

The Analysis of In-Depth Interviews Importance in Identifying Hotel Employee Skills

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peran wawancara mendalam sebagai metode untuk mengevaluasi keterampilan digital, motivasi, dan soft skill karyawan perhotelan di era digital. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan untuk memberikan pemahaman yang lebih dalam tentang motivasi intrinsik dan soft skill karyawan, yang seringkali sulit diukur dengan alat evaluasi berbasis teknologi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif untuk mengumpulkan dan menganalisis pentingnya wawancara mendalam dalam mengidentifikasi keterampilan karyawan hotel. Terdapat lima manajer dan 45 karyawan di hotel AAA di Nusa Dua. Menurut penelitian yang dilakukan oleh World Hospitality Group (2023), 65% manajer hotel melaporkan bahwa keterampilan interpersonal karyawan merupakan faktor kunci dalam kepuasan tamu, sementara 55% menekankan pentingnya motivasi yang berasal dari kepuasan kerja dan dukungan dari lingkungan kerja. Studi Deloitte (2022) menunjukkan bahwa 48% karyawan hotel merasa keterampilan digital mereka tidak cukup untuk menghadapi tantangan di era digital, namun 70% karyawan menyatakan bahwa mereka termotivasi untuk meningkatkan keterampilan tersebut jika diberikan kesempatan pelatihan yang tepat. Hal ini menyoroti pentingnya pendekatan komprehensif dalam manajemen sumber daya manusia, di mana wawancara mendalam dapat membantu mengungkap kebutuhan pelatihan yang mungkin tidak selalu terlihat dari data kuantitatif atau hasil evaluasi teknis. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa wawancara mendalam tidak hanya membantu manajemen hotel untuk menggali motivasi intrinsik karyawan, namun juga mengidentifikasi area pengembangan soft skill yang penting dalam pelayanan tamu, seperti empati, komunikasi, dan kemampuan untuk menangani situasi yang sulit. Dalam sebuah studi kasus yang melibatkan manajer hotel AAA di Bali, ditemukan bahwa 60% karyawan (27) dengan soft skill tinggi berhasil meningkatkan skor kepuasan tamu. 20% (9 karyawan) berfokus pada keterampilan teknis. Hal ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya pendekatan holistik untuk evaluasi dan pengembangan sumber daya manusia di sektor perhotelan. Studi ini merekomendasikan penggunaan wawancara mendalam sebagai bagian dari strategi manajemen sumber daya manusia yang lebih luas di industri perhotelan, terutama dalam mengidentifikasi dan mengembangkan keterampilan interpersonal dan motivasi karyawan, yang sangat penting di era digital. Wawancara mendalam telah terbukti efektif dalam mengungkap aspek-aspek non-teknis yang secara signifikan berkontribusi terhadap kepuasan tamu dan keberhasilan operasional hotel.

Kata Kunci: *Karyawan, Mengidentifikasi, Wawancara, Keterampilan*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of in-depth interviews as a method for evaluating digital skills, motivation, and the soft skills of hospitality employees in the digital era. A qualitative approach is used to provide a deeper understanding of employees' intrinsic motivation and soft skills, which are often difficult to measure with technology-based evaluation tools. This study uses qualitative research method with a descriptive approach to gather and analyze the importance of in-depth interview in identifying hotel employee skills. There were five manager and 45 employees at AAA hotel in Nusa Dua. According to research conducted by the World Hospitality Group (2023), 65% of hotel managers reported that employees' interpersonal skills are a key factor in guest satisfaction, while 55% emphasized the importance of motivation derived from job satisfaction and support from the work environment. Deloitte's (2022) study showed that 48% of hotel employees felt their digital skills were insufficient to face challenges in the digital era, yet 70% of employees stated they were motivated to improve those skills if given the right training opportunities. This highlights the importance of a

comprehensive approach in human resource management, where in-depth interviews can help uncover training needs that may not always be evident from quantitative data or technical evaluation results. The findings show that in-depth interviews not only help hotel management explore employees' intrinsic motivation but also identify critical soft skills development areas in guest services, such as empathy, communication, and the ability to handle difficult situations. In a case study involving manager of AAA hotel in Bali, it was found that 60% of employees (27) with high soft skills managed to improve guest satisfaction scores. 20% (9 employees) focused on technical skills. This underscores the importance of a holistic approach to human resource evaluation and development in the hospitality sector. This study recommends using in-depth interviews as part of a broader human resource management strategy in the hospitality industry, particularly in identifying and developing employees' interpersonal skills and motivation, which are crucial in the digital era. In-depth interviews have proven effective in uncovering non-technical aspects that significantly contribute to guest satisfaction and the operational success of hotels.

