

Effectiveness Of Communication Skills On Service Quality In The Front Office Department Of Sunway Putra Hotel

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Communication Effectiveness Service Skills Quality	Good communication skills are very important because the Front Office is the first department that interacts directly with guests, so it has a crucial role in shaping the initial impression of the hotel. The main problem raised is the low satisfaction of hotel guests which is allegedly related to the lack of effective communication skills among Front Office staff. This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with Front Office staff as well as direct observation of interactions that occur between staff and guests. Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach, which focused on an in-depth understanding of the role of communication skills in improving service quality. The results showed that effective communication skills play a significant role in improving service quality at the Front Office. Staff who have good communication skills are able to create a friendly and professional atmosphere, which has a positive impact on guest satisfaction and loyalty to the hotel. This finding emphasizes that good communication not only helps in solving problems, but also provides a pleasant experience for guests. In conclusion, effective communication skills are essential to ensure that the Front Office Department can provide optimal service quality at Sunway Putra Hotel. These skills should be a key focus in staff training to support the achievement of guest satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most important economic sectors in Indonesia due to the country's natural potential, culture, and diversity. Tourism is one of the most important economic sectors in Indonesia Yakup, A. P. (2019) (1). Home to more than 17,000 islands, Indonesia offers a diverse range of exciting destinations, from beaches, mountains, and lakes to tropical forests and coral reefs. Popular destinations such as Bali, Yogyakarta, and Lombok have long been recognized as international tourist destinations. The tourism sector contributes significantly to Indonesia's economy by creating jobs, increasing local revenue, and supporting other sectors such as transportation, hospitality, and food services. The Indonesian government continues to develop the sector through international funding and infrastructure development. With these benefits, tourism in Indonesia plays an important role in driving economic growth and improving the country's image on the world stage.

The development of tourism in Indonesia requires various strategic efforts by the government and the private sector to improve the competitiveness and quality of destinations. The government is committed to developing new tourist destinations through programs such as "10 New Bali," which aims to expand the economic benefits of tourism to areas outside Bali. Infrastructure improvements such as the construction of roads, airports, and ports as well as improved internet access are prioritized to facilitate the movement of tourists. In addition, Indonesia is also starting to adopt the concept of sustainable tourism that prioritizes

environmental preservation and local culture, with ecotourism and community-based tourism at its core. To attract foreign tourists, it will also strengthen international promotion through digital campaigns and participation in global tourism exhibitions. We are also working to improve the quality of human resources through training and providing superior services. Government support measures, such as more flexible visa requirements and simplified investment regulations, will also boost tourism growth. All these measures aim to make Indonesia a leading destination with global competitiveness, which is not only economically beneficial but also socially and environmentally sustainable.

Hotels are usually classified by their stars. The most important factors that determine the success of a hotel are its strategic location, quality of service, and amenities. Hotels near city centers or popular tourist attractions tend to be more popular. Excellent service quality, cleanliness, and comfort are also very important to attract and retain guests. In the digital age, the reputation of a hotel is heavily influenced by online reviews on booking platforms such as Booking.com and Agoda. As modern technology is increasingly used, the ability to adapt to changing travel trends and consumer needs is essential to remaining competitive in this dynamic industry. Effective communication is a key cornerstone in the successful operation of an organization, especially in the highly dynamic hospitality industry. In a hotel environment, communication not only plays a role in conveying information but also in building strong relationships between staff and resolving conflicts that arise (OD Wulanda and others, 2024) (2). Effective interpersonal communication between front office staff and guests has many benefits, especially in increasing guest satisfaction. Guests who feel valued and respected through good communication tend to be satisfied with the services provided by the hotel.

The front office department is the department that has the main task of managing the check-in and check-out processes of hotel guests. This department is the front guard who first interacts directly with guests, thus creating the first impression while representing the hotel's image. According to Yosep, H.(2023) (3), in the front office, communication is closely related to service quality; good communication will get good feedback too. Therefore, it is very important for front office staff to understand communication ethics, both with guests and with coworkers, for the smooth operation of the hotel. Guest satisfaction is the target pursued by every field engaged in hospitality, and hotels are one of them. Many hotels still face serious challenges due to the lack of effective communication between departments. This article aims to analyze the extent to which the effectiveness of communication skills affects service quality in the front office department of the Sunway Putra Hotel.

Understaffing in hotels, including Sunway Putra, can be a serious problem affecting operations and service quality. When staffing is insufficient, some of the problems that often arise include slow service, increased workload for existing employees, as well as a decline in overall service quality. This can negatively impact the guest experience, such as longer check-in and check-out times, rooms that may not be cleaned on time, as well as the hotel's inability to respond quickly to special requests or guest complaints. As a result, the hotel's reputation may suffer, which may affect guest reviews and ratings on online platforms, ultimately affecting occupancy rates and hotel revenue.

To address this issue, hotel management needs to take several strategic steps. First, hotels can improve the recruitment process by targeting potential candidates who have the required skills, as well as offering competitive compensation and a conducive work environment to attract a larger workforce. Secondly, training existing staff to be more efficient and multitasking will help ease the temporary workload. With these measures, Sunway Putra Hotel is expected to minimize the negative impact of staff shortages and ensure service quality is maintained. This research aims to identify the communication skills that are most instrumental in improving guest satisfaction, as well as evaluate how the front office staff's communication skills can contribute to the smooth operation and overall improvement of the hotel's image.

