

AIRPORT REPRESENTATIVES' ROLE IN HANDLING FOREIGN TOURISTS: CASE STUDY AT PANORAMA DESTINATION BALI

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: November, 2024

Accepted: December, 2024

Published: December, 2024

Keywords:

Role of Airport Representative, Travelers, Tourist Arrival and Departure, I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport, Panorama Destination Bali

E-ISSN: 3064-044X
DOI: 10.52352/jtrue.v1i2.1670

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of airport representatives at Panorama Destination Bali in managing foreign tourist arrivals and ensuring service satisfaction. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method, the results of direct observation in the field and the distribution of questionnaires to two different classifications of respondents. The first group of 23 staff members of Panorama Destination Bali while the second group consists of 8 foreign tourists who use the service. The findings indicate that Airport Representative plays a crucial role in ensuring a positive traveler experience at the airport, starting from when tourists arrive to when tourists depart. They are not only responsible for assisting with the logistics of arrival and departure but also provide necessary information and support to tourists. The staff respondents emphasized the importance of communication skills and thorough knowledge of airport procedures, while tourists highlighted the sense of security and comfort provided by the Airport Representatives. Overall, this study confirms the important role of Airport Representatives in the tourism industry, particularly in enhancing the satisfaction of foreign tourists visiting Bali. The findings offer valuable insights for airport managers and travel agents aiming to improve their services.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Airport Representatives at Panorama Destination Bali play a pivotal role in managing the arrival and departure experiences of foreign tourists at I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport. As a key division within PT. Destinasi Tirta Nusantara TBK, operating under the brand name Panorama Destination, these representatives ensure smooth and efficient processes for international travelers. This study focuses on the critical responsibilities and impact of Airport Representatives in enhancing the overall experience of tourists visiting Bali.

Panorama Destination, a prominent travel agent based in Bali, is a subsidiary of Panorama Sentrawisata. It specializes in providing travel arrangement services for foreign tourists visiting Indonesia, organizing inbound tours to various destinations across the country, with a particular focus on Bali. Founded by Mr. Adhi Tirtawisata in 1972, Panorama has evolved over nearly five decades into the Panorama Leisure Group, integrating tourism, transportation, and hospitality as its core business activities. Since its establishment in 1999, Panorama Destination has offered a range of tourism services, including accommodation, food and beverage, transportation, and more. Essentially, Panorama Destination acts as a bridge connecting consumers (tourists) with vendors such as hotels, restaurants, transportation services, and tourist destinations.

Panorama Destination Bali operates several departments, including Tour Operation, Reservation, Accounting, and Product and Contracting. The Operations department plays a crucial role in ensuring end-to-end customer satisfaction with its comprehensive support functions. In large-scale enterprises, end-to-end processes often involve multiple companies. However, in some cases, based on best practices, end-to-end processes may apply within a single company. In this context, 'end-to-end' encompasses the entire process from start to finish and from upstream to downstream. The end-to-end approach in operations is essential for all practitioners overseeing processes from start to finish.

One of the key divisions within the Operations department is the Airport Representative Division. This division is responsible for ensuring smooth arrivals and departures of tourists at the airport. Airport Representatives assist guides in managing the arrival and departure of foreign tourists at I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport, handling a significant number of international tourists, especially those under the care of Panorama Destination Bali. The number of foreign tourist arrivals in Bali through I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport fluctuated between 2022 and 2023, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1
The number of foreign tourist visits to Bali in 2022 and 2023
[Source: Bali Provincial Central Statistics Agency, 2024]

| No | Month | Number of Visitors (Person) | |
|--------------|-----------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| | | 2022 | 2023 |
| 1 | January | 3 | 329.909 |
| 2 | February | 1 310 | 317.005 |
| 3 | March | 14 620 | 366.956 |
| 4 | April | 58 335 | 410.281 |
| 5 | May | 115 611 | 439.454 |
| 6 | June | 181 625 | 478.127 |
| 7 | July | 246 504 | 541.272 |
| 8 | August | 276 659 | 522.063 |
| 9 | September | 291 162 | 508.297 |
| 10 | October | 305 244 | 458.845 |
| 11 | November | 287 398 | 397.522 |
| 12 | December | 377 276 | 478.382 |
| Total | | 2 154 045 | 5.273.528 |

In 2022, the number of foreign tourist arrivals at Bali's I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport was 2,154,045. This figure increased significantly in 2023, reaching 5,273,528. The peak seasons in 2022 were observed in September, October, November, and December. In contrast, the peak seasons in 2023 occurred in July, August, and September.

