

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Housekeeping Department

The word “housekeeping” gives a clear picture of what the department does. The term comes from two words, “house,” which refers to a building or place of residence, and “keeping,” which means the act of caring for, maintaining, and looking after something. When these two words are combined in the context of hotel operations, Housekeeping refers to the department that is responsible for maintaining the overall cleanliness, orderliness, and presentation of the entire hotel property. According to Murdana, (2023) housekeeping is the department within a hotel that is tasked with upholding cleanliness and comfort across all areas of the property, ranging from guest rooms and bathrooms to corridors, lobbies, and outdoor spaces.

In hotel operation, the terms “housekeeping,” “housekeeper,” and “room attendant” are often used interchangeably in everyday practice, but they actually refer to different things. The term housekeeping refers to the department as a whole, covering all cleaning, maintenance, and presentation operations within the hotel property, including room attendants, public areas, and gardeners. According to Simatupang & Pandiangan, (2022), the housekeeping department is responsible for maintaining cleanliness, orderliness, and comfort across the entire hotel environment. The term housekeeper, in a more specific professional sense, refers to the person who holds a managerial or supervisory role within the department, such as the Assistant Housekeeper or Housekeeping Supervisor, who oversees the work of the cleaning staff and ensures that service standards are consistently met.

Meanwhile, the term room attendant refers specifically to the frontline operational staff who area directly assigned to clean and prepare individual guest rooms.

According to Bhatnagar & Dheeraj, (2019), the housekeeping department is responsible for quickly preparing clean rooms for arriving guests while also routinely cleaning and maintaining the entire hotel so that it continues to looks as inviting and well-kept as it did on the day it first opened. This operational function requires close coordination with the front office department, particularly in managing room status updates, and with the engineering department to ensure that all room facilities are in proper working condition.

Andre et al., (2020) emphasized that the housekeeping department can make guests delighted and more likely to return or recommend the hotel to others, which enables the hotel to generate more profit over time. A hotel may have impressive architecture and modern facilities, but if the rooms are not clean, the towels are not fresh, or the public spaces are not well-maintained, guests will form a negative impression of the hotel. This confirms that the housekeeping department's function goes beyond physical cleaning and touches directly on guest satisfaction, loyalty, and the hotel's long-term reputation.

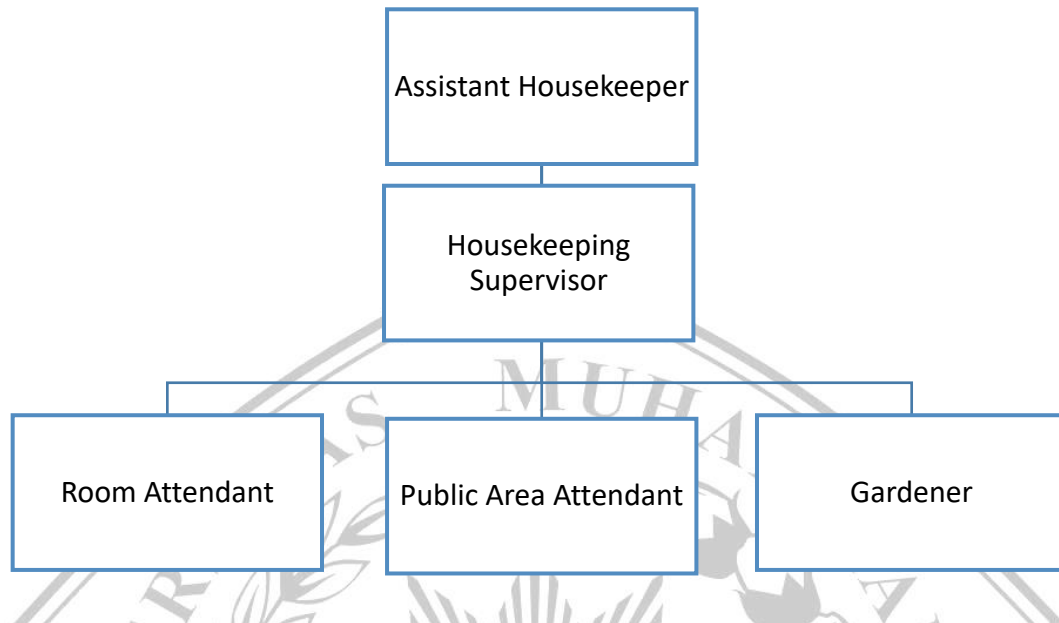
At Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu, the resort's Japanese concept introduces as a higher standard of cleanliness that is deeply rooted in cultural values. In Japanese hospitality culture, known as *omotenashi*, cleanliness is not simply a matter of hygiene but a form of sincere care and respect for the guest. This cultural expectation means that every aspect of the guest environment, from the neatness of the tatami room to the condition of the private outdoor onsen, must reflect a level of attention and care that goes beyond what is typically expected in a conventional

