PROBLEMS IN SATISFYING HOTEL GUESTS, DECISION MAKING OR LANGUAGE GAPS?

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ABSTRACT

Customer satisfaction is the ultimate goal of business establishments. The hospitality industry is not an exception. While there are numerous studies about the language barrier and decision-making gaps among hospitality workers, its focus was mostly the middle and top management but very neal on front liners where guests' satisfaction largely depends on. Since the communication and accommodation model posits that powerless people like hotel front liners in the workplace match their communication and management styles with their clients, how they make adjustments on their decisions to satisfy guests is the main course of this study. This phenomenological inquiry will use focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews to determine why hotel front liners fail to meet guests' satisfaction, delving specifically on their decision-making gaps and language problems, results of which can be used as inputs to training and staff development of front liners in the workplace, particularly in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Decision-making gaps, Language gaps, Hospitality industry, Customer satisfaction, Phenomenological inquiry.

INTRODUCTION

Problems while satisfying guests by the staff is just a natural phenomenon in hotels and is a challenge to people who are in the industry. The opportunities that exist to wow customers are limitless, and being able to cultivate and choreograph an unexpectedly excellent experience is truly what working in hospitality is about, however, the typical hotel guest presents a challenge for hoteliers (Hughes, 2015). Given the varied personalities and characteristics that are brought by guests as they approach the hotel front desks poses a challenge to the staff. These problems range from typical concerns of the guests such as simple miscommunication with the staff and pity needs for toiletries and equipment to more complicated issues.

The study entitled Hotel Guests' Most Common Complaints by (Zaldivar, 2017). highlighted ten (10) most common occurrences of guest complaints and these include guests feel too hot or too cold in their rooms (24%), guests are unable to connect to the Wifi or feel that it is too slow (14%), guests feel that there is too much noise heard from the room (11%), guests feel that in their rooms are not clean

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enough (10%), guests experience slow or unsatisfactory service (9%), guests experience problems with charges, payment and booking expectations (6%), guests feel that their room is too small (6%), guests feel that there was a security lapse in their room (5%), guests encounter maintenance issues in their room (radiator breakdowns, air conditioner leaks, TV spoilt) (3%) and guests encounter maintenance issues in their bathroom (sink clogged, pipes are dripping) (3%). All these problems have added to the challenges faced by hotel staff.

This study aimed to solicit the actual experiences of hotel staff as they face the challenges and problems, they have encountered every day with their guests and customers. Although these problems could be varied as discussed earlier, this study will focus on the aspect of decision-making and communication and language gaps. The researchers believe that these two particular issues are critical and undetachable to the daily routine of hotel staff in the discharge of their respective functions in the hotel and in the pursuit for excellent delivery of services to their guests.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Providing the best service to customers is always the ultimate intention of front liners. This is a bold step for creating and establishing loyalty among guests and to expect the latter to keep coming back to their establishments. Guest satisfaction is the highest priority for owners and managers competing with hundreds of others, and personal service is at the top of the travelers and list of the most important things when considering a hotel to stay in (Wipoosattaya, 2001). However, for front line service providers, satisfying guests is never easy considering the varied circumstances that they are facing every day and the varied demands and concerns of customers that also need varied approaches and styles on the part of the staff attending to them.

According to De Leon (2013), there are five types of difficult customers. First, the aggressive customer usually has no intention for a polite conversation with the staff and not interested in hearing an explanation. Second is the impatient customer who does not like to wait and always wants quick action and response to his concerns regardless of the situation. Third, the silent type of customer who understands the things that they want but does not exert effort to ask for it and oftentimes they are not willing to provide more and clearer information on what they want. The fourth type of customer is the complaining customer who is easily get disappointed on little things and it is easy for him to spot for little things that could be source for his complaints and pity grievances, and fifth is the know-it-all customer", and this is a type of customer that always believe that he is doing is always right and it is difficult for him to take suggestions and advice of other people. In the hospitality business like in hotels, difficult customers are part of the everyday business side by side with good customer service.

