

Miscommunication Weekend: Trainee Challenge at the Front Office of the Five-Star Hotel in Batam City

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Abstract

The Front Office serves as the frontline in creating the first impression for hotel guests, especially in five-star hotels that demand high service standards. Therefore, the presence of trainees in the Front Office has become a common strategy to support operations, particularly during weekends when guest volume increases. Although trainees have received training, miscommunication with guests still frequently occurs, leading to a decline in service quality. The problem addressed in this study is how trainees can minimize miscommunication to ensure smooth operations and enhance service quality at the Front Office of five-star hotels in Batam City. This research aims to understand how trainees can reduce the occurrence of miscommunication to support operational efficiency and improve the quality of Front Office services in five-star hotels in Batam City. This study employs a qualitative research method with a case study approach. The rationale is to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by trainees, focusing on a specific location within a complex situation where miscommunication is likely to occur during weekends. The findings indicate that miscommunication often happens due to the trainees' lack of experience in handling pressure during busy weekends. One limitation of this research is its use of a qualitative case study approach, involving only one five-star hotel in Batam City with a limited number of respondents. It is recommended that future research adopt a quantitative method to cover a broader range of respondents by involving multiple five-star hotels.

Keywords: Miscommunication, Trainee, Guest, Service, Front Office

Introduction

Front office staff at five-star hotels must possess strong skills in serving guests with high-quality standards (Kresna, 2023). The reception and service provided by the front office staff

create the first impression for guests, which plays a crucial role in their decision to stay at the hotel. The front office serves as the hotel's information center, and when guests arrive for the first time, they meet the front office staff or receptionist, who must be able to give a pleasant and welcoming first impression (R. Utami et al., 2023). Although five-star front office services are standardized, miscommunication between trainees and guests still often occurs during weekends.

The front office plays a crucial role in creating a good first impression for guests. However, during high seasons when the number of guests increases, the front office requires additional support to ensure smooth operations. The trainee program provides aspiring hospitality professionals with an opportunity to learn directly within the industry while helping hotels optimize service at the front office. With proper guidance, trainees can handle administrative tasks, support senior staff in serving guests, and improve the operational efficiency of the Front Office (Yasa, 2024). The trainee's main responsibility is to assist seniors in serving guests at the Front Office. However, during high season, trainees are expected to have skills on par with their seniors to prevent miscommunication when providing front office services to guests.

The research problem in this study is how trainees can minimize miscommunication to ensure smooth operations and improve service quality at the Front Office of five-star hotels in Batam City. The objective of this research is to identify the contribution of trainees in minimizing miscommunication to support operational flow and improve the quality of service at the Front Office of five-star hotels in Batam City.

According to research by Hidayah and Octaviany (2023), training activities in the front office focus on developing soft skills such as work ethic, politeness, teamwork, discipline, and adaptability to norms, aiming to shape high-quality individuals who can implement these traits in a work environment.

From several previous studies the first study discussed the role of trainees in the Front Office and their impact on guest satisfaction in star-rated hotels. The presence of trainees affects guest perception, particularly in terms of service speed and friendliness. The first interaction between guests and trainees at the Front Office significantly influences the overall guest experience (Wulandari, 2021). The second study focused on the impact of trainee quality on the hotel's professional image. Trainee professionalism affects the hotel's image, especially if they are trained in communication and work ethics. The service provided by trainees reflects the hotel's professional image, making it crucial for management to handle them strategically (Sutanto, 2022). The third study examined the role of trainees at the Front Office of Harris Hotel Batam Center. Trainees were found to be very helpful in Front Office operations, with training processes that were easy to follow under staff supervision. The findings showed that trainees played a significant role and followed the training instructions effectively (Teo, 2022). The fourth study explored the role of training on the performance of front desk agents at Harris Resort Barelang Batam. The training given to Front Desk Agents significantly improved their performance in delivering services to guests (Simatupang et al., 2022).

The conclusions from these four studies are as follows first, the presence of trainees impacts on guest satisfaction, particularly in terms of service speed and friendliness. Second, trainee professionalism and ethics reflect the overall image of the hotel and should be managed through proper training and supervision. Third, trainees contribute significantly to daily operational efficiency, as long as they receive clear guidance and mentoring from senior staff. Fourth, effective training directly enhances Front Office performance, including that of the trainees involved. Meanwhile, the research to be conducted will focus on miscommunication between trainees and guests during weekends at the front office of five-star hotels.