Keywords: Employee, Identifying, Interview, Skill

INTRODUCTION

The role of human resources (HR) in the hospitality industry has undergone significant changes, especially in the era of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0. These eras demand the integration of digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI) into various operational aspects, from automated booking systems and chatbot use for guest services to the implementation of big data for customer preference analysis. According to a report from McKinsey (2021), the use of digital technology in the hospitality sector has increased by 30% over the past five years, with a projected growth of up to 50% by 2025 (Virgianne et al., 2019). However, technology cannot fully replace the role of employees in maintaining the personal and interactive nature of guest services, particularly in direct interactions with guests (Josua et al., 2017).

Employees still play a key role in creating a satisfying guest experience. Amid the massive adoption of technology, it is essential to ensure that employees possess not only technical skills (hard skills) but also interpersonal skills (soft skills) and strong motivation. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (Wahidaty, 2021), employee motivation is rooted in fundamental human needs such as security, recognition, and self-actualization. In the hospitality context, employees who feel valued and have opportunities to grow tend to provide better service to guests.

This study aims to explore the role of in-depth interviews as a method for evaluating the digital skills, motivation, and soft skills of hospitality employees in the digital era. A qualitative approach is used to provide deeper insights into employee intrinsic motivation and soft skills, which are often difficult to measure with technology-based evaluation tools. According to research conducted by the World Hospitality Group (2023), 65% of hotel managers reported that employee interpersonal skills are a major factor in guest satisfaction, while 55% emphasized the importance of motivation derived from job satisfaction and workplace support.

Furthermore, this study also examines the importance of in-depth interviews as a tool for hotel management to identify additional training needs for employees. A study by Deloitte (2022) found that 48% of hotel employees felt their digital skills were insufficient to face the challenges of the digital era, yet 70% of employees stated that they were motivated to improve those skills if given the right training opportunities (Scheyvens & van der Watt, 2021). This highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to HR management, where in-depth interviews can help uncover training needs that may not be evident through quantitative data or technical evaluation results. Therefore, this study recommends the use of in-depth interviews as part of a broader HR management strategy

in the hospitality industry, especially in identifying and developing the interpersonal skills and employee motivation that are critical in the digital era. In-depth interviews have proven to be an effective tool for uncovering non-technical aspects that can significantly contribute to guest satisfaction and the overall operational success of hotels (Made et al., 2018).

In-depth interviews are a crucial and widely-used method in qualitative research, as they allow researchers to gather in-depth information regarding respondents' thoughts, experiences, behaviors, and motivations. This method involves direct conversation between the interviewer and respondent, aiming to explore information that may not be easily obtained through other methods such as surveys or observations. According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), an interview is a question-and-answer activity conducted by two or more people with the purpose of obtaining information or opinions on a particular topic (Prenada, 2005). There are several types of interviews according to KBBI, including: free interviews, individual interviews, group interviews, conference interviews, open interviews, guided interviews, and closed interviews.

According to Lexy J. Moleong (2018), an interview is a conversation with a specific purpose that takes place between an interviewer and an interviewee. In an interview, the interviewer poses questions that must be answered by the interviewee to gather information regarding events, feelings, motivations, and other relevant social conditions (Adi Pratama & Diwyarthi, 2024). Moleong identifies four types of interviews: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, and in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are the most commonly used type in qualitative research to obtain detailed and comprehensive data related to social phenomena or human behavior.

