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# THE COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES USED BY TELEPHONE OPERATOR IN HANDLING GUEST COMPLAINT AT LE GRANDE BALI

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**Abstract:** Hotel Le Grande Bali is one of the five-star hotels located in Pecatu, South Kuta, Bali. Hotel Le Grande Bali's operational services are currently classified as good, including the service of guest complaints. One of the methods used to serve guest complaints is by using telephone operators. The purpose of this research is to find out all types of guest complaints and identify communication techniques by Le Grande Bali telephone operator staff. Through this research, the benefits obtained are an understanding of new phenomena regarding the types of complaints and communication techniques in handling guest complaints using telephone operators based on a case study at Le Grande Bali. The research method used is a descriptive study. Through descriptive studies, the steps taken to identify phenomena include observation, data collection, and data analysis. Based on the stages carried out, the results obtained are the findings of the types of guest complaints and communication techniques used by the four telephone operator staff of Le Grande Bali. The types of complaints that occur through Le Grande Bali's telephone operators include mechanical complaints, service problem complaints, and unusual complaints. Then, the communication techniques used are informative techniques and persuasive techniques.

**Keyword:** Hotel Le Grande Bali, Telephone Operator, Types of Guest Complaints, Communication Techniques.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Hospitality Industry is an industry that deals with the interaction between foreigners and local people. Hotel is a type of hospitality industry. A hotel of course has several department to help the operation of the hotel. Front Office Department is one of the departments in a hotel, one of the most important parts of which is the Telephone Operator. According to [Irfal and Meirafina \(2021\)](#), telephone operators are a division within the front office department. Their primary responsibilities, include answering telephone calls from internal and external hotel customers, providing them with appropriate information, and facilitating connections to relevant hotel departments to meet guest needs. Telephone operator service at Hotel Le Grande Bali begins before guests' arrival, continues throughout their stay, and extends beyond their departure from the hotel. Telephone operators also play an important role in ensuring that all guests' needs and requests are accommodated before check-in, upon arrival, during their stay, and even after guest check-out from Hotel Le Grande Bali.

Telephone operator is an individual with responsibilities akin to those of an information officer ([Hartini, 2011](#)). These duties encompass welcoming guests, managing room reservations, providing goods and acting as a cashier within the front office. In the context of hotels, telephone facilities play a vital role in supporting the business, and the administration of communication services in hotels is entrusted to a dedicated department known as telephone operator. The role of a telephone operator involves not only enhancing the company's reputation but also contributing to the hotel's image in the eyes of its guests.

Typically, telephone operators are tasked with a range of responsibilities, as outlined by [Hartini \(2011\)](#): (1) Handling incoming calls with politeness and efficiency, (2) Managing outgoing calls, (3) Facilitating fax

reception and transmission services, (4) Ensuring seamless Internet access for guests, (5) Providing morning wake-up services, (6) Assisting with various information-related tasks. (7) Overseeing the smooth operation of music and film entertainment in music venues, public areas, and guest rooms, (8) Managing communications within the hotel, (9) Responding promptly to telephone threats and emergency calls, (10) Handling vehicle parking inquiries and maintaining order through loudspeaker announcements. Of course, to be able to fulfill all these responsibilities, telephone operators must have good communication skills. Communication is a fundamental aspect of human interaction and is crucial in the hospitality industry. Effective communication skills are vital for telephone operators to manage guest complaints successfully. Patience and appropriate communication techniques can help resolve issues more effectively, ensuring guests feel heard and respected.