Literature Review

Five-Star Hotel Front Office

The Front Office in a five-star hotel, is a highly strategic department, as it serves as the main center for guest services and requires a high level of professionalism in carrying out its duties. Service standards in five-star hotels must reflect comfort, luxury, and consistent hospitality in every interaction. According to Suwento (2021), the Front Office is the frontline in delivering the first impression, which greatly influences guest satisfaction and shapes the overall perception of the hotel's quality.

Front Office staff are required to possess extensive knowledge of hotel services, strong communication skills, and the ability to respond quickly and personally to every guest's needs (Suwento, 2021) states that the Front Office plays a key role in determining guest satisfaction and shaping perceptions of the hotel's overall quality. Therefore, services in this department must be carried out optimally, with accuracy, and through the use of polite and professional language. Thus, excellent Front Office service quality will strengthen the image of the five-star hotel as a provider of internationally standardized services that prioritize guest satisfaction.

Service Excellence at the Front Office

Excellent service is often equated with service excellence, but in essence, there is a difference. Excellent service is service that is carried out with a friendly, fast, precise, polite, and satisfactory attitude, according to minimum standards. Meanwhile, service excellence is service that is provided well, so that it exceeds the expectations of guests (Suputra, 2021).

Front Office services in five-star hotels emphasize superior service quality in order to meet customer needs that exceed guest expectations. In the hospitality industry, especially in five-star hotels, service excellence is essential for creating memorable stays, increasing customer loyalty and enhancing the hotel's image, thereby strengthening its competitive advantage. According to Putra & Sari (2023), service excellence is an organization's ability to provide service that not only meets but surpasses customer expectations through professionalism, empathy, and consistency in the service process. They emphasize that consistently positive customer experiences will foster loyalty and positive perceptions of the service brand.

The Role of Trainees in the Hospitality Industry

Trainees in the hotel industry have a main role, which is to help work operations in hotels, trainees also have a goal, namely, to know the world of work so that it can benefit both

parties, both the hotel and the trainee itself (Pradewi, 2024). On the other hand, trainees also make direct contributions to the hotel's operational activities. According to Widodo and Permata (2023), the presence of trainees can systematically improve operational productivity and provide more responsive service experiences to guests, especially in five-star hotels with high service standards.

The role of trainees can be viewed from two perspectives. First, they assist in carrying out operational service tasks at the Front Office. Second, they are simultaneously learning practical skills such as teamwork, communication, and discipline, all of which are essential in the dynamic hotel work environment. Hidayah and Octaviany (2023) emphasize that trainees with strong soft skills can become an important part of maintaining the service quality standards expected in the hospitality industry.

Service quality standards in the hospitality industry are not determined solely by professional staff but also involve the active role of trainees who contribute to daily operations (Suwento, 2021). Trainees are expected to demonstrate basic competencies such as effective communication skills, discipline, teamwork, and good work ethics. In a dynamic hotel environment, trainees must be prepared to perform real tasks with a professional attitude in order to help deliver a positive guest experience (Putra & Nurdin, 2020). Guest satisfaction-oriented service quality standards are essential; therefore, trainee training must focus on soft skill development.

Communication and Miscommunication in the Front Office of a Five-Star Hotel

The delivery of messages from one party to another to achieve mutual understanding is known as communication. In businesses such as hotels, communication is the foundation for carrying out daily operations and delivering services to guests. According to Pambudi et al. (2022), communication is the process of exchanging information and meaning between individuals or groups, conducted verbally, non-verbally, and symbolically, with the goal of achieving mutual understanding.

Miscommunication occurs when a message is not conveyed or understood correctly, potentially leading to errors, conflicts, delays, or poor service quality. Miscommunication happens when the information delivered is not accurately understood by the recipient, due to ineffective delivery, differences in perception, or technical barriers in the communication process (Zalind, 2022). The performance of trainees in the front office of five-star hotels is highly influenced by effective communication. To ensure tasks are carried out efficiently and without mistakes, clear communication between staff and supervisors is essential. In addition, open and two-way internal communication can enhance a trainee's self-confidence and help build strong working relationships. This is supported by research conducted by Pambudi et al. (2022), which found that internal communication has a direct impact on employee productivity in the hotel environment, as smooth communication fosters a more productive work atmosphere where everyone can collaborate effectively.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method with a case study approach. The rationale is to understand specific events or experiences of trainees in real-life conditions as part of their routine work at the Front Office of a five-star hotel (Bibiana, 2022). The

qualitative approach provides a holistic depiction of events occurring in the field, particularly within the context of trainee activities in an actual work environment. The case study focuses on one five- star hotel in Batam City as the research object to gather information intensively, in-depth, and in detail.

