

## THE IMPACT OF FRONT OFFICE STAFF SERVICE ON HOTEL GUEST LOYALTY AND SATISFACTION

Alifa Nurul P<sup>1</sup>, Selvanny Dwi Saputri<sup>2</sup>,  
Rara Rachel<sup>3</sup>, Firstia Mida Sekar A<sup>4</sup>, Kasmin<sup>5</sup>  
Hospitality Management Program, Faculty of Economics and Business,  
Bina Sarana Informatika University, Indonesia  
Email: [51240045@bsi.ac.id](mailto:51240045@bsi.ac.id), [51240075@bsi.ac.id](mailto:51240075@bsi.ac.id), [51240032@bsi.ac.id](mailto:51240032@bsi.ac.id),  
[51240021@bsi.ac.id](mailto:51240021@bsi.ac.id), [kasmin.ksm@bsi.ac.id](mailto:kasmin.ksm@bsi.ac.id)

### Abstrak

#### Keywords:

Front Office Service,  
Guest Loyalty,  
Guest Satisfaction,  
Hotel.

*This study aims to determine the impact of Front Office staff service on hotel guest satisfaction and loyalty. Front Office staff play a crucial role as the first point of contact between guests and the hotel, making their service quality an important factor in shaping guest perceptions and overall experiences. A qualitative method was employed in this study, involving an in-depth review of journals, books, and other relevant scientific sources related to hospitality management, customer satisfaction, and guest loyalty. The study focuses on analyzing how the quality of service provided by Front Office staff influences guests during their stay and affects their future behavioral intentions. The findings indicate that the quality of service delivered by Front Office staff has a significant positive impact on both guest satisfaction and loyalty. Professional, friendly, responsive, and efficient service contributes to creating a welcoming atmosphere and enhances guests' comfort throughout their stay. Guests who receive high-quality service are more likely to develop positive perceptions of the hotel and feel that their needs and expectations have been met. As a result, satisfied guests tend to revisit the hotel in the future and are more willing to recommend it to family, friends, and colleagues through positive word-of-mouth communication. Furthermore, effective communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and personalized attention from Front Office staff can strengthen guest trust and emotional attachment to the hotel. Therefore, improving Front Office service quality is essential for maintaining guest satisfaction, increasing loyalty, and achieving long-term success in the highly competitive hospitality industry today.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is currently experiencing rapid growth, yet it also faces increasingly complex competitive dynamics. In this competitive business landscape, every business operator in the hospitality sector is required to consistently prioritize service quality as the primary tool for attracting and retaining customer loyalty. Service quality is no longer optional; rather, it has become a fundamental foundation that directly determines the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Within a hotel's operational structure, which comprises various departments, the front office occupies the most strategic position. As the frontline, this department serves as the first point of contact, interacting directly with guests from the moment they arrive until they check out. The service provided by front office staff—which encompasses hospitality, responsiveness, and accuracy in handling various requests—has a significant impact on forming a first impression.

This initial impression then becomes the primary benchmark that shapes guests' perceptions of the hotel's overall image and quality. Although the front office plays such a crucial role, the reality on the ground shows that there are still various challenges in its implementation. Some common issues include low staff responsiveness, inconsistent service standards, and ineffective communication between staff and guests. Such conditions have the potential to cause disappointment among guests, which in turn can erode their loyalty to the hotel. In fact, guest loyalty is one of the main pillars for business sustainability in the hospitality industry. Loyal guests not only tend to return but are also willing to recommend the hotel to relatives and colleagues, thereby creating invaluable marketing value. Given this reality, it has become imperative to conduct research that thoroughly examines the influence of front office service quality on guest loyalty.

This study is designed to answer two main questions. First, what service factors influence hotel guest satisfaction and loyalty? Second, does high-quality front office service prove effective in increasing hotel guest loyalty? In line with these research questions, this study sets three main objectives. First, to identify and describe the current quality of front office service. Second, to measure the level of hotel guest loyalty based on relevant indicators. Third, to empirically analyze the extent to which front office service influences guest satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, this study is also expected to provide significant benefits. Theoretically, this study can enrich scientific insights in the field of hospitality management, particularly regarding the strategic role of the front office in building customer loyalty. This study is also expected to present comprehensive information on which service factors most significantly influence guest loyalty. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a guide for hotel management in formulating “ ” policies and improvement measures, so that the quality of front office service can be continuously enhanced to foster sustainable guest satisfaction and loyalty.

