Exploration of Guest Preferences toward Quality of Hotel Staff Service

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ABSTRACT

This study explores guests’ preferences regarding the quality of service provided by hotel employees, particularly those in the accounting department of SI Hotel in Denpasar. The research was conducted using a qualitative method, involving in-depth interviews with five individuals who visited SI Hotel. The results were deterioration in service standards among staff working in the accounting division of hospitality businesses comprises an incapacity to address customer grievances, tardiness in completing tasks, inaccuracies in calculations or reporting, negligence towards protocols, inconsistent attendance, and resistance to adaptation to change. To enhance service excellence within the accounting department of SI Hotel, management should consider implementing measures such as training sessions, constructive feedback mechanisms, fostering employee engagement, offering incentives, and promoting work-life balance initiatives.

Keywords: Exploration, Guest, Preference, Staff Service

INTRODUCTION

Tourism and hospitality industry development nowadays has several significant trends (WTTC, 2022) and (Masic et al., 2017). First, technology has become a crucial element in guest experiences, from online booking processes to hotel services supported by artificial intelligence and (Fadly and Sutama, 2020). Second, there is an increasing awareness of environmental sustainability, which has prompted the hospitality industry to adopt eco-friendly and sustainable practices. Third, there is a shift in customer preferences towards local and authentic experiences, driving hotels to offer unique and distinct experiences. Additionally, the integration of technology in hotel services has also become a significant trend, from self-check-ins to the use of apps for hotel service bookings. These all reflect the importance of the hospitality industry adapting to technological developments.
and consumer trends to meet modern customer expectations and needs (Diwyarthi, Desak and Bali, 2022).

As a company operating in the hospitality industry, SI Hotel aims for all its components to perform well, thereby providing satisfaction to both management and guests visiting the hotel. However, based on the data obtained from comments provided by guests visiting SI Hotel, there are still comments about service that is not optimal, long waiting times to receive service, especially regarding transaction processes in the accounting department, and unfriendly service.

The presence of gaps in guest complaints regarding the quality of service provided by employees indicates the disparity between guests’ expectations of service and the actual experience they receive. This gap can occur for various reasons, including mismatch between expectations and actual performance of employees, lack of training or understanding of service standards, unawareness of guest preferences or needs, or communication issues between employees and guests. To address this gap and improve service quality, research related to service quality is needed. This research can help management better understand guests’ needs, expectations, and perceptions of service, as well as identify areas where improvements are needed. This research may include guest satisfaction surveys, in-depth interviews, direct observation of interactions between employees and guests, or analysis of guest comments and complaints.

By conducting research on service quality, management can identify the root causes of gaps in guest complaints, implement necessary changes in employee training, operational procedures, or company policies, and overall enhance the guest experience and customer satisfaction. This has prompted research into guest preferences regarding the quality of service received.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Guest preferences for the quality of hotel staff service, play a crucial role in determining overall guest satisfaction and loyalty. Understanding these preferences is essential for hotel management to tailor their services effectively and meet or exceed guest expectations. Several key factors influence guest preferences for the quality of hotel staff service: professionalism and courtesy, knowledge and competence, efficiency and effectiveness, personalization and attention to detail, communication skills, empathy and empowerment (Selatan, 2020) and (Maliluan, Suharto and Sunyoto, 2014).

Professionalism and Courtesy due to guests appreciate hotel staff who exhibit professionalism and courtesy in their interactions. This includes greeting guests warmly, addressing their needs promptly and efficiently, and maintaining a polite and respectful demeanor at all times. Knowledge and Competence, because guests expect hotel staff, especially those at the Front Office, to be knowledgeable and competent in their roles. This entails having a thorough understanding of hotel services, amenities, and local attractions, as well as being able to assist guests with inquiries or requests effectively.

Efficiency and Effectiveness, due to guests value hotel staff who demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness in their service delivery. This involves handling check-in and check-out procedures swiftly, processing reservations accurately, and resolving any issues or concerns promptly to ensure a seamless and hassle-free experience for guests.
Personalization and Attention to Detail, in order to make guests appreciate personalized service and attention to detail that caters to their individual preferences and needs. This may include remembering guest preferences for room type, amenities, or special requests, as well as anticipating and fulfilling any additional requirements to enhance the guest experience.

Communication Skills, because effective communication skills are essential for hotel staff to interact with guests professionally and courteously. This includes active listening to understand guest needs, clear and concise verbal communication, and the ability to communicate effectively in multiple languages to accommodate diverse guest demographics. Empathy and Empowerment, due to guests value hotel staff who demonstrate empathy and empowerment in their interactions. This involves showing genuine concern for guest satisfaction, actively seeking solutions to resolve any issues or complaints, and having the authority to make decisions or provide compensations when necessary to ensure guest happiness. By prioritizing these factors and consistently delivering high-quality service, the hotel staff can effectively meet guest preferences and create memorable experiences that foster guest satisfaction and loyalty (Andjanie, Asyifa and Pratama, 2023).