There is some research that supports that good communication skills are needed by hotel front office staff. Research conducted by [Christie & Dima \(2023\)](#) with the aim of explaining the type of service communication used by Telephone Operator staff accompanied by data collection carried out by qualitative descriptive methods by finding that interdepartmental communication is very important, especially in improving services. Similar research was also conducted by [Rai et al. \(2023\)](#) on complaints strategies used by employees at Kashantee Village Hotel using qualitative descriptive methods by finding there are four types of complaints found with the settlement strategy being resolved based on speech acts. The next research was conducted by [Andromeda \(2013\)](#) with the research objective of identifying English language needs in front office staff with the research subject of 2 male front office staff with data collection conducted by questionnaires and interviews by finding the ability to speak is the main requirement for front officers in hotels because oral communication is the ability that is most often used to communicate with customers. According to [Christie and Dima \(2023\)](#), communication among key hotel departments is a constant necessity to deliver the highest level of service to guests. Effective communication between these major departments is essential to avoid any communication mishaps.

Guests frequently express complaints, often stemming from their dissatisfaction with the services at the hotel they are staying in. These complaints are consistently raised, often without universal awareness. In light of the concise overview provided, it is crucial to examine the communication strategies employed by telephone operators to address these complaints at Le Grande Bali.

Regarding this issue, proficient telephone operator staff should possess effective communication skills, as they will be responsible for addressing guest complaints at the hotel. To effectively resolve complaints, telephone operator staff should exercise patience in conjunction with sound communication techniques. When communication skills and language are appropriate, addressing complaints becomes more manageable for telephone operator staff. Guests tend to appreciate individuals who can communicate politely and express themselves effectively. In simpler terms, guests are more likely to remain calm and refrain from emotional outbursts when making a complaint.

Considering the phenomena above, this study is aimed at identifying how the telephone operator staff of Le Grande Bali when handle complaint using good communication techniques that are appropriate to the situation of the complaint. In spesifically, the study aims to address three primary problems. First is identifying the types of complaints received by telephone operators at Le Grande Bali. Second is understanding the communication techniques they use to handle these complaints. Last is analyzing the purposes of these communication techniques. To achieve these objectives, the research will analyze the nature of complaints received by telephone operators and the communication techniques they use. This analysis will help in identifying strategies that can improve the handling of complaints.

## 2. METHOD

The research design is descriptive, focusing on the factual data collected from observations. The study involves three telephone operator staff at Le Grande Bali to compare their communication techniques.

Data were collected through interviews with the telephone operators, which were recorded and documented in observation sheets. These recordings captured primary data, while the observation sheets provided additional details about the situations during complaints.

To collect data, the researcher first obtained permission from the Human Resources and Front Office Managers observed and collect data in their hotel. After the Human Resources Manager give the permission, next the reseracher contacted the Front Office Manager for asking permission to make observation and collect data in telephone operator section. Then, interactions in the telephone operator section were recorded, the reseracher gave the telephone operator staff observation sheet (check list) about how their communication techniques used to handling complaints. The last procedures, the researcher analyse the communication techniques used by the telephone operator staff in handling guests's complaints by filling the observation sheets accurately.

For data analysis, the researcher transcribed and reviewed the recordings and observation sheets to identify the communication techniques used. The data were then analyzed to determine the percentages of different

types of complaints and the techniques employed, providing insights into effective communication strategies for handling guest complaints. The formula used to calculate the data is as follows:

$$\text{The Percentage of Complaint: } P = \frac{\text{Type of Complaint}}{\text{Number of Complaint}} \times 100$$

$$\text{The Percentage of Communication Techniques } P = \frac{\text{Types of Communication Techniques Each Staffs}}{\text{Visible Communication Techniques}} \times 100$$

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### Result

This finding will present the results of research regarding the communication techniques used by telephone operator staff in handling guest complaints at Le Grande Bali. Researchers collected data regarding the types of complaints received by telephone operator staff, as shown in **Table 1**. This section of the research results will discuss the identified complaint categories and their implications for effective communication strategies at the hotel.

**Table 1. The Types of Complaint Received by Telephone Operator Staff at Le Grande Bali**

Complaint							
No	Types of Complaint		Staff A	Staff B	Staff C	Total	Percentage
1	Mechanical (MC)	Complaint	4	6	4	14	77,7%
2	Attitudinal Complaint (AC)		0	0	0	0	0 %
3	Service Related Problem (SRP)		0	1	2	3	16,7%
4	Unusual Complaint (UC)		0	1	0	1	5,6%

Based on the description of the results in **Table 1**, it is show that the most frequent type of complaint handled by staff is the Mechanical Complaint (MC), which reaches 77.7%. On the other hand, there are other types of complaints that are rarely faced by staff operators at Le Grande Bali. These types include Service Related Problems (SRP) which reached 16.7% and Unusual Complaint which reached 5.6%.

