



# Service skills in solving hotel guest problems in the food and beverage service department in the post-COVID-19 pandemic in the hospitality world

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## ABSTRACT

Hotels have many departments, one of which is food and beverage service, in which the role of the waiter influences the hotel's image in many ways. One of them bridges between guests and waiters. In this case, we need good communication skills when serving guests, as well as dealing with guest complaints by using good and correct communication. The goals given are being able to hone communication skills when dealing with guest problems with Food and Beverages Service. This study applies a qualitative method design, collecting observations on data and literature studies. Based on this research, there are two findings of problems related to communication skills in the hotel sector. The first is how to improve the handling of guest service complaints at hotels and the second is how to overcome obstacles when serving guests during a pandemic. In this article, we explain about Food and Beverage Service. The author applies it to learning in improving communication and problem solving to broaden our understanding, so that we can learn freely and carefully in using standard procedures in hotels and personal quality values, as well as barriers caused by a lack of communication skills in solving problems with guests due to service which is less than perfect.

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the world has experienced an economic shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the major impacts of this pandemic is the tourism sector. Tourism experienced a very significant decrease in the number of visitors. For domestic tourists until July 2020 there were 11,331,567 recorded, down 76.6 percent compared to the same period last year. So until the end of the year it

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fell to 80 percent. The hotel sector is a sector that feels the impact. Many hotels cannot survive and end up bankrupt.

The Covid-19 pandemic situation has resulted in a decrease in the number of guests, due to which a number of hotels have reduced existing facilities. Not only hotel facilities, but also services available at hotels such as service and guest handling. This is because the hotel's revenue target was not achieved but had a lot of expenses. To overcome expenses, several hotels laid off their employees and reduced the quality of service at the hotel. With these reduced facilities, hotels still have to survive during this pandemic.

According to Sulastiyono [1], a hotel is a business whose owner provides food, drink and accommodation to people who travel and can charge a reasonable fee for services obtained without special permission. Hotel is a type of accommodation that is used as a building for accommodation, eating, drinking and other public services for business. Hotels are also an important part of the hospitality industry, combining several businesses, usually people staying for long trips and holidays or work that requires them away from home. According to Bagyono [2], a hotel is a type of accommodation that is managed commercially and professionally, provided for everyone to get food and beverage lodging services and other services.

Even though the hotel has followed and implemented the Health Protocol standards correctly, and these conditions allow guests to rest comfortably, they do not provide a complete sense of security. Therefore, strict management control is required to ensure consistent CHSE implementation. The pandemic has increased visitor awareness of the importance of cleanliness, health and safety. This condition must be in accordance with the quality of hotel services. CHSE stands for Cleanliness, Health, Safety and Environment. CHSE was launched in the tourism sector and creative industries in Indonesia. The CHSE was issued on the basis of an order from the Minister of Health regarding health protocols in public places and institutions related to the prevention and control of Covid-19.

Within the hotel department, room service is a service for taking food or drink orders in hotel rooms overnight. Room service is also part of the food and beverage service, which can be called the Food and Beverage Service (FBS). FBS is the hotel department which is responsible for providing food and drinks to guests in a professional manner to obtain good ratings and feedback from the guests themselves. According to the definition of F&B experts, in this case it can be said that a restaurant is a business. The Food & Beverage Division is divided into two divisions, namely Food & Beverage Products and Food & Beverage Services. Currently at FBS there are several qualities that must be possessed before being accepted into the field. Quality first is the most important commitment because all efforts made by employees must revolve in and around customer satisfaction [3].

Food and Beverage Product itself according to Mertayasa [4] what is meant by F&B Product is the part that has the main task of preparing and serving food and drinks to guests both at the hotel and outside the hotel. While the Food and Beverage Service is part of the Food and Beverage Department which is responsible for serving food and drinks to guests in a professional manner with the aim of earning income or revenue and profit. Commercial and provide food and drink services for the public and professionally managed [5].

According to Richard Komar [6], the Food and Beverage Department is one of the hotel departments that is in charge of and responsible for the provision (production), service (service) of food and beverages to guests outside the hotel. Such as weddings (wedding parties), official meetings (conventions) and catering orders.

On the formulation of the problem explain how to improve the handling of guest complaints at the hotel. Explain to address guest service issues during the pandemic. The goal is to find out how the relationship between food and beverage service and kitchen communication affects the quality of service, analyzing the relationship between food and beverage service and kitchen communication to service quality, explain how food and beverage service and communication in the kitchen affect the quality of service.