According to Semil in (Zulkarnain Wildan and Sumarsono, 2018), the term "pelayanan prima" is not referred to as "premium service," but rather as "excellent service" or "service excellent." (Di and Tegallalang, 2023) and (Putu et al., 2023) "Pelayanan prima" is a concept emphasizing the provision of high-quality service that meets customer needs and expectations, conducted in a friendly, prompt, and efficient manner. According to Zaenal Mukarom and Wijaya Laksana (2018), "pelayanan prima" is the translation of the term "Service Excellent," which literally means the best or very good service. According to Semil in (Zulkarnain Wildan and Sumarsono, 2018), "pelayanan prima" is referred to as "excellent service" or "service excellent," or also as "service excellence" or "service with very good quality." According to Suwithi in (Frimayasa and Administration, 2017), "pelayanan prima" is the best service provided to customers. According to Freddy (2017), "pelayanan prima" is the best service in meeting customer expectations and needs. According to Firmansyah (2016), "pelayanan prima" is good and satisfying customer service (Aling et al., 2023).

Excellence service is good and satisfying service provided to customers or the public or other stakeholders; an effort to fulfill needs or requests; preparing, handling what is needed excellently, so that customers get something beyond their expectations. The scope of "pelayanan prima" in the hospitality industry is a service concept that emphasizes quality, speed, accuracy, and ease in providing services to customers. Its scope includes aspects such as responsiveness to customer needs, effective communication, safety, comfort, and politeness in interacting with customers. The scope of "pelayanan prima" encompasses all aspects of interaction between service providers and customers, from
effective communication, rapid response to customer requests, comprehensive fulfillment of customer needs, to continuous improvement in service quality.

The scope of "pelayanan prima" covers all aspects of the customer experience, from initial contact to transaction completion. This includes responsiveness to customer needs, friendliness, efficiency, providing effective solutions, and delivering an overall satisfying experience. The scope of "pelayanan prima" or service excellence includes several dimensions related to service quality. Some dimensions that are part of the scope of excellence service are capability, customer satisfaction, and quality. Capability means excellence service requires the ability to anticipate, recognize, and fulfill customer expectations. Customer satisfaction means excellence service should make customers feel important and meet their needs, and Quality means excellence service should measure service quality and improve it.

The benefits of implementing excellence service in the era of literacy and digitalization provides advantages such as increasing customer satisfaction, strengthening company reputation, building customer loyalty, and enhancing competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market. It also helps optimize the use of digital technology to provide efficient and easily accessible services to customers (Andjanie, Asyifa and Pratama, 2023).

Implementing excellence service in the current era of literacy and digitalization has many benefits (Ibnou-Laaroussi, Rjoub and Wong, 2020). Easy and Equitable: Public services are increasingly accessible and accepted by the public, such as through online systems and mobile applications, Cost and Time Efficiency: The use of digital technology and digital literacy helps reduce costs and time in public services, such as reducing paper usage, Smoother Communication: The use of digital technology and digital literacy helps reduce communication problems and helps create more positive content.

Excellence service drive increasing customer satisfaction, improving hotel reputation, and increasing revenue. The excellent service, customers will feel valued and satisfied. This will help build good relationships and increase customer loyalty to the hotel/company. Improving Reputation, In the digital era, positive reviews from customers are essential. Excellent service will prompt customers to give positive reviews that will enhance the reputation of the company/hotel. Increasing Revenue, Satisfied customers are likely to return and recommend our hotel to others, thus increasing the occupancy rate of guest stays. Implementing "pelayanan prima" in the current era of literacy and digitalization helps companies build a positive image, increase customer loyalty, and gain a competitive advantage. By providing high-quality and responsive services to customer needs, companies can win customer trust in an increasingly connected and competitive business environment.
METHODS

This research uses literature review and depth interview as research methods. The depth interview was conducted by interviewing guests who interact with the accounting department staff. Literature review is a research method that involves collecting, evaluating, and analyzing relevant literature related to a specific research topic (Ilii and Pendekatan, 2016) and (Wahyudi and Bangun, 2023). In the context of research, a literature review aims to investigate what has been previously known or published about a topic, identify knowledge gaps, and gain a better understanding of the subject.

The points explaining what is meant by a literature review in research methodology are literature collection, literature evaluation, information synthesis, data analysis, interpretation, and conclusion (Filipe, Santos and Barbosa, 2018). Literature Collection means the literature review starts with gathering various types of literature relevant to the research topic. This includes scholarly journals, books, articles, theses, research reports, and other publications related to the subject under investigation. Literature Evaluation involves after collecting literature, researchers evaluate the quality, relevance, and reliability of the information sources. This evaluation involves assessing the research methodology, theoretical fit, data accuracy, and author credibility.

