

THE ANALYSIS OF FRONT OFFICE DEPARTMENT SERVICE QUALITY FOR CUSTOMER'S SATISFACTION AT PADMA RESORT LEGIAN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to assess the quality of services provided by the Front Office Department at Padma Resort Legian; to identify gaps between guest's perception and guest's expectation, and to know which indicators need to be improved and maintained to enhance the service quality. The main data used in this research are quantitative data which are collected from the service users using incidental sampling method. The data analyses technique used are SERVQUAL Method and Importance-Performance Analysis presented in Cartesian Diagram. The result of this research showed that there are some negative and some positive gaps between guests' perceptions and expectations within all variables. The result of the Importance-Performance Analysis found 1 indicator positioned in Quadrant A; attribute number 4 - 'fast and proper service of check-in and check-out process by the Front Office Staff' is the major weakness that needs improvement. On the other hand, there are 6 indicators on Quadrant B which is the major strengths of the services provided by the Front Office Staff. The results of the research could be used by the hotel management as one of the considerations in improving the quality of service for customer's satisfaction.

Keywords: SERVQUAL methods, importance-performance analysis, service quality, customer's satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Front Office Department is one of the most important parts of a hotel organization. Front Office Department creates the image of a hotel because it handles the guest from the beginning until the end of the guest stay; this is similar with Padma Resort Legian, Bali in Indonesia wherein the research was carried out. The Front Office Department at Padma Resort Legian has some sections such as Guest Service Officer (GSO) which known as receptionist, Guest Relation Officer (GRO), Concierge, Front Office Admin, Garden Club Lounge (GCL), Bellboy, Guest Service Centre (GSC) and Padma Resident Officer (PRO). Every section in the front office contributes in forming customer's satisfaction.

The tasks of the Front Office Department of Padma Resort Legian include: guest check-in and check-out, provision of information, and ensuring the guests having unforgettable moments during stay. In addition, the Front Office Department at Padma Resort Legian also handles guest's complaints and handling VIP guests. Front Office Department has to be able to give excellent service to the guest, ensure their satisfaction during the stay and create the best image of the hotel in the eye of guests.

In order to achieve the business goal, it has to provide an excellent service for the guests. It is expected that the guests are satisfied with the quality of services provided by the hotel; otherwise some enhancements need to be made; to know the quality of service that reflexes the level of customer satisfaction, a quality assessment need to be carried out. This study assessed the quality of service provided by the Front Office Staff of Padma Resort Legian, contributes in providing satisfying services for the guests. The purpose of this research are to know if there is a gap between the guest's expectation and guest's perception of Front Office Department service quality at Padma Resort Legian and to know the indicators that need to be improved and maintained to enhance the service quality of Front Office Department for customer's satisfaction at Padma Resort Legian.

There are some definitions that used in this research. The first definition is service quality. Service quality is the assessment or comparison made by customers between the perceived service and the expected service (Tjiptono, 2005; Tjiptono, & Diana, 2005). If the perceived service is compatible with expectation, means that perceived service quality is satisfying or good. Satisfaction is able to push customer to do re-buying, therefore will become loyal customer (Kotler: 2004). There are five service quality's dimensions seen from customer's perception. Those are (Parasuraman, et al., 1985 as cited Raharjo & Azwir, 2017: 2): Tangible, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. The second one is definition of customer's satisfaction. Customer's satisfaction is after-purchased evaluation, in which the product selected at least equal or exceed customer's expectation; dissatisfaction arise if the perceptions do not meet expectation (Engel et al., 1990 as cited in Tjiptono, 2007).

Service Quality given by employees or front office staff at Padma Resort Legian is measured through 5 dimensions of service quality. According to Parasuraman et al.,

(1985) there are 5 dimensions of service quality which include: Tangible means anything that can be seen by the guest. Reliability means the ability of front office staff in giving services to the customer. Responsiveness means the response of front office staff in serving customers. Assurance means knowledge that own by front office staff in fulfillment guest's needs. Empathy means the attention given to customers.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research took place in Front Office Department of Padma Resort Legian. The object of this research is the service quality of Front Office Department of Padma Resort Legian. The variables assessed in this research are five dimensions with 12 indicators of service quality (Parasuraman, et al., 1985).The main data used are quantitative data collected from 60 respondents through a questionnaire survey to the service users, using Incidental sampling technique. The data analyses technique used in this study are SERVQUAL analysis with 12 indicators and Importance-Performance Analysis. The respondent's profile is presented in Table 1.