To achieve all these objectives, this study employs a data collection method in the form of a literature review or in-depth research. This technique involves searching for and analyzing various relevant and credible sources, such as scientific journals, research articles, books, and other online documents. All these sources are used to obtain secondary data and a solid theoretical foundation regarding the influence of front office service on guest satisfaction and loyalty. The scope of this study is limited to the services provided by a hotel's front office department, with hotel guests as the research subjects. The analysis focuses on three key service dimensions: friendliness, service speed, and

communication effectiveness. Meanwhile, guest loyalty is measured through two behavioral indicators: the intention to return (repeat visit intention) and the willingness to recommend the hotel to others (willingness to recommend). With these limitations, this study is expected to provide a targeted and in-depth analysis in line with the established objectives.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Definition of a Hotel**

A hotel is a type of accommodation that uses part or all of a building to provide lodging, food, and beverage services, as well as other services to the public, and is managed commercially. According to Sulastiyono (2011:5), a hotel is a business managed by its owner that provides food, beverages, and sleeping accommodations to travelers who are able to pay a reasonable amount commensurate with the services received, without any special agreement.

Meanwhile, according to the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications Decree No. KM 34/HK 103/MPPT-87, a hotel is a type of accommodation that uses part or all of a building to provide lodging, food, and beverage services, as well as other services to the public; it is managed commercially and meets the requirements set forth in government regulations. Thus, as a service industry, hotels bear a significant responsibility to provide the best possible service to meet the needs and expectations of their guests.

### **Definition of the Front Office**

The front office is one of the key departments in hotel operations that interacts directly with guests. According to Bagyono (2012:21), the front office is the department responsible for the systematic sale of hotel rooms—from the reservation process through to welcoming guests at the hotel—including handling guests' information needs during their stay and managing guest financial transactions.

In line with this view, Darsono (2011:1) states that the front office is one of the departments or sections within a hotel's organizational structure located at the front of, where front office staff handle all matters related to guests—from before their arrival, during their stay, until they check out of the hotel. The front office is often referred to as the "heart" of the hotel because it serves as the hub for communication and coordination of all hotel operations.

Furthermore, Agusnawar (2004:5) defines the front office as the center of the hotel's operational activities, with the primary functions of selling rooms, providing information to guests, and handling guest complaints. The front office plays a highly strategic role because it is the first point of contact guests encounter upon arriving at the hotel; consequently, the first impression is largely determined by the quality of service provided by front office staff.

### **Functions and Roles of the Front Office**

The front office performs various strategic functions in hotel management. According to Sulastiyono (2011:67), the main functions of the front office include: selling and promoting the hotel's facilities; providing guests with information about various hotel products and facilities; processing guest registration; preparing and distributing room keys; carrying out check-in and check-out procedures; maintaining guest financial records; and handling guest correspondence.

Meanwhile, according to Bagyono and Sambodo (2006:19), the front office serves as: (1) the hotel's nerve center—that is, the hub for information and communication; (2)

the face of the hotel, as it is the first and last point of contact for guests; and (3) the room seller—that is, the spearhead of hotel room sales. These roles underscore just how strategic the front office’s position is in determining the overall operational success of the hotel.

### **Definition of Service**

Service is an action or activity offered by one party to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in ownership of anything. According to Kotler (2008:83), a service is any action or activity that can be offered by one party to another, which is essentially intangible and does not result in ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be associated with a physical product. Tjiptono (2014:17) defines a service as any action or activity that can be offered by one party to another, which is essentially intangible (non-physical) and does not result in ownership of anything. In the context of the hospitality industry, service is a key element that distinguishes one hotel from another and is a determining factor in guest satisfaction. Furthermore, Ratminto and Winarsih (2010:2) state that service is an activity or a series of activities that are intangible (cannot be touched) and occur as a result of interactions between consumers and employees or other elements provided by the service-providing company, intended to resolve consumer/customer issues.

### **Definition of Excellent Service**

Excellent service is an attitude or approach that employees adopt in serving customers in a satisfying manner. According to Barata (2004:27), excellent service is a commitment to customers by providing the best possible service to facilitate the fulfillment of their needs and ensure their satisfaction, thereby fostering their continued loyalty to the organization or company. Rahmayanty (2010:18) states that excellent service is service that is of the highest quality and exceeds customer expectations. Excellent service aims to provide service that meets and satisfies customers or the public while prioritizing customer-focused service. In the hospitality context, excellent service serves as the cornerstone for creating an unforgettable stay experience for guests.

According to Triguno (1997:78), excellent service encompasses three basic concepts summarized as the 3A’s, namely: (1) Attitude, which refers to the attitude that must be displayed when serving customers, including a neat appearance, a positive mindset, and serving with respect; (2) Attention, which refers to caring for customers—including listening to and understanding their needs, as well as devoting full attention to them; (3) Action, which refers to the various concrete actions that must be taken when providing service to customers.

