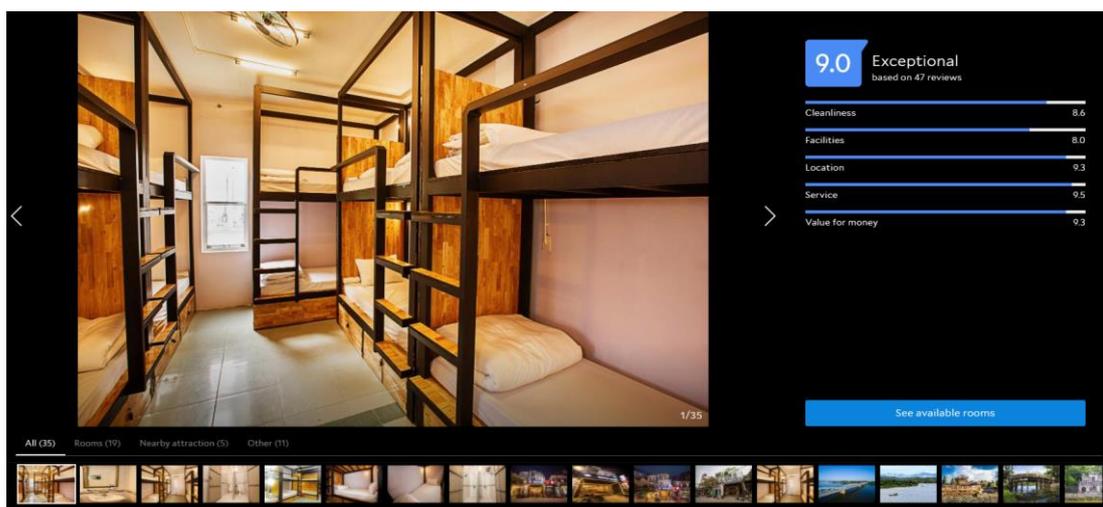


Figure 4 Mintea hostel ,Hue city ,Vietnam



4.3 Ruck sack Inn Lavender, Singapore. Rack rate Around 800THB per bed per night.

The hostel has 1 floor and provides only mixed dormitory rooms, of which 3 rooms have 4 beds, 1 room has six beds, and 1 room has 14 beds. Shared bathrooms with personal shower, toilet, and personal lavatory are available. The small common area is in the same area with the lobby and personal room in the main corridor.

Location and accessibility: The hostel is located in the city center on the main road named Lavender St., which is not far from tourist attractions such as Little India. Bus and MRT are also in the area.

The basis biographic data: 82% are Asian Nationality and another 18% are European, Age between 20-22 years old

The second session: Type of traveler data: 82% of them were traveling in a group of between 2-4 persons, 100% of their luggage size is 7 kg, 100% of them stayed for 3-4 nights, 100% booked four-to-fourteen-bed mixed dormitory room, 88% accessed by MRT while another 12% of them accessed by bus and walk, and 100% of the travelers made a decision by the location.

The third session: The general background knowledge about the hostel: 100% used to stay in the hostel before, 48% of them will get back to stay here again, and 100% of them chose to stay in this hostel rather than the hotel even if they can get the same rate.

The fourth session: Specific:

The most frequently used facilities are personal lavatory, common room, and personal locker at 100%, bar at 82%, personal shelf and locker at 24%, and bed lamp, television, and library at 36%. See figure 5.

