ANALYSIS OF WAITER PERFORMANCE IN IMPROVING SERVICE QUALITY AT AZURE BAR HOTEL CONRAD BALI

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To improve the performance of waiters, this research is based on frequent errors in serving food and drinks, which cause delays in service. This error occurs because the waiter does not always repeat the order or ask about the guest's allergies, and is not precise in serving drinks. In addition, checking guest satisfaction based on order of arrival is also a problem. Waiters should be more proactive in meeting guests' needs.

Methods: The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection through observation, interviews and literature study.

Implication: The research showed that the waiters' performance was good but not optimal, with 56.25% of the 16 observation points carried out well, while 43.75% were still rarely carried out. From the interviews, it was concluded that the waiters at Azure Bar were friendly, responsive and professional, and played an important role in creating a satisfying experience for customers and maintaining the reputation of the place. In conclusion, the waiter's performance is quite good but can still be improved to ensure guest satisfaction and comfort.

Keywords: Food and Beverage Service, waiter, quality of service

INTRODUCTION

As time goes by, the development of the tourism industry in Indonesia has advanced very rapidly. Therefore, the tourism industry is receiving special attention from the government, as it closely aligns with the government's hopes for tourism to become a reliable source of income for various sectors. The development of the tourism world is a crucial component of today's tourism industry. Tourism activities are highly favoured by various groups, from children, teenagers, to adults, due to their enjoyable nature and the entertainment they offer to all demographics. In these activities, supporting facilities are essential, as in tourism-based travel, everyone needs amenities and accommodations such as transportation, lodging, and consumption supplies like food and beverages. To meet these needs, various accommodation facilities, including hotels, have begun to emerge. The rapid growth of the hospitality industry has resulted in the establishment of many hotels in major cities across Indonesia. These hotels range from training hotels to star-rated hotels. A hotel is an infrastructure or building that provides services or products. Generally, the services offered by hotels include facilities, which can be utilized by consumers for both formal and informal events.

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Additionally, there are cafes or restaurants that offer alternatives for consumers to enjoy these services. The general definition of a hotel is an accommodation service that offers products, facilities, food and beverages, as well as lodging for the general public. These facilities are available to guests staying at the hotel or those visiting. Waiters/Waitresses are service workers in the hotel industry, both in two-star hotels and five-star hotels, including those working in restaurant services. Conrad Bali Hotel offers 365 operational rooms, consisting of 305 rooms in Conrad Resort, 55 rooms in Conrad Suite, and 5 Conrad Pool Villas. Their duties include warmly greeting guests, taking orders, serving food, clearing used dishes, and setting the table for the next guest. To improve the performance of waiters, hotel management typically implements various strategies, such as rewarding performance, paying attention to employee welfare, or the most effective method, raising salaries or providing bonuses. Waiters have varying levels of work motivation. Those with low motivation, even if intelligent, may fail to perform their duties well. On the other hand, waiters or waitresses who may not be as smart but possess the talent to provide satisfying service will have high motivation and succeed in their jobs. Being responsive to guest complaints is also an essential aspect of effective communication. Waiters must be trained to handle guest complaints with professionalism and a solution-oriented attitude. They should be able to listen to complaints patiently, apologize when necessary, and seek suitable solutions for the guests.

During fieldwork at Conrad Bali Hotel, the researcher was assigned to the Food & Beverage service department at Azure Bar for three months. During this period, the researcher had the opportunity to directly serve guests, ranging from VIPs to regular guests. During the fieldwork, the researcher encountered issues such as waiters not always repeating orders or asking if guests had any allergies to food or beverages. Additionally, improper beverage service and the practice of checking guest satisfaction based on who arrived first also posed challenges. Ideally, waiters should be more proactive in meeting guest needs, so they do not need to go to the bar themselves, and ensure that empty water glasses are refilled from the amenity box.