In 2023, with over five million foreign tourists visiting Bali, the largest group came from Europe, totaling 1,440,736 visitors. This was followed closely by tourists from Oceania, with 1,430,752 visitors. Detailed information on foreign tourists by country of origin can be found in Table 1.2.

Table 2
Number of Foreign Tourist Visits to Bali by Country
Years 2022 and 2023
[Source: Bali Provincial Central Statistics Agency, 2024]

| No | Country | Visitors Data (person) | |
|--------------|---------|---------------------------|------------------|
| | | 2022 | 2023 |
| 1 | Europe | 645 617 | 1.440.736 |
| 2 | Oceania | 645 125 | 1.430.752 |
| 3 | Asian | 353 456 | 1.270.111 |
| 4 | Asean | 337 769 | 699.924 |
| 5 | America | 156 313 | 379.472 |
| 6 | Afrika | 17 467 | 52.263 |
| Total | | 2 155 747 | 5.273.258 |

From the data in Table 2, it is evident that foreign tourists are predominantly from European and Oceania countries. The high number of European tourist visits has led various travel agents in Bali to focus their attention and marketing efforts on these regions. Panorama Destination has also developed a strong market presence in Europe, as it holds a significant market share from these countries. Detailed data on European tourists visiting Bali and Panorama Destination's customer demographics can be found in Table 3 below:

Table 3
Number of European Tourist Visits to Bali and Panorama Destination's Customers
Years 2022 and 2023

[Source: Data processed from Bali Provincial Central Statistics Agency 2024 and Panorama Destination Customer Data]

| No | Country | Visitors Bali | | Visitors of Panorama | |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| | | 2022 | 2023 | 2022 | 2023 |
| 1. | France | 95 510 | 208.253 | 73 | 1.092 |
| 2. | German | 94 516 | 196.774 | 145 | 3.149 |
| 3. | Netherlands | 55 730 | 116.330 | 408 | 5.251 |
| 4. | England | 126 892 | 256.359 | - | - |
| 5. | Russia | 57 860 | 144.104 | - | - |
| 6. | Other Europe | 215 109 | 514.907 | 3.951 | 8.476 |
| Total | | 645 617 | 1.440.736 | 4.577 | 17.968 |

From Table 3, it can be seen that Panorama Destination Bali's market share of European tourists in 2023 reached 1.25%, equivalent to 17,968 visitors. With a market share exceeding one percent, it is crucial for Panorama Destination to maintain and enhance its services to ensure that European tourists continue to choose Panorama Destination for their travel needs in Bali. Given the significant portion of customers coming from Europe, prioritizing high-quality service and targeted marketing strategies is essential for sustaining and growing this market segment.

The substantial number of European tourists using Panorama Destination's services necessitates comprehensive customer handling through end-to-end service. The considerable distance and multiple flight transits from Europe to Bali can lead to various issues upon tourists' arrival, such as delays, baggage mishandling, and pickup problems. To address these challenges, Panorama Destination Bali employs dedicated staff known as Airport Representatives. These representatives assist guides and manage any issues that arise when tourists arrive at Ngurah Rai Airport.

The researcher aims to analyze the role and effectiveness of Airport Representatives in managing the arrival and departure of foreign tourists at Ngurah Rai Airport. This study is titled: "Airport Representatives' Role in Handling Foreign Tourists: Case Study at Panorama Destination Bali."

2. METHODS

This research was conducted at I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport and the Panorama Destination Bali office. The subjects/informants in this study include the Operation Manager, Supervisor Airport Representative, Guides, and Drivers working at Panorama Destination Bali, as well as 30 tourists who have purchased products from Panorama Destination Bali. This study employs a qualitative descriptive research approach, where data is collected through questionnaires, interviews, and direct field observations to obtain accurate information that reflects the actual conditions in the field.

The data collected is qualitative and gathered using semi-structured questionnaires that measure perceptions using Likert scales. The data collection methods include observation, documentation, and questionnaire distribution to Panorama Destination Bali staff and their customers (foreign tourists). Data analysis involves systematically seeking and organizing data obtained from interviews, tests, questionnaires, and structured observations by categorizing the data into patterns, identifying significant themes for study, and drawing conclusions that are understandable to oneself or others, as per Sugiyono (2019).

The activities in data analysis include data collection, data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions, and verification, following the Data Analysis Model by Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2019).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

Data Description

In this research, questionnaires were distributed to 23 respondents from the staff departments of Panorama Destination Bali and 8 foreign tourists who utilized the services of Airport Representatives.