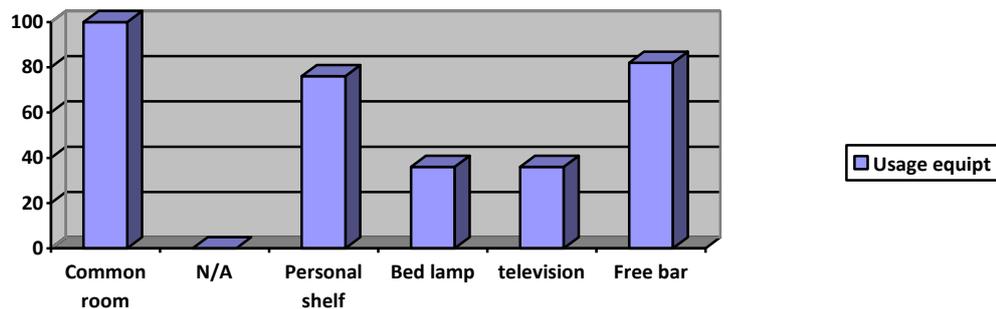


Figure 5 The usage function at The Ruck sack Inn Lavender, Singapore

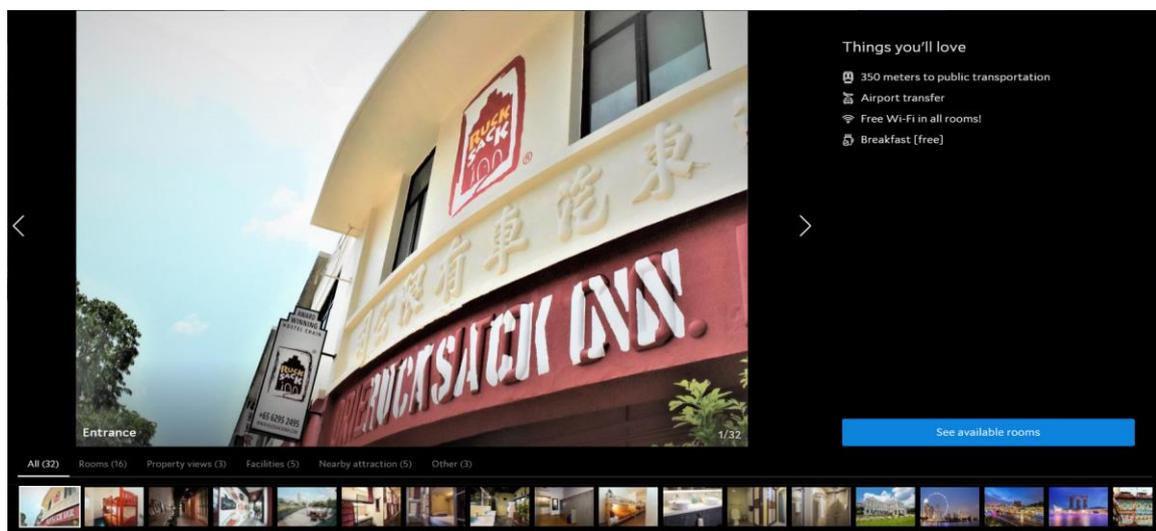


Figure 6 Ruck sack Inn Lavender, Singapore



4.4 The Frame Hostel, Penang, Malaysia. Rack rate from 200THB per bed per night.

The hostel is a 3-story row house. The main floor is on the ground floor with a small lobby and common room with dining area. However, the kitchen is not available. There are 2 dormitory rooms with 2 bulked bed on the first floor with a toilet and shower room. On the second and third floors, there are 4 dormitory rooms having 4 bulked beds rooms and another 3 dormitory rooms with only one bulked bed. Both floors have a small common area with a shared toilet and a shared shower room.

Location and accessibility: The hostel is located in the city center (China town) and close to the MRT station.

The basis biographic data: 100% are Asian Nationalities, Ages between 21-27 years old.

The second session: Type of traveler data: 82% of them were traveling in a group of between 2-4 persons, 94% of their luggage size is 15 kg while another 6% is 7 kg, 100% of them stayed for 1-2 nights, 100% booked four-bed dormitory room (separated gender), 100% accessed by bus, and 100% made a decision by the location and the hostel decoration.

The third session: The general background knowledge about the hostel:

None of them ever stay in the hostel before, 24% of them will get back to stay here again, and 100% of them will stay in the hotel if they can get the same rate.

The fourth session: Specific:

The most frequently used facilities are a personal common room, personal locker, personal shelf, and bed lamp at 100%, bar at 82%, and television and library at 24%. See Figure 7.