hotel. The housekeeping staff at Onsen are therefore expected to understand and internalize these standards as part of their daily work.

The importance of the housekeeping department at Onsen is further reinforced by the resort's unique physical features, particularly the presence of private outdoor onsen in each cottage. Unlike conventional hotels where housekeeping responsibilities are generally limited to indoor spaces, the housekeeping staff at Onsen must also maintain private open-air bathing areas, outdoor balconies, garden pathways that form part of the guest's accommodation experience. This expands the scope of housekeeping responsibilities significantly and requires a higher level of physical effort, attention to detail, and coordination among team members. According to Bhatnagar & Dheeraj, (2019), high-quality housekeeping practices are directly correlated with customer satisfaction and guest loyalty, which makes the housekeeping department's performance at Onsen an essential factor in the resort's long term success as a destination.

Organizational Structure of the Housekeeping Department at Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu

To understand how responsibilities are distributed within the housekeeping department at Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu, it is necessary to recognize the hierarchy of roles that governs daily operations. As organizational structure defines the chain of command and accountability within a department, clarifying who is responsible for what, how tasks are assigned, and how quality is monitored across all levels of the team. At Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu, the housekeeping department is organized across two levels of management and operational level, as illustrated in the following figure.



Picture 2.1 Organization Structure of Housekeeping Department

The roles within the housekeeping department at Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu are described as follows:

1. Assistant Housekeeper

The Assistant Housekeeper occupies the highest position within the housekeeping department at Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu. This role is responsible for overseeing all housekeeping operations across the entire resort, establishing and enforcing service standards, managing staff schedules and workload distribution, and acting as the primary liaison between the housekeeping department and hotel management. The Assistant Housekeeper ensures that all cleaning and maintenance activities are carried out in accordance with the resort's quality standards and that any operational issues are addressed promptly and appropriately.

2. Housekeeping Supervisor

The Housekeeping Supervisor directly below the Assistant Housekeeper and serves as the immediate supervisor of all frontline operational staff. The primary responsibility of this role is to monitor and supervise the daily cleaning activities of room attendant, the public area attendant, and ensuring that every task is completed on time and meet the hotel's required standard. The Housekeeping Supervisor also conducts room inspections after cleaning is completed, communicates guest requests or complains to the relevant staff, and reports any significant issues to the Assistant Housekeeper for further action.

3. Room Attendant

Room attendants occupy the frontline of the housekeeping department and are directly responsible for cleaning and preparing individual guest cottages at the resort. Their duties include removing rubbish, changing bed linen and kimono, cleaning the bathroom, maintaining the private onsen and balcony, and arranging all amenities in the living room area before reporting to the supervisor that the room is ready for inspection. At Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu, the room attendant team consists of four staff members who carry out these responsibilities in accordance with the resort's standard operating procedure on a daily basis.

4. Public Area Attendant

The public area attendant is responsible for maintaining the cleanliness and presentation of all shared spaces within the resort the exist outside of individual guest cottages. These areas include corridors, lobbies, restaurants, public restrooms, and other shared spaces used by guests. Unlike room attendants who work within the defined and relatively controlled space of a private guest room, the public area

attendant manages a large and open territory that is continuously in use by guests, requiring consistent attention and repeated cleaning throughout each shift.

5. Gardener

The gardener team is responsible for maintaining the outdoor areas and landscaping of Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu, including caring for plants, trees, and all other natural elements that form part of the resort's outdoor environment. The gardeners at Onsen contribute directly to the visual and atmospheric quality of the resort by ensuring that all outdoor spaces are well-maintained, clean, and presentable at all times. The gardener team at Onsen consists of six staff member who work under the Housekeeping Supervisor and coordinate with the broader housekeeping team, particularly during peak seasons when their assistance may be required to support room turnover operations.

