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*Corresponding author: Mukhammad Musa, Department of Management, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Pariwisata Indonesia, Indonesia.

E-mail: mukhammad.23510044@student.stiepari.ac.id

MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Analysis of Guest Relation Officer Responses to Complaints at Zeus Restaurant, Apsara Beach Front Resort and Villa, Thailand

Mukhammad Musa^{1*}, Tuwuh Adhistyo Wijoyo²

^{1,2}Department of Management, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Pariwisata Indonesia, Semarang, Indonesia. Email: mukhammad.23510044@student.stiepari.ac.id^{1*}, adhistyo@stiepari.ac.id²

Abstract: This study examines the role of Guest relations officers (GROs) in handling complaints at Zeus Restaurant, Apsara Beach Front Resort and Villa, Thailand, focusing on the effectiveness of various complaint management strategies and their impact on guest satisfaction. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, the study involved semi-structured interviews with 10 GROs to explore common types of complaints, the strategies employed for resolution, and the outcomes of these strategies. Findings revealed that complaints primarily concern services, food quality issues, and staff behaviour. GROs effectively managed these complaints through immediate acknowledgement, empathetic communication, and prompt problem resolution. The study highlighted the significance of follow-up actions, such as checking in with guests and offering compensatory gestures, in enhancing guest satisfaction and loyalty. Thematic analysis of the interview data indicated that well-handled complaints could transform negative experiences into positive ones, thereby improving overall guest perceptions and service quality. The research underscores the importance of training GROs in emotional intelligence and problem-solving skills and suggests that advanced technologies and structured complaint management processes are crucial for maintaining a high standard of service. This study contributes to the understanding of effective complaint-handling practices in luxury hospitality settings and provides insights into enhancing guest relations and operational excellence.

Keywords: Guest Relation Officer, Handling Complaint, Restaurant.

JEL Classification Code: L83, M31, M10, D83

1. INTRODUCTION

In the hospitality sector, ensuring that guests are happy is essential to achieving success, and this is especially true in luxury settings where individuals often have very high expectations (Wijoyo & Putri, 2023). Restaurants, particularly those that are located inside resorts, play an important role as touchpoints for the experiences of guests (Abas, 2019; Abdullah, 2022). They provide not just food and drinks, but also service, which may have a significant impact on how a visitor perceives the business. The way complaints are addressed is a significant component that plays a role in shaping this experience. It is possible for a variety of problems to give rise to complaints, including delays in service, poor food quality, or misunderstandings between the personnel and the visitors (Aktaş Polat, 2022). It is thus essential to have efficient complaint handling to guarantee that these problems do not diminish the overall happiness of the visitor. This is where visitor Relation Officers (GROs) come into play, since they play a critical part in the whole process. Guest Relation Officers are responsible for fulfilling the role of a bridge between the business and its visitors (Octafian & Nugraheni, 2023). They are entrusted with addressing complaints and finding solutions to problems to ensure that customers feel heard and respected. They are responsible for more than just reacting to complaints; in addition to that, they are expected to display empathy, communicate effectively, and move quickly to address issues. In an establishment such as Zeus Restaurant, which is situated inside the illustrious Apsara Beach Front Resort and Villa in Thailand, GROs plays a significant role in ensuring that that

the high standards that are anticipated by customers are maintained. Guest relationship officers (GROs) can improve customer satisfaction and, ultimately, promote loyalty by transforming complaints into chances for service recovery.

Through the process of addressing and resolving guest complaints and issues, (Ariffin, 2013; El-Said, 2019) (GROs) plays an crucial role in increasing the level of satisfaction that guests have with hospitality facilities and in sustaining the reputation of these institutions. GROs is responsible for managing visitor experiences, ensuring that concerns are swiftly resolved, and delivering personalised service. They are the major contact between guests and the hotel; hence they oversee managing guest experiences. Complaint management that is effective on the part of GROs requires empathic communication, prompt issue resolution, and follow-up activities (Akasia & Sandy, 2023). These are all critical components for transforming unpleasant experiences into good ones. It has been shown via research that the capacity of GROs to manage complaints in a professional and compassionate manner has a major influence on the loyalty of guests and overall satisfaction. GROs has also been provided with tools like customer relationship management (CRM) systems and feedback platforms because of technological improvements, which has enhanced their capacity to monitor and respond to guest problems in a more effective manner (Misra, 2019). It is essential for general resource officers (GROs) to participate in training programs that emphasise interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution to maintain high service standards and function successfully. In general, GROs plays a crucial role in ensuring that visitors have pleasant experience and in cultivating strong connections between those who stay at hospitality institutions and those properties.

