

THE COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF TOUR GUIDES IN HANDLING CUSTOMERS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to describe the language skills of tour guides in terms of verbal and non-verbal communication in dealing with foreign tourists. This study is a descriptive analysis. Data was collected using, observation, interview questionnaire and documentation. The data consisted of twenty questionnaires completed by tourists from two travel agents. Jan's Tours and Travel Ltd, located in Denpasar and Destination Asia Travel, located in Padang galak, Sanur. These questionnaires examined the verbal and non-verbal communication skills of Balinese tour guides. A verbal recording of each tour guide was also obtained as supporting data. The results of this study revealed that in verbal communication, the accuracy of the information was ranked as "good" in 40 % of cases, the fluency of the communication was ranked "good" in 35% of cases and the comprehension was ranked " good " in 35 % of cases. In terms of the non-verbal communication skills, body language was rated "good" in 25%, facial expression, 50%, eye contact, 60% , walking gesture, 55% and hand shaking 55%.

Keywords : verbal and non-verbal communication, tour guides

INTRODUCTION

A tour guide is a person who guides visitors in the language of their choice and interprets the cultural and natural heritage of an area, which person normally possesses an area-specific qualification usually issued and/or recognized by the appropriate authority. This is one of the world's oldest professions in the tourism industry and the basis for employment for ground handling customers during stay in the island. (WFTGA, 2005).

Suwarno (2004: 13) said that: "The tour guide is someone who gives explanations and guidance to tourists and other travelers about everything they were about to see and be seen when they

visited an object, place or specific tourist areas".

Pond (1993: 17) said that "a tour guide, in its purest industry definition, is "one who conducts the tour" or one with "a -broad-based knowledge of a particular area whose primary duty is to inform".

The function of a tour guide is a function of service, almost as a maid servant, specifically in the Tourism sector, providing accurate information about objects in the region, helping guests in innumerable different ways. Types of help required includes carrying bags and goods belonging to guests, assisting guests who experience problems such as losing a passport, or airplane tickets, or who experience an accident, or fall ill, or perhaps even in the event of death, etc.

A travel agency is a private retailer or public service that provides tourism related services to the public on behalf of suppliers such as airlines, car rentals, cruise lines, hotels, railways, and package tours. In addition to dealing with ordinary tourists most travel agencies have a separate department devoted to making travel arrangements for business travelers and some travel agencies specialize in commercial and business travel only. There are also travel agencies that serve as general sales agents for foreign travel companies, allowing them to have offices in countries other than where their headquarters are located.

The competency of a tour guide can be classified into four categories in general, namely: *professional, pedagogical, personal, and social competency*. In brief, each competency encompasses the following: (1) the pedagogical competency is a tour guide's ability to manage foreigners following requests on the tour, which includes tour itinerary planning, reporting, and students' competency actualization (2) personal competency includes demonstrating certain characteristics, such as trust and dedication, stability, maturity, sensibility, responsibility, etc.

A program which is set by the local government in order to enhance the competency of tour guide certification, begin in 2000 and was aimed at ensuring that state tour guides have pedagogic skills relating to methods of handling foreigners professionally, and with personal competence. This is also currently being applied to 2000 local tour guides as the government Tourism Department in Bali plans to appoint all who qualify as professional tour guides by 2014 at the latest. The tour guide certification program is based on the Act of the Republic Indonesia number 10/2009 on Tour guides. (Source: *Bali Guide Association*).

Furthermore, Tilaar, (2002; 102) says Professional duties in accordance with the demands of the profession or in other words to have the ability and attitude in accordance with the demands of the profession. The profession contains elements of devotion, and is not intended to seek praise or compliments for self in terms of the economic and practical sense, but rather to community service. This carries the implication that the profession should not be to the detriment of, damaging to, or disastrous in any way to the public. Kandia in Bali Post, 2004: 16 said that the governmental target, through the Minister of Culture and Tourism, was to increase the number of tourist arrivals to Bali island in particular. It would be ironic if the players in the tour guide sector of the tourism industry were to provide very low quality services to guests, despite the increase in numbers of incoming passengers.

