Abstract. Fadia Lutfiana Dahlan C13.2019.00275 Efforts Of Front Office Department To Increase Guest Satisfaction At Padma Hotel Semarang. Hospitality Management Applied Undergraduate Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Dian Nuswantoro University.

This final project aims to explain the efforts that have been made by the Front Office Department to increase guest satisfaction. There are two obstacles faced by the Front Office Department staff, namely when guests are waiting for long rooms and the problem of AC that is not cold. Basically, guests who visit a hotel with the aim of staying want a comfortable place. Guests who are satisfied with the services provided by staff are important, in this case, the Front Office department is responsible for and has a major influence on hotel guest satisfaction. This research is a research that uses descriptive qualitative research methods. Data collection techniques were obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation so as to obtain accurate data. The research results obtained show that the services provided by the Front Office Department to guests can be assessed as very good in terms of handling complaints to guests, due to handling complaints to guests is one way to satisfy guests. The efforts made by the Front Office Department in increasing guest satisfaction include three things, namely writing guest complaints in the comment log, conducting staff training and following the workflow according to standard operating procedures. With this, efforts can be made to increase the satisfaction of guests staying at Padma Hotel Semarang.

Keywords: Front Office Department, Hotel, Guest Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Semarang is the capital of Central Java and one of the largest cities on the island of Java. The city of Semarang is the center of all activities, both as an economic, trade, service and industrial area in several small towns in the region, and opens up opportunities for the entry of businessmen and tourists. Various foreign and domestic tourists want to do business, invest and travel in the city of Semarang. According to (Hidayah, 2019) tourism is a tourist trip with several tourist destinations that are carried out around, both planned and unplanned. This understanding explained that tourism activities are visits to a place to gain new experiences. One of the factors of tourism accommodation in the city of Semarang that supports the economic sector is the hotel industry which is increasing. Currently, the growth of star hotels in Semarang is quite rapid and significant, so that the competition in the hotel industry in Semarang is becoming more competitive. This increasingly competitive competition requires hotels to make new breakthroughs or new ideas to provide satisfaction to customers.
According to (Sudaryono, 2016) satisfaction is the result of consumer assessment that a product or service provides a level of satisfaction, which level of satisfaction can be more or less. Therefore, most hotels are competing to improve service quality in various ways. Especially in the Front Office section, where the Front Office section is divided into several sections such as Guest Service Officers, Guest Relations Officers, Concierge, Guest Service Centers, and Club Lounges. In fact, currently there are still many hotels that do not prioritize the quality of service provided to guests. Most of the problems that often occur in hotels are in the Front Office Department. Examples include not smiling when guests arrive, making guests wait too long during the Check-in process, and staff being less responsive in handling guest complaints. There are many ways to improve services such as giving briefings to Front Office Department staff, giving seminars to understand the basic theory of hotel services, and providing training to practice directly how to serve guests properly according to standard operating procedure set by the hotel.

The front office department is the department that plays the most important role in the hotel. The front office department is the department that handles guests directly, which will give guests the first and last impression. The responsibilities of the Front Office Department are to provide services and serve as an information center for guests. Guest satisfaction depends on the services provided by its employees and the facilities available at the hotel. Therefore, the Front Office Staff plays an important role in providing services to guest satisfaction. Padma Hotel Semarang is one of the hotels that is very concerned about customer satisfaction, considering the reputation of Padma Hotel Semarang as a five-star hotel. Important in providing maximum service, in order to compete with competitors.