Next, based on the observation of complaints received through the staff telephone operator, there are results obtained from Types of Communication Techniques shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2. The Communication Techniques Used by Telephone Operator Staff at Le Grande Bali**

Communication Techniques							
No	Types of Communication Techniques		Staff A	Staff B	Staff C	Total	Percentage
1	Informative Techniques (IT)		1	1	0	2	11,1%
2	Persuasive Techniques (PT)		3	7	6	16	88,9%
3	Coercive Techniques (CT)		0	0	0	0	0%
4	Human Relation (HR)		0	0	0	0	0%

Based on the description of the results of the use of communication technique types in **Table 2**, it is known that the most frequently used type is persuasive techniques. this is indicated by the percentage results on this type reaching the highest value of 88.9%. But not only that, although identified as rarely used, but the type of informative techniques is also used to communicate through telephone operators. This type is known to reach a percentage of 11.1%.

#### Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the research results described by the researcher in the finding section. The discussion in this section discussion focuses on analyzing the findings related to the communication techniques used by telephone operator staff in handling guest complaints.

#### The Types of Complaints Received by Telephone Operator Staffs at Le Grande Bali

Telephone operator staffs become the center of information services that can receive and handle complaints submitted by guests in the hotel. Looking at the results found by researchers shows that there are three types of complaints that usually make guests feel uncomfortable with the service at Le Grande Bali. The types of complaints include mechanical complaints, service related problems, and unusual complaints. When viewed from the data obtained, mechanical complaints are among the most frequently received by telephone staffs. While the least frequent is the unusual complaint. According to **Sugiarto (in Yani, 2016)** states that the form of guest disappointment with the product or service they receive is conveyed by complaints about the discomfort they feel.

The types of complaints by guests include firstly Mechanical complaint, which is a type of complaint due to problems with the use of facilities used by guests. Secondly, Attitudinal complaint, which is a type of complaint due to guest discomfort with the attitude of service behavior from staff. Thirdly, Service related problems which are types of complaints that are due to unsatisfactory service received by guests. Lastly, Unusual complaint which is a type of complaint that is rarely and unusually complained about by guests.

Judging from the types of complaints mentioned by Sugiarto (in Yani, 2016), it can be interpreted that the type of mechanical complaint most often received by telephone operator staff tends to occur due to technical errors in the facilities obtained by guests. Guests will directly convey their complaints about the dysfunctional facilities they get to Le Grande Bali through telephone operator staffs. Then, the second type of complaint that is usually received by telephone operator staffs is service related problems. Although not as frequent as mechanical problems, guests at Le Grande Bali also several times conveyed their obstacles to service performance that was considered unsatisfactory. The third type of complaint, which is the least frequently received is the unusual problem. This is because guests usually convey it directly to the staff in charge of their field. The type of complaint that is never received by telephone operator staffs is attitudinal complaint. This is of course because the attitude given by the staff when serving guests is very polite and friendly. A description of the three types of complaints usually received by telephone operator staffs is as follows:

### **1. Mechanical Complaint**

As we know, mechanical complaints occur because guests experience dysfunctional facilities. Complaints related to mechanical complaints include water heater, AC, Wi-Fi, TV, toilet, etc. An example of this type of complaint can be shown in the sentence (1) *"Hi, I am from room 302. The television on my room is didn't working and now I can't watch the movie. Can you help me to call the engineering to fix it?"*; (2) *"Hello Good Morning, I am from room 114. There is a problem with The shower in my bathroom, the hot water is didn't work well!. Before using the hot water I waited and turned on around five minutes and didn't hot yet. So I take a shower using cold water!. Please check into my room now because around thirty minutes I will go out with my children"*. From these sentences, it shows the discomfort of guests when they experience trouble from the facilities they receive.