2.2 Room Attendant

A room attendant is one of the most essential frontline positions within the housekeeping department of a hotel. In the simplest term, a room attendant is a hotel employee who is directly responsible for cleaning, preparing, and maintaining the condition of guest rooms so that every room is clean, comfortable, and ready for use before a guest checks in and throughout the duration of their stay. According to Simatupang & Pandiangan, (2022), a room attendant is regarded as a role accountable for the cleanliness, aesthetic appeal, and comfort experienced by guest throughout their stay at the hotel. This definition highlights that the room attendant's responsibility is not only about physical cleaning but also about ensuring that the overall condition and appearance of the room meets a standard that creates a positive and comfortable experience for guests.

Rumekso, as cited in Sari et al., (2023), further described room attendants as service personnel who hold responsibility for upholding the cleanliness, comfort, aesthetic value, and overall completeness of the room. This means that a room attendant is expected to do more than simply sweep and mop. They are responsible for ensuring that every detail of the room, from the arrangement of pillows on the bed to the placement of toiletries in the bathroom and the condition of all in-room facilities, is exactly as it should be before the guest enters. According to Sinaga & Lapotulo, (2022), room attendants are also expected to perform regular checks and maintain consistent coordination with supervisors and other team members to ensure that all rooms under their responsibility are properly managed throughout each shift.

For those working in the hospitality field, building a positive impression on guests, delivering excellent service, and upholding a professional self image carry considerable importance. Since room attendants engage directly with guests while performing their duties, they need to remain mindful of how a positive first impression is formed toward guests who stay overnight. The impression created does not only influence how guest perceive the staff personally, but also shapes the broader image of the hotel as a workplace. A poor initial impression has the potential to drive guests away, including those who might have stayed in the future. Hence, what matters is not merely creating a good impression at the outset, but consistently sustaining it throughout the service process. Room attendants are expected to consistently uphold honesty, while also displaying kindness and friendliness whenever communicating with guests, all of which should remain aligned with the hotel's established rules and standard operating procedures (SOP).

A Standard Operating Procedure, commonly abbreviated as SOP, can be understood as a written guideline that outlines the precise steps a room attendant must follow in order to complete a task correctly on every occasion. The presence of an SOP holds importance within a hotel setting because it ensures that every member of the team understands and adheres to the same established rules and procedures. Within an SOP, instructions and guidelines are typically arranged step by step to support the accurate and consistent execution of tasks or processes, thereby helping to guarantee that work outcomes meet expected quality. This mechanism essentially functions to ensure that those responsible for cleaning rooms are able to carry out their duties in a consistent and efficient manner, in accordance with the hotel's established standard of cleanliness and service. According to Wirya, I. M. S., (2023), SOP is a set of rules that helps make sure that different tasks in a company are done well and without problems. To make sure guests are happy with the rooms, there are certain things the rooms must have. The things can be described as follows:

1. Being clean is super important and the person in charge of the guest room needs to take it seriously. The cleanliness of the room and items directly used by guests must be maintained properly.
2. Comfort makes the room feel nice and cozy. This can be done by making sure that the things in the room, like the furniture and bedding, are in the same good shape as the room itself.
3. Attractiveness is related to the harmony of room decoration, for example the suitability of the color of a picture or painting to the layout of the room. The goal is to create an impression of harmony in the interior decoration of the room.

4. Safety is very important. Guests should feel secure and free from any accidents in the room. This includes things like getting shocked by electricity, slipping on the bathroom floor, or falling down. Security also means keeping guests personal things safe from being lost or stolen.

Within the Housekeeping department, there is one role that is closely related to the room attendant yet distinct different in scope and working environment, namely the public area attendant. Room attendant focus on private guest rooms, meanwhile public area attendants are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness and presentation of all shared spaces that guests encounter throughout their stay, including lobbies, corridors, restaurant, public restroom, and garden areas. These areas are expected to be clean throughout the day and public area attendants are tasked with keeping them safe and hygienic. In this sense, public area attendants contribute significantly to the guest's overall impression of the hotel, because the cleanliness of shared spaces is often the first thing guest notice upon arrival, even before they enter their rooms.