Table 4
Respondent Characteristics and Frequency of Visits
 [Source: Processed Data, 2024]

| No | Visit Frequency | Total | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------------|-------|------------|
| 1. | < 5 Times | 6 | 75% |
| 2. | 5 – 10 Times | 2 | 25% |
| 3. | > 10 Times | 0 | 0% |
| Total | | 8 | 100% |

The frequency of visits by respondents is a crucial factor to consider, as it can influence their perspective, attitude, and understanding of the services provided, based on their experiences. According to Table 4, the most common frequency of visits is less than 5 times, accounting for 75% of the respondents. This data suggests that Bali remains a highly attractive destination for foreign tourists, with many choosing to return for additional visits.

Competencies of Airport Representatives in Handling the Arrival and Departure of Foreign Tourists

The task of creating both the first and last impression rests on the responsibilities of Airport Representatives, who provide services to ensure a lasting impression. This role requires human resources that are high-quality, reliable, meticulous, agile, capable of managing and providing services to tourists. All tasks performed by Airport Representatives are governed by regulations or SOPs established by the travel agent management.

Based on the data analysis, it was found that an Airport Representative must possess several competencies:

- a. **Swift and Alert:** Based on observational findings, an Airport Representative must be quick to act in resolving issues and coordinating between guides and group tourists.
- b. **Good Knowledge of I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport:** Based on observational findings, an Airport Representative must be familiar with the situation and facilities at the airport, such as restrooms, tourist waiting areas, dining places, currency exchange facilities, etc.
- c. **Excellent Communication Skills:** Based on observational findings, an Airport Representative must have good communication skills with tourists and all airport personnel to assist tourists, guides, and drivers in resolving issues.
- d. **Hospitality Skills:** Based on observational findings, an Airport Representative must also have hospitality skills to ensure that tourists feel happy, safe, and comfortable upon arrival at I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport, Bali.
- e. **Proficient in English:** Proficiency in English is crucial for Airport Representatives for smooth communication with foreign tourists.
- f. **Understanding Tourists' Needs:** Based on observational findings, an Airport Representative must understand tourists' needs to ensure they feel safe and satisfied at I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport, Bali.
- g. **Problem-Solving Ability:** This is reinforced by observational findings, indicating that an Airport Representative must handle or provide solutions to every issue faced by tourists.

Neat Appearance: Airport Representatives must also maintain a tidy appearance to create a comfortable and positive impression on tourists.

Discussion

The questionnaire used in this study is guided by the role theory proposed by Soekanto (2002), which suggests that roles consist of three elements: role conception, role enactment, and role expectations. To analyze these elements, data was gathered from 23 staff members of Panorama Destination Bali and 8 tourists who used their services. The perspectives of these respondents were then evaluated to calculate the mean value for each aspect of the role.

- a. **Finding the mean value**
 To find the mean value for each closed-ended question answered by the respondents, a weighted scoring system was applied. The calculations were facilitated using Microsoft Excel, which provided

an automatic formula to compute the mean. The mean values give an average score for each aspect evaluated, reflecting the general sentiment or opinion of the respondents regarding the roles and effectiveness of the Airport Representatives.

Table 5
 Summary of Mean Values
 Opinions from Staff of Panorama Destination Bali
 [Source: Processed Research Data (2024)]

| No | Statement | Amount | Mean |
|------------|---|--------|------|
| A | A. Role Conception | | |
| A.1 | Airport representatives must serve tourists professionally and politely. | 113 | 4,91 |
| A.2 | Airport Representatives are capable of communicating in English. | 108 | 4,70 |
| A.3 | Airport Representatives are capable of providing necessary information about airport facilities. | 108 | 4,70 |
| A.4 | Airport Representatives can answer tourists' questions. | 105 | 4,56 |
| A.5 | Airport Representatives understand tourists' requests well. | 104 | 4,52 |
| A.6 | Airport Representatives can respond quickly and promptly to tourists' needs. | 108 | 4,70 |
| A.7 | Airport Representatives are willing to provide additional services as needed by tourists. | 97 | 4,21 |
| A.8 | Airport Representatives are able to handle complaints from tourists. | 103 | 4,47 |
| B | B. Role Activities | Amount | Mean |
| B.1 | Airport Representatives are honest with tourists. | 107 | 4,65 |
| B.2 | Airport Representatives provide the best service to tourists. | 112 | 4,86 |
| B.3 | Airport Representatives handle tourists' luggage to the car. | 107 | 4,65 |
| B.4 | Airport Representatives ensure tourists feel safe while waiting for pickup by tour guides at the airport. | 110 | 4,78 |
| B.5 | Airport Representatives understand tourists' needs. | 106 | 4,60 |
| B.6 | Airport Representatives are friendly towards tourists. | 110 | 4,78 |
| B.7 | Airport Representatives always prioritize tourists' needs. | 105 | 4,56 |