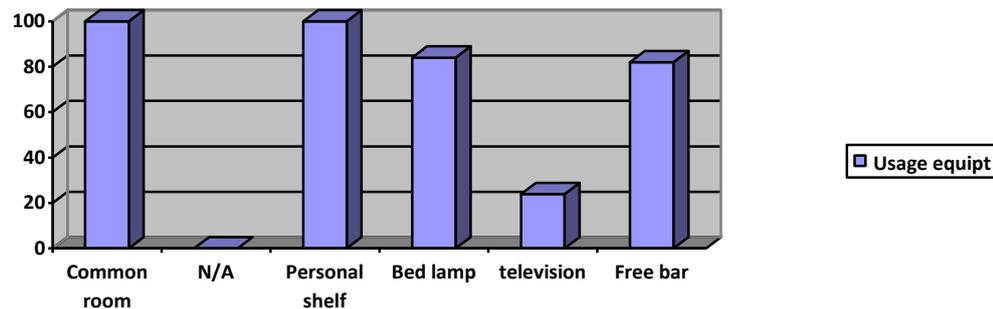


Figure 7 Usage function at The Frame Hostel, Penang, Malaysia

Comments: Mostly concerned the beautiful and convenient location with the interior decoration of the hostel - no negative comment.

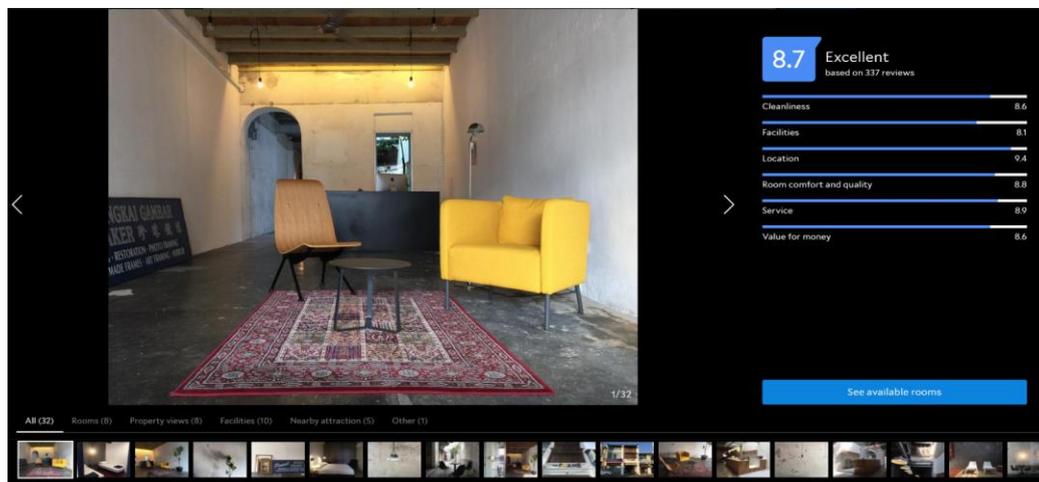


Figure 8 The Frame Hostel, Penang, Malaysia



4.5 ABC Premium hostel, Singapore. Rack rate 500THB per night per bed

The hostel is a 2-story row house located in the heritage area (Little India). There are 7 Dormitory rooms for 8 persons on the same floor separated by the common area and shared gender-separated bathroom and toilet. Kitchen and dining are also available next to the common room. The small lobby is in the front close to the park.

Location and accessibility: The place is close to MRT station, Mustafa. The 24-hour restaurant is available in the area.

The basis biographic data: 70% are Asian Nationalities and another 30% are European, Ages between 20-24 years old.

The second session: Type of traveler data: 100% of them were traveling in a group of between 2-4 persons, 100% of their luggage size is 7kg, 100% of them stayed for 3-4 nights, 100% booked eight-bed dormitory room (separated gender), 100% accessed by MRT, and 100% made a decision by the location and the hostel decoration.

The third session: The general background knowledge about the hostel: 100% of them never stay in the hostel before, 94% of them will get back to stay here again, and 100% of them chose to stay in this hostel rather than the hotel even they can get the same rate.

The fourth session: Specific:

The most frequently used facilities are a personal common room, personal locker, and bed lamp at 100% and bar, personal shelf, and lavatory at 88%; however, television and library are not available. See Figure 9.

