

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The front desk is an important part of hotel operations. The front office is a mirror of the entire hotel from the guest's point of view. Agusnawar (2004) The front office is department who directly related to guests, with complex responsibilities and functions. Moreover Soenarno (2006: 2) It is claimed that the front office is one of the department's whose handling rooms from booking, reception, check-in to check-out. This means that front office can also be called the heart of the hotel, because all activity centers in the hotel start from front office as a liaison between the guest and the hotel from the time the guest arrives until the guest Stay overnight and eventually leave the hotel always keep in touch with front office. Therefore, the main task of the front office is to provide the best service in increasing hotel room sales.

It is undeniable that the Covid-19 pandemic has a major impact on the tourism industry, especially in Bali. Since the implementation of the New Normal policy by the government since June 1, 2020, many aspects and general provisions of the hotel have to be changed. The new standard operating procedure (SOP) provisions include the implementation of health protocols that are increasingly tightened, the use of masks, hand gloves, face shields in daily work processes, and also the application of social distancing.

The same procedures are also applied in U-Paasha Seminyak Hotel which one of the resort hotels under the management of AHS (Absolute Hotel Service), located in Seminyak, Kuta, Bali. U-Paasha Seminyak Hotel is one of the hotels that has survived from Covid-19 pandemic period. In the new normal, many new provisions have been re-made, and all activities in the Hotel are in accordance with the new normal procedures and protocols of the government. Surely this has a major effect on all activities in the Hotel. One of the examples is the way to engage with guests called guest engagement.

Castillo (2016) stated that guest engagement stems from the marketing principle of "customer engagement", which has been defined as the action of

generating relations with customers that aim purchasing decisions, interactions and participation. When applied to the hotel industry, the strategy calls for hotels to engage with guests to influence their behavior.

Guest engagement is very basic at the hotel. According to the results of the survey summarized by Suara.com from Booking.com, it is not surprising that more than half (51%) of tourists choose to stay again at the same accommodation because they are delighted with the warmth of the host. The hotel is not only seen from the big or how many facilities they have, but guests also look at how reliable the services provided, and that's why guest engagement is very important. (Kusuma, 2019).

Guest engagement can be divided into 3 parts, including the first, namely Acknowledge, Anticipate, and Ascertain. Acknowledgment is how we observe guests, both verbal and non-verbal (Body language). Examples of how we can engage guests through their words, for example, the guest at check-in sounds tired and his voice is a little stuttering, at that time we also have to acknowledge this by speeding up the check-in process and escorting the guest to his room as soon as possible. due to strong suspicion that the guest felt tired after the trip to the hotel and immediately wanted to rest. From non-verbal (body language) we can also acknowledge guests, for the example if you see a guest looking confused and checking into his or her bag. Guests also appear not to be wearing masks, we must immediately approach them and offer assistance to guests, try to offer masks, the results of the guests will be very grateful to us, for giving something that he hasn't even had time to say. The second is anticipate, anticipation is a very useful thing and of course, it can train our sensitivity towards every guest who stays. A small example is, for example, a guest on the first day of their stay really likes extra sweet chamomile tea, what we need to notify and do is prepare an extra set up of Chamomile tea and sugar in the room. These little things will certainly make guests feel helped, do something even before the guest asks, that will add plus points to a hotelier. The third is Ascertain, ascertain is our way of ensuring what guests request and we have to double-check to avoid miss communication of what guest's order. Ascertain is a good habit to do because always reconfirm what guests ask for, it will minimize errors that may occur due to misunderstanding.

Graham (2018) stated that, Building a relation with guests is useful in hospitality, but generating loyal brand takes more than that. Some hotels may have several returning guests, sometimes at the same time of year, sometimes for business, or sometimes with their family, but how the hotel staff ensure that these guests return regularly and continue to promote the hotel online, to friends or family. Maintaining the relation is much easier with guest engagement.

From the research above, the writer will discuss the strategies and language expressions used in the guest engagement at U-Paasha Seminyak hotel under new normal conditions in this research. Research on guest engagement is very important in the world of hospitality which will certainly generate hotel revenue itself, therefore this research was conducted. The writer will explain what are the strategies used in guest engagement and what are language expressions used in guest engagement at U-Paasha Seminyak Hotel.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the research questions are formulated as follows:

- a. What are the strategies used in guest engagement by the Front Office staff at U-Paasha Seminyak hotel?
- b. What are the language expressions used in guest engagement at U-Paasha Seminyak hotel?

1.3 Purpose of the study

In line with the research questions, the research objectives are formulated as follows:

- a. To describe the strategies used in guest engagement by the Front Office staff at U-Paasha Seminyak hotel
- b. To describe the language expressions used in guest engagement at U-Paasha Seminyak hotel

1.4 Significance of the study

a. For Students

This report could increase the knowledge of the student about the Language Expressions Used In Guest Engagement At U Pashaa Seminyak Hotel Under New Normal Condition. It could be good as a preparation for them before they get a job in the Hotel, especially in the Front Office Department.

b. For the institutions

This report could be a reference for the library in the institution, especially UNDIKSHA, and would be a good reference for the students who want to do similar research or become a preliminary research for other students.