The front office is where most of the front-line service providers of a hotel are found. This is the main reason why it is dubbed as the "nerve center" of a hotel. This is where the basic services start like welcoming the guests, answering the questions about the hotel and the services offered, carrying and helping the guests, registering the guests, guiding the guests to their assigned rooms, and assisting them until check out. Basically, the front office functions include reception, bell service, mail and information, concierge, and finance and these are the points where direct contacts between the hotel staff and the guests happen.

The reception happens in the Front Office of a hotel and this is where the front office staff get to know for the first time the guest and for initial screening and checking. Receptionists take charge of helping the needs of hotel guests such as reservations and assigning rooms and accommodations. They are also responsible for answering the problems that may occur during the stay of the guests on their premises. They are always expected to be ready and be equipped with ideas for whatever circumstance at the front desk.

The bell service of a hotel is equally important with the other front-line services in a hotel as they are one of the hotel staff to interact with the customer and their service is expected to extend until check out of the guest. Staff is of critical importance to a hotel, as they are the first and the last people on the hotel's staff that a customer interacts with. The bellman's job is to greet customers, direct them to the check-in desk, carry the customers' baggage to and from their cars, and educate guests on the contents and features of their hotel rooms (Wickford, 2017). Just like the front office personnel, bellmen are also exposed to problems in satisfying hotel guests.

The concierge a resident in an apartment or hotel who is a doorkeeper, landlord's representative, and typically multilingual hotel staffer who handles luggage and mail, make reservations and arranges tours, makes arrangements, or runs errands (Webster, 2018). The hotel accounting and finance staff caters to the financial concerns of the guests including assistance and finding solutions and remedies on issues related to billing and payments of charges. They give also inputs about the customer's credit standing and defaults accounts for proper disposition by the management. Solving all billing-related disputes. Check customers credit ratings and Flag accounts as 'Blacklisted' for long outstanding or defaulted accounts.

Decision making related problems in satisfying hotel guests

The study of Pantaleon (2013) revealed that some of the problems encountered by hotel staff include meeting customers who are too demanding. Hotel guests nowadays are going beyond the basic services like rooms that are being offered for them to stay but for a more adventurous and meaningful experience. Customers' demands are becoming broad and customized to their lifestyles. This makes many of the hoteliers difficult to anticipate and define and has become a common source of problems in satisfying hotel guests. Another common problem is customers who are too messy, and this is oftentimes an experience of hotel housekeepers.

According to Woolsey (2017) the worst real-life experience by housekeepers is their encounters with male hotel guests who in most cases have intentionally show off their private parts. The impatient customer who do not have the attitude to wait and they feel and always questioning why everything is taking too long. For them, a couple of minutes is already like an hour that is why this could be very challenging for hotel or restaurant staff to deal with this kind of guest. On the other hand, there are guests who are too bossy.

Below are actual cases involving hotel staff in satisfying hotel guests. These sample cases were intentionally lifted verbatim from the original for easy appreciation and understanding by the readers and were taken from the study entitled Motivating Your Staff to Provide Outstanding Service by (Michael, Sturman & Ford, 2011).

Sample Case 1: The case was about a family who booked accommodation at Hyatt Grand Cypress. The hotel was full, and the family's reservation had not been properly handled and thus the husband, wife, and three tired children were upset. The front-desk employee assessed things and acted promptly. The hotel staff offered the parents the chits for a drink at the lobby bar and the kids to enjoy the video games until things have been straightened out. That gave her the specified time to hunt out a manager to straighten out the matter. the oldsters were happy, the kids were happy, and thus the front-desk person had defused a tense situation.

Sample Case 2: The experience of Tom Farmer and Shane Atchison, that they had a confirmed reservation at a hotel, and thus space had supposedly been guaranteed by Mastercard for late arrival. Yet once they arrived at 2:00 AM, they were refused rooms. Tom and Shane posted a complaint against the hotel and have publicized their experience. They have shared that the Night Clerk on duty has shown unacceptable behavior and had done nothing about finding alternative accommodation elsewhere. The clerk explained and has stressed his point that it's wrong for customers to be upset when their booked room was not saved for them and insists that he has nothing to apologize for. The decision of Tom and Shane to post their concern about the hotel services has prompted the management to settle the problem and express their apology although the damage has been done already.

