

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

An accommodation establishment that provides room rental services along with food and beverage offerings is generally categorized as a hotel Tahiri, A et al., (2021). In a broader sense, a hotel can be defined as a commercially operated business that runs within a building structure, providing facilities accessible to the public, ranging from room accommodation to food, beverages, and various supporting services. Given that hotel buildings are often large in scale and height, they are capable of accommodating hundreds or even thousands of guests at once in order to sell their services. For this reason, hotels are expected to deliver services that create comfort for guests, with the hope that such comfort will encourage guests to return for future stays. Among the various department contributing to guest comfort, housekeeping holds a particularly significant role. The term housekeeping itself originates from two words, “house,” referring to a building or dwelling, and “keeping,” which implies the act of caring for, looking after, and maintaining something. Within hotel operations, housekeeping functions as the department tasked with maintaining the cleanliness of guest rooms, public areas, bars, restaurants, and other outlets.

Operational departments that support operational activities at Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu consist of employee relations, front desk services, housekeeping, food and beverage, sales and marketing, finance, engineering and maintenance, as well as security. Housekeeping department, and more specifically, the room attendants, where the activities of room attendants can be argued to be

complicated and heavy considering that rooms are one that is frequently criticized by guest because of effectiveness and service quality provided is based on the room attendant performance performed by the room attendants. Room attendants must do their job as best as they can so that guests that spend the night here will be comfortable and satisfied with result made by the room attendants, in the expectation of visitors returning to this hotel to stay Fatimah et al., (2024).

To provide quality room service standards, the behavior and actions of the room attendants must be considered properly where the room attendants must understand the guests who use room services because providing quality service to guests has the aim of winning business competition, in the era of globalization such as now, only with the hotel's physical facilities or offering the perfect beauty of the room does not guarantee that guests will choose it, as long as there are funds to provide physical facilities, a hotel can compete because facilities and equipment can be provided Taviprawati et al., (2020).

The research on exploring the responsibilities and obstacles of room attendants in guest service at the onsen resort batu points to a string of distinct problems having a serious bearing on the efficacy of the housekeeping service. One of the most serious problem is the high rate of turnover of room attendants, a common problem in the hospitality sector in general. Turnover, in this case, has been found to be more than 70% in some areas, mainly due to low salaries, fewer opportunities of development in their work, and the physically demanding character of the work Kwortnik & Thompson, (2020). This high turnover rate not only yields a discontinuity in the service, but also yields extra burden on the rest of the employees. This inconsistency in the quality of service is hence likely to affect the

guests' experience in a negative way, as new employees will need time to get acquainted with the facility's standards and expectations.

In addition, the emotional and physical requirements of the room attendants present another problem. Room attendants have to do physically demanding work while being cheerful, and that causes emotional burnout and job dissatisfaction. This emotional work is more extensive in a guests-contact role, in which attendants must control their feelings in the processing of the guests' requests and complaint resolutions. When the room are physically exhausted, the quality of the service is impaired, and it causes low levels of guest satisfaction.

In study of Bhatnagar & Dheeraj, (2019), how housekeeping quality not only directly affects short-term satisfaction of the guests but also the likelihood of repeat business in the hospitality sector. They found that in many cases, hotels give greater attention to the front-office and naturally overlook the vital role of the housekeeping, including cleanliness, linen, and in-room facilities, in the guests' impression. They employed a quantitative survey methodology, gathering data on guests of various properties in the Chandigarh Tri-city area. Their structured questionnaires quantified guests' perception of various dimensions of housekeeping service. They demonstrated high correlation of high-quality housekeeping practices and customer satisfaction and loyalty of the guests. These findings strongly support the argument that highly qualified and responsible attending room servants are the indicators of a good stay, and that it is worthwhile to heavily invest in housekeeping operations in a property's long terms success.

Bin Ahmad, (2024) examined the issue of the effect of different aspects of housekeeping operations on the customers' satisfaction in hospitality facilities. In

order to examine it, Ahmad took quantitative approach by applying structured questionnaires to the customers in the hotels. Data gathered focused on the views of the customers on cleanliness, condition of the room, responsiveness of the housekeeping staff, and condition of the rooms. Findings revealed that enhanced cleanliness, cleanliness of the rooms, and politeness and professionalism of the attendants in the units proved to be the major drivers towards enhancing the satisfaction of the visitors. Ahmad established that enhancing these housekeeping factors can lead to enhanced reviews, customer loyalty, and performing hotels.