The responsibilities of a public area include cleaning of public spaces such as lobbies, corridors, restaurant, public restroom, as well as ensuring that outdoors areas remain clean and free from debris. This makes the role particularly broad in scope compared to room attendants, whose area of responsibility is the interior of individual guest rooms. Beyond cleaning, public area attendants are also expected to respond to guest requests and inquires in a timely and courteous manner, assist guest when needed, and report any incidents or maintenance issues to the housekeeping supervisor immediately.

In terms of challenges, public area attendants face a set of obstacles that are somewhat distinct from those encountered by room attendants. High traffic areas require frequent attention throughout the day rather than single cleaning session per shift, meaning public area attendants must work continuously around guest and ongoing hotel activities without disrupting operations. This is particularly challenging during peak seasons when guest movement in shared spaces is highest. Unlike room attendant who work inside a defined private space with a clear start and end point for each room, public area attendants must manage a large and open territory that is constantly in use. The role also carries significant physical demands, requiring constant standing, walking, bending, and the operations of various cleaning equipment throughout the shift, all while maintaining a friendly demeanor and staying alert to safety protocols in spaces where guest are actively present. At a resort like Onsen, outdoor work adds another layer of difficulty, as public area attendants must maintain cleanliness in open spaces that are exposed to weather conditions and natural debris such as fallen leaves, making their workload less predictable than of room attendants who work in controlled indoor environments. Despite these differences, both roles share the same of delivering a clean, safe, and comfortable environment for guests, and both operate under the same housekeeping department hierarchy and service standards.

2.3 Guest Service

One of the most essential elements of the hospitality industry is guest service. Guest service involves all the processes done by hotel staff to meet or surpass the guests' expectations during their stay, such as hospitality, communication, responsiveness, and professionalism. Guest satisfaction is significantly linked to the

quality level of service offered by an employee of a hotel, as asserted by Cahyaningrum et al., (2024). In their study in Yogyakarta, they saw that quality service is the service is the key to the formation of a good guest experience. This includes how well the staff members interact with the guests, serve them, and settle their problems. Guest service, therefore, is just not a mere routine, but is a core strategy in loyalty formation and guest satisfaction.

In addition, also stressed by Giovanni et al., (2022) is the contribution played by the housekeeping department toward ensuring quality guest service. Through their work at the Isola Scara Hotel Italia, they reveal that cleanliness and room readiness play a significant contribution towards the impression guests make of their total stay. Despite the fact that housekeeping staff, like room attendants, may not interact with guests face-to-face, their service has an influence on the perception of service by the guests. For instance, a clean room, restocked amenities, careful details yield a sense of trust and comfort. This goes towards highlighting that not just the front office staff alone is the provider of the service, who make each customer feel special by the environment they leave behind. Moreover, Julius Buulolo & Krisnawati Setyaningrum, (2024) believe that service quality, not hotel facilities, is the most appropriate way of ensuring guests are satisfied. In their study of the Chanti Semarang hotel, they reiterate the point that extended interactions, personalized services, and responsiveness have a far stronger emotional appeal with guests compared to physical properties. Their study substantiates the point that room attendants, being an integral part of the front-end service personnel, are a key component of the service quality process. While the room attendant may not necessarily have direct interaction with guests, his or her function of preparing the

rooms properly, accommodating special requirements, and ensuring proper levels of cleanliness is an essential form of guest service that defines the entire hotel experience.

Raditya Prayogi et al., (2024) explain that guest service needs to be delivered with empathy, discipline, and attention to detail. The authors identify that the hotel staff with patience and understanding are better able to deliver on guest needs. This involves the room attendants who not only need to finish their work efficiently but also with attention and a service orientation. Even when the guests are not around, the room attendants' work exemplifies the hotel's level of quality. From these findings, it can be said that guest services is a team effort that involves the front-of-house and back-of-house staff and requires the balancing of technical competency and emotional intelligence in order to function effectively.