The cases above exhibited a transparent role of hotel staff and the way they ought to act and approach a specific problem in handling their customer during a specific situation. In those cases, they were tested on how prepared they're to act and address the concerns of their clients, and that they were to make a decision on the case. Deciding is often made individually or even by a gaggle counting on its urgency to return up with such decision and therefore the degree of importance. Deciding individually or collaboratively has its advantages and advantages.

In today's modern approach in management, decision-making oftentimes involved employees in the least levels especially in cases affecting them. The collaborative manner of deciding will exploit and find out the talents of employees (Hewitt, 2002). Employees must be involved if they're to understand the need for creativity and if they're to be committed to changing their behavior at work, in new and improved ways (Singh, 2009; Kingir & Mesci, 2010). Employee involvement choose serves to form how of belonging among the workers also as a congenial environment during which both the management and thus the workers voluntarily contribute to healthy industrial relations (Noah, 2008). Thus, the involvement of workers choose is taken under consideration as a tool for inducing motivation within the workers leading to a positive work attitude and high productivity (Noah, 2009).

Frontline employees of a hotel are the people that are closest to the customer and who can facilitate new product and repair recognition, a central element within the entrepreneurial process (Li, Tse & Gu, 2006). The participation of employees in the planning process of the organization is a good innovation to facilitate its recognition (Kemelgor, 2002; Zivkovic, Mihajlovic & Prvulovic, 2009).

As proposed by The Participatory Decision Making (PDM) framework as proposed by (Sagie & Aycan, 2003). talks about power distance and individualism-collectivism. Power distance indicates how each member recognizes power

differentials within the organization (Menzel, Krauss, Ulijn & Weggerman, 2006). This framework explains that call making involving the staff is seen as a chance and a special privilege granted by the management.

Hence, employees aren't involved in decision-making. In contrast, in low power distance culture, most are appeared to have the potential to contribute to the decision-making process; actually, most are assumed to possess equal rights. The employees clamor to participate in the decisions that concern them can be considered valid (Sagie & Aycan, 2003). The principle of individualism-collectivism is a good model to identify the person or group that should take part in decision making. The individualism-collectivism continuum is the extent to which a person defines himself as either an independent agent or an area of the collective. Cultures that give more emphasis on individualism rather than that of a group (collectivism) gives more importance to the fulfillment of the goals of the individual and his family. Each member in an individualistic culture is liable for his actions. On the other hand, cultures that give more weight to collectivism and with less emphasis on individualism) value the group.

In collectivistic cultures, the entire group could even be held responsible for the actions of its individual members. Hence, no individual is allowed to form decisions alone without the approval of the whole group (Sagie & Aycan, 2003). Consistent with (Sagie & Aycan, 2003) the mixture of the two-by-two power distance (low/medium versus high) and individualism (low/medium versus high) produce four approaches to PDM: face-to-face, collective, pseudo, and paternalistic participation. Face-to-face PDM is the mixture of high individualism and low power distance gives because of face-to-face interaction. Face-to-face PDM could also be an immediate superior-subordinate interaction thus, the workers rather than their representatives are involved in the decision- making process. However, employees who are necessarily involved are people who possess the needed knowledge and knowledge not possessed by the superior. Managers may provide opportunities for participation in the idea of one's merits (Witte, 1980; Sagie & Aycan, 2003).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This phenomenological study ought to solicit and document the lived experiences of local hotel staff particularly the problems they have encountered in satisfying hotel guests whether these are related to decision-making or language gaps. The following questions guided the data gathering for the study:

1. What are the actual experiences of hotel staff in satisfying hotel guests?

2. What are the issues and problems encountered by the staff in their work in the hotels? Are these problems related to the decision-making gap or the language and communication gap?

3. What is the most prevailing and more challenging problem that the staff has encountered, decision-making related, or language gap-related problems

METHODOLOGY

This is a phenomenological inquiry that described the actual experiences of hotel staff highlighting the problems encountered in satisfying hotel guests which is the purpose of this study. Creswell (2007) has proposed five (5) qualitative inquiry and research designs in the parlance of social, behavioral, and health science which he claims to be more effective, one of which is phenomenology which according to

(Creswell, 2007), it is focused on understanding a concept or phenomenon and the meaning of the lived experiences of individuals about the said phenomenon.