### **Service Quality**

Service quality refers to the expected level of excellence and the control over that level of excellence to meet customer expectations. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), in their seminal study, identified five dimensions of service quality known as the SERVQUAL model, as cited by Tjiptono and Chandra (2011:198), namely: (1) *Tangibles* (Physical Evidence): This includes physical facilities, equipment, staff, and communication tools. (2) *Reliability*: The ability to deliver promised services promptly, accurately, and satisfactorily. (3) *Responsiveness*: The willingness of staff to assist customers and provide responsive service. (4) *Assurance*: Includes the knowledge, competence, courtesy, and trustworthiness of the staff. (5) *Empathy*: Includes the ability to build rapport, effective communication, personal attention, and an understanding of customers’ individual needs.

According to Lupiyoadi (2013:216), service quality is the extent of the difference between reality and customers' expectations regarding the service they receive or obtain. Good service quality creates customer satisfaction, which in turn fosters customer loyalty.

### **Definition of Guest Satisfaction**

Guest satisfaction is the degree to which a guest's needs, desires, and expectations are met or exceeded through a product or service received. Kotler and Keller (2012:150) define customer satisfaction as a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment that arises after comparing the perceived performance (outcome) of a product against the expected performance. Tjiptono (2014:354) states that customer satisfaction is a post-purchase evaluation in which the chosen alternative at least provides an outcome that meets or exceeds customer expectations, whereas dissatisfaction arises when the outcome obtained fails to meet customer expectations. In the hospitality industry, guest satisfaction is greatly influenced by the guest's experience during their stay, particularly in interactions with front-office staff. According to Soekresno (2000:88), guest satisfaction is the level of a person's feelings after comparing the perceived performance or results with their expectations. Guest satisfaction is influenced by various factors, including: product quality, service quality, emotional factors, price, and cost. High satisfaction leads to strong guest loyalty toward the hotel.

### **Definition of Guest Loyalty**

Customer loyalty is a steadfast commitment to repurchase or subscribe to a preferred product or service in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts that could potentially lead to behavioral changes. Griffin (2005:31) defines a loyal customer as someone who makes regular repeat purchases, buys across product and service lines, refers others, and demonstrates resistance to competitors' enticements. According to Oliver (1997) as cited in Tjiptono (2014:392), customer loyalty is a customer's deep-seated commitment to consistently repurchase or subscribe to selected products or services in the future, even though situational influences and marketing efforts have the potential to cause behavioral changes. Hotel guest loyalty reflects a guest's decision to consistently use the same hotel's services. Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996), as cited in Lupiyoadi (2013:231), state that customer loyalty can be measured through several indicators, namely: (1) speaking positively about the company to others; (2) recommending the company to others; (3) considering the company as their first choice; (4) doing more business with the company in the future.

### **Factors Affecting Guest Loyalty**

Hotel guest loyalty is influenced by various factors. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012:43), the factors that influence customer loyalty include: customer satisfaction, product quality, service quality, corporate image, and customer value. In the context of hotels, these factors are interrelated and influence one another. Hurriyati (2010:128) states that there are four distinct types of loyalty, namely: (1) Premium loyalty, which is the type of loyalty most amenable to improvement; (2) Latent loyalty, where situational influences play a greater role than attitudes in determining repeat purchases; (3) Spurious loyalty, where customers exhibit low commitment but high repeat purchase rates; (4) No loyalty, meaning some customers do not develop loyalty toward a specific product or service.

Specifically in the hospitality industry, Dick and Basu (1994), as cited in Tjiptono (2014:393), state that the relationship between *relative attitude* and *repeat patronage* forms the foundation for developing customer loyalty. In the hospitality industry, the

quality of front office service plays a crucial role in building guest loyalty because the front office serves as the primary point of contact between guests and the hotel.

### **The Relationship Between Front Office Service and Guest Satisfaction and Loyalty**

The relationship between the quality of front office service and guest satisfaction and loyalty has been extensively studied in the hospitality industry. High-quality service has been shown to have a positive impact on customer satisfaction, which in turn fosters customer loyalty. Valarie A. Zeithaml, Leonard L. Berry, and A. Parasuraman (1996) state that high-quality service can encourage customers to use a company's services again and recommend them to others. In the hospitality context, professional, friendly, and responsive front office service can enhance guest satisfaction, leading guests to return and provide positive recommendations to others. Parasuraman et al. (1988) found a positive correlation between service quality and customer satisfaction, and further noted that customer satisfaction has a positive impact on customer loyalty. The model they proposed demonstrates that superior service quality creates satisfaction, and consistent satisfaction leads to long-term loyalty. Specifically in the context of a hotel's front office, Sugiarto (2002:28) states that the professionalism of front office staff in serving guests includes: a neat and attractive appearance, a friendly and approachable attitude, adequate product knowledge, good communication skills, and speed and accuracy in service. These factors directly influence guests' perceptions of the hotel's overall service quality.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2017:9), qualitative research is a method used to study subjects in their natural settings, where the researcher serves as the key instrument, data collection techniques are triangulated, data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning over generalization. Bogdan and Taylor (1975), as cited in Moleong (2014:4), define qualitative methodology as a research procedure that generates descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. This approach was chosen because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of how front office service impacts hotel guest loyalty and satisfaction from the participants' perspective.