Information Synthesis means once the literature is evaluated, researchers synthesize information from various sources. This involves organizing and categorizing relevant findings, theories, or concepts from the selected literature. Data Analysis is a step the researchers analyze the data found in the literature. This includes identifying patterns, trends, differences, and similarities in the information discovered, as well as extracting key findings important for understanding the research topic.

Interpretation and Conclusion means based on the data analysis, researchers provide interpretations of the findings from the literature. This involves drawing conclusions about what was previously known about the research topic and identifying research implications for the field. Literature review is an essential step in the research process as it provides a theoretical and contextual foundation for the study. It helps researchers understand the conceptual framework developed, discover debates or differing opinions in the existing literature, and identify potential directions for future research needed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Service management in the accounting department of a hotel is an essential aspect ensuring operational smoothness and compliance with applicable accounting standards. Several points that explain service management in the hotel accounting department include revenue management, expense management, financial reporting, legal compliance, technology utilization, and financial risk management (Widyarsih, CAHAYA and Chairul, 2023). The accounting department is responsible for ensuring all hotel revenues are accurately recorded and in accordance with accounting principles. This involves monitoring revenue from various sources such as rooms, food and beverage, additional services, and others. Revenue management also focuses on efforts to improve Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) and Total Revenue per Available Room (TRevPAR) of the hotel.
Expense Management: The accounting department is also responsible for monitoring and managing hotel expenses. This includes bill payments, inventory management, department budget oversight, and evaluating cost efficiency in all aspects of hotel operations. Financial Reporting: One of the core functions of the accounting department is to prepare accurate and detailed financial reports. These reports are not only used for internal oversight but also to meet tax obligations, undergo audits, and provide information to external stakeholders such as shareholders or authorities. This description supports Safitri theory (Safitri, 2020) that accounting department has function to prepare accurate and detail financial reports in order to reach customer satisfaction.

Legal Compliance: The accounting department must ensure compliance with all applicable regulations and laws in the field of accounting, including tax regulations and accounting standards. This requires a deep understanding of applicable rules and obligations and the ability to apply them in the hotel’s day-to-day operations. Technology Utilization: Service management in the accounting department also involves the implementation of advanced information technology and financial management systems to facilitate reporting processes, analyze data, and improve overall operational efficiency. This description support kusumaningrum’s research that the information and technology utilization has influence financial management system improve in the hotel operational (Kusumaningrum, 2022). Financial Risk Management: The accounting department must also monitor and manage financial risks associated with hotel operations, such as exchange rate risks, credit risks, or liquidity risks. Risk management is important to maintain the hotel's financial stability in the long term. By ensuring effective service management in the accounting department, hotels can optimize resource utilization, minimize financial risks, and meet all applicable regulatory and legal obligations.

Conducting a study on excellent service in hotels is very important for the following reasons: competitive advantage, customer satisfaction, hotel reputation, customer loyalty, increased profitability, and social media influence. Competitive Advantage, because hotel industry competition force excellent service as a key differentiator between one hotel and another. Hotels that can provide exceptional guest experiences will attract more attention and retain customers better than those that do not. Customer Satisfaction, because excellent service plays a key role in ensuring customer satisfaction. Guests who feel valued and well-served are more likely to return to the hotel in the future and may recommend it to others.

Reputation, because service quality is an integral part of a hotel’s reputation. Customer reviews and testimonials can have a significant impact on the hotel’s image in the eyes of potential guests. By providing excellent service, hotels can build a strong reputation as a friendly and customer-oriented establishment. Customer Loyalty, in order to excellent service can help build long-term customer loyalty. Satisfied customers are more likely to become repeat customers and may even become enthusiastic brand advocates. Increased Profitability, due to ensuring excellent service can help increase hotel profitability. Satisfied customers are more likely to spend more money on hotel facilities such as restaurants, additional services, or spa experiences. Additionally, satisfied customers are more likely to return, reducing the cost of acquiring new customers.

Social Media Influence, because social media influence is significant in this digital age. Guest experiences, whether positive or negative, can quickly spread through platforms such as TripAdvisor, Yelp, or other social media. By providing excellent service, hotels can ensure that online reviews tend to be positive, which can increase the hotel’s attractiveness to potential guests. By
understanding the importance of excellent service in hotels, management can allocate resources appropriately and implement strategies to ensure that every guest has an exceptional experience during their stay.