Padma Hotel Semarang is located at Jalan Sultan Agung No. 86, Wonotingal, Candisari District, Semarang City, Central Java 50252. Padma Hotel Semarang is in a strategic location and is about 10 minutes from Simpang Lima, 20 minutes from Semarang Tawang Station, and 25 minutes from Jendral Ahmad Yani International Airport. Padma Hotel Semarang has a total of 224 rooms. Padma Hotel Semarang has several departments including Front Office Department, F&B Service Department, F&B Product Department, Housekeeping Department, Sales & Marketing Department, Engineering Department and Security Department. Padma Hotel Semarang's location is in the city center, this hotel has the consequence of competing with hotels around Padma Hotel Semarang. Generally there are several obstacles faced by the Front Office Department.
For example, the Guest Service Center staff answers the phone curtly or in a high tone so that it makes guests feel uncomfortable, then the Concierge staff is less responsive in helping guests, especially with guests who have excess luggage, Reception staff are less thorough in carrying out the Check-in process so made an error during the process of entering the guest's personal data, then the Concierge staff forgot to enter the guest's data into the guest list to be picked up at the airport resulting in a complaint. Incidents like this make guests complain and feel dissatisfied with the services provided. This happens because staff perform tasks and responsibilities that are not in accordance with operational standards. In order to increase guest satisfaction at Padma Hotel Semarang, hotel staff are expected to provide the maximum level of service to guests. Hotel staff must also be able to understand what guests want. Based on the description of the background of the problems that arise, it can be proposed a study with the title "Efforts of the Front Office Department in Improving Guest Satisfaction at Padma Hotel Semarang".

In general, a hotel is a business in the tourism industry. The definition of a hotel according to the Oxford Dictionary is a building where meals and rooms are provided for travelers, which is defined as a physical building that provides room service, food and drink, and other guest services. Hotel is a property that aims at the service industry and has the concept of uniting a product with service. Hospitality accommodation providers have different products that are usually marketed, such as hotel architectural designs, hotel facilities, building interiors, room and restaurant concepts. According to (Suardani, Solihin, & Damayanti, 2021) in his book entitled Introduction to Hotels and Restaurants, the definition of hotel comes from the Latin "hospitium" which means guest rooms in the monastery and finally the word hospitium in French is combined with the word hospes and then becomes hospice. The word hospice remained unchanged for some time. In subsequent developments, the manor was called an inn, after a long process of understanding and comparison to differentiate between a guest house and a mansion house, the mansion house was called a hostel. In the end the letter "s" in the word hostel was removed, which finally became the word hotel. Meanwhile, as stated by the American Hotel Association, a hotel is a place that is deliberately provided for the purposes of accommodation, meals, and other services in the form of other hospitality facilities.
According to (Bagyono, Pariwisata dan Perhotelan, 2014) a hotel is a commercial accommodation and is managed professionally, ready for every visiting guest to receive lodging, food and beverage services, and other services. The hotel industry requires very large capital and requires a lot of workers in it. The hotel industry is also affected by changes in economic, political, social, cultural and security conditions around the hotel location. Hotels produce and market their products in relation to the place where the services are produced. The hotel operates 24 hours a day and without days off in providing services to guests and the wider community. Applying guests as kings and treating guests as business partners because a hotel's income depends on the number of guests using hotel facilities.

According to (Bagyono, Teori dan Praktek Hotel Front Office, 2014) the front office is defined in English, namely Front means front, and Office means office. Front Office is one of the departments in the hotel which is located at the front of the hotel, precisely in the hotel lobby. According to (Agusnawar, 2013) the visible front office is in a strategic location in the hotel lobby. The reception is the place where guests can contact the hotel directly for the first time (check-in) and final meeting (check-out). According to (Prakoso, 2017) Front Office is the first place visited by guests. Front office staff must look neat, smell good, be polite and attractive. Smart in communicating is the most important part. The Front Office Department is the busiest and busiest department because it can be termed as the heart of the hotel, has the main task of selling rooms and is a service center for arriving guests. That's because the Front Office is the center of information related to the services that will be provided to every guest at the hotel.

Front office department has duties and responsibilities in each of each section. According to (Dima, 2017) the front office has duties and functions related to guest check-in, guest billing, guest check-out, room management dan room availability. Front Office Department of course not working alone in carrying out operations, each department must have a working relationship between other departments to support the targets to be achieved. According to (Bagyono, Teori dan Praktek Hotel Front Office, 2014) the smooth operation of hotels every day is supported by several departments.

According to (Tjiptono, 2016) states that customer satisfaction is a condition expressed by customers when they are aware that their needs and desires have been fulfilled as expected. According to (Baharudin & Zuhro, 2015) guest satisfaction is an evaluation of choices due to purchasing decisions in using goods or services.
According to (Indrasari, 2019) determining the level of guest satisfaction has several factors that influence customer satisfaction, such as product quality, customers are satisfied when their reviews show that the products they use are of high quality. Service quality, customers are satisfied when the service is good or meets expectations. Emotionally, customers feel proud and believe that other people will surprise them because they tend to prefer using certain products. Products of similar quality, but relatively inexpensive, offer customers more value. Cost, customers do not need to pay extra or waste time to get the product, usually satisfied with the product.