Even though GROs plays an essential part in the handling of complaints, there is a paucity of research that explicitly focusses on how the replies they provide influence the level of pleasure that guests feel while dining in restaurants that are located inside luxury resorts. Much of the currently available research concentrates on service quality or customer satisfaction in larger hospitality settings. The unique dynamics of complaint management by GROs receive less attention than the other aspects of hospitality (Wijoyo & Prasetyo, 2024). In addition, whereas several research emphasise the need of providing prompt and individualised replies to complaints, only a limited number of studies investigate the tactics and methodology that general hospitality operations (GROs) adopt to turn potentially unpleasant experiences into good results for guests (Y. Zhang, 2021). The purpose of this research is to fill that void by investigating the precise techniques and methods that are used by GROs at Zeus Restaurant, which is a premium dining establishment that often encounters high expectations from all its foreign customers. Through an examination of the way GROs handle and resolve complaints, the purpose of this study is to identify the aspects that lead to visitor satisfaction in the most efficient manner. Having a solid understanding of these components is very necessary to enhance the quality of service and keep a competitive edge in the luxury hospitality sector. This is especially true currently, when online evaluations and feedback from customers may have a considerable influence on the reputation of a restaurant.

The proper handling of complaints is an essential component of service management in the hospitality business. This is because it has a direct impact on the level of satisfaction and loyalty experienced by guests. According to the findings of research, it is necessary to provide prompt and compassionate replies to complaints to successfully resolve problems and preserve strong relationships with guests (Abbasi, 2023). It is possible that when complaints are addressed properly, visitors may become even happier than they would have been if there had been no problems at all (Aboalnam, 2024; Ahmed, 2020). This is what the service recovery paradox says. Recognition of the problem, provision of a prompt resolution, and subsequent follow-up to assure satisfaction are all components of effective complaint management. These elements, when used together, contribute to the reduction of the adverse effects that the complaint may have. In addition, the use of cutting-edge technology, such as customer relationship management (CRM) tools and automated feedback systems, has enabled businesses to improve their capacity to monitor, handle, and address customer complaints in a more effective manner (Tarhini, 2021; W. Zhang, 2023). When it comes to successfully resolving complaints, it is essential to provide employees with training in emotional intelligence and problem-solving abilities. This training prepares employees to handle concerns with empathy and professionalism (Istanbulluoglu, 2024; Shams, 2020). In general, a complaint management procedure

that is well-structured not only helps to handle individual difficulties, but it also contributes to the overall service quality and reputation of the hospitality institution.

This study will focus on three primary objectives: first, to identify the most common types of complaints encountered at Zeus Restaurant; second, to analyse the response strategies employed by GROs in addressing these complaints; and third, to assess how these strategies influence overall guest satisfaction. The research that will be conducted will be conducted in this study. Through the accomplishment of these goals, the research will be able to give useful insights into the process of complaint resolution, as well as practical suggestions for increasing the efficiency of GROs in resolving guest complaints and raising service standards at Zeus Restaurant. Complaints from customers are an unavoidable aspect of the service delivery process in the luxury hospitality sector. This is especially true at high-end dining places such as Zeus Restaurant at Apsara Beach Front Resort and Villa in Thailand. Even though complaints may be brought about by a variety of service difficulties, such as delays, concerns over the quality of the food, or encounters with personnel, real difficulty comes in the way these complaints are addressed. In the process of addressing such complaints, visitor Relation Officers (GROs) play a crucial role, and their capacity to react effectively may have a considerable impact on the overall happiness of the visitor. On the other hand, not all settlements of complaints end in good results, and complaints that are handled improperly may lead to a loss of customer loyalty, unfavourable reviews, and long-term harm to the image of the business. To maintain the high service standards that are required in luxury dining, it is vital to have a solid understanding of the reaction techniques that are used by GROs and the success of these methods in managing complaints.

Although GROs plays a significant role in the management of guest complaints, there is a paucity of research that focusses on the precise methods that they employ and how certain approaches influence the level of pleasure that guests feel while dining in resort restaurants. In the sphere of hospitality service, many studies concentrate on customer satisfaction or service recovery in a general sense; however, they do not provide a comprehensive analysis of the direct actions and reactions of GROs in high-pressure circumstances such as Zeus Restaurant for example. Because of this information gap, it is necessary to do an in-depth investigation of the way GROs address complaints, the techniques that are the most effective, and the ways in which these replies impact the opinions of guests. It is essential to address this problem to enhance the quality of service, guarantee the retention of guests, and keep a competitive advantage in the luxury hotel business. With the help of this investigation, we want to answer the following important research questions: at Zeus Restaurant, Apsara Beach Front Resort and Villa, Thailand, what are the most prevalent forms of complaints that guests have about their experience there? To what extent do Guest Relation Officers (GROs) react to these concerns, and what methods do they use to resolve problems that have been brought to their attention? In conclusion, how does the reaction of the GROs affect the overall pleasure of the guests and their view of the quality of the service provided by the restaurant? The purpose of this study is to find effective ways of managing complaints that may improve the experiences of guests and maintain high service standards. This will be accomplished by answering the issues that have been discussed.