The data sources in this qualitative study consist of secondary data obtained from various sources supporting the research. This secondary data includes internal hotel documents, room occupancy rate reports, summaries of guest complaints, and various scientific literature such as books, journals, and articles relevant to the research topic. The data collection techniques used in this study include documentation and literature review. Documentation was conducted by collecting various documents, reports, notes, photos, and archives related to the research. According to Suharsimi Arikunto (2013:274), documentation is a technique for gathering data on specific topics or variables in the form of records, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, meeting minutes, agendas, and so on. In addition, a literature review was conducted by examining various written sources such as books, scientific journals, articles, and other relevant references to strengthen the theoretical foundation of the study.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the material above, the impact of front office service on hotel guest loyalty and satisfaction is not merely a matter of ordinary hospitality but is built on good

relationships and communication between hotel staff and guests. The existence of this reciprocal relationship is not without reason; there are factors that influence it, one of which is service quality. Service quality arises from well-established communication, which in turn influences customer evaluations and enhances the hotel's public image; thus, the quality of the hotel can be perceived even before guests arrive.

Effective communication enables front desk staff to better understand guests' needs and preferences. By listening carefully, asking relevant questions, and providing appropriate responses, front desk staff can gather important information about guest preferences, such as room preferences, special requests, or additional needs. Consequently, they can provide personalized service tailored to guests' preferences, which contributes to higher guest satisfaction (Galloway, 2022, as cited in Pradana, T. 2023). Loyalty serves as an indicator of the success of service strategies within the competitive landscape of the relationship-oriented service industry, as it fosters an emotional connection between guests and the hotel. Managing the quality of interactions at key touchpoints—such as the Front Office—is a critical factor in building and sustaining guest loyalty over the long term. (Anggraini, F. D., & Kurniawan, F., 2025).

Consequently, effective communication fosters guest loyalty; guests feel valued and genuinely welcomed, and this sense of appreciation prevents them from easily switching to other hotels due to the hotel's positive image or the value it conveys in the guests' eyes. Consequently, service quality can influence customer satisfaction because it fosters alignment between the services provided by a hotel and the guests' expectations, ensuring that the services are perceived as meeting their needs. The relationship between the front office and customer satisfaction can run smoothly because the front office works as a team supported by other departments in sustaining a hotel's operational activities; through effective collaboration with customers, they can directly assess the quality of service they receive, thereby achieving customer satisfaction. (Putra, C. G. A. K., Fatimah, D. P., & Nugraha, R. N., 2023). Satisfaction is based on a comparison between expectations and reality. If reality meets or exceeds expectations, the person will be satisfied. If reality falls short of expectations, the person will be disappointed (Kotler & Keller, 2012, as cited in Madani, H., & Arifiansyah, R., 2025).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion regarding the impact of front office staff service on guest loyalty and satisfaction, it can be concluded that the quality of front office service plays a crucial role in building guest satisfaction and loyalty. The front office serves as the face of the hotel, as it is the first and last point of contact for guests (Bagyono & Sambodo, 2006). Customer satisfaction arises after comparing the service received with the customer's expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Friendly, prompt, and polite service, along with good communication, makes guests feel comfortable during their stay. If the service provided meets guests' expectations, they will feel satisfied and be inclined to return to the hotel. In addition, guests are also more likely to recommend the hotel to others because of the positive experiences they have had.

High-quality service fosters customer satisfaction, which in turn promotes customer loyalty (Lupiyoadi, 2013). Therefore, front office staff must be able to provide professional service to ensure that guest satisfaction and loyalty continue to grow. Based on the results of the research conducted, there are several strategic recommendations that

can be made to management to improve operational performance. First, the hotel should periodically improve service quality in the front office through structured training programs focused on developing communication skills, implementing hospitality standards, and effectively handling guest complaints. In line with these improvement efforts, all front office staff are expected to consistently maintain a friendly, responsive, and professional attitude in serving the needs of every guest. Ultimately, the hotel's strong commitment to maintaining consistent service standards is the key to creating a sense of comfort, which in the long term will encourage guests to continue choosing this hotel as their primary accommodation in the future.

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