According to Chan in (Priansa, 2017) states that training is learning provided to improve performance related to current work. There are two implications in this sense. First, current performance needs to be improved because there is a gap between the knowledge and abilities of current employees, with the knowledge and abilities needed today. Second, learning is not to meet future needs, but to be utilized immediately. The definition described above, it can be concluded that training is a systematic process of changing the behavior of employees in one direction in order to improve organizational goals to improve performance or develop the knowledge and skills possessed by employees. Complaints can be interpreted as consumer complaints, every field that provides services and products will definitely face complaints. Companies must be able to find ways or solutions to resolve complaints to consumers, good complaint handling is needed to maintain a good image of the company. According to (Daryanto dan Setyobudi, 2014) a complaint is a complaint or submission of dissatisfaction, discomfort, annoyance, and anger over a service or product.

Standard Operating Procedures can be interpreted as a flow or work procedure that has been included by the company or institution. According to (Budiharjo, 2014) it is a stage of a work process or certain procedures which are mandatory, eternal and cannot change, which are already in writing, standardized into a document. It is based on an operation that has a definite written procedure or steps. The function of standard operating procedures is to ensure that they have a structured system and quality. Quality employees and a company culture that can motivate each individual. Standard operating procedures can encourage the right employees in the right environment. Standard operating procedures help review everything that is done by employees, as well as support employees to move forward and run smoothly.
RESEARCH METHOD(S)

In this study the authors used a research method that is descriptive qualitative. This qualitative descriptive research method was used by the authors to complete a study on "FRONT OFFICE DEPARTMENT EFFORTS IN INCREASING GUEST SATISFACTION AT PADMA HOTEL SEMARANG". The time for research and data collection was carried out from 03 October 2022 to 03 April 2023 and was carried out when the author was conducting On The Job Training at Padma Hotel Semarang.

1. Data Collection Technique

Qualitative research is research that investigates, finds and describes, data collection techniques derived from primary data which is information obtained from primary sources. By using data collection techniques such as observation, interviews and documentation. (Sugiyono, 2017)

1. Interview

According to (Tersiana, 2018) Interview is a research process in which all information can be obtained through conversation or question and answer between the researcher and those being studied. The interviews were carried out in a structured and formally structured manner based on questions related to the problem under study. From writing the questions presented, answers will emerge which will be more specific questions according to the main points in it.

2. Observation

According to (Sugiyono, 2018) observation is a data collection technique that has specific characteristics when compared to other techniques. Observation is also not limited to people, but also other natural objects.

3. Documentation

According to (Sugiyono, 2018) documentation is a means of obtaining knowledge and information in the form of books, documents, images, and data to support research.

2. Data Analysis Techniques

According to (Rezkia, 2020) data analysis techniques are a systematic process of examining and synthesizing data that can be obtained through data collection techniques. The qualitative data analysis process is divided into 5 processes, namely data collection, data presentation, data reduction, conclusions by presenting data and drawing conclusions. Qualitative data analysis has a non-rigid nature so that it runs from the beginning to the end of the data from the research.
1. Data collection is data obtained from interviews, observations and documentation written in field notes which consist of two parts, namely descriptive and reflective.

2. Reduction of the ongoing stages of data is carried out continuously during the implementation of the research. Select relevant and meaningful data, with an emphasis on data that can lead to problem solving, discovery, or meaning, or that can be used in research answers.

3. Presentation of data can be presented in the form of sentences, pictures, graphs and charts. Aims to unify the information so that it can be described with the circumstances that occur.

4. The conclusion by presenting the data corrects again that the conclusion is inaccordance with the presentation of the data that has been grouped.

5. Conclusion drawing or verification is carried out in an ongoing research process resembling a data reduction process, after sufficient data has been collected and thoroughly prepared, the final conclusion will be made based on convincing evidence.