2. RESEARCH METHOD AND MATERIALS

To investigate the methods and procedures that Guest Relation Officers (GROs) at Zeus Restaurant, Apsara Beach Front Resort and Villa, Thailand, utilise to address complaints from guests, this research took a qualitative approach. To give a comprehensive knowledge of the dynamic and complicated nature of complaint management, which often requires emotional intelligence in addition to problem-solving abilities, the qualitative technique was selected as the research approach. By concentrating on the experiences and points of view of the GROs, the purpose of this study was to determine how the answers of the GROs to complaints influenced the level of satisfaction experienced by guests and the overall quality of the service experience. Interviews with ten GROs who were employed at Zeus Restaurant were performed in a semi-structured format throughout the data gathering process. We chose semi-structured interviews because of their adaptability, which enables the researcher to ask predetermined questions while still delving further into replies when it is deemed important to do so. Questions asked during the interview focused on several important topics, including the following: the many sorts of complaints that are often received, the activities that general

room operators (GROs) did to resolve these concerns, the emotional and psychological components of dealing with disgruntled customers, and the efforts that were made to guarantee that visitors were pleased. The duration of each interview ranged from thirty to forty-five minutes, and the sessions were videotaped and transcribed for the purpose of conducting in-depth analysis (Creswell, 2023).

For the purpose of ensuring the genuineness and trustworthiness of the data, a technique called theme analysis was used. Using this method, the transcripts of the interviews were coded to identify recurring topics and trends in the responses that were supplied by the GROs. Using thematic analysis, it was possible to classify the numerous strategies that were utilised by GROs, such as empathic communication, quick issue resolution, or follow-up activities, and to ascertain the degree to which these strategies influenced the overall experience that guests had while they were staying at the establishment. It was feasible for the study to conclude on the most effective techniques of handling complaints since it was able to identify patterns that were like all of the complaints.

The information that was gathered from the interviews was also cross-referenced with the internal paperwork that was accessible at Zeus Restaurant on the processing of complaints. This material included things like standard operating procedures and reports on guest feedback. A more extensive study was able to be conducted because of this, which offered a more comprehensive background for interpreting the reactions of the GROs. As a result of the results from the qualitative interviews, useful insights were provided into the complaint management procedures at Zeus Restaurant. These insights contributed to a greater knowledge of how GROs efficiently manage client discontent and boost overall service quality in the premium hotel industry.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The study of the interviews conducted with the Guest Relation Officers (GROs) at Zeus Restaurant showed several significant results about the different sorts of complaints, response techniques, and the effects that these factors have on the level of satisfaction experienced by guests. In the first place, the most frequent complaints that were received by GROs were either delays in service, problems with the quality of the food, or the behaviour of the personnel. Delays in service often included wait periods that were longer than anticipated for both food and beverages, and concerns about the quality of the meal centred on issues pertaining to temperature, flavour, and presentation levels. During their encounters with visitors, the personnel were regarded to be impolite or unprofessional, which led to complaints about their behaviour. To properly address these problems, GROs used a variety of different tactics. An instant acknowledgement of the problem, followed by an apology and swift effort to correct the situation, was a prevalent strategy that was used. If there were delays in service, GROs often supplied compensation products or expedited the order. If there were problems with the quality of the meal, they would either replace the dish or provide a discount. In the process of resolving issues about the behaviour of staff members, GROs performed a follow-up chat with the staff person who first raised the concerns and provided extra training if it was deemed appropriate. It was also emphasised that active listening and empathic communication are essential components in the process of addressing concerns, which enables visitors to feel heard and appreciated inside the establishment.

Based on the results of the thematic analysis of the interview data, it was determined that these response strategies had a significant impact on the degree of pleasure that was experienced by the visitors. Satisfied visitors expressed higher levels of satisfaction when they experienced responses that were both prompt and effective. A significant number of these vacationers acknowledged their appreciation for the individualised attention and follow-up actions that were carried out by the GROs. Notable observations were made about the fact that the proactive approach to problem-solving and empathetic communication were characteristics that contributed to the overall improvement of the tourist experience. This was true even in circumstances in which the initial complaint would have been a source of stress. Furthermore, the study found that a positive impact on guest views was produced by constantly following up with visitors after a complaint had been resolved. This was determined to be the case. This follow-up consisted of checking in with clients to ensure that they

were happy with their experience and delivering extra gestures of goodwill, such as making complimentary products accessible or providing discounts on future trips. It appears from the data that the capability of GROs to manage complaints with empathy, speed, and a focus on passenger recovery has a substantial effect on Zeus Restaurant's ability to sustain high levels of service quality and to foster visitor loyalty.