The data analysis procedures were performed by strictly adhering to the steps as proposed by Creswell (2007).

MAKING READY THE DATA FOR ANALYSIS

The data gathered from focus group discussions and interviews were carefully transcribed veratim by the researchers themselves in order to ensure high accuracy and reliability. The transcribed data were kept confidential and safe.

REVIEWING THE GATHERED DATA

This step entails reading repetitively if necessary, in order to gain the overall idea of the data.

ANALYZING THE DATA ADAPTING THE HORIZONTALIZATION PROCESS

In this stage, significant statements should have been identified, and these are quotes and verbatim responses that clearly describe how the participants experienced the phenomenon, assuming equal worth (horizontalization of the data), and developed a list of non-repetitive and non-overlapping statements.

FORMULATING THE THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

This entails grouping and clustering the significant statements that have been identified from the transcribed data thereby forming bigger meanings or themes.

DESCRIBING AND PRESENTING THE THEMES

This needs clear descriptions to convey the findings of the analysis. A discussion of themes and sub-themes was used to describe the phenomenon.

INTERPRETING THE MEANING OF THE DATA

Writing of the text description of what the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon which includes verbatim examples and structural descriptions of how the experience happened that considered the setting and context in which the phenomenon was experienced. Next is synthesizing the data and writing of the composite descriptions of the phenomenon incorporating both the textural and structural descriptions which is the essence of the experience and represented the culminating aspect of the phenomenological study.

NOTE

The participants of this study have a background in hospitality management and are working in hotels with varied positions and functions. The participants were purposively selected and have experiences in dealing with customers in their respective hotels and their lived experiences in their works are important because this is where their stories are coming from.

The participants were informed in advance about the study and they were briefed on its objective and the result that it would like to achieve. They were made to understand that the study would highlight their experiences as workers in hotels and eventually their actual experiences in dealing with their customers particularly the problems in satisfying their daily guests would be solicited from them. The

researchers made it sure first that the participants are willing to share and would be open in laying down their personal and actual experiences and encounter with guests in their respective establishments **(Table 1)**.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants.

Participants	Hotel Presently Working during the conduct of the study	Position/s and No. of Years of Experience
A	The Oriental Hotel, Leyte	Supervisor/ 5 years
B	The Oriental Hotel, Leyte	Front office staff / 1.5 years
C	Granda Manor, Tacloban City	Front office staff/ 3 years
D	Z Pad Residences, Tacloban City	Front office staff/ 2 years
E	XYZ Hotel, Tacloban City	HRMO/ 4 years
F	XYZ Hotel, Tacloban City	Front Office staff/ 3 years
G	XYZ Hotel, Tacloban City	Front Office staff/ 3 years

There were two (2) focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted and formal communications were sent to the management of the concerned hotels where the participants are currently working. The purpose of sending the communication was to ask permission and to formally inform them that their staff would be participating in such study as respondents and for this they will be sharing their actual experiences as staff in their hotels.

The first focus group discussion was participated by three (3) participants and it took place in the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs of the University and the second session took place in XYZ Hotel in Tacloban City with four (4) participants.

The data gathering was conducted through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with the respondents who were purposively selected by the author. The discussions and interviews were aided by the use of open-ended questions which were formulated using the English language since all the participants are college graduates and speak well and understand the language. However, during the actual discussion, the participants were informed in advance that they can speak in waray-waray, the local dialect, or Tag-alog if they want just to make sure that they can really express well their thoughts that they want to explain and share.

After conducting the FGDs and interviews with the selected participants, the gathered data were transcribed carefully by the researchers and were collated, encoded, and organized for the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The gathered data were analyzed using the procedures which were proposed by Creswell (2007) for phenomenological qualitative inquiries. Major themes and sub-themes were formulated from the actual experiences of hotel staff who have direct contact and were exposed in dealing with concerns and problems of guests in their respective hotels.

THEME: SATISFIED HOTELIERS OF THEIR JOBS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

In order to set the tone of the sharing session and to situate the mindset of the respondents for them to openly share their actual experiences as hotel staff and

front liners, they were allowed first to share their feelings of being part of the hospitality industry.