Table 6
 Summary of Mean Values Opinions from Tourists
 [Source: Processed Research Data (2024)]

| No | Statement | Amount | Mean |
|------------|---|--------|------|
| C | A. Role Conception | | |
| C.1 | Airport Representatives must serve tourists professionally and politely. | 37 | 4,62 |
| C.2 | Airport Representatives are capable of communicating in English. | 36 | 4,5 |
| C.3 | Airport Representatives are able to provide necessary information about airport facilities. | 37 | 4,62 |

| | | | |
|------------|---|--------|------|
| C.4 | Airport Representatives can answer tourists' questions. | 36 | 4,5 |
| C.5 | Airport Representatives understand tourists' requests well. | 36 | 4,5 |
| C.6 | Airport Representatives can respond quickly and promptly to tourists' needs. | 37 | 4,62 |
| C.7 | Airport Representatives are willing to provide additional services as needed by tourists. | 36 | 4,5 |
| C.8 | Airport Representatives are capable of handling complaints from tourists. | 35 | 4,37 |
| D | B. Role Activities | Amount | Mean |
| D.1 | Airport Representatives are honest with tourists. | 35 | 4,37 |
| D.2 | Airport Representatives provide the best service to tourists. | 38 | 4,75 |
| D.3 | Airport Representatives handle tourists' luggage to the car. | 33 | 4,12 |
| D.4 | Airport Representatives ensure tourists feel safe while waiting for pickup by tour guides at the airport. | 38 | 4,75 |
| D.5 | Airport Representatives understand tourists' needs. | 36 | 4,5 |
| D.6 | Airport Representatives are friendly towards tourists. | 39 | 4,87 |
| D.7 | Airport Representatives always prioritize tourists' needs. | 38 | 4,75 |

b. Inserting Mean Values into Interval Classes

After obtaining the mean values from the questionnaire responses, the next step is to classify these values into interval classes. This classification provides a quantitative measure of the responses. Each question's mean value is calculated by multiplying the data frequencies by the assigned weights, then dividing the sum by the total number of respondents who completed the questionnaire.

The classification uses a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with a scale range of 0.8, determined by the following formula:

$$Rs = \frac{5 - 1}{5} = 0,8$$

Explanation:

STS = Strongly Disagree, within the interval (1.00 to < 1.80)

TS = Disagree, within the interval (1.80 to < 2.60)

N = Neutral/Undecided, within the scale (2.60 to < 3.40)

S = Agree, within the scale (3.40 to < 4.20)

SS = Strongly Agree, within the scale (4.20 to < 5.00)

Table 7
Inserting Mean Values into Interval Classes
Results from Staff of Panorama Destination Bali
[Source: Processed Research Data (2024)]

| No | Statement | Amount | Mean | Interval Class |
|------------|--|--------|------|----------------|
| A | A. Role Conception | | | |
| A.1 | Airport Representatives should serve tourists professionally and politely. | 113 | 4,91 | Sangat Setuju |
| A.2 | Airport Representatives are capable of communicating in English. | 108 | 4,70 | Sangat Setuju |

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------|-------------|----------------------|
| A.3 | Airport Representatives can provide necessary information about airport facilities. | 108 | 4,70 | Sangat Setuju |
| A.4 | Airport Representatives can answer tourists' questions. | 105 | 4,56 | Sangat Setuju |
| A.5 | Airport Representatives understand tourists' requests well. | 104 | 4,52 | Sangat Setuju |
| A.6 | Airport Representatives can respond quickly and promptly to tourists' needs. | 108 | 4,70 | Sangat Setuju |
| A.7 | Airport Representatives are willing to provide additional services as needed by tourists. | 97 | 4,21 | Sangat Setuju |
| A.8 | Airport Representatives are capable of handling complaints from tourists. | 103 | 4,47 | Sangat Setuju |
| B | B. Role Activities | Amount | Mean | Interval Class |
| B.1 | Airport Representative is honest with tourists. | 107 | 4,65 | Sangat Setuju |
| B.2 | Airport Representative provides the best service to tourists. | 112 | 4,86 | Sangat Setuju |
| B.3 | Airport Representative handles tourists' luggage to the car. | 107 | 4,65 | Sangat Setuju |
| B.4 | Airport Representative ensures tourists feel safe while waiting for pickup by tour guides at the airport. | 110 | 4,78 | Sangat Setuju |
| B.5 | Airport Representative understands tourists' needs. | 106 | 4,60 | Sangat Setuju |
| B.6 | Airport Representative is friendly towards tourists. | 110 | 4,78 | Sangat Setuju |
| B.7 | Airport Representative always prioritizes tourists' needs. | 105 | 4,56 | Sangat Setuju |
| Total | | 1603 | 4,64 | Sangat Setuju |