2.4 Responsibilities of The Room Attendant

The responsibilities of room attendants in guest service cover two core areas: operational service dan interpersonal service. The first is operational service, which refers to the core physical duties that room attendants carry out to maintain the condition of guest rooms. According to Jefri et al., (2023), operational service consist of three aspects: cleanliness, neatness, and comfort. Each of these aspects reflects a specific dimension of the room attendant's physical responsibility in preparing and maintaining guest rooms to the hotel's required standards.

a. Cleanliness refers to the primary and most fundamental physical duty of room attendants. Cleanliness means ensuring that every part of the guest room is thoroughly free from dirt, dust, and contamination, including the floor, furniture, bathroom, and all surfaces. A clean room is the most basic expectation of any hotel

guest, and maintaining it to the hotel's required standard is the foundation of the room attendant's operational responsibility.

b. Neatness refers to the orderly and well-arranged appearance of the guest room after the cleaning process is complete. Neatness means ensuring that the bed is properly made, all furniture and items are placed in their correct positions, towels are neatly arranged, and the overall appearance of the room is visually presentable. While cleanliness focuses on hygiene, neatness focuses on the visual presentation of the room, which directly affects the guest's first impression upon entering.

c. Comfort refers to the responsibility of room attendants to ensure that all in room facilities and amenities are functioning properly and available for use by the guests. Comfort means checking that the bed, bathroom, towels, room facilities such as the air conditioner, television, lighting, and all other in room amenities are in proper working condition and correctly placed before the guest checks in. By ensuring comfort, room attendants make sure that guests can enjoy their stay without encountering any functional problems in their room.

Other than cleaning, the room attendants also need to look professional. This entails being neat in uniform, well-groomed in terms of personal hygiene, and courteous. Room attendant needs to demonstrate honesty, discipline, and respect towards the guests, the superiors, and fellow workers. These are as important as their cleaning duties. Also, the room attendants must be aware of the rules and standards of the hotel in preparing the guest rooms. They are not merely cleaning the room, but making it "ready for sale." If they execute the rules well and work hard, the guests will be satisfied and happy with the service. The satisfactory

performance of the room attendants will be able to improve the image and satisfaction of the hotel.

A room attendant is a hotel employee responsible for providing guest room services, performed by both male and female staff, in rooms that are either occupied or vacant. Chandrasari et al., (2023) room attendant plays a vital role in hotel operations, as it is responsible for maintaining cleanliness, orderliness, aesthetic appeal, and comfort throughout all hotel areas, both inside and outside the building, including guest rooms, rented facilities, office areas, and public amenities such as restrooms.

Beyond operational service, the second core area of responsibility is interpersonal service, which refers to the way room attendants present themselves and interact with guests in the course of their daily work. Room attendants are required to maintain a neat and professional appearance, including honesty, politeness, responsiveness and courtesy toward guests, supervisors, and colleagues Surya & Zakiah, (2025).

a. Neat and professional appearance means room attendants are expected to always look neat and professional while on duty. This means wearing a clean uniform and keeping good grooming. Because the way they look represents the hotel's image in front of the guests.

b. Honesty means that room attendants must demonstrate integrity and transparency in their work, especially because they operate in the private spaces of guests and regularly come into contact with guests' personal belongings, facility damage, and any matters that require the attention of supervisors or management. When room attendants act honestly, guests feel secure and develop trust in the hotel.

c. Politeness means that room attendants must use respectful and appropriate language and behavior in all interactions with guests, colleagues, and supervisors. Politeness is demonstrated through the use of courteous greetings, appropriate tone of voice, and considerate conduct in every guest interaction. When room attendants are polite, guests feel welcomed and valued, which contributes to a positive overall guest experience.

d. Responsiveness means that room attendants must be prompt and attentive in addressing guest requests and needs during their stay. Being responsive involves not only reacting quickly to direct requests, but also demonstrating awareness of guest needs and taking the initiative to fulfill them in a timely and professional manner.

e. Courtesy means showing genuine kindness, consideration, and care toward guests and colleagues in every interaction. Courtesy goes beyond following rules of politeness; it reflects a sincere attitude of respect and attentiveness toward others. When room attendants demonstrate courtesy, guests feel appreciated and welcomed, which creates a more positive and memorable hotel experience.