The total population in this study is 10 individuals, consisting of two key informants: the first is the Front Office Manager (FOM), and the second is a Front Desk Agent/Receptionist (FDA) working at a five-star hotel in Batam City. The remaining 8 respondents are trainees (Suriani & Jailani, 2023).

The sampling technique used is saturated sampling, meaning that the entire population is used as the sample because relatively small population (Tamara et al., 2023). Therefore, the total sample taken is 8 trainees.

To categorize respondent answers, the study adopts four categories based on the Likert scale, as follows Very Satisfied: represents all responses (100%), Satisfied: represents most responses (90–75%), Fairly Satisfied: represents a considerable number (74–65%), Moderately Satisfied: represents some (64–50%), Not Satisfied: represents a small number (<50%) (Saputra & Apri Yani, 2024).

A Proposed Conceptual Framework

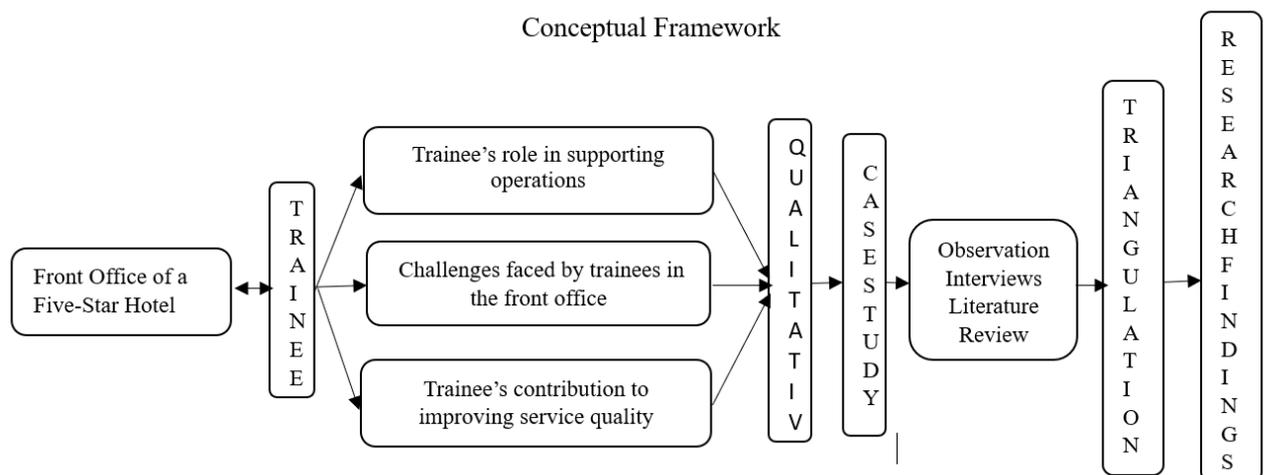


Figure 1.The Proposed Conceptual Framework

Source: Analytical Thinking on Weekend Miscommunication: Challenges Faced by Trainees at the Front Office of a Five-Star Hotel in Batam City. 2025

The conceptual framework above illustrates the flow of the research. This study focuses on trainees being assigned to the Front Office of a five-star hotel as the central point of the phenomenon being examined. The core issues revolve around three main aspects related to trainees: first, the role of trainees in supporting operations; second, the challenges faced by trainees while working at the front office; and third, the contribution of trainees to improving service quality.

A qualitative approach is used in this research to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, not based on numbers or statistics. A case study approach was chosen

because it focuses on a specific case at a five-star hotel in Batam City. Data was collected through observation, interviews, and literature study.

The aim is to produce research findings that provide an overview of the roles, challenges, and contributions of trainees in service practices at the hotel, as well as to offer recommendations for improvement.