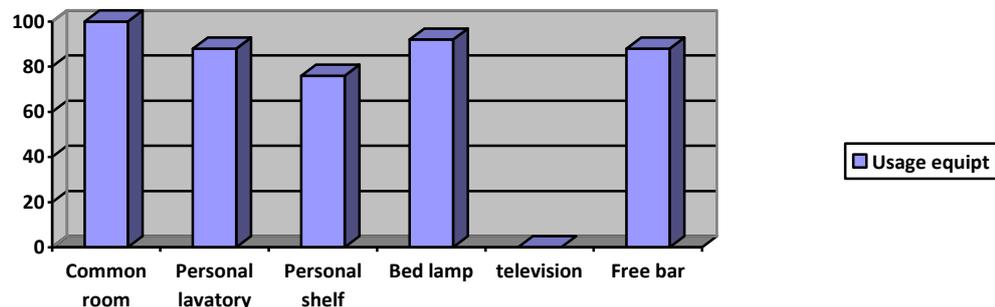


Figure 9 Usage function at The ABC Premium hostel, Singapore

The comments: Positive comments here are about the accessibility and location in the heritage area — no negative comment.

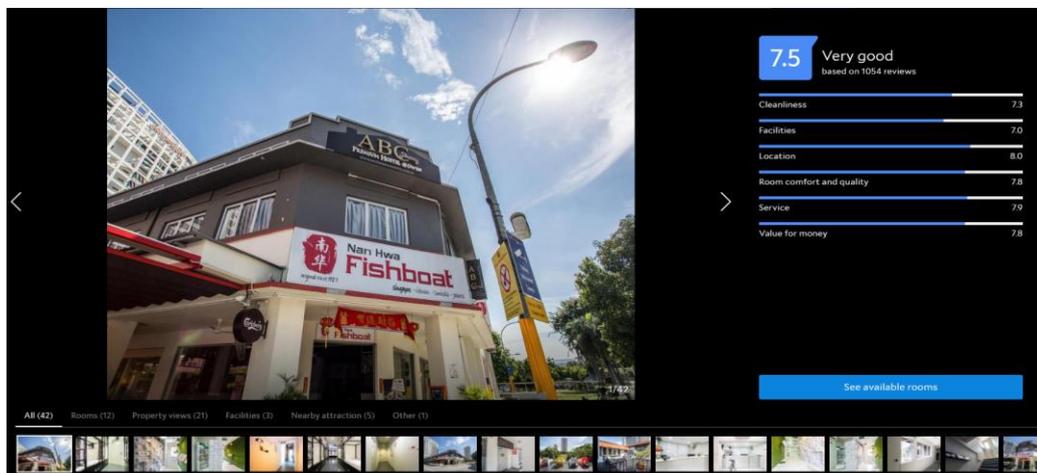


Figure 10 ABC Premium hostel, Singapore



4.6 Bangkok story hostel, Bangkok, Thailand. Rack rate 300THB per night per bed.

The hostel is a 3-story row house with an unusual-shaped floor plan. The main floor is the ground floor with a small lobby and public cafeteria with a laundry service and storage room for luggage leave. The second floor is the mixed dormitory room for 9 persons with shared toilet and lavatory. The third floor is the lady dormitory for 12 persons with a partition dividing the room for 8 and 4. Shared shower rooms and toilet are also on this floor.

Location and accessibility: The hostel is located in the city center (China town) and close to MRT station.

The basis biographic data: 48% are Asian Nationalities and another 52% are European, Ages between 20-25 years old.

The second session: Type of traveler data: 100% of them were traveling in a group of between 2-6 persons, 100% of their luggage size is 7kg, 100% of them stayed for 1-2 nights, 100% booked nine-bed dormitory room, 84% accessed by MRT with a 10-minute walk while another 16% by taxi and tuk-tuk, and 100% made a decision by the location and the hostel decoration.

The third session: The general background knowledge about the hostel: 100% of them never stay in the hostel before, 82% of them will get back to stay here again, 100% of them chose to stay in this hostel rather than the hotel even if they can get the same rate.

The fourth session: Specific: The most frequently used are a personal common room, personal locker, personal shelf, personal lavatory, and bed lamp at 94%. Also, the bar and restaurant are available, but the guests never use. See Figure 11.