### **2. Service Related Problems**

In service related problems, complaints from guests can include delays in room service, room cleanliness, slow receptionist service, etc. An example of this type of complaint can be shown in sentence (1) *"I had a bad first impression here, I ordered croissant for my breakfast from 6:30 am and the breakfast came at 7:45 am and I was already very hungry, and what's worse is that it didn't come according to the order, what came was only eggs. can you tell me why this mistake can happen?"*. From the sentence, it shows that the guest was disappointed with the service that was very slow and not according to the order. Although this type of complaint is rarely received by telephone operator staffs, it can be a meaningful input for the hotel in improving service performance to guests in the future.

### **3. Unusual Complaint**

Guest complaints with this type of unusual complaint can be in the form of things that are very rarely received by telephone operator staffs. An example of this type of complaint can be shown in sentence (1) *"Hello I'm from room 131, I would like to say that from the moment I entered this room the wardrobe right next to the TV was very dusty, can you help me?"*. Judging from the sentence, it is a complaint that is very rarely conveyed directly by guests by telephone operator staffs. This is because guests tend to convey their complaints to the staff on duty directly.

## **The Types of Communication Techniques are Used by Telephone Operator Staffs at Le Grande Bali**

Communication techniques are highly considered by the staff at Le Grande Bali. Therefore, by communicating using appropriate techniques, staff can still give a good impression to guests, even in handling cases of complaints from guests. According to Effendy (in Bagus, 2007), communication techniques are divided into four types, namely informative communication, persuasive communication, coercive communication, and human relations. The following is a discussion of the four communication techniques:

### **A. Informative Communication**

Informative communication, which aims to ensure that the recipient comprehends and is aware of the content being conveyed by the communicator. Such techniques can be observed in personal communication, various communication media, and mass media. Informative communication shares news or knowledge with people. It aims to inform about a specific topic, similar to news in print or online media. This method is mostly one-way, with an institution or organization as the communicator. The messages are general and reach a wide, diverse audience simultaneously. Media often use this technique to inform the public about important issues.

### **B. Persuasive communication**

Persuasive communication is a method of conveying information with the aim of influencing the recipient's attitudes, opinions or behaviour, particularly in the psychological domain. The primary goal of persuasive

communication is to bring about positive changes in the recipient's attitudes, opinions or behaviour. It involves appealing to the human mind, cultivating awareness and will, and creating a sense of satisfaction or pleasure.

According to Effendy (in Sugiartini, 2011), there are five techniques of persuasive communication, which are firstly, Associative techniques which is teaching communication techniques by using an interesting object or event in that time. Secondly, Integration techniques, which teach communication techniques through non-verbal and verbal communication, describing that the communicator has the same destiny as the communicant. Thirdly, Pay-off techniques, this persuasive activity by giving expectations or promises. Fourthly, Diversionary tactics, the art of the communicator to win by using his argument to persuade the communicant. It is usually used in discussions. Lastly, Icing techniques, where a communicator tries to get a message across by using a magic word to attract the communicant's attention.

### **C. Coercive communication**

Coercive communication is a communication technique such as an order, a threat, a sanction, etc. It makes the communicator do the coercive communication.

### **D. Human relations**

Human Relations is the translation of the words of the spiritual nature of human relationship with attention to the psychological aspects in man. Generally, the communicator did a communication with human relation to remove the barriers in a communication, remove the misunderstanding and develop the human attitude. Human relation technique usually uses some approach techniques, they are emotional approach and socio-cultural approach.

Looking at the findings in this study, it is known that the dominant communication technique used by telephone operator staffs at Le Grande Bali is Persuasive Communication. Part of the persuasive communication techniques used usually includes pay-off technique, integration technique, and association technique.

