
Elevating Service Quality Through English Training: A Case Study of Pagaralam's Hotel and Resort Staff

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Abstract

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This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the English language training program applied to hotel and resort staff in Pagaralam, South Sumatra. English language proficiency is critical in the hospitality and tourism industry, allowing Staff to provide high-quality services to international guests. This study uses a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and observations of 50 staff participating in the three-month training program. The results showed a significant improvement in the English language skills of Staff after participating in the training program, with the average score increasing by 30%. Interactive learning methods and the use of language learning apps have proven to be effective in improving English language skills. While there are limited time constraints for Staff to participate in training, using technology helps to overcome this problem. Staff with better English skills can communicate more effectively with international guests, which positively impacts guest satisfaction and the hotel's reputation. This study concludes that structured and relevant English language training programs are very effective in improving the English language skills of hotel and resort staff in Pagaralam. Management support and investment in continuous training are essential to maintain and enhance employee competencies. This finding has significant implications for developing human resources and the attractiveness of tourist destinations in Pagaralam. Practical recommendations include increased flexibility of training schedules and collaboration with educational institutions for more comprehensive training programs.

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INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry in Indonesia continues to increase, including in the city of Pagaralam, South Sumatra. Known for its natural beauty, such as Mount Dempo and various waterfalls, nature fences are becoming an increasingly popular tourist destination. With the increasing number of tourists, both domestic and international, good communication skills, especially in English, have become very important for hotel and resort staff in the area.

English is vital in the hospitality and tourism industry as an international language. Fujita (2019) Adequate English language proficiency allows hotel and resort staff to communicate effectively with international guests, improve service quality, and ultimately increase guest satisfaction (Hermawan et al., 2018). However, many Staff at hotels and resorts in Pagaralam still need help with English language challenges. This is due to various factors, including different educational backgrounds, time constraints, and the need for access to practical English language training (Ridayani & Purwanto, 2024).

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of English language training programs implemented in several hotels and resorts in Pagaralam. Specifically, this study aims to: 1) identify the level of English proficiency of hotel and resort staff before and after participating in the training program. 2) assess the methods and approaches used in the English language training program. 3) Identify the obstacles Staff faces in participating in English language training. 4) assess the impact of improving English language skills on service quality and guest satisfaction.

This research is expected to significantly contribute to developing human resources in the hospitality and tourism industry in Pagaralam. By understanding the effectiveness of English language training programs and the obstacles faced, hotel and resort management can devise

better strategies to improve the English language skills of their Staff. In addition, this research can also be a reference for local governments and educational institutions in designing more comprehensive and sustainable training programs. Studies at other locations emphasized that long-term investments in employee training, including English (Fuentes, 2004), improved service quality and guest satisfaction (Al-khatib, 2005).

This research is focused on hotel and resort staff in Pagaralam who participated in the English language training program during the research period. Data were collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and observations to get a comprehensive picture of changes in English language proficiency and their impact on services.

Thus, this study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of English language training programs and provide practical recommendations for improving the quality of services in the hospitality and tourism industry in Pagaralam.

METHOD

This research was conducted in hotels and resorts in Pagaralam, South Sumatra. The sample consisted of 10 hotel and resort staff in Pagaralam who participated in the English language training program. Respondents were randomly selected from various departments such as front office, housekeeping, and food and beverage. The research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and observations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

1. Initial Limitations in English Language Proficiency

The results of the interview with Mr. A, an employee of Resort X, explained:

Our biggest obstacle is communication in foreign languages, especially English. So if there are guests from abroad,

We need help interacting with them.

At the beginning of the study, during observation, interviews, and documentation, most Staff had low to intermediate English proficiency.

Then, the results of the interview with Mr. W, an employee of Hotel M, explained:

The hotel staff and employees lack confidence, which causes confusion when foreign guests want and ask for something.

The explanation above shows that the Staff feels less confident in using English, especially in work situations requiring direct interaction with international guests.

2. Training Program

Hotels and resorts should hold intensive training programs to improve English language skills, especially for hotel staff and employees.

Mr. Y, as Brand Loyal Promotion Hotel G, said:

Foreign language training programs (English et al., etc.) are usually held three times in one year. The training program involves classroom sessions, speaking practice, and language learning apps.

