



A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Marriott International Core Values

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to explore the Marriott International Core Values through Critical Discourse Analysis. The data is taken from Marriott official website, and students' interview. The data was then analyzed based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model which covers text, discourse practice and social practice. The findings of the study highlights that Marriott's core values have power to motivate both management and associates to provide exceptional service to customers, community and the entire world. The core values benefit not only those inside the Marriott's company, but also the external stakeholders, especially its customers. This study underscores the significance of core values in shaping organizational culture and behavior. It implies that well-articulated core values can serve as a strategic tool to enhance employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and overall brand reputation. Organizations may consider adopting similar analytical approaches to assess and refine their core values, ensuring alignment with both internal goals and external expectations for sustainable growth and success.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, core values, Marriott

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that companies face business competition. In nowadays tight competition, core values play crucial roles in determining the success of the business operations and the sustainability of the company, especially in hospitality industries. (Hsien Chu & Chi Liu, 2024) give a strong statement about the importance of core values. They point out that core values serve as the beneficial DNA of a company, which distinguish a company from its competitors. As a strategic foundation, core values guide the organization behavior, and providing guidelines for management and associates to think, act and making decision accordingly to the goals of the company (Robbins, et.al,2013). The implementation of core values are essentials for gaining the employee engagement and determining company's reputation and performance.

Marriott International (Marriott) is an American multinational company which is very famous all over the world. Established in 1927 by John Willard Marriott who started his business by opening a nine-stool bar. Since then, the company has grown rapidly. With 8.785 properties and 1.597.380 rooms in around 141 countries and territories, (marriott.com), Marriott is a reputable lodging company which is now becoming the top ten best company in the world (Dominick et al., 2021) and the leader in hospitality industry. Its rapid growth and success is definitely determined by a number of key success factors, among them is the core values and their implementation within Marriott company.

Marriott which is built on the fundamental concept of service (Foucar-Szocki et al., 2004) has core values as company's essential guidelines. The core values consists of 5 principal statements, namely: 1). We put people first, 2). We pursue excellence, 3). We embrace change, 4). We act with integrity, and 5). We serve the world. (marriott.com). Marriott provides an explanation and description to each value which shape the company's behavior and the process of decision making. More importantly, the implantation of these core values significantly contribute to the overall achievements of Marriott.

Although Marriott has provided explanation and description for its core values, a wider exploration is still worth doing. This current study aims at conducting a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of Marriott's core values. CDA is different from Discourse Analysis (DA). The distinction between these two concepts is on their focus. DA is focused more on the study of text, theory, stylistics, whereas CDA gives its focus on the connection between language and various types of social aspect, interferences and effort to show up strengthens from ideology context. (Li Xia & Hamuddin, 2019); Fairclough, 1993. CDA was firstly introduced in 1980s in Britain, and defined as a kind of discourse analytical study that mainly investigates how social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by talks and text in the political and social aspects (Van Dijk, in (Wang, 2010). The object of CDA can be spoken or written text, such as public speech, news, official documents, advertisements, company's profile, songs, concepts, and laws and regulations.

A lot of studies on CDA have been done by scholars. Among them, CDA was done on advertisements (Small et al., 2008); (Agustia, 2021); (BAYRAM, 2010), (Rohmah & Suhardi, 2020), on hotel review (Oka et al., 2024); on songs (Falz, 2024); (Putri & Triyono, 2018), on news (Bednarek & Caple, 2014), on tourism concept (Stamou & Paraskevopoulos, 2004), on hotel profile (Qiu, 2013); and Core values ((Hsien Chu & Chi Liu, 2024). Despite a large number of research done on CDA, there are still very few study especially on core values. Based on this gap, the current study aims to apply CDA on Marriott's core values. The study can enrich the literature and foster understanding on core values.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach which utilize CDA as the main framework to explore Marriott core values. The analysis of this study is done on the basis of Fairclough's three-dimensional model which gives a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between language, power dynamcic and social practice.

Fairclough model covers three related dimensions, namely text, discourse or discursive practice and social practice (Fairclough, 1990): Text dimension is focused on the linguistic features, such as word, grammar, phrases and sentence. In this study, text refers to the Marriott core values as stated in its official document or platform, such as official website. Discourse or discursive practice dimension is focused on how the text is produced and communicated. In this study, the discourse practice looks at how the core values are communicated in Marriott organization and in the wider context of hospitality industries. Social Practice dimension looks at the implication of core values socially, including how the values shape organization culture, associates' behavior and power dynamic.