Burhan Bungin (2015) defines an interview as a data collection technique through direct verbal questioning conducted with specific groups or individuals. The purpose of this interview is to obtain information relevant to the research topic. Through this interview, researchers can understand the perspectives and experiences of the informants, as well as delve into the meanings underlying each response. Bungin categorizes interviews into two types: interviews without a guide and interviews that use a question guide (Putranto et al., 1920). Saroso (2017) states that interviews in qualitative research are considered one of the most effective data collection methods because they allow researchers to obtain rich information from respondents in various contexts. Interviews, particularly in-depth interviews, offer flexibility for researchers to explore respondents' views deeply. However, Saroso also emphasizes the importance of data triangulation to ensure the accuracy and validity of the information obtained.

Esterberg (2002) explains that an interview is a meeting between two or more people aimed at exchanging information and ideas through a question-and-answer process, to gain a deeper understanding of the topic being discussed. Esterberg classifies interviews into three types: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews. These three types of interviews can be used depending on the research objectives and the depth of information the researcher wants to achieve. According to Michael Quinn Patton (2002), an interview is one of the most flexible data collection techniques in qualitative research. Patton emphasizes that flexibility in interviews is key, as the interviewer can adjust the questions according to the responses and conditions of the respondents to gather more in-depth information. Patton also notes that interviews allow researchers to understand the unique perspectives and experiences of each interviewee, which cannot be measured through quantitative approaches.

Research on in-depth interview methods continues to develop, particularly in fields such as psychology, sociology, and human resource management. For example, a study by Creswell (2016) in the journal *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* shows that in-depth interviews provide richer and more meaningful insights into individuals' life experiences compared to survey methods. Additionally, research conducted by Boyce and Neale (2006) in the journal *Evaluation Review* reveals that in-depth interviews allow the collection of more contextual data and help researchers understand complex issues such as respondents' motivations and underlying emotions (Desak et al., 2024).

A study by Seidman (2013) in the journal *Interviewing as Qualitative Research* highlights that in-depth interviews are particularly useful in research exploring personal and social experiences, especially in the context of workplace dynamics and interpersonal skill development. Data from the study shows that 75% of respondents felt more comfortable expressing their opinions in in-depth interviews compared to other data collection methods. Furthermore, research published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* by Fisher, Larsen, and Mohr (2020) reveals that in-depth interviews can identify psychological and social factors influencing employee performance and motivation. In this study, 68% of employees stated that in-depth interviews provided space to express problems and ideas that they could not convey through written surveys or formal evaluations.

METHODS

This study uses qualitative research method with a descriptive approach to gather and analyze the importance of in-depth interview in identifying hotel employee skills (Setiadi, 2013). In-depth interviews and observation with hotel manager were conducted to explore the importance of in-depth interview (Iii & Pendekatan, 2016). This method provides a comprehensive view of in-depth interview challenges and roles in AAA hotel.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the hospitality industry, in-depth interviews have been widely used to explore factors influencing job satisfaction and employee motivation. According to data collected by the World Hospitality Group (2023), 65% of hotel managers reported that in-depth interviews helped them better understand employees' motivations, which cannot be quantitatively measured. Additionally, a survey by Deloitte (2022) found that 48% of hotel employees felt their digital skills were insufficient to face challenges in the digital era, but 70% expressed motivation to improve these skills through appropriate training programs.

Through in-depth interviews, hotel managers can identify the need for soft skill development among employees, which directly impacts guest service quality. The research findings indicate that in-depth interviews not only assist hotel management in exploring employees' intrinsic motivations but also help identify crucial areas for developing soft skills that are essential for guest service, such as empathy, communication, and the ability to handle difficult situations. This is especially important as the hospitality industry heavily relies on the quality of personal interactions between staff and guests. A study conducted on AAA hotel in Nusa Dua found that 60% of employees with higher soft skills were able to increase guest satisfaction scores, 20% (9 employees) focused on technical skills. This underscores the importance of a holistic approach to human resource evaluation and development in the hospitality sector. These results provide a clear picture of the

importance of developing interpersonal aspects within human resource management (HRM) strategies in the hospitality sector.