## **2. Method**

In this study, data collection techniques were carried out by limiting several hotels in Indonesia. And the form of all information and data is appropriate before the pandemic, during the pandemic and after the pandemic. Even though there was a pandemic at that time, we had to know how to communicate with guests, so that it was easier for guests to speak properly without offending the guests. The search data obtained were analyzed using qualitative methods, this method provides a more detailed picture of the status of the analysis obtained, and this research does not include elements of calculation, but connects the data obtained with the data obtained. According to Sugiyono [7], research methods are basically scientific in nature to obtain data with specific purposes and uses. As stated by Moleong [8] states that: "Qualitative research is research that seeks to understand phenomena about the experiences of research subjects, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, and so on, holistically and through descriptions in the form of words and language. In a particular natural context. Therefore, researchers choose to use qualitative research methods to determine how to find, collect, process and analyze the research data. The research used is descriptive qualitative research, which is a type of research with a case study method or approach. According to Sujarweni [9], there are several methods in collecting qualitative descriptive data, namely:

Method of observation (observation), the author proceeds to research items by seeing and observing directly so that he can collect data from observations. The author's library and documentation method takes documents directly on the object of research and requests data in the form of files from related parties.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

Service in the food and beverage department is a priority. According to Sulastiyono [1], "Service is something special that stands out and attracts attention, and there is an element of surprise and excitement for guests because they really did not expect the service to go that far". Good service quality can be achieved by skilled workers. Adequate and qualified waiters are needed in the food and beverage sector to provide excellent service to guests. According to Kotler [10], service is any action or activity that can be offered by one party to another, which is basically intangible and does not result in any ownership.

According to Hutagalung [11], guest satisfaction is the biggest effort to increase the profits of the hospitality industry. Naturally the Food and Beverage Department can improve services and products to guests from time to time by taking good care of the implementation of hygiene and sanitation.

One of the things that need to be considered in service is communication. Communication is an important part of a work group, especially in a restaurant work environment. The people who play a role in it, from managers to the lowest positions, communicate with each other. Communication between the food & beverage service and the kitchen in question is to create a smooth, dynamic, and conducive working atmosphere so as to minimize the occurrence of errors in preparing and serving guest needs.

Communication is the process of sending and receiving information or messages between two or more individuals effectively, so that they can be understood easily. According to Hovland in Mulyana [12] "Communication is the process by which the individual (the communicator) transmits stimuli (usually verbal symbols) to modify the behavior of the other individuals". Communication is the process by which an individual (the communicator) changes stimuli (usually verbal symbols) to change the behavior of others. Communication is easily interpreted as the process of transferring messages through communication facilities or media to the intended communicant.

Language is one of the most important communication tools that people can use to express their thoughts, ideas, opinions and feelings. It is known that English is the first foreign language for teaching and learning in Indonesia. Until now, using language to communicate with others is very important. The use of language and manners is a completeness that forms the basis of service, which is very important in carrying out tasks. Therefore, waiters must be more sophisticated in serving guests, giving a good reputation to hotels and food and beverage companies, which indirectly makes their work more professional and creative. Based on the existing definitions, the authors conclude that communication is the process of sending and giving messages from the communicator with a medium to the recipient of the message in the hope of getting feedback and achieving the same understanding of the message.

Complaints are an expression of consumer dissatisfaction because the results are not as expected. complaints are common in the tourism business, especially in the hospitality industry. Consumer preferences vary depending on social and economic background. Keaveney [13] states that there are 8 motivations when consumers switch to other services, namely price, inconvenience, basic service failure, service cooperation failure, response to service failure, competition, ethical issues, and accidents. Especially during a pandemic, more and more guests are complaining about the cleanliness and safety of the hotel. Many guests are afraid of spreading the virus, so the hotel must implement a new SOP that responds to the current situation.

The SOP that was implemented before the Covid 19 pandemic, namely, when welcoming guests, the food and beverage service only smiled and gave warm greetings, of course during the pandemic many employees were laid off. The hotel trains employees who are still working by holding excellent service training, so that the trained staff can work better. Before the pandemic, guests who wanted to dine in were free to choose the seat they wanted. While during a pandemic, many guests chose to reserve a place to make it more sterile, of course, during a pandemic, many hotels limited the number of guests. Before the pandemic, the waitress provided a menu list in the form of a book or in physical form, this made it easier to communicate with direct guests. Unfortunately, this sometimes makes it difficult for new waiters to offer menus and the limited menu book often makes other guests wait quite a long time to order. Not only that, before the pandemic the payment system used cash more. Meanwhile during a pandemic, because many guests were afraid to touch or communicate, waiters suggested using a scan/digital menu or using the touch screen method, and mostly using debit/credit card or Qris payment methods.

Before the pandemic, waiters often asked guests about the taste of the dishes they had tasted, but during the pandemic, waiters kept their distance and reduced interactions with guests regarding the taste of the dishes directly. Because of this, many hotels have experienced a downgrade. After the pandemic, waiters started implementing health protocols, but they were not as strict as during the pandemic. Communication began to run again, this is to maintain guest ratings in order to increase hotel ratings. During the pandemic, the hotel delivered food to guest rooms to reduce physical contact, many guests were reluctant to have breakfast or dinner at the hotel restaurant. Waiters also use personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves, maintain personal health, wash hands

before touching food and always cover food with wrap so that it is not exposed to dust and ongoing viruses.