According to Murdana, (2023), room attendant is not only responsible for the cleanliness and tidiness of guest rooms, but also helps build the hotel's image. Room attendants, as part of this department, are directly involved in preparing rooms and maintaining guest comfort. Their daily activities, such as bed making, keeping the bathroom clean, and checking the amenities, are all mandatory to offer a comfortable stay to hotel guests. Similarly, the research conducted by Giovanni et al., (2022) emphasizes that room attendant plays a significant role in forming guest impressions based on the cleanliness and presentation of guest rooms. Their study in the Isola Sacra Hotel in Italy revealed that the hotel guests the quality of the hotel depending on the hygiene and maintenance of hotel rooms.

There have been several studies on housekeeping and room attendants' contribution to hotel service quality and operation. Yanti et al., (2022) aimed to examine room attendant service quality as a determining factor for guest satisfaction improvement at Hotel Vila Lumbung. The study was interested in service delivery to contribute to guests' perceptions of hotel stay. Sari et al., (2023) also highlighted room attendants' empathy in Aston Batam Hotel services.

Although earlier studies have explored housekeeping's impact on guest satisfaction through guest surveys in conventional hotels in areas like India, Chandigarh, and Aston Batam, a key research gap remains: there is little in-depth qualitative research on the specific responsibilities and challenges of room attendants from their own perspective, particularly in a unique themed resort setting like Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu. These studies mainly highlight guest views rather than staff issues, such as high turnover rates, emotional and physical demands, and context specific like peak season, language barrier with international guests, and team coordination in demanding conditions. This study addresses this gap by qualitative interviews with room attendants, building on concepts of duties and obstacles tailored to Japanese themed resort.

Based on the background described above, this study identifies two main problems that become the focus of this research. The first problem concerns the responsibilities of room attendants in delivering guest service at Onsen Hot Spring Resort. Although room attendants play a central role in the hotel's housekeeping operation, there is limited understanding of what their specific responsibilities actually involve in the context of a themed resort like Onsen Hot Spring Resort.

The second problem concerns the obstacles that room attendants face in carrying out those responsibilities. As discussed above, room attendants at Onsen often work under demanding condition, including back-to-back guest arrivals during peak seasons, time pressure in preparing rooms, language barriers when serving international guests, and the need for strong teamwork and coordination to maintain service quality. These obstacles directly affect the ability of room attendants to deliver consistent and quality guest service. Therefore, this study

focuses on exploring both the responsibilities and obstacles of room attendants in guest service at Onsen Hot Spring Resort, with the aim providing a clear and detailed understanding of their roles and the challenges they face in their daily work.

1.2 Research Problem

The formulation of the problem in this study is as follows:

1. What are the responsibilities of Room Attendant in serving guest at Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu?
2. What are the obstacles faced by Room Attendants at Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu?

1.3 Research Objective

Based on the background and the formulation of the problem, this research was conducted with the objectives, namely:

1. To identify the responsibilities of Room Attendant in serving guests at Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu
2. To examine the obstacles faced by Room Attendant in their daily operations at Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu

1.4 Research Significant

This research is significant for hotel management, especially at Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu, to understand the specific responsibilities and obstacles of room attendants in guest service. By exploring how room attendants serve guests in a cultural themed resort, the management can improve staff training, operational planning, and service delivery systems based on actual field conditions.

On the other hand, this research is also significant for room attendants and housekeeping department to become more aware of the challenges they face in their

daily tasks, such as time pressure, physical demands, and service expectations. Understanding these challenges can help them develop strategies to manage their workload, improve work efficiency, and maintain guest service.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of Study

This research focuses on the exploring responsibilities and obstacles of room attendants in guest service at the onsen resort batu, examining their specific responsibilities and the challenges they face. The study will provide actionable recommendations for improving the effectiveness of Room Attendants. However, it is limited to Onsen Hot Spring Resort Batu, which may affect the generalizability of the finding to other hotels.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

Specific key term related to this research need to be defined in order to avoid misunderstanding. The term that needs to be defined are as follows:

1. Room Attendant: (often referred to as a housekeeper) is a housekeeping staff who is responsible for keeping guest rooms and certain hotel areas clean, neat, and ready for use. Typical duties include making beds, changing linens, cleaning bathrooms, replenishing amenities, and checking room conditions to ensure everything is presentable and comfortable for guests.
2. Guest Service: refers to the help and support provided by hotel staff to meet guests' needs during their stay. In this research, focuses on how room attendants contribute to guest comfort through cleanliness, room readiness, responsiveness, and assistance when guests request items or service. The goal of guest service is to create a positive and satisfying stay through consistent and courteous service.

3. Service Quality: is the level of service performance that guests perceive and evaluate based on whether their needs and expectations are met. In other words, service quality reflects how well the hotel delivers its service standards such as cleanliness, responsiveness, responsiveness, and professionalism so that guests feel satisfied with the experience.
4. Challenge (Obstacles): refer to difficulties or barriers that make work harder or affect performance. In the context of this study, challenges are the obstacles faces by room attendants while delivering guest service, such as limited time during room turnover, communication problems, or coordination issues within the team.