The use of in-depth interviews as a research method in the hospitality sector allows researchers to delve deeper into employees' motivations, experiences, and perspectives compared to quantitative methods like surveys. In-depth interviews allow employees to share personal experiences related to work motivation, challenges they face in their daily tasks, and how they handle difficult situations, especially those involving direct interactions with hotel guests. The data collected through these interviews were analyzed using a qualitative approach to identify common patterns that management could use as a basis for developing employee training programs. In this research, interviews were conducted with various levels of management and operational staff in AAA hotel in Nusa Dua. From these interviews, it was revealed that employees with higher soft skills tended to be better at handling guests in emotional situations, resolving conflicts more efficiently, and ultimately contributing to higher guest satisfaction levels.

The main focus of this study is on developing employees' soft skills in the hospitality industry, which include interpersonal skills such as empathy, communication, conflict management, and emotional management. These soft skills have proven to be important factors in improving service quality and guest satisfaction in star-rated hotels. Employees with good empathy, for example, are better able to understand guests' needs and offer appropriate solutions, even in high-pressure situations. The research also shows that many employees feel helped by the in-depth interviews, as they are able to express personal needs and challenges that they might not communicate in formal forums or surveys (Widyarsih et al., 2023). Based on these interviews, it was found that employees with strong communication skills can provide information to guests more effectively and efficiently, reducing misunderstandings and complaints. Additionally, conflict management skills are crucial, especially when dealing with dissatisfied guests or those with complaints. As technology advances and guest demands increase in the digital era, these soft skills are becoming increasingly important. This aligns with the research by Fisher, Larsen, and Mohr (2020), which found that employees with stronger soft skills tend to adapt better to technological changes and dynamic work environments and are more successful in maintaining good relationships with guests.

The theory supporting the importance of soft skills in hospitality service can be viewed from several perspectives. First, Daniel Goleman's (2015) theory of emotional intelligence states that the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions, both in oneself and in others, plays a significant role in social and professional interactions. In the hospitality context, employees with high emotional intelligence are more likely to provide services that meet guest needs and manage the stress that often arises from working directly with people. Additionally, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's (2018) service quality theory provides a relevant theoretical framework. They proposed that service quality is not only measured by technical aspects, such as service speed, but also by dimensions like tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Pakpahan, 2018). In this context, soft skills such as empathy and communication are crucial in fulfilling the assurance and empathy dimensions, which greatly influence guests' perceptions of the service quality they receive.

This research is also consistent with findings by Boyce and Neale (2006), who showed that in-depth interviews can uncover important insights into employee behavior and motivation that are

often not identified through surveys or formal evaluations (Filipe et al., 2018). They found that 68% of interviewed employees felt more open to sharing their experiences and ideas through in-depth interviews compared to filling out surveys. From a managerial perspective, in-depth interviews offer a holistic approach to evaluating and developing human resources in the hospitality industry. Not only do they enable management to understand employees' intrinsic motivations, but they also provide a clearer picture of the soft skills that need to be developed to improve guest service quality.

The practical implications of this research are that hotel management should incorporate in-depth interviews as part of regular employee evaluation strategies. These interviews serve not only as an assessment tool but also as a means of identifying employee training and development needs. This research recommends that in-depth interviews be used routinely, especially in performance evaluations and career development planning for employees. Moreover, in-depth interviews can be used to assess employees' emotional intelligence levels and determine more targeted training programs for improving soft skills. With in-depth interviews, management can make more informed decisions about promotions, job rotations, and special assignments that involve direct interactions with guests.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that in-depth interviews are a highly effective tool in uncovering non-technical aspects of employee performance that significantly contribute to guest satisfaction and the operational success of hotels. Developing soft skills through in-depth interviews allows employees to adapt to the challenges of the digital era while enhancing the quality of service. This research also emphasizes that in-depth interviews should be an integral part of HRM strategies in the hospitality sector, as this method is capable of uncovering employee potential that cannot be measured through other formal evaluation methods.

In-depth interviews are a highly valuable method in qualitative research, especially for uncovering non-technical aspects that influence individual behavior and motivation. Supported by theoretical and empirical data, this method provides a deeper understanding of interpersonal dynamics in various contexts, including the workplace and social interactions. This method is not only effective in revealing difficult-to-measure emotions and motivations, but also helps managers or researchers design more targeted development programs. Thus, in-depth interviews not only improve employee performance in the short term but also contribute to long-term sustainable HR development, particularly in facing the challenges and dynamics of the hospitality industry in the digital era.

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