Some decline in service quality by employees in the accounting department of hospitality establishments include: inability to handle customer complaints, delays in task completion, errors in calculation or reporting, disregard for processes and procedures, absenteeism or inconsistent attendance, inability to adapt to change. The guest said, the staff of accounting department had lack sufficient interpersonal skills in handling invoices, payments and other accounting issues. Due to inexperienced staff and lack of equipment, guests have to wait a long time to settle their bill payment. This creates a negative impression and disappoints hotel guests. This description support Buhalis theory (Buhalis et al., 2019) Inability to handle the complaint, and errors in calculating will drive to customer dissatisfaction.

Inability to Handle Customer Complaints: Inexperienced or poorly trained accounting department employees may lack sufficient interpersonal skills to address customer complaints regarding invoices, payments, or other accounting issues. This can lead to customer dissatisfaction and a decline in service quality. Delays in Task Completion: If accounting department employees cannot complete their tasks in a timely manner, such as preparing financial reports or responding to accounting information requests, it can cause inconvenience to other departments within the hotel and disrupt overall operational efficiency. Errors in Calculation or Reporting: Errors in financial calculations or reporting may occur if accounting department employees are not meticulous or are rushed. Such errors can result in inaccuracies in financial reports, which can financially harm the hotel or even jeopardize legal compliance.

Disregard for Processes and Procedures: Employees who neglect or disregard established accounting procedures and policies can cause serious issues in hotel financial management. This may include fund misuse, company policy violations, or the risk of losing sensitive data. Absenteeism or Inconsistent Attendance: Accounting department employees who are frequently absent or inconsistently present can cause delays in completing important tasks, such as bill payments or monthly report preparation. This can disrupt hotel operations overall and strain relationships with external parties, such as suppliers or financial institutions.

Inability to Adapt to Change: Changes in technology, regulations, or internal policies can affect the tasks that accounting department employees need to perform. If employees cannot adapt to these changes or are not provided with sufficient training, it can result in a decline in service quality. All of the above examples can lead to various negative impacts, such as decreased customer satisfaction, financial losses, or even reputational damage to the hotel. Therefore, it’s crucial for management to ensure that accounting department employees are provided with adequate support, training, and supervision to maintain their service quality.

This description explains that the quality of a hotel staff’s performance is determined by the quality of service. Therefore, steps are needed to improve service quality. Based on the previous description of service management in the accounting department of a hotel, the steps that management can take to improve the quality of service provided by employees training and development, providing constructive feedback, encouraging employee engagement, providing incentives and recognition, and ensuring work-life balance.
Employee Training and Development: According to research published in "The International Journal of Human Resource Management,” employee training and development are effective strategies for improving service quality. Management can hold regular training sessions covering technical accounting skills, understanding of current accounting standards, as well as soft skills training such as communication and leadership. Providing Constructive Feedback: According to human resource management expert David Guest, providing constructive feedback to employees can improve service quality. Management should regularly provide feedback to employees about their performance, praise for good achievements, and provide suggestions for improvement if needed.

Encouraging Employee Engagement: Research in the "Journal of Service Research” shows that employee engagement has a positive relationship with service quality. Management should create a work environment that motivates and enables employees to actively participate in improving work processes and providing input on how to improve service. Providing Incentives and Recognition: Studies published in the "Journal of Organizational Behavior” show that providing incentives and recognition to employees can increase motivation and service quality (Abduh, 2019). Management can provide incentives such as performance bonuses, recognition for specific achievements, or promotions for successful employees. Ensuring Work-Life Balance: According to research published in "The International Journal of Hospitality Management, (Haribudiman, Berliandaldo and Holman, 2023) a good work-life balance can increase employee satisfaction and performance. Management should ensure that employees' workloads are not too heavy and provide support to maintain a balance between work and personal life.

These steps are crucial for enhancing service quality in the accounting department of a hotel. They include employee training, constructive feedback, promoting engagement, providing incentives, and ensuring work-life balance (Ibnou-Laaroussi, Rjoub and Wong, 2020). By implementing these measures, management can improve service quality, leading to increased customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. By implementing these steps, management can improve the quality of service provided by employees in the accounting department of the hotel, which in turn will contribute to optimizing operations and overall guest satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The exploration of guest preference toward quality of hotel staff service proved the staff’s quality of service. The decline of service quality by employees in the accounting department of hospitality establishments include: inability to handle customer complaints, delays in task completion, errors in calculation or reporting, disregard for processes and procedures, absenteeism or inconsistent attendance, inability to adapt to change. The suggestion for SI hotel management to improve service quality in the hotel's accounting department by providing training, feedback, engagement, incentives, and work-life balance measures for staffs.
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This research considered guest preference toward service quality of hotel staff. The novelty of this research are the service quality in the term of guest preference. The best implement strategies to prevent customer switching to other hotel, and to foster loyalty among customer.

REFERENCE