The data of Marriott core values is taken from the official websites of Marriott (marriott.com), and students of Bali Tourism Polytechnic Training Report. The data is also taken through interviews to students of Bali Tourism Polytechnic who did the internship program in hotels under Marriott's hotel company, such as Courtyard Nusa Dua, Sheraton, Kuta, and The Renaissance Uluwatu. The findings of the study are interpreted and analyzed based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model above (Fairclough, 1993; Agustia, 2021)

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The core values of Marriott International consists of 5 principal statements, as the following: 1). We put people first, 2). We pursue excellence, 3). We embrace change, 4). We act with integrity, and 5). We serve the world. These core values are analyzed based on Fairclough' three dimensional model which include Textual, Discourse or discursive service and social service.

3.1 Textual

The Marriott core values use active voice. This implies that Marriott is serious, proactive and committed to articulate and implemet the core values. Other important feature is th use of personal pronoun "we" in each value. This highlights the collective identity, that every single person, from management to associate has a shared commitment to implement the core values. The core insight of each core value are as follows: "put people first" means that Marriott gives priority on people (in this case: associates), and build a sense of respect among others. The value "pursue excellence" implies that Marriott has a strong committment to set up and implement the high quality standard of service. "embrace change" reflects the flexibility in adapting with the current innovative development issue, such as technology. "We act with integrity" implies that Marriott foster the importance of the morale and ethical-related behavior, while "serve the world" highlights that Marriott is responsible to social life environment and the engagement of the community in the entire world.

3.2 Discourse Practice

The results of the interviews to students of Bali Tourism Polytechnic who did the intership program under Marriott's hotel company hughlight that core values of Marriott are communicated in several official documents, such as website (marriott.com) and leader guidelines. This implies that the importance of these core values as strong guidelines on which the overall business operations are run. In the

distribution of these core values, Marriott uses various channels, such as training program or onboarding program for new trainees or employees. Through this distribution, it is expected that management and associates can think or interpret and importantly implement the values in their roles to meet the success of Marriott. Ultimately, these values shape the organization behavior.

3.2 Social Practice

Marriott's core values bring essential impacts to social landscapes, such as cultural establishment, employees' engagement and the impact on stakeholders. Regarding the cultural establishment, Marriott builds the culture of prioritizing people and respectfulness, high-quality provision, creative and innovative, adaptability and sustainability and community engagement. The amazing organization culture can foster the success in achieving the organizations goal of Marriott. In terms of employees' engagement, Marriott core values, especially "put people first" brings good influence to employees. They feel valued and appreciated. These valued associates are more likely to have strong commitment in doing their roles for delivering excellent service to customer and for the sake of the success of Marriott. Importantly, this phenomenon will bring good impact to external stakeholders, particularly customers. Customers who get exceptional service will become loyalty customers who eventually sustain the business operations

The core values of Marriott have power in the following aspects: 1). shaping organization culture, 2). fostering employee engagement, 3). Bringing good impact on customers and enhancing social responsibility and the engagement of the community. In terms of shaping organization culture, these core values have crucial determinants. Pursue excellence for example, has power to build and shape the culture of delivering high-quality standard of service. The associates will try hard to do their best in implementing working standards which can impact to customers' satisfaction. Marriott provides various training for associates and give them opportunity to grow so as to gain excellence.

In regards of employee engagement, core values are the essential foundation. Prioritizing people, for example, has power to motivate all people within Marriott company, from management to associates to respect among others, so this can create warm working condition. A unite identity as a Marriott family can improve teamwork, and be responsible in every single action done, such as making decision and implementing working standards. Best practices done by Marriott to enhance employee engagement is through giving appreciation, such as "employee of the month" and family gathering.

In terms of social responsibility and community engagement, these core values have power to stimulate the management and all associates to think and show up good actions to be responsible to the social lanscapes and the community in the world. Marriott implement this social responsibility to the real action, such as giving worthy contribution to schools, orphanages, and people in certain territories which suffer from natural disasters of starvation. To promote sustainable environment, Marriott actively participate in beach cleaning and mangrove planting. This indicates its care to serve the world.

4. CONCLUSION

The CDA highlights the powerful role of Marriott's core values in guiding and motivating both management and associates to implement them for the sake of Marriott's company goals. The power of core values does not only benefit those inside the organization, but also extend to external stakeholders, especially customers. The customers will experience the excellent result of the implementation of the core values.

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