The use of the pay-off technique can be found in the sentence *"Thank you for contacting us. We do apologize for the inconvenience. We will inform our engineering team and we will give you the information in 5 minutes. Please wait first for the information."*; *"Hello thank you for waiting, related to your shower. Our engineering will be going to your room in 10 minutes. I would like to confirm that your room number is 114?"*. If analyzed, these sentences show persuasion activities, namely giving hope or promise to guests against complaints submitted by them by telephone operator staffs. The promise or expectation in the first sentence is when the staff conveys that they will immediately provide further information back within 5 minutes, while in the second sentence is to ensure that the engineering team will immediately come to room 114 within 10 minutes.

Integration technique is shown in responding to complaints from guests regarding dusty wardrobes. Staff used integration technique in handling the complaint. This technique can be seen in the sentence spoken by the staff, namely *"Room 131 with Ms.Nyoman, we apologize for the inconvenience ma'am, please wait for our HK team will immediately head there to address this issue"*. In this sentence, it is known that the staff shows empathy for the guest's inconvenience. This is shown by the apology conveyed by the staff to the guest and the seriousness of the staff to assure the guest that the housekeeping team will immediately come to the guest's room.

Next is the use of association technique which can be found in the sentence *"We sincerely apologize for the incident experienced by Mr. Watanabe, we will make sure this does not happen again, instead for lunch later we will provide a special menu with a special price slope also for mutual convenience, is that okay Mr. Watanabe?"*. From the sentence, it is known that offering a special menu with a special price is a form of using other objects that aims to still give a positive impression to guests even though they are complaining about their inconvenience.

## **The Purposes of Communication Techniques are Used by the Telephone Operator Staff in Handling Complaints at Le Grande Bali**

As we know, the dominant communication technique used by telephone operator staffs at Le Grande Bali is Persuasive Communication, precisely in the types of pay-off technique, integration technique, and association technique. First is Pay-off Technique which the purpose of using the pay-off technique is usually to appease guests for the inconvenience they experience like giving hope that the problems experienced will be handled immediately by the hote. Second is Integration Technique that used with the aim of creating a sense of empathy to show the common fate of the obstacles experienced by guests. Empathizing with the obstacles faced by guests can show that Le Grande Bali staff also understand the uncomfortable feelings felt by guests. Third, Association Technique which is to divert uncomfortable feelings from guests, by providing attractive offers in replacement of bad experiences experienced by guests. In addition to aiming to please the guest's emotions, this technique can also build a positive image of the services and products offered as a replacement to the guest.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on research related to communication techniques used by telephone operator staff at Le Grande Bali Hotel that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the types of complaints received by telephone operator staffs that are most often received at Le Grande Bali are first is Mechanical Complaint or complaints related to

dysfunctional problems of facilities obtained by guests, including complaints about water heater, air conditioning, Wi-Fi, TV, toilet. Second is Serviced Related Problems or complaints related to service problems such as delays in room service ordered, room cleanliness, slow reception services. And the last is Unusual Problems or complaints that are very rare or have never been complained about before by guests, in this case, complaints related to dust complained about by guests in the cupboards in their rooms.

The types of communication used by telephone operator staffs that are dominantly used in overcoming complaints are Persuasive Communication techniques. The types of Persuasive Communication techniques that are often used include 1) Pay-off Technique, which is by giving hope or promise to the guest against the complaint submitted by the guest; 2) Integration Technique, which is by showing empathy for the guest's inconvenience; and 3) Association Technique, which is diverting the guest's feelings of disappointment by offering attractive objects, both in the form of services and products.

The purpose of communication techniques that are used by telephone operator staff in handling complaints at Le Grande Bali include 1) to calm the guest for the inconvenience he is experiencing; 2) to show concern about the bad experience experienced by the guest and a sense of wanting to immediately help in overcoming the problem; 3) to please the guest's emotions through services and products offered as a substitute.

Through this research that has been carried out, there are suggestions that can be conveyed for future researchers to collect more data than this study. By using more data, future researchers are expected to find communication techniques and types of complaints that have not been found in this study.

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