METHODS

In this study, the researcher employs a qualitative descriptive method to gain a deep understanding of the social situations being investigated. This method was chosen due to its comprehensive approach, allowing for a better explanation of phenomena and enabling the researcher to capture the complexities of social interactions. According to Bogdan and Taylor, as cited by Lexy J. Moleong, qualitative research aims to produce explanations or descriptions of observed phenomena or behaviors, as well as to explore the meanings behind individuals' actions and interactions within specific social contexts. This qualitative approach focuses on the direct observation of social phenomena, providing the researcher with the opportunity to understand the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of the participants. Thus, this study does not merely collect data; it also seeks to delve into the depth of meaning contained in the experiences of individuals involved in the situation under investigation. In the context of this research, primary data are obtained directly from relevant research subjects through observation and interviews conducted at the Conrad Bali Hotel.

The researcher observes directly during the fieldwork practice, allowing for the documentation and analysis of interactions between hotel staff and guests, as well as the surrounding environment. Additionally, interviews are conducted with hotel staff and guests to gather their perspectives, experiences, and perceptions regarding the services and facilities provided by the hotel. These interviews are designed to uncover more in-depth and subjective information, providing participants the opportunity to share their stories and viewpoints. Through this approach, the researcher hopes to capture the nuances and social contexts that may not be detected through quantitative data. In addition to primary data, this research also utilizes secondary data, consisting of information obtained from various other sources, such as books, journal articles, and the internet. This secondary data is used to support and enrich the discussion of topics relevant to the research, as well as to provide additional perspectives that may assist in the analysis and interpretation of the primary data collected. By combining both primary and secondary data, this study aims to provide a holistic and in-depth picture of the phenomenon under investigation, presenting research findings that can contribute to the development of knowledge in the fields of tourism and hospitality, particularly regarding the services offered by the Conrad Bali Hotel. Through this qualitative descriptive approach, it is hoped that this research can offer valuable insights for hotel management and stakeholders in enhancing service quality and guest experiences. The data collection methods in this study encompass several complementary approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the subject being researched. One of the primary methods used is observation, where the researcher gathers data through direct observation of research subjects during fieldwork in the hospitality industry. Through this observation, the researcher can record various interactions and behaviors of hotel staff, including how they interact with guests, the service processes, and the dynamics occurring in the work environment.

This approach provides deeper insights into the service practices taking place in the field. In addition to observation, interviews also play a significant role in data collection. In this study, the author systematically planned the questions prior to conducting the interviews and recorded the responses given by the participants. These interviews were conducted with hotel staff, particularly waitstaff, to delve deeper into how they carry out their tasks to enhance service quality. By employing open-ended questions, the author was able to gather richer and more detailed information regarding the experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by the waitstaff in serving guests. Furthermore, the literature review is an integral part of the research methodology. The author references various online resources and relevant literature to supplement information that was not directly obtained from field research. Through this literature review, the author can construct the theoretical framework underpinning the research and identify previous studies that may provide additional context for the research findings.

In qualitative data analysis, the researcher acknowledges that the emerging data is descriptive or consists of a series of words that depict the experiences and viewpoints of individuals. Data is collected in various forms, including observations, interviews, document summaries, and recordings, all of which are typically organized or processed before use. Nonetheless, qualitative analysis continues to rely on words arranged in texts that are explained in greater detail, allowing the researcher to explore deeper meanings from the data collected. The qualitative analysis process follows three main activities: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, as outlined by B. Miles and Huberman (2014). During the data reduction stage, the researcher filters relevant information and eliminates unnecessary data to focus on the most significant findings. Next, in the data presentation stage, the researcher organizes the collected information into a structured format, such as tables, graphs, or easily understandable narratives. Finally, conclusion drawing is performed by analyzing the presented data to generate a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and to address the research questions. By integrating various data collection methods and conducting careful analysis, this study aims to provide valuable and comprehensive insights into service practices in the hospitality industry.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Observation Results

In the preparation of this thesis, the researcher conducted observations of the service standards provided by the waiters at Azure Bar, located in Hotel Conrad Bali. The researcher performed direct observations of the interactions between the waiters and customers, focusing on measuring the response time to orders.