Padma Resort Legian is a five-star hotel located at Jl. Padma No. 1 Legian. Padma Resort Legian provided 432 rooms to accommodate the guest and promise wonderful stays for discerning travellers. Not only offering rooms, Padma Resort Legian also offers products of restaurant, spa, wedding package, meeting package, and events.

Table 1. Respondent's Profile Recapitulation

	Criteria	Respondents	Percentage
Nationality	Australian	44	73,33
	Indonesia	5	8,33
	British	3	5,00
	Japanese	2	3,33
	Korean	2	3,33
	German	1	1,67
	New Zealander	1	1,67
	Switzerland	1	1,67
	Dutch	1	1,67
	Gender	Male	37
Female		23	38,33
Age	<20	8	13,33
	20-30	10	16,67
	31-40	14	23,33
	41-50	15	25,00
	>50	13	21,67
Occupation	Student	14	23,33
	Employee	31	51,67
	Businessman/woman	7	11,67
	Other	8	13,33
Visit Frequency	Once	30	50,00
	2-5 times	13	21,67
	>5 times	17	28,33
Purpose of Stay	Holiday	53	88,33
	Business	7	11,67

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. SERVQUAL

Results

The SERVQUAL is measured in order to know how well the service was delivered by Front Office Department at Padma Resort Legian to match the customer's expectations. A negative gap indicates guest's dissatisfaction, whilst the positive one shows guest's satisfaction. The results of the guests' perception and expectation for all the indicators shown in Table 2.

Table2. Average Scores of Guest's Perception, Expectation, and the Gap

N	Attribute/Indicator/Item	Item-by-item Analysis		
		Expectation	Perception	Gap
1	Readiness of the Front Office staff with all material and equipment (pen, registration form, computer, tab, etc) before serving the guest	4,08	4,03	-0,05
2	Front Office Staff's grooming	4,00	4,00	0
3	Cleanliness and Facilities in Front Office area	4,08	3,98	-0,1
4	Fast and properly service of check-in and check-out process by the Front Office Staff	4,22	4,10	-0,12
5	Ability of the receptionist to provide accurate information	4,22	4,23	0,01
6	Provide services as promised	4,32	4,37	0,05
7	Willingness and initiative of the Front Office staff to help the guest	4,32	4,4	0,08
8	Front office's staff ability to handle guest's complaints	4,28	4,25	-0,03
9	Politeness and Friendliness of the Front Office staff	4,13	4,43	0,30
10	Clear and understandable communication in good English and/or any Third Language	4,27	4,25	-0,02
11	Front Office staff understand customer needs	4,33	4,37	0,04
12	Recognition of the guest name and preference by the Front Office staff	4,17	4,23	0,06
Total		4,20	4,22	0,02

Discussions

Table 2 shows that there are positive, neutral and negative gap for the attributes. There are 5 attributes that have negative gaps which indicate customer's dissatisfaction, These are attributes number 1,3,4,8 and 10. The statement of the attributes are as follows: 1) Readiness of the Front Office staff with all office materials and equipment (pen, registration form, computer, tab, etc) before serving the guest, 3) The cleanliness and facilities in front office area, 4) Fast and properly service of check-in and check-out process by the Front Office Staff, 8) Front office's staff ability to handle guest's

complaints, and 10) Clear and understandable communication in using good English and/or any third language.

Attribute number 2 - “Front Office’s grooming” has zero gap result as represented in Table 2; which indicates customer’s satisfaction. On the other hand, there are 6 attributes having positive gaps which indicate customer’s satisfaction. These include: attribute number 5, 6, 7, 9, 11 and 12. The statements are as follows: 5) Ability of the receptionist to provide an accurate information, 6) Hotel provide services as promised, 7) The willingness and initiative of the Front Office staff to help the guest, 9) The Politeness and Friendliness of the front office staff, 11) Front office staff understand customer needs, and 12) The recognition of front office staff to know the guest name and preference.

The existence of the positive and negative gaps result due to the hotel’s performance as a service provider not always the same as the guest’s expectation as service recipients. The results of SERVQUAL’s analysis could be viewed more clearly on Figure 1.

The run chart on Figure 1 shows one indicator in which expectation matches performance (indicator number 2); while the rests of the results show positive and negative gaps. There are 5 attributes show results of negative gaps which mean customer’s dissatisfaction. Nonetheless, observing the perception mean values for the indicators, those 5 attributes are still categorized as good performance.