In addition, room attendants must understand proper room preparation techniques and standard room layouts, including the correct sequence of room cleaning and the placement of guest amenities, starting from the bathroom, bedroom, and living area. Therefore, room attendants are expected to perform their duties professionally, effectively, and efficiently to enhance the overall quality of hotel services. The better the quality of work performed by room attendants in carrying out their responsibilities, the higher the level of guest satisfaction, which

in turn increases guest loyalty and positively shapes guest's perceptions of hotel services, particularly room service.

In the company, the rules are presented in a slightly different manner, called *Standard Operating Procedure* (SOP). Standard Operating Procedure can be defined as “a document which explains the activities of the operation of the business in such a way that the business in such a way that the tasks are performed correctly, accurately, and consistently in order to produce the desired output as per established standard.” Below is the SOP for the Room Attendant at Onsen Hot Spring Resort:

1. Entering Guest Room

- Ring the doorbell and announce, “Housekeeping” if there is no reply, ring again up three times.
- Open the door slowly announcing “Housekeeping” again. If the guest shower, close the door and leave quietly.
- If the guest is inside, apologize by saying, “Good morning/afternoon, evening Madame/Sir, I am from housekeeping, may I clean your room?”
- If the guest agrees, proceed. If the guest requests cleaning to be done later, politely ask guest the time that best suits them.
- If the guest requests later cleaning than your shift, handover the request to your supervisor.

2. Vacuum To Clean Guest Room

- Place the vacuum cleaner and the trolley at the side of the door before knocking 3 times at the guest door and announcing “housekeeping”
- Make sure the machine is working and the accessories are ready, hose, nozzle, flat nozzle and round brush.

- Pick up pieces of paper, trash or other items from the floor. On carpets/tatami, check for stains and loose threads. Cut loose threads with scissors. Remove stains using “spot clean procedure”.
- Plug in and switch on the vacuum cleaner.
- Vacuum the floor and tatami, starting from the inner corner of the room, using overlapping strokes. Pay attention to areas under sofa and table.
- Vacuum the floor skirting and edges using crevice head and a round brush
- Be careful not to push against furniture because it will cause damage (scratch and scuff marks).
- Move loose furniture items when vacuuming and replace them when finished.

3. How To Make Up a Bed

- Pull the bed away from the wall
- Bed sheet, pillow and duvet cover must be stripped one by one, ensure guest clothing is not being rolled into bed sheet and taken away with soiled linen.
- Place duvet and pillows on a chair and not on the floor/tatami for hygiene reasons.
- Place soiled linen into the soiled-linen bag and not on the floor.
- Change the mattress/pad or duvet mattress if it is stained, turn mattress according to schedule.
- Spread the bed sheet over the mattress and tuck in all four corners. Pull the sheet firmly over the mattress while tucking in.
- Place the duvet cover on the bed. The left and right corner of the duvet and insert them into the respective corners of the duvet cover. Straighten the edges and corners.

- Do the same with the pillow.
- Smooth the duvet and place it in the middle of the bed with 40cm hanging over the sides and bottom edge.
- Use your knee and push the bed back against the wall, and smooth the bed out.

2.5 Obstacles Faced of Room Attendants

Room Attendants are the pillars of the hospitality industry and play a key role in ensuring that guests have a good and comfortable stay. Their activities extend beyond cleaning; they are among the contributors to the development of a warm environment that offers quality satisfaction to guests. However, although they are very crucial, room attendants face various challenges that can interfere with their performance in offering quality service Puspitasari et al., (2025).

1. Back-to-back arrival

There is very limited time between guest check-out and the next check-in, commonly referred to as back-to-back arrival. This situation significantly affects the performance of room attendants, as they are required to prepare guest rooms within a very tight timeframe. The limited time available increases work pressure, requiring room attendants to complete cleaning, inspection, and room setup quickly while still maintaining cleanliness standards and service quality. As a result, this condition can lead to physical fatigue, increased stress levels, and challenges in ensuring that rooms are fully ready and meet hotel standards before the next guest arrives.

2. Time Management

Time management is another challenge that is presented by the fact that the room attendants are always under time pressure. This can cause the room attendants to rush the cleaning process, hence compromising the quality of service. Moreover, the need to ensure that the hotel maintains high standards of cleanliness within a certain period can cause the room attendants to experience anxiety. Zhang et al., (2022).