Service Standards	Conducted	Less	Not
	,	conducted	conducted
Briefing is mandatory before starting	\checkmark		
operations (Tangible).			
Able to explain the available menu	\checkmark		
(Knowledge).			
If the employee knows the guest's name, the	\checkmark		
guest will be greeted by their name (Attitude).			
Escorting the guest to an available or preferred	\checkmark		
seat, and then placing a towel on the sun			
lounger before the guest sits down (Attitude).			
The waiter provides an amenities box for the	\checkmark		
guests that contains a face towel, water spray,			
and water (Responsiveness).			
The waiter provides the menu to the guests,	\checkmark		
and if the guests feel uncertain, the waiter			
offers solutions for suitable dishes to order			
(Assurance).			
Repeating the order ensures that the guest's		\checkmark	
requests are accurately captured, preventing			
any mistakes (Reliability).			
The waiter should ask if the guests have any		\checkmark	
allergies (Empathy).			
Before serving the food, the waiter should		\checkmark	
serve drinks to the guests first (Attitude).			
After the food and drinks have been served for		\checkmark	
3 minutes, the waiter must check the guests'			
satisfaction (Skill).			
Guests are served based on who arrives first		\checkmark	
(Responsiveness).			
The waiter will anticipate the guests' needs so		\checkmark	
that they do not have to go to the bar			
(Responsiveness).			
Pouring water into the guest's glass that is		\checkmark	
empty in the amenities box (Responsiveness).			
Cleaning the guest's utensils after they are	✓		
finished (Attitude).			
Guests will be given the bill before they leave	\checkmark		
the restaurant (Attitude).			
All guest payments must be settled before they	✓		
leave Azure Bar (Attitude).			

Table 1. Observation Results

Table 2. Result of service standard Assessment

CATEGORY	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE
Performed	9	56,25%
Insufficiently Performed	7	43,75%
Not Performed	0	0

A total of 9 points (56.25%) indicate that the service provided by the waiters is being performed well. This includes aspects such as knowledge, tangibles, and assurance, which are consistently applied by the waiters.

Seven points (43.75%) suggest that some waiter service activities are only insufficiently performed. This includes situations where certain tasks are not consistently executed or service standards are not always met. This indicates areas that need improvement and enhancement to ensure more consistent and satisfying waiter service.

There are no points indicating that any waiter service activities are not performed at all (0%). This indicates that all measured aspects of the service have received attention from the staff, and there is an effort to implement these service standards. However, some aspects are still executed with low frequency, meaning that while there are efforts to provide good service, there is room for improvement and consistency in its application.

Interview Results

The researcher conducted comprehensive interviews with each guest who visited and dined at Azure Bar, aiming to gather insights and feedback regarding their experiences. The interviews were guided by a structured set of questions designed to explore various aspects of the service provided by the waiters. This approach allowed for a direct comparison between the observation results and the guests' perceptions of the service quality. Upon analyzing the feedback regarding the roles of a waiter at Azure Bar, it became clear that these staff members play a vital role in creating a satisfying and memorable experience for the customers. Guests expressed their appreciation for the waiters' ability to deliver service that is not only friendly and welcoming but also highly responsive and professional. Many guests noted that the waiters promptly attended to their needs, whether it was taking orders, providing recommendations, or addressing any special requests. This attentiveness contributes significantly to the overall dining experience, making guests feel valued and cared for. Moreover, the waiters' ability to respond quickly to customer calls was highlighted as a strong point. Guests reported that they felt at ease knowing that help was just a moment away, and this immediate responsiveness fostered a sense of security and comfort within the dining environment. The friendly demeanor of the waiters, coupled with their readiness to assist, creates an inviting atmosphere that encourages guests to relax and enjoy their time at Azure Bar.

However, the interviews also revealed areas for improvement. Some guests mentioned that while the waiters were generally responsive, there were moments when more proactive engagement could enhance the experience. For instance, actively inquiring about customer preferences or checking in more frequently could further personalize the service. This feedback indicates that there is an opportunity for the waiters to build stronger connections with the guests by anticipating their needs and preferences. Despite these areas for growth, there was a consensus among guests that the waiters at Azure Bar are committed to excellence. Their enthusiasm and dedication to improving service quality were evident, and guests expressed confidence that these attributes would lead to continual enhancement of the dining experience. In conclusion, the role of the waiters at Azure Bar extends beyond merely taking orders and serving food; it encompasses the creation of an overall atmosphere that fosters satisfaction and enjoyment. Their contributions are instrumental in maintaining the bar's reputation for quality service. By continuing to focus on both their strengths and the areas where they can improve, the waiters will undoubtedly ensure that each guest leaves with a positive impression, further solidifying Azure Bar as a top choice for dining experiences.

