

The Readiness Of Prospective Hotel Workers In Facing The Acceleration Of Tourism Development In Labuan Bajo

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Abstract. This research was conducted to determine the readiness of the hotel workforce in Labuan Bajo during the acceleration of tourism development. Respondents in this study were the hotel industry that used student services to expedite hotel operations during the ASEAN SUMMIT 2023 in Labuan Bajo. Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that industry perceptions of students' abilities to communicate, work together in teams, independence, creativity, basic hospitality skills, and self-appearance are considered ready to face the world of work.

Keywords: Prospective, readiness, hoteliers, Labuan Bajo .

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INTRODUCTION

Labuan Bajo is a premium tourist area that is currently being visited by many local and international tourists. This area can be said to be a developing tourism area, as can be seen from the infrastructure and Human Resources (HR) side. Within the scope of hospitality tourism, many five-star hotels have been built in less than five years. The number of hotels in West Manggarai Regency as of 2022 is 144 hotels (manggaraibabaratkab.bps.go.id). This amount has not been added to the ongoing construction of several hotels such as Marriot International, Katamaran, Mawatu Resort, and several other star hotels. The construction of these hotels is estimated to be completed before the end of the year and will start operating at the end of 2023.

The grandeur of the infrastructure, of course, must be balanced with adequate quality and quantity of human resources to manage it. It is estimated that thousands of workers will be absorbed to expedite the operations of these five-star hotels. Then, how is the readiness of the local workforce to meet the demands of the hotel industry in Labuan Bajo? Based on the observations of researchers, currently, a lot of local workers are being

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recruited to work in hotels. The West Manggarai district government expects that the community will not only become spectators of regional progress but also take part in the development of their region. Currently, there are still many hotel workers who are not capable and skilled in meeting the demands of the hotel industry. Talking about local hotel workers in Labuan Bajo is even more concerning. Not a few hotel workers are recruited from the non-hospitality education sector and who still lack work experience in the hospitality industry. Local workers are even pushed aside by hotel workers who come from outside the Labuan Bajo area. The development of infrastructure and the tourism industry has not been matched by the development of human resources in Labuan Bajo, so more labor is absorbed by workers from outside Labuan Bajo (Syaiful Bahri & Abdillah, 2022). Most of the positions from middle management to top management in Labuan Bajo hotels are taken by workers outside the region. This fact occurs because the capacity of local human resources is not following the current demands of the hospitality industry. Besides that, uncertainty in the world of tourism, such as fluctuations in occupancy, is also a fundamental basis for why hotels need to use or select the right workforce by the vision and mission of the hospitality industry.

Various training and assistance are carried out by the central and regional governments to produce quality and competitive local human resources. One of the parties responsible for producing quality human resources for hotel workers is schools and colleges, especially vocational schools or colleges. One of the problems in human resource development in Labuan Bajo is that formal and non-formal education in the field of tourism is still limited and focused in cities and besides that educational facilities are also inadequate and not by those in the industry (hotels) (Syaiful Bahri & Abdillah, 2022). Until now, the number of Vocational High Schools (SMK) in the West Manggarai region that have hospitality majors are four schools and one vocational college, namely the Elbajo Commodus Polytechnic. Vocational education works hard to produce qualified and competitive graduates in the hospitality industry. One of the efforts being made is collaborating with the hospitality industry in Labuan Bajo. This collaboration is also accommodated by the existence of an independent learning curriculum that emphasizes the amount of practice in the industry more than the amount of theory in class. Education plays a role in providing quality human resources, so educational institutions need cooperation with industry, and vocational education programs must be oriented to market needs (Setyawati & Karim, n.d.).

This study will describe the job readiness of prospective hotel workers, especially hospitality students at the Elbajo Commodus Polytechnic, Labuan Bajo, West Manggarai Regency. Job readiness can be interpreted as a condition in which students have both physical and mental maturity to be able to work based on the experience that has been done (Setyawati & Karim, n.d.). The readiness of this workforce will be very good if it is assessed by the industry as users of graduates. HR management is a series of strategies, processes and activities designed to support company goals by integrating company and individual needs (Rivai, 2009: 1 in (Ika et al., n.d.). This research was conducted after the ASEAN SUMMIT in Labuan Bajo which took place on 9-11 May 2023.

In an organization, the most important thing that needs to be considered is human resources which are the main supporters of achieving organizational goals. Human resources occupy a strategic position in an organization, therefore human resources must be mobilized effectively and efficiently so that they have a high level of efficiency. Dessler (2011: 5 in (Ika et al., n.d.) defines human resource management as policies and practices determining human or human resource aspects in management positions, including recruiting, screening, training, rewarding, and evaluating. According to Umar (2008: 128 in) Human Resource (Ika et al., n.d.) Management is planning, organizing, activating, and supervising the procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance, and termination of employment to achieve the company's organizational goals in an integrated manner. Human resource planning can determine the need for manpower based on forecasting, development, implementing, and controlling these needs that integrate with organizational plans to create the number of employees, the proper placement of employees, and the economically useful. There are 2 groups of human resource management functions, the first is a managerial function which includes planning, organizing, directing, and controlling functions. Second, organizational functions include labor procurement, development, remuneration, integration, maintenance, and termination of employment (Rivai and All, 2013: 13 in (Ika et al., n.d.)).