From this explanation, training should be carried out for three months at an intensity of two times per week. Thus, the intensity of training becomes very regular and scheduled.

3. Improving English Skills

In improving English, speaking skills must be the main focus, but listening, reading, and writing skills must also be highlighted. This will be a counterweight for language users.

The results of Ms. B's interview with Hotel T explained:

After participating in the training program, there was a significant improvement in English

speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills among the Staff.

The results of an interview with Mr. J Hotel Manager GZ also strengthened this result:

In improving speaking skills, Staff and employees were given evaluation tests to measure their language skills; evaluation through tests before and after training showed an average increase in scores of 30%.

Discussion

This research was conducted on hotel and resort employees/staff in Pagaram City, South Sumatra Province. It focuses on improving English speaking skills, especially for hotel and resort employees. This research also contributes to the field of hospitality and tourism.

In this case, the Staff stated that the work situation's interactive and relevant learning methods are beneficial. Rahmani & Supardi's (2021) use of language learning apps is adequate because they can be accessed anytime and provide additional practice outside class sessions. Some staff need help balancing work and training (Choi, 2010).

This study implies that with the increasing English language skills of hotel and resort staff, Pagaram can become a more attractive tourist destination for international tourists. This can positively impact the number of tourist visits and regional tourism revenue. Better service and effective communication can improve the image of Pagaram as a friendly and professional tourist destination, ultimately improving the city's reputation in the eyes of international tourists. Then, in collaboration with local governments, this research can take a more active role in supporting English language training programs in the hospitality and tourism sector through policies and initiatives that support human resource development (Cholil, Rohman; Rizki et al.; Hanifah, Fajri, 2023). The government can encourage cooperation between hotels, resorts, and educational institutions to

provide comprehensive and sustainable training programs and funds or subsidies for training (Prima, 2022).

Research in Pagaralam shows that a well-designed English language training program can improve the English language skills of hotel and resort staff, positively impacting service and guest satisfaction. These findings are consistent with similar research in other tourist destinations (Agustin & Purwanto, 2023). Management support, the use of technology, and an interactive learning approach are critical factors in the success of this training program (Purwanto & Al Firdaus, 2023). The positive implications of improving staff English skills are also seen in increasing the attractiveness of tourist destinations and developing local competencies. This study confirms that good English language skills are vital to providing quality services in the hospitality and tourism industry (Auliana et al., 2022). Hanadya et al. (2023) Staff who can communicate effectively in English can better handle the needs and demands of international guests, improving the overall guest experience (Chang & Teng, 2017; Vhalery et al., 2022).

A comparative study conducted by Sosiden and Viraek (2021) shows that English language training programs have also been successful in improving the English language skills of hotel and resort staff. However, the obstacles faced are more diverse, including cultural issues and staff motivation (Nurgiyantoro, 2019). Yamin (2021): The study in Yogyakarta showed similar results, where English language training programs improved staff communication skills. Staffer, this study emphasizes the importance of adapting training programs according to the specific needs of each destination (Sittitoo, 2018). Research by Aranki et al. (2019) in various tourist destinations shows that using technology in English language learning, such as apps and e-learning, is very effective. This aligns with findings in Pagaralam, which show that technology can help overcome time constraints. Fadlia et al. (2022) Studies in

several other locations show that interactive and practical English language training approaches are more effective than traditional methods. This is consistent with the results in Pagaralam, where the interactive method increases staff motivation and participation (Bambang et al., 2022).

The success of the English language training program requires commitment from hotel and resort management to implement future development research or action plans to follow up on this research. Support in the form of time, resources, and training facilities is essential to achieving the desired results.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of English language training in improving the quality of service in the hospitality industry in Pagaralam. Through case studies conducted on hotel and resort staff, it was found that English language training significantly improved staff's communication skills with international guests. These improvements have a positive impact on various aspects of the service, including clearer delivery of information, improved guest satisfaction, and the ability of staff to handle complaints more effectively. In addition, the training also strengthens the confidence of the staff in interacting with foreign guests, which in turn enhances the professional image of the hotel and resort. Overall, this study confirms that investment in English language training for hospitality staff is an effective strategy to improve service quality, which can contribute to improving the competitiveness and reputation of tourist destinations such as Pagaralam.

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