DISCUSION

Based on the checklist table of service standards, it can be seen that the waiters only occasionally implement 5 service standards. The waiters at Azure Bar demonstrate a commitment to providing friendly service and being attentive to guests' needs; however, there are still several areas that require improvement:

Skill

Based on observations and interviews conducted, it was found that several specific service skills, such as checking guest satisfaction, are still not frequently practiced at Azure Bar. This is due to the challenges posed by the high number of guests, especially during peak times when the restaurant is busy. Although the staff possesses the necessary skills, such as the ability to understand and respond to guest needs, the often-hectic situation can hinder them from consistently applying these skills. When the number of guests increases, staff tend to feel rushed and focus more on urgent tasks, such as taking orders, serving food, and ensuring that all basic guest needs are met. In such circumstances, there is a possibility that they will overlook important steps that can ensure direct guest satisfaction, such as conducting satisfaction checks after serving meals or asking if guests need further assistance.

Therefore, it is important for the management of Azure Bar to provide additional training to staff on the significance of checking guest satisfaction, especially in busy situations. This training could include techniques for better time and priority management, allowing staff to remain attentive to guest satisfaction even in crowded environments. By doing so, it is expected that staff will not only be able to perform their basic tasks efficiently but also maintain the high service standards expected by guests.

Knowledge

Based on the observations conducted, it can be concluded that the knowledge possessed by the staff at Azure Bar is consistently applied very well in every aspect of service. The staff at this bar demonstrates a high level of professionalism, where each team member not only understands their tasks and responsibilities clearly but also has a deep understanding of the products and services they offer. With their solid knowledge and positive attitude, the Azure Bar staff successfully creates memorable experiences for each guest. This not only enhances guest satisfaction but also fosters customer loyalty, which is crucial in the hospitality industry. Through high-quality service, the staff not only meets guest expectations but often exceeds them, making Azure Bar a top choice for many visitors.

Based on observations, it appears that responses at Azure Bar are still infrequent, such as the lack of action to refill water glasses that have been emptied. This indicates a lack of attention to fulfilling guest needs, which may be caused by several factors, such as a high number of visitors, a lack of cooperation among staff, or a lack of awareness regarding the importance of attention to small details that can affect the overall guest experience. Ideally, wait staff should be more proactive in anticipating guest needs so that they do not have to go to the bar to ask for help. The lack of refilling water glasses could also be due to several reasons: staff may not routinely check the condition of the glasses, or they may be in a hurry and miss this task.

Attitude

Based on observations, the service attitude at Azure Bar is consistently maintained. Each team member seems to have a friendly and professional attitude toward guests, reflected in their various interactions and actions. For example, when presenting the bill to guests, they do so in a friendly and polite manner, giving the impression that guests are valued and taken care of. Additionally, when clearing away used equipment, they do so quickly and thoroughly, demonstrating their responsibility for cleanliness and the comfort of the bar environment. However, there is one aspect that needs improvement: food is often served first, whereas drinks should ideally be served first. This is due to a lack of coordination between the kitchen and bar staff, or pressure to serve food quickly once it is ready to avoid it getting cold or losing quality. Serving drinks first is important as it gives guests the opportunity to enjoy their drinks while waiting for their food to arrive.