The participants of the focus group discussion have quite similar positive responses with regard to their work and experiences. They are working but they continue learning many things in their works.

"We've been learning a lot of experiences how to deal with different people, especially if we have lots of guests from different countries and places".

"Every day is a learning process, we learned of course through the guests, some people could easily be satisfied, guti-guti la imobuhaton satisfied na but others guests nag extra effort na it imoginhihimoperokulang la gihapon".(Every day is a learning process, we learned of course through the guests, some people could easily be satisfied, doing small favors will already satisfy them already but for other guests an extra effort on our part is still not enough).

The job in the hospitality industry has challenges which they encounter every day, but these challenges have brought them satisfaction and fulfillment in their career and professional lives. Not every worker considers moving across the world to work, but the hospitality industry opens the doors to possibilities with the emerging markets abroad in countries like Brazil, China, India, and Russia mean new hotels, casinos, resorts, and upscale restaurants that are looking for staff (Evans, 2017).

"It's not an ordinary work because every situation every day is different, it's not routine like the usual job right now, and of course we met different people, different types of people with different concerns, different characters and you get to know their culture and personality as well".

"There are lots of interactions that we get not only one, with different walks of life and I learn that in this kind of world there is actually this kind of people that actually exist that you thought they only exist in movies but it really exist in real life and then you get to meet them".

"Being in the hospitality industry is one of the decisions I've made in my life because a part of it you need to have the passion to work with people every day because it is not an easy job"

"To add to the satisfaction with the job is you have the chance rubbing shoulders with big personalities, to meet and see VIPs and dignitaries like the President Duterte and the Princess of Thailand, these opportunities are not true to all people".

THEME: MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING GAPS

This study was intended to solicit the actual experiences of hotel staff particularly in dealing with problems in satisfying hotel guests. The participants were made to share freely of their own personal experiences when they encountered situations wherein, they need to come up with decisions on some things related to their jobs.

DEALING WITH GUESTS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE

"Working and dealing with different kinds of people, you always need to adjust to their levels, so that they could understand you and you would understand

them also and I am only 24 years old but I have to deal with people who are in their 40s, 50s, 60s and older".

The hospitality exposes you to work in a multi-cultural environment but working in a hotel does not mean that internationalism within the establishment stops at your clients and for the workers who are in-charge of the reception, those who are responsible in the kitchen, and even those office staff come from many different parts of the world and as expected they speak their own language, culture, practices and ideas on how to efficiently work within the industry (Nedelcu, 2015).

DEALING WITH IRATE CUSTOMERS

Facing inconsiderate clients should be expected by hotel front liners. This is one of the realities that hotel staff should embrace and accept as part of the work. In order to successfully overcome when confronted which such kind of situation, one needs special skills and a strong attitude. Assume that the customer has a right to be angry (Sawyers, 2018). It is always to presume that no one has the intention to commit mistakes, but it's a reality that may happen.

"May mga customers ngadadamo it yakan, bastapaubusa la hiya hit iya concerns and pay attention to the concerns, to the details and calculate your next move on what to do afterwards magyakanit guest".(There are customers that talk a lot, let them talk first about their concerns and pay attention to them, to the details and calculate your next move on what to do after the guest has expressed his/her concerns).

"You really need to empathize and to put yourself into his shoes why he is feeling down, feeling unsatisfied or whatever and then give the solution, but it is not always that he will agree with your solution, but at least you give options".

Maybe the client feels unsatisfied of the services offered and there's a feeling of being deceived because the hotel failed to meet the expectations.

"If a guest felt unsatisfied with the service and he is complaining for their money's worth, we need to the guest personally and it needs a lot of courage and patience and I need to hear also the side of the staff about the case".

"One time there were 2 female and 1 male guests, the man was already scandalous, and he was shouting at the front desk which could already be heard at the kitchen. They have a request which is not allowed but they keep on insisting. The Front Office staff waited until the guest calm down and offer options to the guests".

"I encountered one guest who was expecting the housekeeper to make-up his room, but at the door of his room, there's the "PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB" sign. The hotel staff knows that it is not allowed to enter the room, but the guest keeps on shouting and cursing the staff. We told him that if he continues cursing and saying foul words, we can send him out".