3. Teamwork and Coordination

Teamwork and coordination are essential element in the operation of the housekeeping department. Room attendants often work under high-pressure conditions, particularly during peak seasons when the volume of rooms that need to be cleaned increases significantly. In such conditions, the ability of room attendants to collaborate, share tasks, and support one another directly affects the quality and consistency of service delivery. When room attendants coordinate effectively, they are able to distribute workload more evenly, manage time constraints more efficiently, and ensure that all rooms are prepared to the required standard before guests arrive.

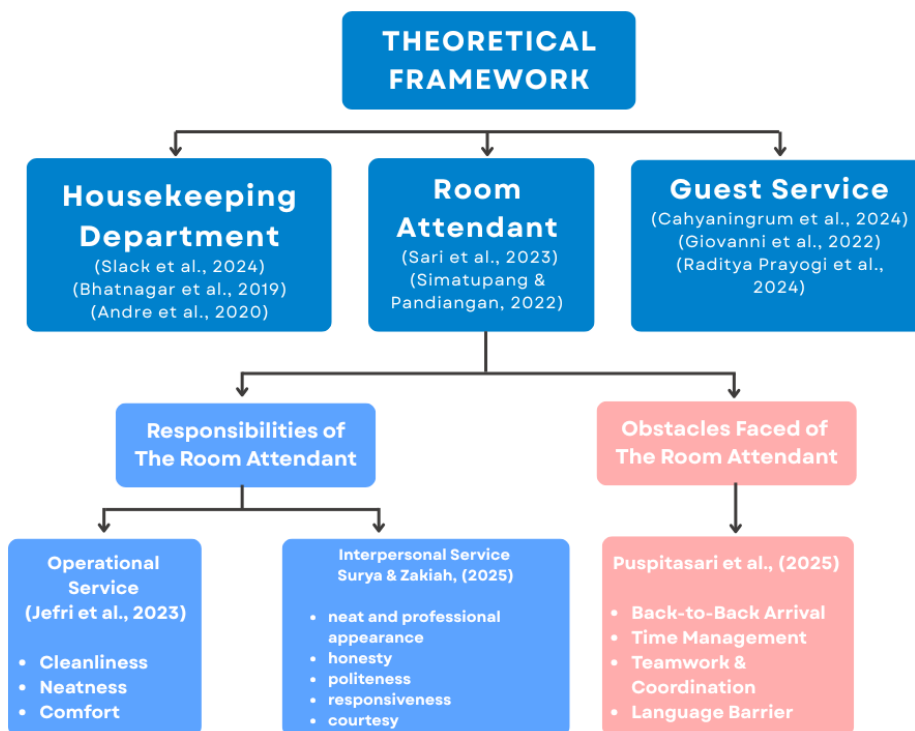
However, the absence of strong teamwork and coordination can become a significant operational challenge. When coordination among room attendant staff is weak, tasks may be delayed, work distribution may become unbalanced, and service quality may decline, ultimately affecting the overall guest experience. Without effective teamwork, these conditions can lead to work overload, stress, and reduced performance. Widiastuti et al., (2024) further highlight that effective team coordination in the housekeeping department

requires mutual trust, clear communication, and a shared commitment to maintaining service quality. Therefore, teamwork and coordination are not merely desirable qualities but are critical operational requirements for room attendants in delivering consistent guest service.

4. Language Barrier

Language barriers remain a crucial in guest-facing roles, especially when interacting with international visitors. According to Poznansky & Davis, (2021), limited English proficiency among hospitality staff in Ukraine often led to miscommunication and negatively affected service quality. This issue reflects a broader concern in the industry, including at Onsen Resort Batu, where room attendants occasionally struggle to understand guest request, particularly when language tools or interpretation support is lacking.

In summary, there are several challenges that room attendants are exposed to, and these challenges can affect their performance and service quality. The fact that back-to-back guests arrive and the time factor are important in this regard, and teamwork and communication are essential in dealing with the demands of the workload. Moreover, the languages factor is also significant in this regard, and understanding this is important in the sense that it emphasizes the importance of dealing with the challenges in the right manner.



Picture 2. Theoretical Framework