Picture 1. Data Analysis Technique Source : Sugiyono 2018

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Front Office Department's Efforts to Improve Guest Satisfaction at Padma Hotel Semarang

The Front Office Department has several sections within it, such as the receptionist, guest service center, guest relations officer and concierge. The front office department is an important department in running hotel operations, especially in increasing guest satisfaction. The front office department is the department that handles guests directly, starting from room information, hotel facility information, and not infrequently the front office also receives complaints from guests. As for guests who wrote negative comments on online platforms such as tripadvisor, especially before that guests had no complaints but wrote negative comments. Therefore, it is mandatory for the front office department to always make efforts to improve guest service. The following are things that can increase guest satisfaction, namely:
1. Training Staff

In one week, staff training will usually be held on a certain day. In the front office department at Padma Hotel Semarang, staff training is carried out in each section, aiming to provide staff knowledge, skills and competence in carrying out work and improve staff performance. Staff who have received training are required to develop skills, so that they can do their job optimally. Staff training can train the hard skills and soft skills of the staff so they have the courage to contribute to it. It is also intended that staff do not make negligence in their work which can cause complaints to guests, because guests do not often complain about negligent staff and the lack of knowledge possessed by staff.

2. Report Comment Log

Complaints that guests give will be reported in the comment log, aiming to find out what the guests are complaining about, the contents of the comment log are a summary of complaints from guests in one day. With the existence of a report comment log, guest relations staff can try again so that the guest remains satisfied, usually the guest relations staff will meet the guest or provide service recovery if the complaint the guest gave is a fatal error.

3. Standart Operational Procedur Front Office Department

Standard operating procedures can be interpreted as workflows or procedures that have been included by the company. In the front office department there are several standard operating procedures according to each section, the following is an example of standard operating procedures in the guest service center section which contains workflow. Workflows or what is
commonly referred to as task lists are made with the aim that staff can work according to standard operating procedures that have been set. In the guest service center section, work by following standard operating procedures is mandatory, starting with giving greetings according to standard operating procedures, talking to guests while on the phone according to SOP, receiving and answering complaints from guests according to standard operating procedures. The task list that is carried out in the guest service center section is not only picking up and answering the phone, but in the Padma Hotel Semarang guest service center there are several other tasks, such as writing guest complaints in the comment log, ensuring the phone is functioning properly, handling messages from guests, connecting call guests who want to make reservations to the reservation team, submit guest requests to each department according to what is requested by guests, check food availability on the room service menu because the one handling food orders in Padma Hotel Semarang room service is the guest service center section, and many other things. The existence of an SOP or workflow, can help staff to work more thoroughly, so that there are no negligence in the work that causes complaints from guests.

**Picture 3. SOP Workflow Guest Service Centre**
Source: Padma Hotel Semarang

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>REMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ensure Console isn't forwarded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Read the GSC Guest Comment Log</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sharing pending matter of the previous shift which need to be followed up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ensure the telephone holding music is working properly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ensure the Wall Mounted iKT in good condition and working properly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ensure if the in house lobby music working properly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Check wake-up call and follow up upcoming wake-up call request</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Prepare GSC Checklist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ensure the switchboard and hotel lines are working properly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Check TV channel every 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ensure the PABX system is in working order and call charges are getting captured on the HMS system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Handling all incoming and outgoing call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Handling messages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Handling guest request</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Handling telephone billing system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Open and block telephone line</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Updating hotel information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Check to room service and kitchen team for food and beverages availability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the three ways, according to the author, the most effective way to improve service is to make a comment log, because it seems as if you are dealing directly with guests. This is supported by what was stated by Mr. Wahyu as Asst. Front Office Manager regarding efforts to increase guest satisfaction, states that:

"Anything that is reported from the guest we make in the comment log, with the report in the comment log so we know what the guest has complained about so that today's incident does not happen again in the future" (Mr. Wahyu, Asst. Front Office Manager)