Results and Discussions

General Picture of Respondents

Table 1

Respondents' Gender

| | | Number of People | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|-------|------------------|----------------|
| Gender | Man | 1 | 12,5% |
| | Women | 7 | 87,5% |

Source: Data Processing Results (2025)

Most of the respondents were female, while a small percentage were male.

Table 2

Respondents' Age

| Age | Percentage (%) |
|-------|----------------|
| 20-25 | 62,5% |
| 25-30 | 12,5% |
| 31-35 | 25% |

Source: Data Processing Results (2025)

The data of respondents aged 20-25 years is quite large, a small proportion of respondents are 25-30 years old, while a small percentage of respondents are 31-35 years old.

Table 3

Respondent Work Experience

| Work Experience | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 6 month | 12,5% |
| 0-1 year | 37,5% |
| 2-3 year | 25% |
| 4-5 year | 12,5% |
| 5-10 year | 12,5% |

Source: Data Processing Result (2025)

The average work experience of respondents is a small part of 6 months, 2-5 years, 4-5 years and 5-10 years, while a small part has 0-1 years of experience, so it can be concluded that the majority of work experience is 0-1 years.

The Role of Trainees in Supporting Smooth Operations at the Front Office of a Five-Star Hotel

1. Trainees Are Involved in Daily Operational Activities

Based on the research findings, a portion of respondents (50%) stated that they were involved in daily operational tasks. A smaller percentage (37.5%) indicated they were occasionally involved in daily tasks, while a minority (12.5%) said they were specifically assigned to duties at the Front Office. This study indicates that the level of trainee involvement in daily

operations still varies, and trainees have not yet been fully (100%) utilized according to their capabilities. Involvement of trainees is crucial for building customer satisfaction and loyalty, which is grounded in strengthening teamwork to enhance service performance (Salsabila, 2022).

2. The trainee is responsible for carrying out the tasks assigned in the Front Office section
Based on the results of the study, some respondents (62.5%) said that trainees work with the responsibility of carrying out tasks in the Front Office. While a small percentage of respondents (37.5%) said that not all tasks in the Front Office are charged to trainees. This research indicates that although most trainees are already actively involved, there are still limitations in certain assignments, the possibility of maintaining the quality of service or due to the limited experience of the trainees. Overall, it builds responsibility as a strong foundation in development, hones problem-solving skills, and gives trainees the opportunity to apply skills directly in the world of work in the Front Office (Sagor, 2024).

3. Trainees are very helpful in speeding up or smoothing the service to guests
Based on the results of the study, most respondents (75%) said that trainees are very helpful in speeding up service to guests, while a small percentage (25%) say that trainees have not fully helped speed up service to guests. This research indicates that all trainees have a fairly important role in supporting the acceleration of services. The rules about waiting time are not something standard, but the hotel management must have a standard to be met in the Front Office (Gustiawan, 2025).

4. The trainee's quality of work is excellent in supporting the service standards of five-star hotels
Based on the results of the study, most respondents (75%) said that the work quality of trainees supports the service standards of five-star hotels, while a small percentage (25%) said that the work quality of trainees has not reached the standard of five-star hotels. This research indicates that the majority of trainees have shown satisfactory performance, although there is still room for improvement so that the quality of service can be felt consistently by all stakeholders. In the world of work, the company's image depends on Front Office services. Therefore, the Front Office is responsible for providing excellent service to the company's guests (Kurniawan, 2015).

5. How staff or management are very effective in overcoming these barriers
Based on the results of the study, most respondents (75%) said that staff or management had worked effectively to overcome obstacles, while a small number (25%) said that staff or management had not achieved effectively to overcome obstacles, This research indicates that the majority of trainees consider that management has carried out its functions well, but there is still a need for improvement so that effectiveness can be felt comprehensively by all parties. The Front Office Department has a duty and responsibility to provide comfort and provide maximum service and information. On the other hand, it can answer effectively to various problems that are often faced by guests, in improving the quality of service (Adveni & Kuswandi, 2020).