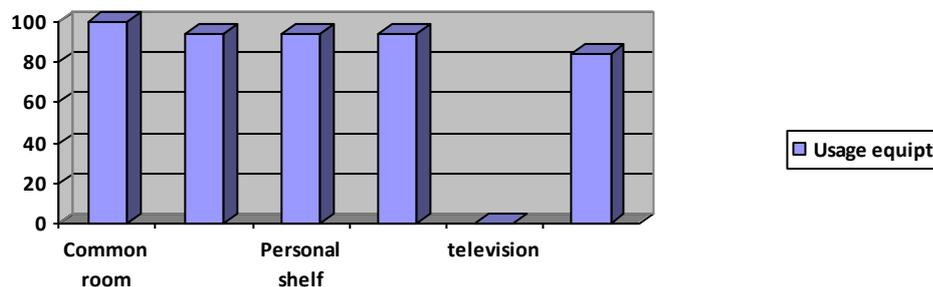


Figure 11 Usage function at The Bangkok story hostel Bangkok, Thailand

The comments: Positive comments here are mostly about the decoration and location — no negative comment.

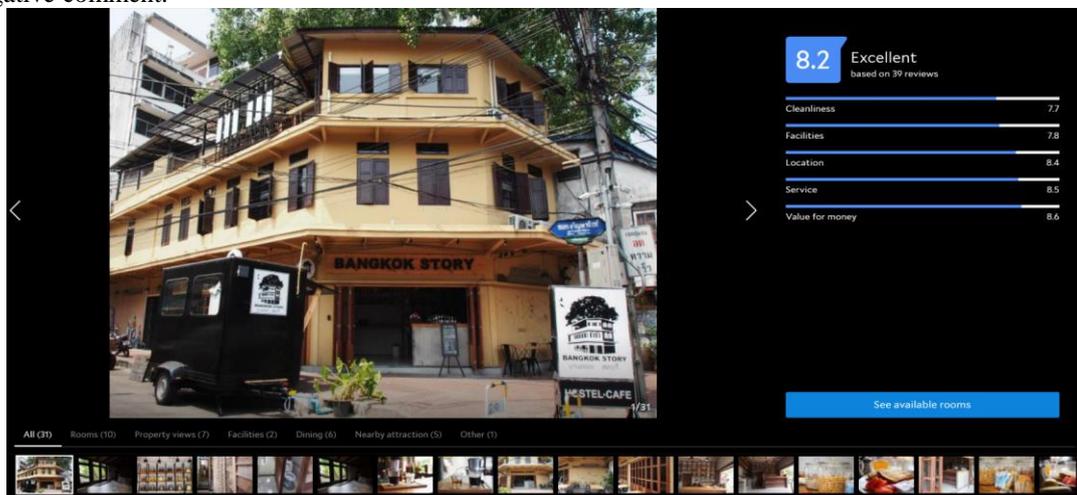


Figure 12 Bangkok story hostel Bangkok, Thailand



From the overall survey, we may have a discussion as following:

Location and accessibility: The successful hostel must locate in the city center area or close to major tourist attractions or heritage area, which is easy to access by any public transportation.

The basis biographic data: 82% are Asian Nationalities and another 18% are from European countries, Ages between 20-25 years old.

The second session: Type of traveler data: 100% of them were traveling in a group of between 2-14 persons, the regular size of their luggage is 7 kg accounted for 94% while the rest are over, 82% of them stayed for 1-2 nights and the maximum we found was 3-4 nights, 100% booked a dormitory room (mixed and separated gender), All of them accessed the location by public transportations such as MRT, bus or taxi, 100% made a decision by the location, and 50% by the hostel decoration.

The third session: The general background knowledge about the hostel: 60% of them never stay in the hostel before, 12% of them will get back to stay here again, and 36% of them chose to stay in this hostel rather than the hotel even if they can get the same rate.

The fourth session: Specific:

The most frequently used facilities are a personal common room, personal locker, personal lavatory, and personal shelf accounted for over 82%, bed lamp for 78%; however, television, charged bar, and restaurant are not significance, but a free coffee bar is one of the most popular factors at over 83%. See Figure 13.