3.2. Discussions

In the process of addressing complaints at Zeus Restaurant, Apsara Beach Front Resort and Villa, the results of this research provide vital insights into the function that Guest Relation Officers (GROs) play. According to the findings of the study, the sorts of complaints that are most encountered include delays in service, problems with the quality of the food, and worries about the behaviour of the personnel. In the hospitality business, where the expectation of high service standards often leads to increased client sensitivity to concerns, these complaints reflect the prevalent obstacles that are encountered. To design focused strategies to successfully address these frequent complaint kinds and enhance overall guest satisfaction, it is essential to demonstrate an understanding of these common complaint types.

According to the findings of the research, the tactics that are used by GROs highlight the significance of early acknowledgement and remedial action in the handling of complaints. To effectively handle complaints, it is essential to immediately acknowledge the problem, provide a genuine apology, and find a solution to the issue as soon as possible. This strategy is consistent with the current body of research, which emphasises the need for prompt answers to complaints as a means of mitigating unpleasantness, experiences and restoring confidence in the guest experience. The proactive efforts that are made by GROs, such as supplying compensating products or speeding service, assist to exhibit a dedication to the happiness of customers and have the potential to dramatically affect the way guests perceive the quality of the service the establishment provides.

While the GROs' response techniques, it was determined that active listening and empathic communication were particularly important components. Not only do hospitality service representatives (GROs) affirm the sentiments of their visitors by addressing their problems with empathy, but they also create an atmosphere in which guests feel cherished and understood. study that emphasises the significance of emotional intelligence in service recovery is compatible with this conclusion, which is congruent with that study. The effective management of complaints requires not only the resolution of the issue at hand but also the management of the emotional reaction of the customer, which could turn a potentially bad experience into a good one.

A further significant result that emerged from the research was the influence that follow-up activities had on the levels of satisfaction experienced by visitors. Based on research findings, it has been shown that following up with customers after resolving a complaint and delivering further acts of kindness might potentially improve visitor opinions and promote loyalty. It is vital to take this follow-up step to guarantee that the first resolution satisfies the expectations of the customer and to reaffirm the restaurant's dedication to providing service of the highest possible quality. In addition to this, it offers the possibility of increased consumer interaction, which may result in increased levels of customer satisfaction and a more robust connection between the company and its customers.

The efficacy of the GROs' complaint-handling processes at Zeus Restaurant is brought to light by these data, which also have practical implications for other hospitality situations. According to the findings of the research, employing comparable methods across a variety of hospitality settings, such as providing fast issue resolution, communicating with empathy, and following up on a frequent basis, may improve service quality and increase the level of pleasure experienced by guests. It is possible for general room attendants to further enhance their capacity to handle complaints and contribute to a pleasant client experience by participating in training programs that concentrate on these factors. To summarise, the findings of the research highlight the significant role that GROs play in ensuring that service quality is maintained and in addressing complaints from guests. The General Relations Officers at Zeus Restaurant can handle concerns in a timely manner and favourably affect the pleasure of their guests because they apply effective response tactics and demonstrate empathy. Not only do these procedures help to settle individual concerns, but they also contribute to the general success and

reputation of the restaurant when they are implemented. In the future, research might investigate the long-term impact of these complaint-handling techniques on the loyalty and retention of guests. Additionally, these results could be compared with those from other hospitality settings to confirm and expand upon the conclusions of the study.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it has been determined that the effective handling of complaints by Guest Relation Officers (GROs) is essential for maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty at Zeus Restaurant, Apsara Beach Front Resort and Villa. The research highlights the need of prompt acknowledgement, compassionate discussion, and the prompt resolution of complaints as crucial components in the process of changing potentially negative encounters into positive outcomes. The execution of follow-up actions, such as guest check-ins and the supply of compensatory gestures, greatly enhances the level of satisfaction experienced by visitors and highlights the establishment's commitment to providing exceptional service. Taking into consideration these findings, it is essential that general resource officers (GROs) be equipped with strong interpersonal skills and the ability to solve problems, in addition to using cutting-edge technology for efficient complaint handling. By using these strategies, hospitality establishments have the ability to effectively solve the issues that their customers are experiencing, improve the quality of their services, and preserve a positive reputation in the highly competitive luxury market.

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