

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Hospitality industry in Bandung is growing rapidly, along with the establishment of some new hotels. Therefore, some hotels in Bandung are in a race to become the number one hotel in Bandung and be the first choice hotel when local and foreign tourists visit Bandung. In my opinion, to be the first choice hotel, hotel staff should build a good relationship with the guests, such as making friendly conversations with the guests and giving the best service to make the guests feel comfortable at the hotel. Therefore, communication skill is important for a hotel staff. James states that, "Hospitality communication in the workplace is always an important issue which is constantly addressed by employers and staff alike" (par. 1). Furthermore, in an article entitled "Small Talk for Assistant Housekeepers", it is explained, Communication skills can give hotel staff some positive aspects ;such as discover what the guest needs, get some feedback from the guests and the guests felt that the hotel staff care about

them (par. 4). Based on those quotations, it can be seen that the communication between the hotel staff and the guests is important.

Referring to hospitality communication, I had a similar experience when doing my internship at Hilton Bandung Hotel (henceforth HBH) as a Front Office Department staff. The Front Office Department is divided into several outlets: Executive Lounge, Concierge, Magic and Front Desk and Guest Relation. I did my internship for three months (one month in each outlet). I have some tasks when becoming a Concierge trainee. The tasks are managing and keeping baggage of guests, being a greeter in the lobby, giving some information to the guests, escorting the guests to their room, ordering a taxi for the guests and fulfilling all the guests' needs.

As a concierge trainee, I have some problems in communication skills; one of the problems is starting a conversation and having a small talk with foreign guests when meeting and escorting the guests. The senior staff, Mr. Gema, told me to initiate conversations with the guests because it would be the beginning of connection with the guests. As Carducci states, "Small talk is not merely a way to pass time or impress others - it is the first step to take when making connections with other people . . ." (1). However, I was confused about how to start the conversation and choose the suitable topics of conversation. Moreover, I did not have confidence when talking with foreign guests from China and Australia. Most of the foreign guests were speaking English but it was difficult to understand what the Australian's guests said, because they spoke English quite quickly and it was difficult to grasp what they said. Meanwhile, the foreign guests from China had difficulty in communicating in English. Accordingly, I was not able to communicate well

with the guests. This problem is important to discuss because it influences my working performance as a Concierge trainee at HBH.

Based on the above explanation, I would like to discuss my difficulty in starting a conversation and making a small talk with foreign guests when becoming a Concierge trainee at HBH. This term paper contains some potential solutions to solve the problem, and I believe that the solutions can be useful for people who have the same problem as mine when doing an internship at the hotel.

B. Identification of the Problem

The problem that will be analyzed is formulated in the following questions:

1. Why did I have difficulty in starting a conversation and having small talk with foreign guests when becoming Concierge trainee in HBH?
2. How did my problem influence my working performance?
3. How should I overcome the problem?

C. Objectives and Benefits of the Study

The objectives of the study are to find out the causes and effects of the problem and to present the best solutions to solve the problem. The benefit of this study for me as a writer is I can learn how to start conversation with foreign guests. As for the readers, they will learn some information about small talk with foreign guests. For hotel staff at HBH, the benefit is they will

get some knowledge to help other trainees who have the same difficulty in starting conversations or making small talks with foreign guests.

D. Description of the Institution

In the article entitled “Bio True Story”, it is stated that, “The founder of Hilton International is Conrad Nicholson Hilton. He is an American hotelier who established the Hilton Hotel chain. He was born on December 25, 1887 in San Antonio, New Mexico” (par. 3). Based on the information from “About Hilton Worldwide”, Hilton group consists of Hilton, Hilton Garden Inn, Hilton Grand Vacation, Home 2 suite, Home Wood Suite, Hampton, Embassy Suite, Double Tree, Conrad and Waldorf Astoria. Conrad had a dream, and that dream was turned into a vision of Hilton Hotel. The vision is “To fill the earth with the light and warm of hospitality”. To achieve that vision, Hilton Hotel has a mission, that is, “To be the first choice of guests, team members and owners alike” (1).

Based on the information that I got from my supervisor in the Executive Lounge outlet, Mr. Julius Haryanto, “Hilton Bandung Hotel was established on March 21, 2009. The owner of the HBH is Mr. Tatang Heriawan. The land used to build HBH was originally a tennis court. HBH is located in the city center, H.O.S Tjokoraminoto Street number 41-43, and it is near Bandung train station and Husein Sastranegara Airport”.

Furthermore, in the “Hotel General Information” it is stated, “HBH has 118 deluxe type rooms, 45 executive rooms, 19 executive plus rooms, 3 junior suites and 1 presidential suite, so the total is 186 rooms. HBH is also

equipped with several facilities such as 3 restaurants (Purnawarman, Caffecino, Fresco and Magma), 3 ballrooms, 9 meeting rooms, a fitness centre, a swimming pool, sauna and spa.”

E. Method of the Study

In order to solve the problem, I have collected data to support the analysis. The data are from library research and field research (interview and observation). The written data is obtained in the books or electronic sources. The field research is based on my internship experience as a Concierge trainee in HBH, the observation, which is recorded in my internship journal, and the interview with my supervisor.

F. Limitation of the Study

The focus of this study is solving the difficulty of starting conversation and having small talk with foreign guests when becoming a trainee at Concierge in HBH. The period of my internship is three months, starting from June 18 until September 9, 2012. As a trainee in the Front Office Department (concierge) at HBH, my working hours is divided into three shifts. The subject of research is myself as a trainee at Concierge in HBH.

G. Organization of the Term Paper

The term paper starts with the Abstract, which is the summary of the term paper in Indonesian. The second is Acknowledgments and Table of Contents, followed by the four chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction, it contains Background of the Study, Identification of the Problem, Objectives and Benefits of the Study, Description of the Institution, Method of the Study, Limitation of the Study, and Organization of the term paper. The second chapter is Problem Analysis, the third chapter is Potential Solutions, and the fourth chapter is the Conclusion of the term paper. After that, there is a Bibliography which lists the data sources to support the research. And the last part is the Appendices, containing flowchart, interview questions and interview transcript.