To date, the reality however, is far from reaching expectations, as is shown from the material that has been obtained. There are still certain things that are forgotten and need to be improved. The lack of knowledge of tour guides regarding verbal and nonverbal communication, causes many travelers to gain a wrong perception, through difficulty in understand the meaning of a tour guide's body language. This is the right moment to donate this work, and is also something no one has discussed previously, hence the discussion of verbal and nonverbal communications will be interesting and a challenge to carry out this thesis research.

In line with the above ideas, this present study is conducted to obtain "The Communication Skills of Tour guides in Handling Customers". Moreover, it is also necessary to find a solution in order to improve the communication skills of tour guides in the field in general. Communication skills will be discussed further in the next section of this writing.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Concept of Communication

Barrett, Deborah J. (2006: 386), said that Communication is the transmission of meaning from one person to another or to many people, whether verbally or non-verbally. Communication from one person to another is commonly depicted as a simple triangle consisting of the context, the sender, the message, and the receiver.

2.2 Verbal Communication

J. B. Heaton (1989: 100) said that Verbal communication consists of; Accuracy, Fluency and Comprehensibility. (1) Accuracy consists of pronunciation, grammatical, lexical, phonological, and causing confusion. (2) Fluency; speaking with a fairly wide range of expression (3) Comprehensibility; easy for the listener to understand the speaker's intention.

On the other hand Mark Knap gives a definition of verbal communication as follows. Verbal is communicating with words and language (as opposed to images, actions or behavior) Verbal communication is restricted to language. Verbal communication is a form of communication in which the message is conveyed orally or in writing using the language. Language is defined as a set of words arranged into sentences are structured so that it connotes. Verbal communication involves only oral communication (*speaking and listening*), but also a written communication (*writing and reading*) on active and passive participants of communication, verbal communication becomes two distinctive: speaking and listening.

2.3 Non-verbal communication

Gerald I. N and Henry H. C. (1973). It's a common place experience for most people. You walk down a street and brush past a complete stranger. Instinctively, the stranger impacts you as a kind or friendly individual from the way he moves his hands or head, or the posture he adopts while bending to pick up something. He may not utter a word, yet you can't help intuitively feeling positive about him. On the other hand, a stranger in a train sends out negative signals without saying a word and makes you become wary of him. He argued that: non-verbal communication that in general the materials for gesture reading consist of : (1) Acquiring the skills for reading gestures; life, the true testing ground; how you can benefit by, understanding gesture. (2) Material for gesturing-reading body language, eye contact, facial expressions, walking gesture, shaking hands. (3) Openness, defensiveness, evaluation, suspicion. (4) Readiness, reassurance, cooperation, frustration, (5) Confidence, nervousness, self-control. (6) Boredom, acceptance, courtship, expectancy. (7) Relation and circumstances: parent and child , lovers, strangers, superior and subordinate , client and profesional, buyer and seller (8) Understanding in an environment :gesture without an audience, telephoning, The courtroom, and social gatherings.

RESEARCH METHODS

Descriptive research was also called Statistical research. The main goal of this type of research was to describe the data and characteristics about what was being studied. The idea behind this type of research was to study frequencies, averages, and other statistical calculations. Although this research was highly accurate, it did not gather the causes behind a situation. Descriptive research WAS the exploration of the existing certain phenomena. The details of

the facts won't be known. The existing phenomena facts are not known to the persons. (http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_descriptive_research)

Descriptive research, also known as statistical research, describes data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon being studied. However, it does not answer questions about e. g. : how/when/why the characteristics occurred, which is done under analytic research. Although the data description is factual, accurate and systematic, the research cannot describe what caused a situation. Thus, descriptive research cannot be used to create a *causal relationship*, where one variable affects another. In other words, descriptive research can be said to have a low requirement for internal validity. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Descriptive_research).

The description is used for frequencies, averages and other statistical calculations. Often the best approach, prior to writing descriptive research, is to conduct a survey investigation. Qualitative research often has the aim of *description* and researchers may follow-up with examinations of why the observations exist and what the implications of the findings are.