Apart from serving food and drinks, waiters must also be able to handle complaints and communicate with guests. According to O'Neil [14], consumer satisfaction is a situation where the desires, expectations and needs of consumers are satisfied. Service can be said to be satisfactory if it meets the needs and expectations of consumers. Conversely, consumer dissatisfaction can lead to complaints. According to Megawati [15], as indicated by Hart, Heskett and Sasser (1990), complaint handling is a strategy designed to correct service failures and learn from them to restore trust in the eyes of customers. Handling guest complaints has a significant impact on the hotel. Hotels that create a negative impression can damage the hotel's reputation, while hotels that create a positive impression can improve the hotel's image and guest rating. In the food and beverage department, handling complaints and communicating with guests is very important because restaurants are one of the most popular and busiest places in a hotel that guests visit. Not only from guests, but also from outside guests who want to taste hotel food. A good waiter should be able to solve guest problems quickly and efficiently.

One of the lack of communication between waiters and guests is the wrong delivery of orders and this can lead to complaints from guests. The saying goes that the customer is king, because most of the customers complain randomly to the waiter, with many and different complaints from each guest, the waiter must solve the problem according to the root of the problem. Hotels should also train F&B services to solve problems without damaging the hotel's image. Many hotels get bad ratings or reviews because of their maid service.

We analyzed online review data from multiple data uploaded between October 2019 and March 2020 for publications in the FBS category with a total of 111 reviews, scoring 5 (very good) and 1 (poor). Get information from 51 reviews of 5-star hotels and 60 reviews of 4-star hotels with details of positive and negative reviews in the table below.

Table 1 Service review data in the FBS section of 5-star hotels in Semarang

NO	HOTEL NAME	STAR	NUMBER OF SERVICE REVIEWS		PERCENTAGE	
			POSITIF	NEGATIF	POSITIF	NEGATIF
1	Hotel Gumaya Semarang	5	2	4	4.65%	50%
2	PO Hotel Semarang	5	37	2	86.05%	25%
3	Hotel Ciputra Semarang	5	2	1	4.65%	12.50%
4	Grand Candi Hotel Semarang	5	2	1	4.65%	12.50%
AMOUNT			43	8	100%	100%

Source: Tripadvisor

From the table it can be seen the percentage of reviews on service at five star hotels, from the results of the analysis it can be seen that in table 1 service for 5 star hotels it can be concluded that PO Hotel Semarang has the highest level of service with a percentage of 86.05% in FBS. And Tripadvisor was able to confirm the number of guest reviews with positive feedback from the FBS Department - PO Hotel Semarang. Meanwhile, other hotels such as Hotel Ciputra Semarang and Hotel Grand Candi Semarang have a low percentage due to the low number of suggestions and complaints from guests staying at these hotels. Meanwhile, Hotel Gumaya's analysis data showed the highest negative reaction with a percentage of 50%.

Tabel 2. Service review data in the FBS section of a 4-star hotel in Semarang

No	Hotel Name	Star	Number Of Service Reviews		Percentage	
			Positif	Negatif	Positif	Negatif
1	MG Maven Hotel Semarang	4	3	3	6.81%	21.42%
2	Hotel Louis Kienne Pemuda Semarang	4	4	1	9.10%	7.15%
3	Hotel Aston Pandanaran Semarang	4	12	3	27.30%	21.42%
4	Hotel Santika Premiere Semarang	4	3	1	6.81%	7.15%
5	Hotel Novotel Seamaerang	4	2	2	4,54%	14.29%
6	Hotel Harris Semarang	4	3	1	6,81%	7.15%
7	Hotel Grand Edge Semarang	4	17	3	38.63%	21.42%
Amount			44	14	100%	100%

In table 2 of 4-star hotel information, it can be concluded that Hotel Grand Edge Semarang has the highest service percentage with a percentage of 38.63% in the FBS area and can be proven by Tripadvisor, and many guests who have positive service and communication in it by the FBS department will be assessed at Hotel Grand Edge Semarang. Compared to other hotels where the percentage is low, this is because overnight guests provide positive feedback and few comments about the FBS area.

From the data above, it can be concluded that both full-service hotels are represented by 5-star hotels and limited-service hotels are represented by 4-star hotels, service attributes greatly determine customer satisfaction. In addition, another similarity was also found in the reviews, these two reviews had the lowest percentage of 7.15% in determining customer satisfaction for 5-star hotels and 4-star hotels. In terms of service, both 5-star and 4-star hotels in Semarang have several ratings. This is because there are few guests and the hotel is reluctant to provide feedback. However, since hospitality is related to service, guest ratings and feedback are very important as they can determine the future of a hotel.

This is read from a literature study according to Walker [16] which says that the hotel industry is a business that is widely used in the service industry, so it can be said that hotel services are emphasized more by consumers. This is easy to see because visitors see it.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion of the authors, it can be concluded that food service plays an important role in customer satisfaction. By providing good service and adjusting to customer needs, guests will feel satisfied with the service they receive. Creating excellent service also requires good communication with guests, waiters and kitchen staff. Miscommunication can lead to fights and even leave a bad impression on guests. In hotels that provide services, positive image or feedback is very influential for the development of the hotel. Table 1 shows that PO Hotels have the best positive feedback, this can increase the guest's trust in staying at the hotel, customer satisfaction is the target the hotel needs to be better. Conversely, consumer dissatisfaction can lead to complaints. Hotels that

create a negative impression can damage the hotel's reputation, while hotels that create a positive impression can improve the hotel's image and guest rating.

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