Based on the statement submitted by Mr. Wahyu, it was explained that no matter how small a problem or complaint is, staff are required to make a report in the comment log. The comment log is an important thing for a hotel, because in the comment log there are various kinds of complaints from guests. With the comment log, we can find out various problems that can be used as learning in the future so that complaints that have occurred are not repeated in the future, then service recovery is carried out by guest relations by providing freebies so that guests do not feel disappointed. This includes efforts to increase guest satisfaction, because with service recovery guests are still satisfied and still get maximum service from hotel staff even though they have a bad experience. Service recovery provided by guest relations can be in the form of cake, fruit platter, or late check-out, in this case many guests have managed to regain satisfaction with hotel services. As for other ways from Padma Hotel Semarang in an effort to increase guest satisfaction such as providing welcome gelato and welcome macaroon. Welcome gelato will be given when guests check-in, welcome gelato has a different taste every day, while welcome macaroon will be provided directly by the staff in the guest room, just like welcome gelato, welcome macaroon is given there are three flavors, of course it has different taste. This also greatly affects guest satisfaction, many guests write reviews about the best experience while staying at Padma Hotel Semarang on online platforms such as tripadvisor.
2. Front Office Department Constraints in Increasing Guest Satisfaction at Padma Hotel Semarang

Hotel accommodation usually often encounters obstacles that trigger complaints, complaints occur due to guests' dissatisfaction with the services provided by hotel staff to guests or hotel facilities that are incomplete or problematic. Mr. Wahyu explained what obstacles he has experienced so far, namely:

“the factor that becomes an obstacle is when guests wait too long for a room to be ready, sometimes guests who come to check-in don't match the hours they should, it takes a few minutes to clean the room until the room is ready” (Mr. Wahyu, Asst. Front Office Manager)

Based on the statement conveyed by Mr. Wahyu as Asst. Front Office Manager who has been in the Front Office world for about 10 years, he understands the obstacles experienced by the Padma Hotel Semarang Front Office because the rooms are not ready, this requires Front Office staff to work closely with the Housekeeping department to speed up their work in cleaning and prepare the guest room. This was reinforced by Mr. Wahyu because of complaints from guests, namely:

“Guests often complain about old rooms, therefore the reception staff must have a good relationship with the Housekeeping department. Good communication between departments can reduce guest complaints” (Mr. Wahyu, Asst. Front Office Manager)

As for other things that are often complained about by guests at the front office, namely regarding the problem of AC that is not cold, this was explained by Mr. Wahyu who stated:
"Many guests are concerned about AC problems. Why is there an AC problem because the AC doesn't turn on automatically, so the standby room without AC turns on, when a guest enters and just inserts the key, the AC starts up, so that's what makes it our problem. How does the front office department try to keep guests satisfied, of course when guests call us to explain and directly contact engineering to check into the room. Check the temperature, check the AC, if it's ok we ask the guest to wait 10 minutes and the engineering team has contacted the guest service center later from the guest service center section will return the courtesy of the guest to make sure how the AC is "(Mr. Wahyu, Asst. Front Office manager)

Based on the statement submitted by Mr. Wahyu, it was explained that the problems that many guests complained about were problems related to air conditioning. This problem will usually lead to negative guest comments on the hotel if the staff does not handle the guest. Therefore, to prevent this, staff who receive complaints will immediately contact the relevant department. After it is repaired and it is felt that there are no more problems, the guest service center staff and guest relations staff will return courtesy to guests regarding the problems that have occurred to make sure and ask whether the problem has been resolved or not. According to the author, the explanations from the informants are sufficient in accordance with what the authors are doing while the authors are carrying out On The Job Training in the guest service center section. Based on the field work at that time, it can reduce the occurrence of negative comments that guests leave on various platforms.

With this statement, Front Office staff must work as much as possible to maintain the quality of comfort for guests who stay overnight, because guests who have paid a high price want to get complete facilities and maximum service.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the research and discussion that the authors described in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that:

1. The role that has been carried out by the front office department at Padma Hotel Semarang in overcoming problems has been very good, by ensuring that guests who complain regain their trust in the hotel. All Padma Hotel Semarang front office department staff also carry out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with work standards, and follow workflows. Guest satisfaction at Padma Hotel Semarang has been successfully achieved, as evidenced by positive reviews from guests who tell about their best experiences while staying at Padma Hotel Semarang.

2. Efforts made by the front office department at Padma Hotel Semarang to realize an increase in guest satisfaction are by having a comment log report, providing welcome gelato and welcome macaroom and service recovery. It is also inseparable from the program that Padma Hotel Semarang has attempted and provided which has succeeded in being a motivation for every staff to always provide the best service to hotel guests by conducting training, this training must be attended by every hotel staff.

REFERENCES

Efforts Of Front Office Department To Increase Guest Satisfaction At Padma Hotel Semarang