Reliability

Based on observations and interviews, it appears that waiters do not always repeat orders to guests, which results in errors in serving orders and makes guests feel dissatisfied and overlooked. The high number of guests and heavy workload, especially during busy restaurant hours, make waiters feel rushed. In such situations, they tend to focus on completing tasks as quickly as possible and skip important steps like repeating orders. When waiters feel pressured by numerous tasks, they overlook steps they perceive as slowing them down. If repeating orders is not done, various problems can arise. Mistakes in orders will occur more frequently, leading to guest dissatisfaction and a poor customer experience, which may deter them from returning to the restaurant. Additionally, order errors could mean that guests have to wait longer for the correct order, further increasing their dissatisfaction. **Tangible**

Based on the observations conducted, it can be stated that briefings are always held regularly at Azure Bar. This briefing activity is very important as it provides an opportunity for managers or supervisors to convey crucial information to all waitstaff. During the briefings, various topics can be discussed, ranging from information about specific guests who will be arriving to preparations for upcoming events that may take place at the bar. Through the briefings, staff are informed about the preferences and special needs of guests, allowing them to provide more personalized and tailored service. For example, if there are regular guests with specific preferences regarding food or drinks, the staff can remember these details and ensure that the guests feel valued and attended to. Overall, the routine implementation of briefings at Azure Bar contributes to the improvement of service quality. With accurate information and effective communication, the staff can deliver a better experience for guests, create an enjoyable atmosphere, and enhance overall customer satisfaction.

Responsiveness

Based on observations and interviews conducted, it was found that guests at Azure Bar are often not served in the order of their arrival. This phenomenon is a significant concern, especially because it can affect the dining experience that guests expect. One of the main causes of this issue is the heavy workload, particularly when the restaurant is busy. In such situations, waiters often feel pressured to complete their basic tasks, such as taking orders and serving food and drinks. This pressure makes it difficult for them to better anticipate guest needs. Furthermore, a lack of coordination among staff can also contribute to this problem. Without effective communication, waiters may not be aware of who arrived first or who is waiting to be served. This situation can lead to frustration for guests, who may feel ignored or overlooked. Additionally, when several waiters are working together as a team but do not have a clear system for managing service order, this can add to the chaos and increase the likelihood of errors in service. Moreover, a lack of awareness among waiters regarding the importance of maintaining service order can exacerbate this situation. If waiters do not fully understand the impact of neglecting the order of guests' arrival on customer satisfaction, they may not take proactive steps to ensure that each guest receives the attention they need. This has the potential to reduce guest satisfaction levels, which is crucial in the competitive hospitality industry. One step that can be taken is to provide additional training to waiters on the importance of maintaining service order and improving communication among staff. By understanding the impact of their actions on the guest experience, waiters can be more motivated to coordinate and serve guests more efficiently.

Assurance

Based on observations and interviews conducted at Azure Bar, it is evident that one important aspect of the service standards implemented at this establishment is the ability to assist guests in choosing menu items, especially when they feel confused or uncertain about the available options. Many guests often struggle to decide on the food they wish to order, particularly if they are not familiar with the menu offered by Azure Bar. This situation can arise for various reasons, such as differences in culinary culture, dietary preferences, or simply because there seems to be a plethora of appetizing choices.

Therefore, every waiter at Azure Bar is expected to provide useful and relevant suggestions to guests. For instance, when a guest appears confused or hesitant in making a choice, the waiter will kindly approach them and offer recommendations based on the guest's tastes or types of cuisine they might enjoy. The staff is also trained to tailor their recommendations to the specific preferences that guests may have, such as vegetarian options, food allergies, or the desire to try local dishes. This interaction is not only important to ensure that guests receive the food they want but also serves to build a more personal relationship between the waiter and guests. When guests feel that the waiters genuinely care and understand their preferences, they are likely to feel more comfortable and satisfied with their dining experience. This can undoubtedly create a warmer and friendlier atmosphere at Azure Bar, making guests feel valued and prioritized. Moreover, by providing appropriate suggestions and assisting guests in choosing their menu items, the waiter also contribute to the overall customer satisfaction. A positive dining experience can encourage guests to return to Azure Bar in the future and recommend it to their friends and family. Thus, a proactive approach in helping guests select menu items not only benefits the individuals but also has a positive impact on the reputation and success of Azure Bar as a premier culinary destination. Overall, the commitment to providing excellent assistance in menu selection is an integral part of the service standards at Azure Bar, which aims to create a pleasant and unforgettable dining experience for every guest.

