

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The hospitality industry is a large element of fields including the service industry, which is place to stay, food and beverage service, event organizing, theme parks, transportation, cruise ship, leisure and travelling, and another related fields including in the tourism industry. Satisfying the customer needs is the most important of the hospitality business. By doing so, it means understanding and anticipating what the customer needs and then know how to meet and exceed those needs. Hotel is one of the service industries in the hospitality industry. In a hotel, front office area is the front desk or reception area, it is also the area where guests arrive and first meet the staff of the hotel, thus the service by the reception staff when doing check-in, mostly will determine the first impression of the guests to the hotel. It is very important for one hotel to maintain the best quality of their front office service, because compared with other departments such as food and beverage or back office operational, the service of front office is the first thing a guest will consider when he/she gives a review about the quality of the hotel. If the guest feels satisfied with the service of the hotel, then he/she will give a good review to the hotel at the trip advisor. However, if the guest does not feel satisfied with the service of the hotel, then he/she will post bad reviews too.

Hotels have 5-star hotel star rating system. The purpose of this system to rate hotels based on the quality and amount of amenities it provides its customers. In Indonesia, Bali is the most famous island for lots of foreigners to have a vacation. Not only famous for its beautiful view and peaceful environment, Bali is also the island with hotels which are mostly 5 stars. However, one of the problems is despite of the hotel is rated 5 stars, there are also guests who are not satisfied with the service of the front office area. So, researcher is interested to do the research regarding the service of front office at one of the 5 stars hotel in Bali, Indonesia.

According to the data of BPS, Bali attracts millions of foreign tourists every year, so Bali depends on the tourism industry for their economic growth, and it is not surprising that there are more than 500 hotels at the island. Researcher chooses one of the 5 stars hotels in Bali to do the research, which is Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua. Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua is a luxury 5 stars beachfront resort located at Kawasan Pariwisata ITDC Lot N5, Badung, Bali, Indonesia. It is also part of Accor's group.

Researcher chooses Sofitel because researcher had already done the pre-survey for 6 months in the front office area, so researcher understands about the condition of the front office. The amount of guests who checked-in at Sofitel was more than hundreds every day, and most of them were foreign guests, mostly from China, Japan, Russian, etc.

The main problem happened in the front office of Sofitel was the dissatisfaction of the guests to the service in the front office area, as guests complained for queuing too long, etc, while actually for a 5 stars hotel like Sofitel, those problems in the front office should not happen, because according to Fawcett (2009), the 5-Star service in front office area is uninterrupted by negotiation or by the customer having to explain or educate the personnel about their expectations. A five star establishment should have already calibrated its service to the highest level.

Thus, researcher is interested to do the strategy analysis to improve the service of front office area at Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua.

1.2 Problem Formulation

1. What are the problems that caused the dissatisfaction of the foreign guests to service of front office area?
2. What are the strategies to improve the service of front office area for foreign guests at Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua?

1.3 Research Focus

The research is focusing on the complaints happened in reception area, which are the problems that caused dissatisfaction of the foreign guests. Problems usually happen during checking-in, checking-out, asking information and requesting something. Based on the problems, researcher analyzes the strategy to improve the service of the front office area.

1.4 Research Objective

The research objective is to explain the problems that caused the dissatisfaction of the foreign guests at the front office area and to provide strategies to improve the service.

1.5 Benefit of the Research

The benefit of the research will be divided into Theoretical Benefit and Practical Benefit:

1.5.1 Theoretical Benefit

Researcher hopes that the result of this research can be useful to bring the theoretical foundation and advantages for the development of Front Office Department around the world in hospitality industry.

1.5.2 Practical Benefit

A. For Sofitel Management:

Researcher hopes that the research is going to help the management of Sofitel to apply the best strategies to improve the service at Front Office Area.

B. For Other Researcher:

Researcher hopes that the research can become the reference for other researchers in doing the research in hospitality industry.

1.6 Systems of writing

The systematic outline of writing this research will be listed as follows :

Chapter I : Introduction

This chapter contains background of the study, problem formulation, research focus, research objectives, benefit of the research, and the systems of writing.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter contains theoretical background, previous research, and framework of thinking.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter contains research design, research object, data collection method, and data analysis method.

Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Discussion

This chapter contains general description of Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua, data analysis and discussion.

Chapter V: Conclusion

This chapter contains the conclusions which have been described in the previous chapter, implications and the recommendations for the Front Office Manager and other researchers.