Obstacles faced by trainees in carrying out their duties in the Front Office of five-star hotels

1. Trainees experience problems during weekends carrying out duties in the Front Office

Based on the results of the study, most respondents (75%) said that trainees did not experience problems on weekends in carrying out tasks, while a small percentage of respondents (12.5%) said that there were obstacles on weekends in carrying out tasks in the Front Office. This research indicates that the majority of trainees have been quite ready and able to face operational challenges on weekends. Although assistance from seniors still needed to be sustainable in order to minimize obstacles that may arise on weekends. High workload during the high season often leads to decreased performance, work stress, and even potential errors in service (Suciadi et al., 2024).

2. Trainees have a good working relationship with permanent staff and superiors in the Front Office department

Based on the results of the study, some respondents (62.5%) said they had a good working relationship with permanent staff and superiors in the Front Office, A small number of respondents (37.5%) said they were not intensely familiar with permanent staff and superiors in the Front Office. This research indicates that the majority of trainees have a working relationship between trainees and staff or superiors in the Front Office that has been built quite well. But it still needs to be improved in terms of proximity and intensity of interaction to create a more harmonious and productive work environment. Human resource management strategies to improve service performance, through training programs that include the development of communication skills, an understanding of guest management, and the improvement of employee well-being, motivation, and loyalty. Through this approach, hotels can create a conducive working atmosphere, consistent service, and a memorable stay experience for guests (Nurhakim & Kelvianto, 2025).

3. Trainees feel that they get enough guidance and training during their duties as trainees in the Front Office

Based on the results of the study, most respondents (75%) said they received sufficient guidance and training while carrying out their duties as trainees, while a small number of respondents (25%) said they did not feel that they had received sufficient guidance and training while carrying out their duties as trainees in the Front Office. This research indicates that the majority of trainees say that training support for trainees has gone quite well. But periodic evaluations are still needed so that all trainees can experience the benefits of training evenly and optimally. Trainees easily understand work if they make good notes on the things they teach and often ask questions about things they don't understand. The most important factor in making it easier to adapt in an internship is a person who is easy to socialize with others and is able to create good relationships and communication with the people around him (L. Y. S. Utami & Sinaga, 2023) .

4. The workload of the trainee received is according to his ability and status as a trainee in the Front Office.

Based on the results of the study, less than some respondents (50%) said that the workload of the trainees received was in accordance with their abilities and status as trainees, while less than some (50%) said that the workload of the trainees received was not in accordance with their abilities and status as trainees in the Front Office. This research indicates that the

majority of trainees say that there is still an imbalance in the distribution of trainee workload. So further evaluation is needed so that assignments can be adjusted to the trainee's abilities and status fairly and proportionately. Proper training can improve the work attitude of staff, strengthen the services provided, and contribute to the reputation of the company/hotel in meeting the needs and expectations of guests. The training program designed should be oriented towards increasing productivity both for Front Office officers and supporting quality service (Natraj, 2022).

5. Trainees are able to adapt to international service standards applied in the Front Office. Based on the results of the research, some respondents (50%) said that trainees were able to adjust to the international service standards applied, while some (50%) said that trainees could not adjust to the international service standards applied in the Front Office. This research indicates that the majority of trainees say that the adaptability of trainees to international standards is still uneven. So there is a need for continuous training, mentoring, and evaluation so that all trainees can meet global service quality expectations. Front Desk Agent training runs effectively, so there is a need for a more structured and planned training schedule, so that it can handle the problems identified through comprehensive analysis to increase the effectiveness of training (Ni Luh Putu Erin Widiyanti et al., 2025).

Trainee contribution to improving the quality of service to guests in five-star hotels

1. Trainees make a direct contribution to guest service

Based on the results of the study, most respondents (75%) said that trainees can contribute to improving the quality of service to guests, while a small percentage of respondents (25%) said that trainees do not contribute to improving the quality of service to guests in five-star hotels. This research indicates that in general, trainees have made positive and significant contributions, and improvement strategies are still needed so that the positive impact is felt more consistently and evenly. In general, trainee students have good knowledge, technical skills, and technological abilities at work, but it still needs to be done to improve hard skills. Forms of training to improve additional skills such as, time management, interpersonal communication, and problem-solving (Hidayah & Octaviany, 2023).