Empathy

Based on observations, waiters still rarely ask guests about allergies to ensure safety and comfort while enjoying dishes. However, this practice is still seldom followed for several reasons. First, many waiters do not receive adequate training on the importance of asking about allergies and their impact on guest health. Second, when the restaurant is busy, waiters often feel rushed and focus more on completing orders rather than inquiring about these important details. The lack of clear standard procedures also leads waiters to skip this step. Additionally, new or less experienced may lack the confidence to do this, and low motivation makes them consider these questions unimportant.

If waiters do not inquire about allergies, several serious issues can arise. Guests with allergies risk experiencing severe reactions if they consume unsafe food, which can jeopardize their health. Mistakes in serving can also create a poor customer experience, making guests feel uncomfortable and disappointed, thereby reducing the likelihood of their return to the restaurant. Additionally, the restaurant's reputation may be affected by negative reviews from guests who experience allergic reactions, which ultimately makes potential new customers hesitant to visit. Therefore, it is crucial for waiters to consistently ask about allergies to ensure the safety and satisfaction of guests. Based on observations and interviews at Azure Bar, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the service standards implemented at this establishment. First, there are specific service skills that are still not practiced frequently, such as checking guest satisfaction, particularly due to the challenges of accommodating a high number of guests. Although the knowledge possessed by the staff about the menu and facilities at Azure Bar is always well applied, responses to guest needs are still infrequent, especially in terms of addressing small details that can influence the overall guest experience.

Meanwhile, the service attitude at Azure Bar is consistently maintained, with team members being friendly and professional toward guests. However, reliability in repeating guest orders remains a challenge, leading to mistakes in order serving and potential guest dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, tangible aspects of service standards, such as consistent briefing implementation and responsiveness in helping guests find seats or attending to their needs, are well applied at Azure Bar. In terms of providing service assurance, it is evident that assisting guests in selecting menu items when they feel confused is a primary focus, but there are still shortcomings in inquiring about guests' food allergies due to the high volume of visitors. This indicates that while some aspects of service standards are applied consistently, there is still room for improvement, particularly in enhancing responsiveness to guest needs and desires, as well as awareness of health concerns such as food allergies. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from these observations and interviews suggest that while Azure Bar possesses several strong service aspects, there is still potential for improvement in specific areas.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion results, the researcher found that the performance of the waiters at Azure Bar is good; however, not all service standards are implemented effectively. From the observations conducted, it appears that there are 9 service standards that are carried out well, while 7 others are less frequently applied. This indicates that although the waiter provides fairly good service, there is still a need to improve consistency in adhering to all established service standards. One of the factors affecting the implementation of service standards is the high number of guests arriving at Azure Bar. When the volume of guests increases, the staff often feels rushed and does not have enough time to implement all aspects of service perfectly. This can potentially impact the guest experience, as some important service standards may be overlooked during busier periods. Based on the conclusions above, the researcher suggests that all waiters should commit to consistently applying the existing service standards. By adhering to these standards, operations at Azure Bar can run more smoothly, and guests will feel more valued and attended to. As an initial step, managers or supervisors should provide training for the staff, focusing not only on product knowledge but also on time management and efficient service techniques.

This training will help the waiters optimize their available time, allowing them to better meet guest needs, even during busy situations. In addition to training, active attention and supervision from the manager are also essential. With proper guidance, managers can ensure that the staff understands and performs their duties effectively. This supervision can include regular evaluations of service performance and providing constructive feedback to help staff improve in areas that still require attention. As another alternative, increasing the number of waiters could also be a solution to this issue. With more staff on duty, all service standards at Azure Bar Conrad Bali can be implemented effectively and systematically. This would allow employees to avoid rushing and enable them to carry out each service standard properly. Consequently, this would not only enhance the guest experience but also create a more enjoyable and productive work environment for the staff. Overall, efforts to improve the implementation of service standards are crucial for maintaining Azure Bar's reputation as a destination that offers a satisfying dining experience. With the right approach in terms of training, supervision, and staff augmentation, it is hoped that all service standards can be consistently adhered to, ultimately benefiting all parties involved.

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