Table 8
 Inserting Mean Values into Interval Classes
 Results from Tourists
 [Source: Processed Research Data (2024)]

| No | Statement | Amount | Mean | Interval Class |
|-----|--|--------|------|----------------|
| C | A. Role Conception | | | |
| C.1 | Airport Representatives should serve tourists professionally and politely. | 37 | 4,62 | Sangat Setuju |
| C.2 | Airport Representative is able to communicate in English. | 36 | 4,5 | Sangat Setuju |
| C.3 | Airport Representative is capable of providing necessary information about airport facilities. | 37 | 4,62 | Sangat Setuju |
| C.4 | Airport Representative can answer tourists' questions. | 36 | 4,5 | Sangat Setuju |
| C.5 | Airport Representative understands tourists' requests well. | 36 | 4,5 | Sangat Setuju |
| C.6 | Airport Representative can respond quickly and effectively to tourists' needs. | 37 | 4,62 | Sangat Setuju |

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|--------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| C.7 | Airport Representatives are willing to provide additional services as needed by tourists. | 36 | 4,5 | Sangat Setuju |
| C.8 | Airport Representative is capable of handling complaints from tourists. | 35 | 4,37 | Sangat Setuju |
| D | B. Role Activities | Total | Mean | Interval Class |
| D.1 | Airport Representative is honest with tourists. | 35 | 4,37 | Sangat Setuju |
| D.2 | Airport Representative provides the best service to tourists. | 38 | 4,75 | Sangat Setuju |
| D.3 | Airport Representative handles tourists' luggage all the way to the vehicle. | 33 | 4,12 | Setuju |
| D.4 | Airport Representative is able to make tourists feel safe while waiting for pickup by tour guides at the airport. | 38 | 4,75 | Sangat Setuju |
| D.5 | Airport Representative understands tourists' needs. | 36 | 4,5 | Sangat Setuju |
| D.6 | Airport Representative is friendly towards tourists. | 39 | 4,87 | Sangat Setuju |
| D.7 | Airport Representative always prioritizes tourists' needs. | 38 | 4,75 | Sangat Setuju |
| Total | | 547 | 4,55 | Sangat Setuju |

From the perspective of role expectations, 23 respondents from Panorama Destination Bali staff expressed their views on the competencies expected of Airport Representatives: being agile and prompt, having good knowledge of I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport, possessing good communication skills, displaying hospitality, proficient in English, understanding the desires of tourists, being able to handle problems, and presenting a neat appearance. To enhance comfort with Airport Representatives, training and development should be enhanced to broaden insights and connections. Comfort for tourists is highly prioritized by Airport Representatives; however, when tourists encounter issues, Representatives must communicate effectively, provide information regarding the issue, help clarify the problem, and offer the best solutions.

Additionally, from the perspective of role expectations, there were 8 respondent data from tourists who provided their opinions on the role of Airport Representatives. In general, tourists expect services that enhance comfort, convenience, and safety upon arrival at the airport. Tourists expect Airport Representatives to be friendly, courteous, helpful, informative, efficient, and honest to improve their airport experience. Tourists also expect responsive complaint services that are easily accessible and empathetic. Representatives should be easy to locate, skilled in communication, understand passenger issues, and capable of providing clear solutions and follow-ups.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted in the study "Airport Representatives' Role in Handling Foreign Tourists: Case Study at Panorama Destination Bali," the findings are summarized as follows:

1. Competence of Airport Representatives:

Airport Representatives at Panorama Destination Bali are highly competent in managing the arrivals and departures of foreign tourists. They are equipped with the skills necessary to provide satisfactory services, including effective communication, efficient baggage handling, and adept problem-solving abilities. These competencies ensure that tourists receive the support and assistance they need throughout their time at the airport.

2. Role of Airport Representatives:

The questionnaire results reveal that Airport Representatives have received high average scores from both Panorama Destination Bali staff and foreign tourists in terms of role conception and role implementation. This highlights the critical importance of their role in ensuring smooth and

efficient processes for the arrival and departure of foreign tourists at Ngurah Rai Airport, Bali. The findings emphasize that the presence and performance of Airport Representatives significantly enhance the overall experience of tourists, contributing to a positive perception of Bali as a welcoming destination.

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