It helps researcher to define the phenomena associated with The Communication Skills for Tour guides in Handling Customers. The purpose of the research will attempt to answer through formal and argumentative thinking. Qualitative descriptive approach was used in this study, the various subjects as the sources of information was used to minimize the bias of view regarding to the problems of the study. Observation, interview, questionnaire and documentation were used to collect the desired data. The triangulation of data collection were used to gather the necessary information from the same subject to maintain the validity of the

result. Some theoretical views and related details were also used, to support the analysis of collection data. The Research design diagram can be seen as follows .

Nierenberg, Gerald I and Henry H. Clero. The questionnaire question was adaptation of verbal and non-verbal communication analysis proposed. Observation, interview, questionnaire and documentation were used as the technique in collecting data. This questionnaire was used to obtain information of tour guide qualification and competence in verbal and non-verbal communications. It was chosen since the subjects who would distribute the questionnaires were twenty four guides. There would be enough time to interview them step by step during the research. The advantage of the questionnaires was that they can be sent fairly and easily to a large number of subjects.

Table 4.3 Table Normal Curve Norma Theoretical framework

No	Criteria	Classification
1	$M_i + 1,5 SD - M_i + 3 SD$	Excellent
2	$M_i + 0,5 SD - < M_i + 1,5 SD$	Very good
3	$M_i - 0,5 SD - < M_i + 0,5 SD$	Good
4	$M_i - 1,5 SD - < M_i - 0,5 SD$	Poor
5	$M_i - 3 SD - < M_i - 1,5 SD$	Very poor

Description:

$M_i = 1/2$ (maximum score + score minimum)

$SD_i = 1/6$ (maximum score – minimum score)

(Koyan, 2012).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4. 1 Descriptive Data Variable Verbal Communication

Verbal communication was done by first calculating the mean ideal (Mi) and standards of deviation ideal (SDI). $Mi = \frac{1}{2} \times (\text{score maximal ideal} + \text{score of minimal ideal}) = \frac{1}{2} \times (90 + 18) = 54$. $SDI = \frac{1}{6} \times (\text{score maximal ideal} - \text{score of minimal ideal}) = \frac{1}{6} \times (90 - 18) = 12$. Based on calculations Mi and SDI, obtained: $Mi + 1.5 SDI = 54 + 1.5 (12) = 72$; $Mi + 0.5 SDI = 54 + 0.5 (12) = 60$; $Mi - 0.5 SDI = 54 - 0.5 (12) = 48$; and $Mi - 1.5 SDI = 54 - 1.5 (12) = 36$.

ideal) = $\frac{1}{6} \times (90 - 18) = 12$. Based on calculations Mi and SDI, obtained: $Mi + 1.5 SDI = 54 + 1.5 (12) = 72$; $Mi + 0.5 SDI = 54 + 0.5 (12) = 60$; $Mi - 0.5 SDI = 54 - 0.5 (12) = 48$; and $Mi - 1.5 SDI = 54 - 1.5 (12) = 36$.

Table 1. Category Variabel Verbal Communication

No	Interval	Frequency	Percentage	Category
1	72 – 90	2	10.0	Excellent
2	60 – 71	6	30.0	Very good
3	48 – 59	8	40.0	Good
4	36 – 47	4	20.0	Poor
5	18 – 35	0	0.0	Very poor
		20	100.0	

Noting the results of the calculations in Table 1, it can be concluded that the variables verbal communication included good category by 8 respondents or by 40.0%.

Based on the results of research on verbal communication with tourists holiday in Bali, from the verbal aspect in general these were pretty good. From these data however, there were still numbers of tour guides making mistakes in drafting sentences, especially when there was a question that may be difficult to answer. The tour guide was then required to learn by scavenging for words for the sake of the language, so that the use of the phrase in the context of the sentence was correct, in order that the language was used in accordance with the rules of the language.