Listen to emotion without emotion (Sawyers, 2018). is a good reminder for hotel staff who may be are caught in this same situation. Hotel staff must be good enough to capture the things being emphasized by the customer for this will give an idea on what to focus on to address the concern.

DEALING WITH HARD-TO-PLEASE CUSTOMERS

There is another fact that a hotel worker must accept when working in the hotel industry, that there are customers who are difficult to satisfy no matter how

much effort you have exerted. This was proven by surveys and reviews of top-rated hotels that despite their excellent and very good service, still they received negative comments. So, the popular adage still holds true that you cannot please everyone, and this is also true in the hospitality industry.

"There are okay nga guests, and there are also guests that no matter what kind of good service you give to the person still they are hard to please Sometimes the problem is kay damona it ira gin aarongadirinaekaskto and then he would not like it or if nadedelay it ira request hinpira ka minute, nag-isognahira". (There are good customers, however, there are also guests that no matter how good the services that you offered to them, they are still hard to please. Sometimes the problem is they have plenty of requests and some are no longer practical and if these will not be given to them at once, they will be angry at us).

PUTTING A BALANCE BETWEEN GUESTS' SATISFACTION AND BUSINESS PROFIT

Favors and special requests by hotel customers are just normal especially when it comes to payments, discounts, and other perks and benefits. These offers attract customers; however, the concerned hotel staff must be decisive enough in making decisions regarding the matter. This requires skills by carefully considering the balance between the request of the client and the interest of the hotel.

"In sales, usually client companies and organizations have specific budgets and if you want to get them sometimes you need to lower the price, you have to adjust, but you need also to think the impact of your decision to the revenue performance of the hotel".

"In giving discounts, first I ask the management about the specific discount that I can give to the customers, and if the request of the customer is beyond the limit then I will talk to the guest labinakonnaabotnala kami hin break-even danay okay pa itoperokon very low nagudtalaga we also learn to say "no" but in a nice way". (Especially if it already reaches the break-even, but it's still acceptable, but if we think the offer is very low, we also learn to say "no" in a nice way).

"Kon dirinagud acceptable nga gin-aaronga discount (If the request of the client for a discount is no longer acceptable), we inform the guest up to how much discount is allowed, because we need also to be consistent that now we can give big discounts and next time that the customer will come we could no longer give the same".

THE CHALLENGE OF MAKING QUICK DECISIONS

One way to test a good worker is the ability to make good decisions at the time when it is needed, and the situation requires it. It is important to know the ultimate strategic objective, think rationally about how your options align with the ultimate objective and do something with that knowledge and those thoughts (Tasler, 2013).

"There are time nga may pressure and diri man pwedemaghulatbisan 2 to 3 minutes la (Sometimes we are pressured to decide on a thing that cannot wait even for 2 to 3 minutes only), we have to think, we have to decide on the matter which is better for the guest and also for the establishment". "For things that I need to

decide, I also asked my colleagues on what the best decision would be especially when it comes to bigger decisions".

CREATING A PRO-ACTIVE HOTEL STAFF

For a hotel to deliver 5-star service, it requires two important things on the part of the staff – being proactive and with great initiative. (Or, 2019). One cannot afford to be caught unaware and be reactive to things that may occur. Planning and anticipating things that may happen is an advantage instead of waiting for it to occur.

"As much as we can, we try to address tanannga concerns hit guests, nganpaggawas hit guests (all the concerns of the guests, and after checkout we investigate on what to do) the next time we encounter the same case, what would be the best thing to do, we need to prepare ourselves for same situations that might happen again in the future".

THEME: COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE GAPS BEING ARTICULATE IN REJECTING A CUSTOMER

Rejecting a customer or a request that is not acceptable based on the policies of a hotel is undeniably a big challenge to handle by concerned hotel staff. However, experts would advise that the staff should be creative enough in dealing with the customer by telling the truth and the reasons for the rejection. The staff should maintain his point while remaining polite.

"We need to learn also the graceful style of rejecting customers, not necessarily saying "no" rather you will say "I'm sorry we're fully booked now, but I can call our sister hotel, if you can be accommodated".