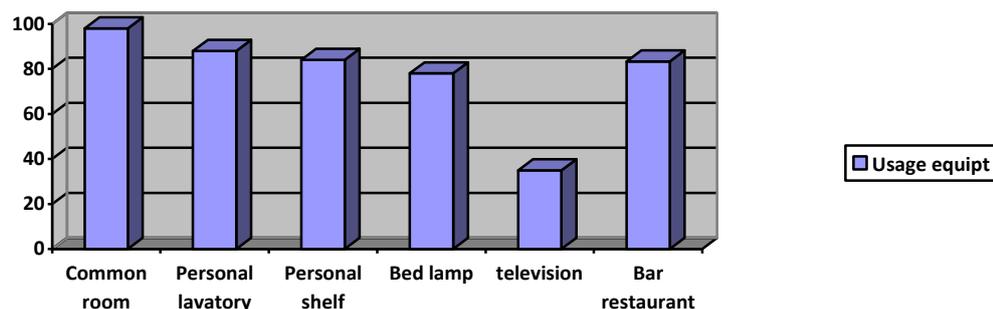


Figure13 Average usage function in six surveyed hostel

The comments: Most positive comments mostly concerned decoration and location while negative comments are the insufficient area in the common space.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, most travelers still made a decision from the location of the hostel which can be easily accessed by any public transportation and close to tourist attractions or the city center. We can notice that in the country having inexpensive living costs such as Vietnam, Malaysia, and Thailand, the gap of the pricing between the hostel and hotel is not significantly different, with the hotel still being their best choice. However, the main reason for choosing the hostel is a budget and number of traveler in the group. Most of the travelers who stay in the hostel are teenagers whose ages ranged between 20-25 years old, so the hotel may not be convenient for them to stay together. In contrast, if the group has only 1-2 people, the hotel will be the best choice. It is also the main reason why most popular rooms are shared dormitory rooms. Nonetheless, the private space is still needed which is why personal locker, personal shelf, and personal lavatory are still the most used equipment in the hostel. Besides, another main reason why they chose to stay in the hostel is to make new friends which is why a common room is what all respondents used most.

Next, we can conclude that the main key elements for the success of the hostel design are:

1. The prime location which is very easy to access by any public transportation.



2. The common room area where guests spend most of their time in to make new friends and have breakfast, lunch or free coffee. If the kitchen were available, it would be a plus function for the guests as most of them needed to spare some money for other expenses.

3. The shared dormitory with a privacy area: This is one of the most important factors for making the hostel successful. From most answers, travelers prefer to stay in the hotel than the hostel because they can have their own private space in the hotel. It means that if travelers can have their own private space at a cheaper price and can hang out with a group of friends at the same time, they will prefer to stay in the hostel. It is also the reason why personal facilities such as personal locker and personal shelf obtained the highest score for guest usage equipment.

4. Bathroom and toilet: Shared bathrooms and toilets are acceptable but separating gender is still needed. If the hostel has a personal lavatory, it will be the plus score for guests as we can see that the personal lavatory is one of the equipment they used most.

5. Bed lamp and television: In general, both are equipment that must be provided in the hotel but not the hostel according to the survey. From the survey, it showed that personal bed lamps and televisions are not significant elements for hostel guests anymore, maybe because of the changing in people behavior and all media are in mobile phones. It also means that personal plug outlets for charging become the most important equipment. If they want to write or read, the common room will be the area for them.

6. Library: This is not the most used area anymore because people can read online anywhere. So this space may merge into the common room.

7. Bar and restaurant: These are one of the most valued spaces for the hotel but not for the hostel. Since most guests need to spare money for other expenses, bar and restaurant in the hostel may not be the place for them. However, a free coffee bar in the common area is still needed.

8. Beautiful decoration and architecture: From the survey, these are not the key elements for the successful hostel as compared to other factors. However, they are one of the most significant influences for guests to choose accommodation. If the place has a beautiful decoration, people will stop to take a look, and if the price is affordable, it will be a choice for them.

6. Acknowledgements

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