2. The presence of trainees has a positive impact on the speed and friendliness of the service. Based on the results of the study, less than a few respondents (50%) said the presence of trainees could have a positive impact on speed or service friendliness, while less than a few respondents (50%) said trainees had less positive impact on speed or service friendliness. This research indicates that the existence of trainees has a positive impact on the speed and friendliness of services, on the other hand, it is still felt that the contribution of trainees has not been consistently felt by all parties. Staff Training Development is an effort to improve the capabilities and services provided to hotel staff. The material provided was about improving employee competence, especially in terms of excellent service, communication, and guest complaint management (Suharto Bambang, Bascha Umi Farichah, 2025).

3. Trainees have helped resolve guest complaints or difficult situations

Based on the results of the study, most respondents (75%) said that trainees often help resolve guest complaints or when situations are difficult, while a small percentage of

respondents (25%) said trainees are less helpful in resolving guest complaints or when situations are difficult. This research indicates that the majority of trainees say that the role of trainees is very helpful in complaint management and problem solving. Although the contribution has not been fully felt by all parties, this requires strengthening training and mentoring so that the role of trainees becomes more consistent and effective in various situations. Handling guest complaints is done specifically by the Public Relations Officer (PRO), who acts as part of the complaint handling strategy to ensure any issues can be addressed effectively (Indah et al., 2024).

4. Trainees follow the service standards of five-star hotels.

Based on the results of the study, most respondents (75%) said that trainees had followed hotel service standards, while a small percentage of respondents (25%) said that trainees did not follow five-star hotel service standards. This research indicates that the majority of trainees have worked up to standard, but regular reviews and further training are still needed to maintain consistent service quality. The growth of the hotel industry increases competition among hotels; in order to maintain the quality of service, hotels must ensure optimal employee performance so that guests feel comfortable and want to come back. Good hotel service requires clear guidelines, namely Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) that must be followed by all employees (Sandry et al., 2024).

5. Trainees help ease the workload of permanent staff so that the focus of service can be increased

Based on the results of the study, most respondents (75%) said that trainees help ease the workload of permanent staff so that they can focus on service, while a small percentage of respondents (25%) said that trainees are less able to help ease the burden on staff so they cannot focus on service. This research indicates that the majority of trainees say that the role of trainees is very helpful in reducing the operational burden of staff, but this contribution has not been felt equally by all staff. Therefore, improved coordination and training need to be done so that trainees can contribute more consistently in supporting the effectiveness of the team. The workload received by Front Office staff has a significant influence on trainee performance and job satisfaction, a small percentage of staff feel a high workload and assess the workload as having a negative impact on trainee productivity and mental health. However, some staff also have a positive perception of workload, seeing it as a challenge that can improve their abilities and skills (Permatasari et al., 2024).

Conclusions

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded as follows:

The Role of Trainees in Supporting Smooth Operations in the Front Office of a Five-Star Hotel: Trainees have been involved in the daily operations of the Front Office according to their respective abilities. Most of them have played an active role, although they have not been fully involved in important tasks to maintain the quality of service. In general, trainees have a significant role in supporting the acceleration of services. The majority of trainees showed satisfactory performance during the internship, although continuous improvement is still needed. They also assessed that the management had carried out its functions well during the internship process.

Obstacles faced by trainees in carrying out their duties in the Front Office of five-star hotels:

The readiness and ability of trainees in weekend operations is quite good, although it still requires assistance from seniors to avoid miscommunication. The working relationship between trainees, staff, and superiors is going well, but it needs to be strengthened to create a more harmonious and productive work environment. Training has been provided evenly, but there is still an imbalance in workload so that it needs to be evaluated so that the assignment is fairer, and according to ability. The ability to adapt to international standards is not evenly distributed, so it is necessary to increase training, mentoring, and continuous evaluation to meet global service quality standards.

Trainees' contribution to improving the quality of service to guests in five-star hotels:

During the internship, trainees have made positive and significant contributions, especially in improving the speed and friendliness of the service. However, the impact has not been felt equally by all parties. Trainees also help in the solution of guest problems, although they have not been consistent in various situations. The majority of trainees have worked up to standard, but regular reviews and further training are needed to maintain the quality of service. The presence of trainees also eased the burden on staff, but this contribution was still not felt comprehensively. An improvement strategy is needed so that the positive impact of trainees is more consistent and even.

The limitations of this study were carried out on one five-star hotel, so the results could not be generalized to all other star hotels. Recommendations for further research focus more on measuring trainee specific competencies, namely trainee communication skills in interacting with staff, especially guests.

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