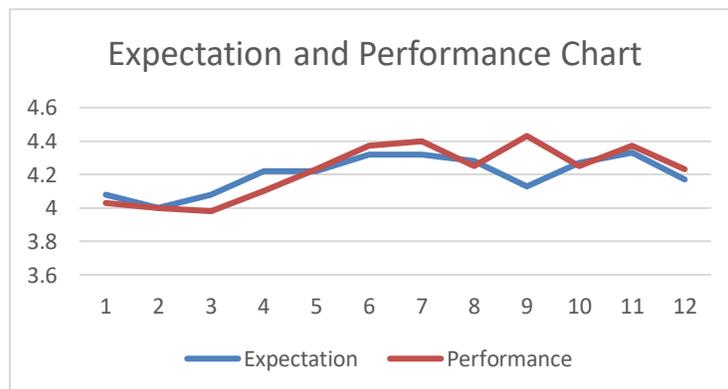


Figure 1. SERVQUAL Chart

2. Importance-Performance Analysis

Results

Importance Performance Analysis Technique is used to identify which indicator that needs to be improved on the quality of service at the Front Office Service of Padma Resort Legian. Figure 2 shows the location of the 12 indicators within the IPA chart.

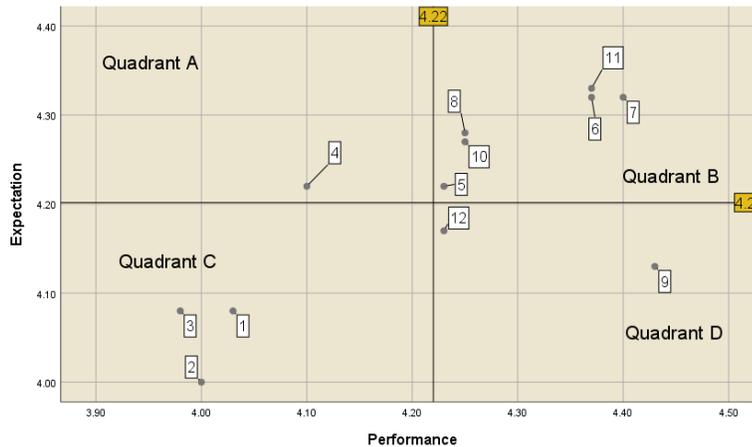


Figure 2: Results of the Importance-Performance Analysis

Figure 2 displays service quality indicators of this research in 4 Quadrant: Quadrant A, Quadrant B, Quadrant C, and Quadrant D. The indicators in each quadrant are presented in the following:

Quadrant A (Concentrate Here)

1. Fast and properly service of check-in and check-out process by the Front Office Staff

Quadrant B (Keep Up the Good Work)

1. Ability to the receptionist to provide accurate information
2. Provide services as promised
3. Willingness and initiative of the Front Office staff to help the guest
4. Front office's staff ability to handle guest's complaints
5. Clear and understandable communication in good English and/or any Third Language

6. Front Office staff understand customer needs

Quadrant C (Low Priority)

1. Readiness of the Front Office staff with all material and equipment (pen, registration form, computer, tab, etc) before serving the guest
2. Front Office Staff's grooming
3. Cleanliness and Facilities in Front Office area

Quadrant D (Possible Overkill)

1. Politeness and Friendliness of the Front Office staff
2. Recognition of the guest name and preference by the Front Office staff

Discussions

The discussion of the IPA results are as follows:

1. Quadrant A

According to the theory, Quadrant A contains attributes that are perceived to be very important to customers but performance levels are fairly low. These attributes are referred to as the major weakness that requires immediate attention for improvement. Thus, the attributes/indicator found on this quadrant is the indicator that has high importance by the guests, whilst the front office department of Padma Resort Legian seems to provide a low level of performance. There is one indicator found in this quadrant: 'Fast and properly service of check-in and check-out process by the Front Office Staff'; it belongs to the 'Reliability' dimension of quality. The location of the attribute on quadrant A indicates the guest seems not satisfied with check-in and check-out process during their arrival or departure time. There are several causes of the check-in and check-out process seem long such as: the FO staff tried to do up-selling sometimes without being asked and there is no training about upselling; many of rooms are not ready yet: it could be the room still occupied or dirty upon guest's arrival because the early check-in or the rooms are back to back therefore the housekeeping staff need time to make the rooms ready for use.

Around 12 am until 3 pm is the normal time for check-out and the check-in process started, the guests wait in long queues just to do a check-in or check-out process, it caused by the lack of staff on duties. For the late room's ready, the front office staff at Padma Resort Legian actually give an option to the guest to use the departure lounge while waiting for the room's ready and promise to get back to the guest once the room's ready. Padma Resort Legian needs to give more or extra attention especially the front office to carry out check-in and check-out processes by increase the number of staff and should run a proper schedule based on the number of expected arrival or departure in a month and update the schedule for the next day every day to avoid the lack of staff on duties. Front Office staff at Padma Resort Legian need to increase communication with other departments especially housekeeping department to inform which room should be prioritized for the guests who arrived early, so these guests do not wait too long for the room's to be ready.

