

Evaluation of Complaint Handling by Guest Relation Officer at Zeus Restaurant, Apsara Beach Front Resort and Villa

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the role of Guest Relations Officers (GROs) in handling guest 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. Using a qualitative research approach, the study involved semi-structured interviews with 10 GROs to explore the most common types of complaints, the resolution strategies implemented, and the outcomes of these strategies. Findings show that the main grievances relate to service delays, food quality, and staff behavior. GROs effectively addressed complaints through immediate acknowledgement, empathic communication, and prompt problem-solving. The research highlights the importance of follow-up, such as rechecking guest conditions and providing compensation, in improving guest satisfaction and loyalty. The study emphasizes the importance of GRO training in emotional intelligence and problem-solving skills, and suggests the use of advanced technology and a structured complaint management system to maintain high service standards. This study contributes to the understanding of effective complaint handling practices in luxury hospitality environments and provides insights for the improvement of guest relations and operational excellence.

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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 as a whole. The manner in which 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 (Aktas Polat, 2022). It is thus essential to have efficient complaint handling in order 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 in order 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 in order 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 play a significant role in ensuring that the high standards that are anticipated by customers are maintained. Guest relationship officers (GROs) have the ability to 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) play a crucial role in raising the level of satisfaction that guests have with hospitality facilities and in sustaining the reputation of these institutions. GROs are 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 are in charge of 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 have also been provided with tools like as customer relationship management (CRM) systems and feedback platforms as a result of technological improvements, which has enhanced their capacity to monitor and respond 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 in order to maintain high service standards and function successfully. In general, GROs play a crucial role in ensuring that visitors have a pleasant experience and in cultivating strong connections between those who stay at hospitality institutions and those properties

Despite the fact that GROs play 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. The vast majority of the currently available research concentrate on service quality or customer satisfaction in larger hospitality settings. The unique dynamics of complaint management by GROs receives 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 in order 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 of its foreign customers. Through an examination of the manner in which 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 in order to enhance the quality of service and keep a competitive edge in the luxury hospitality sector. This is especially true in this day and age, 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 in order 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 more happy 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 makes a contribution 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. Despite the fact that 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, the real difficulty comes in the manner in which 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. In order 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 successfulness of these methods in managing complaints

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In order to investigate the methods and procedures that Guest Relation Officers (GROs) at Zeus Restaurant, Apsara Beach Front Resort and Villa, Thailand, utilise in order to address complaints from guests, this research took a qualitative approach. In order 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 its 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 a number of 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 done 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 as theme analysis was used. Using this method, the transcripts of the interviews were coded in order 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 had an effect on the overall experience that guests had while they were staying at the establishment. It was feasible for the study to come at conclusions on the most effective techniques of handling complaints since it was able to identify patterns that were similar to 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 as a result 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 DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Result

The study of the interviews conducted with the Guest Relation Officers (GROs) at Zeus Restaurant showed a number of 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. In the course of their encounters with visitors, the personnel was regarded to be impolite or unprofessional, which led to complaints about their behaviour. For the purpose of properly addressing 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. In the event that there were delays in service, GROs often supplied compensation products or expedited the order. In the event that 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. Generally speaking, 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 to 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 travels. 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 Discussion

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 commonly 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 are a reflection of the prevalent obstacles that are encountered. For the purpose of designing 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. In order 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 of prompt answers to complaints as a means of mitigating

unpleasant experiences and restoring confidence in the guest experience. The proactive efforts that are done 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.

During the course of 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 has the ability to turn a potentially bad experience into a good one.

An 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 do this follow-up step in order 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 are able to 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 in order 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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