"Yes, we think and look for reasons that we think are acceptable to our customers, so far my observation they still go back to our hotel".

"Makuri gad ig-turn down mo it customer because diri possible it iya request or gin-aaronga favor, peroako (It's really difficult to turn down a customer because his/her request is not possible) sometimes we need to tell them politely and honestly that for now we cannot accept this but you need to tell them that you are going to review their case for consideration next time and you do not close the possibility of having them back sooner, to win them back later".

THE CHALLENGE OF SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE

Hotel front office staff are often confronted with the issue of language gap because of the inability to speak and understand many of the languages being used by their clients. This issue is one of the reasons for the loss of confidence among hotel front liners. Showing emotion and paying attention to the comfort of the customer is a good technique, also try to slow down and be calm, draw a picture to be understood, check and validate your client's understanding, be patient and maintain good humor may help in the situation (Lee & Roberts, 2020).

"We have guests like Chinese, Koreans and Japanese and good that I know a little of Nihongo. For the Japanese, it's a problem because the staff cannot speak the language, but it is a matter of strategy like the use of simple but understandable sign language".

"Another incident in our restaurant with a Korean guest, and there were many staff attending to him because they were trying to analyze what the customer was trying to convey. I approached them and show to the guest the pictures of the

menu and finally we understand that the Korean guests would like to order an ice cream as shown in the pictures of the menu list".

"Yesdakongaproblema it language barrier in the office, sometimes we did google kunano it iraginyayakan". (Yes, language barrier is a big problem in the office, sometimes we refer to google just to get to know their message).

"There are other forms of communication not just speaking, you can illustrate just to get the message and also sign language is very helpful".

MINIMIZING MISCOMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOTEL STAFF AND THE GUEST

Miscommunication with hotel guests is a nightmare and therefore this should be avoided by the staff to happen. This will create trouble that may lead to customer's complaints and negative reactions about the hotel.

"Bangin too high an expectation han guest, or banginwaraykamomagkaintindihayhan guest, like masiring it guest ngaayawakopagsukti kay diriako it mabayad, or masukot ka hit guest tapos it iya company ngay an it mabayad as agreed, so may adahitonmga miscommunication with the customer and the staff *of the hotel.* (Maybe the expectation of the guest is too high and maybe you do not understand each other's message, like the client will say "don't ask me to pay because it's not me who will pay the bill or you will ask the customer to pay, but it's her/his company that will for him/her, so there could be miscommunication between the customer and the hotel staff).

"With the use of technology, it is easier to communicate because there are available applications and these are helpful for foreign guests that are not really good in speaking English, the use of English translator application or even the use of google also".

 There are creative ways to avoid this problem like establishing a mobile-friendly digital workplace, offering accessible information for the clients, upgrading the skills of hotel staff on the use of current technologies, sharing updated information, and speeding up issue reporting and response time (Grossman, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Hotel staff is largely and commonly confronted with problems as they perform and deliver the tasks that are assigned to them. Front liners in hotels are highly susceptible and predisposed to encountering problems in the everyday routines of their jobs to satisfy and fulfill the expectations of customers. These problems range from simple and easy to solve such as moderate and to difficult and critical issues that already entail careful considerations of many things.

Two major types of problems that are related to satisfying hotel guests have surfaced in this study which was shared by the respondents based on their actual experiences in their past and current work assignments. The problems that were encountered by hotel staff are largely related to management and decision-making and often these require quick results. Daily, they were made to decide on what room to assign to a particular guest given his/her preferences and specifications. When a guest would request payment discounts, the staff must decide whether to grant it or not and if it is allowed a decision again is needed on up to how much

discount should be given to the customer. These are only some of the numerous circumstances that require a decision by the hotel staff.

Language and communication gaps are another type of problem that was encountered by hotel staff. Entertaining foreign guests is a challenging task for hotel front liners especially those who cannot speak English. However, they consider these problems as subordinates only to decision-making which is more serious and challenging. The staff has resorted to various ways of addressing the issue of the language gap like using technology to understand the message of their customers. They were also highly articulate in using other strategies such as body gestures and doing sign language just to get across with their customers and eventually satisfying them.

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