The deficit of acquisition in scores obtained from the above data, was reasonable, since English was not their mother tongue, but the communication tools need continued training. A tour guide has a lot to learn about hospitality, product knowledge, cross cultures and in principle

all goes well. The main target of a tour guide is zero complaint.

As the nation's ambassador, former Tourism Minister of Indonesia (Joop Ave) said, tour guides are leading the nation's troops and are a barometer of the nation's character.

4.2 Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication was done by first calculating the mean ideal (Mi) and the standard deviation of the ideal (SDI). $Mi = \frac{1}{2} \times (\text{maximum score} + \text{minimum score ideal base}) = \frac{1}{2} \times (30 + 6) = 18$. $SDI = \frac{1}{6} \times (\text{ideal maximum score} - \text{minimum score ideal}) = \frac{1}{6} \times (30 - 6) = 4$. Based on calculations Mi and SDI, obtained: $Mi + 1.5 SDI = 18 + 1.5 (4) = 24$; $Mi + 0.5 SDI = 18 + 0.5 (4) = 20$; $Mi - 0.5 SDI = 18 - 0.5 (4) = 16$, and $Mi - 1.5 SDI = 18 - 1.5 (4) = 12$. Based on the results of the calculations, the result then compiled classification category level variables such as non-verbal communication.

Table 2. Category Variabel Non-verbal Communication

No	Interval	Frequency	Percentage	Category
1	96 – 120	1	5.0	Excellent
2	80 – 95	6	30.0	Very good
3	64 – 79	12	60.0	Good
4	48 – 63	1	5.0	Poor
5	24 – 47	0	0.0	Very poor
		20	100.0	

The calculation in Table 2, it can be concluded that the variable component of non-verbal communication, including eye contact was very good category by 12 respondents or by 60.0%. Based on the above results we see that in general the service of the people of Bali towards travelers specifically, have been good, proving above that the icon Bali was famous for its hospitality, and speech, language, politeness and respect for the tourists who came to Bali. Thus the results that have been achieved further enhance this goal, and with knowledge of non-verbal communication, how to move, how to started a conversation, and what to talked about, two-way communication can be fun. Body language has not been much studied, yet played a very important role in communication, which has been forgotten in the new recruitment program for tour guides.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Based on the results of the study which have been described in Chapter IV, the following will be presented as some research conclusions. (1) Generally that verbal communication skills in handling customers fall into the “good category by 40%. Results for verbal communication consisting of the components in the category of “good accuracy” equal 35.0%, and in the fluency component a category of “good” was reached, equal to 40.0%. Comprehension components in

the “good” category equal 35.0%. (2) Generally non-verbal communication skills in handling customers were in the good category by 60%. The criteria non-verbal communication consisting of body language components were in the “very good category” and equal 35.0%, facial expression components fell into the “very good” category equal to 50.0%, eye contact rated “very good” and equaled 60.0%, walking gesture components were in the category of “very good” by 55.0%, and hand shaking components were in “good” category at 55.0%.

It was felt that based on the results of research on verbal and non-verbal communications of tour guide, certain suggestions can be submitted Bali Guide Association, and Bali Tourism Department in charge for the quality or output of tour guides in Bali.

5.2 Implications

Based on the finding, some points of implications can be stated as follows: (1)The finding of this research can be useful as information for DPD HPI Bali as the central Guide Association in Bali. (2)The finding of this research can be used as guidance for tour guides in handling customers in the field. (3) The finding of this research can support the theory of verbal and non-verbal communication in general. (4) the finding of this research suggest it would be advantageous for persons in positions of authority in the tourism industry to learn about verbal and non-verbal

communication in order to provide more satisfaction to customers.

5. 3 Suggestions

Other possible studies should further be carried out in future specifically on communication skills. Suggestions for this follow: (1) The local tour guide Association in Bali in conformity with existing rules and become the benchmark to be implemented, but in terms of the art of speaking or sentence patterns, lessons in grammar, and in particular in make active and passive sentences, would be advantageous (2) One particular subject that has not been touched is body language, which would in fact be both interesting and fun. Although it seems trivial, what seems simple can be a fatal mistake, causing serious complaint by guests.

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