METHOD

The method used in this research is the descriptive-qualitative method. The qualitative research type has descriptive properties and tends to use analysis. Process and meaning are more highlighted in this type of research with a theoretical basis used as a guide so that the research focus matches the facts in the field Ramdhan, M. (2021)(4). The data collection techniques applied by the author at Sunway Putra Hotel include observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis techniques included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A positive first impression greatly influences the quality of service in a hotel, especially in the front office, which is the first point of interaction with guests. Effective communication skills, such as speaking in a friendly, polite, and responsive manner, make guests feel valued and comfortable. Positive interactions from the start can build a good impression of the entire hotel. In addition, the front office is responsible for understanding guests' needs and preferences, whether regarding room service, hotel facilities, or other assistance. Good communication allows staff to listen carefully and respond accordingly, making guests feel heard and prioritized. Guests who receive friendly and communicative service tend to feel satisfied and have the potential to return in the future. Furthermore, good communication can create a bond between the guest and the hotel, becoming an added value in building customer loyalty. Good communication skills, including speaking clearly, active listening, and being professional and friendly, are key elements in creating a memorable guest experience and supporting the overall reputation of the hotel.

The front office at Sunway Putra Hotel not only interacts with guests but also often coordinates with other departments such as housekeeping, security, and room service. Interview results show that smooth communication between departments can speed up the completion of guest requests, such as the provision of additional facilities in the room or certain repairs. This effective coordination has an impact on guests' perceptions of the speed and quality of hotel services. To achieve good coordination, it is important to have clear and open communication channels between departments. The use of hotel management software or an adequate internal communication system allows staff to relay important information in real-time, such as room availability status, additional service requests, or special notes regarding guests. With accurate and timely information, front office staff can provide solutions to guests quickly and prevent misunderstandings that can disrupt service.

Joint training between departments is also very helpful in increasing understanding of their respective roles and each department's contribution to the guest experience. Training for employees is a process of teaching certain knowledge and skills, so it is hoped that this training will be able to improve the ability of employees to carry out the tasks that have been given so that they are more skilled and able to carry out their responsibilities Sumerta I.N.A (2020)(5). By understanding the tasks and challenges faced by other departments, front office staff can be better prepared to handle situations that may arise, such as coordinating special requests from guests with housekeeping or addressing security issues. Regular meetings between departments can be a forum to share information, discuss challenges, and plan joint strategies to improve service. Rewards and recognition for collaborative efforts between departments can boost team spirit and create a positive work environment. Effective inter-departmental coordination not only improves operational efficiency but also contributes to guest satisfaction, as each department can work in harmony to provide the best service and meet guest expectations. Although communication skills have a significant impact on service quality, this study also identified some challenges in their implementation. Therefore, it is important for management to provide a supportive environment as well as a thorough training program for employees to overcome the challenges they will face. One step that can be taken is to integrate

communication skills into the recruitment and training process of new employees. In addition, regular evaluations of employees' communication skills need to be conducted to ensure they remain competent in delivering quality services. Implementing a mentoring or coaching program between more experienced and newer employees can help improve overall communication skills.

Overcoming the shortage of staff in Sunway Putra Hotel's front office requires effective solutions to continue providing optimal services. One of them is the optimization of work schedules and rotations. Effectively organizing work schedules using a rotation system can ensure that available staff can meet operational needs without experiencing fatigue. Utilization of scheduling software that aggregates guest volumes can assist in allocating the number of staff according to peak needs, thus avoiding overstaffing or understaffing at any given moment. Providing multitasking training for front office staff can also improve efficiency, allowing them to handle multiple tasks at once, such as check-in, information requests, and coordination with housekeeping. This training not only improves efficiency but also gives staff the confidence to handle additional tasks when staff shortages occur. Additionally, hiring temporary or part-time labor during times of high guest volume can help with staff shortages. This workforce can be seconded during busy times, such as holidays or special events, so that hotel operations continue to run smoothly. Furthermore, simplifying workflows and speeding up administrative processes at the front office will reduce the time needed for each interaction. For example, simplifying the check-in process or implementing automation systems to fulfill specific guest requests will make staff more efficient and able to handle more guests even with the same number of staff. Lastly, it should be noted that staff shortages could be a result of high turnover rates. By offering incentives, a supportive work environment, and career development opportunities, hotels can improve staff satisfaction and retention. Retaining experienced staff also means reducing training time, which in turn saves time and operational costs.

CONCLUSION

Effective communication skills in the front office play an important role in determining the quality of hotel services. Friendly and responsive interactions create a positive impression that can enhance the guest experience and build customer loyalty. A deep understanding of guests' needs and preferences, supported by good communication, enables staff to deliver outstanding service. In addition, effective coordination between departments also contributes to operational efficiency and guest satisfaction. However, challenges such as lack of staff confidence and cultural differences can affect the application of communication skills. Therefore, systematic efforts through ongoing training programs and regular evaluations are needed to improve employees' communication skills. Human resource management strategies, such as the optimization of work schedules and the use of temporary workers, are essential to overcome staff shortages and ensure services remain optimal. By creating a positive work environment, hotels can improve team spirit and reduce turnover rates, thus supporting the achievement of quality service.

Based on the above conclusions, some suggestions that can be given are as follows:

1. Implementation of a Continuous Training Program: Hotel management is advised to design a training program that not only focuses on communication skills but also includes intercultural training so that staff can be better prepared to deal with guests from various backgrounds.
2. Implementation of Performance Evaluation System: Routinely evaluating communication skills and inter-departmental coordination can help identify areas for improvement. The use of key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess guest satisfaction can provide useful insights for management.

3. Use of Technology: Hotels should utilize technology to improve communication and coordination. Effective property management systems (PMS) and internal communication applications can speed up the process of passing information between departments.
4. Optimization of Human Resources: There needs to be a clear strategy in the arrangement of work schedules and the use of temporary workers to overcome staff shortages, especially at peak times.
5. Creating a Positive Work Environment: Management should continue to encourage a supportive work culture by rewarding and recognizing staff for their contributions. This can improve team spirit and reduce employee turnover rates.

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