2. Quadrant B

According to the theory, Quadrant B contains the attributes that are perceived to be very important to customers, and the organization seems to provide high levels of performance. Thus attributes in this quadrant are referred to as the major strengths and opportunities for achieving or maintaining competitive advantage. There are 6 indicators found in this quadrant:

a. Ability to the receptionist to provide accurate information

Ability to the receptionist to provide accurate information is one of reliability's dimension attribute. Overall Front office staff at Padma Resort Legian has provided clearly information about the resort and has fulfilled the expectations of the customers, in this case the guests staying at Padma Resort Legian so that is considered good in the eyes of the customer. But even though it has been considered good, front office staff must to always maintain and also increase their knowledge so that they are more informed about the resort or outside the resort and know every information needed by the guests.

b. Provide services as promised

Provide service as promised is one of reliability's dimension attribute. Front Office staff at Padma Resort Legian has provided good services as promised to the guests. Front office staff ensure all the details of services well received by the guests. The guests feels that their expectations has been fulfilled for this attribute. But front office staff at Padma Resort Legian need to maintain and increase the services.

c. Willingness and initiative of the Front Office staff to help the guest

Willingness and initiative of the Front Office staff to help the guest is one of responsiveness's dimension attribute. Front office staff at Padma Resort Legian are aware that offering assistance needed by the guests is an obligation. Front office staff at Padma Resort Legian will approached the confused-looking guest and offering help without being asked. On this attribute, the customer or in this case is the guest assumes that the service provided has fulfilled the expectations of the guests so they are satisfied with the service they have obtained.

d. Front office's staff ability to handle guest's complaints

Front office's staff ability to handle guest's complaints is one of responsiveness's dimension attribute. Front office staff at Padma Resort Legian have good ability to handle the guest's complaints. Front office staff will tried to solve the problem as soon as possible after a discussion with the supervisor or hotel assistant manager. On this quadrant, the guests assumes that their expectations has been fulfilled.

e. Clear and understandable communication in good English and/or any Third Language

Clear and understandable communication in good English and/or any Third Language is one of assurance's dimension attribute. Front office staff at Padma Resort Legian has clear and good understandable communication in English and/or Third Language. The guests could understand clearly with front office information in English and/or any Third Language and the guests considered good for this attribute which this attribute has been fulfilled their expectation.

f. Front Office staff understand customer needs

Front Office staff understand customer needs is one of the empathy's dimension attribute. Front office staff at Padma Resort Legian has clearly understand of customer needs during their stay and ensure all the customer's need has been fulfilled and create good image during their stay. Front office staff always offering help without being asked and providing extra facilities to the guests. Front office staff at Padma Resort Legian need to maintain and increase this attribute performance because the guests feel that their expectation for this attribute has been fulfilled.

3. Quadrant C

According to the theory, Quadrant C contains the attributes with low importance and low performance which are referred to as the minor weakness. Thus attributes in this quadrant do not require a great deal of priority for improvement. There are 3 indicators located in this quadrant such as readiness of the front office staff with all materials and equipment (pen, registration form, computer, tab, etc) before serving the guest, front office staff's grooming, and cleanliness and facilities in front office area.

4. Quadrant D

According to the theory, Quadrant D contains the attributes that are perceived as low importance to customers, but the organization seems to provide high levels of performance. In this case, the organization should reallocate resources committed to attributes in this quadrant to other quadrants in need of improved performance. There are 2 indicators located in this quadrant such as Politeness and Friendliness of the Front Office staff and Recognition of the guest name and preference by the Front Office staff. This could also become positive point of service beyond expectation for customers.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The conclusion referring to the results of data analyses and discussion are as follow:
(1) There are positive and negative gap between the guest's perception and expectation to the front office department service quality at Padma Resort Legian. There are 5 attributes which result in negative gaps. These negative gap caused by the lack of staff

in charge, less training about upselling. There are 7 attributes which results positive gap (2) There are some indicators found that needed to be improved and maintained to enhance the service quality of Front Office Department for customer's satisfaction at Padma Resort Legian. There is 1 indicator found in Quadrant A "Concentrate Here" as the major weakness which need to be improved and there are 6 indicators found in Quadrant B "Keep up the good work" as the major strengths and opportunities which need to maintain the indicators. The suggestion put forward are add some new equipment that needed and some new staff at front office department; conducting more training such as: general knowledge training, up-selling training, and check-in and check-out training.

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