In a study entitled " Determining Factors of Work Performance in the Hospitality Industry," it was stated that there are several determining factors for work performance in the hospitality industry. First, work culture is an organizational structure and form that sets the tone and pattern of an organization, influences product design and policy and it also gives an impression of how tasks and objectives are achieved. Second, a polychronic culture is that polychronic is an individual's preference for doing a lot of work and changing the focus of an ongoing issue, instead of concentrating on one task (multitasking). Third, an innovative culture is one of the things that makes a difference or even becomes a competitive advantage between organizations. Fourth, an adaptation culture is a condition in which an organizational culture must change periodically to improve work capabilities so that it can provide maximum service to customers (Norman et al., 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Hospitality Workforce is a group of individuals active in various sectors of the hospitality industry, including hotels, restaurants, leisure centres and other related services (Pratami, 2017). Within this sector, they assume a variety of roles and responsibilities that include customer service, operations management, cleaning maintenance, maintenance management, marketing strategies, as well as administrative duties. The participation of members of the hospitality workforce spans a wide range of aspects that contribute to the overall guest experience, including aspects of accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment, as well as ancillary services that support guest comfort (Adytia et al., 2017).

The readiness of prospective hospitality workers in the face of accelerated tourism development in Labuan Bajo plays a very important role. As the tourism potential in this destination grows, careful preparation is needed for individuals who wish to be involved in the hospitality industry in Labuan Bajo. Prospective hospitality workers are faced with a

variety of challenges and opportunities that require the enhancement of relevant qualifications, knowledge and skills.

Given that Labuan Bajo has been in the spotlight as a leading tourist destination, prospective hospitality workers must prepare themselves with an in-depth understanding of the hospitality and tourism industry. Knowledge of the local culture, the natural beauty of Labuan Bajo, as well as the existing tourist attractions, will be a valuable asset in providing a satisfying experience to guests. An understanding of sustainable practices and nature conservation is also important, given the importance of environmental preservation in the midst of tourism growth.

In addition to knowledge, specialised skills are also an important aspect in the preparation of prospective hospitality workers. Skills in communicating effectively, working in teams, managing varied situations, as well as providing superior customer service, are competencies that are highly required in this industry. Prospective hospitality workers must also acquire technical skills, such as the utilisation of technology in service, event management, and foreign languages to serve international guests.

In addition, a mental attitude that is adaptive and responsive to changes and challenges needs to be instilled in the preparation of prospective hospitality workers. Given the dynamic growth of tourism, prospective hospitality workers are expected to be able to adapt quickly to changes in guest demand, industry trends, as well as various unexpected situations.

In the context of Labuan Bajo, cultural skills development and positive interactions with the local community are also important aspects. Engaging with the local community will help in understanding the culture, values and needs of the community, which in turn will influence how hospitality candidates deliver more authentic and meaningful services.

The readiness of hospitality workforce candidates for the accelerated development of tourism in Labuan Bajo is not just about academic qualifications, but also about a holistic understanding of the hospitality industry, knowledge of the environment, and personal and technical skills that are able to meet the challenges and expectations faced in this rapidly evolving industry environment.

METHOD

This research is quantitative research using a questionnaire survey method as a research instrument. Before the questionnaires were distributed, validity and reliability tests were first carried out. By using the number of respondents with a significance level of 5%, the r table is 0.396. The validity test is done by looking at the significance of the correlation of each questionnaire item with the total items. Furthermore, the significance is used to determine valid instrument items. The result is 16 valid statements and 1 statement declared invalid. Furthermore, the results of the reliability calculation stated that Cronbach's alpha was $0.890 > 0.70$ so the questionnaire was declared reliable to be used for research data collection. The questionnaire statements are guided by the indicators of the research variables which are described in several items. Each statement will contain five answers, namely Strongly Agree (SS) = 5, Agree (S) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (TS) = 2, Strongly Disagree (STS) = 1. Giving item answers based on the likert scale. The Likert scale score using the 5 choices used. The preparation of the questionnaire items is based on a grid adapted to the theoretical basis developed. The descriptive analysis includes the

presentation of the mean, median, mode, frequency distribution table, bar chart, and trend category table chart for each variable. The questionnaire grid can be seen in the following table.

Table 1 Research questionnaire grid

Number	Variable	Indicator
1	Ability to communicate	Convey information orally or in writing to superiors or employers. Understand cooking recipes and work procedures. Communicating new ideas on the job.
2	Ability to work together in a team	Ability to work together in a work team Ability to cooperate with colleagues in the same department Ability to work with colleagues in other departments Ability to coordinate tasks and work against a team Ability to complete assigned tasks and be responsible for the results
3	Independence ability	Ability to complete assigned tasks without supervisor's supervision Ability to complete assigned tasks independently Ability to solve problems on own initiative Have self-confidence and behave well and politely
4	Creativity	Ability to apply new knowledge/techniques/ways of completing work Ability to come up with new ideas in solving problems
5	Basic hospitality skills	Capability in the field of housekeeping, food and beverage service, food and beverage products,
6	Grooming (Personal appearance)	Students can maintain their appearance while working.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results regarding various aspects of students' abilities are summarized as follows:

a. Ability to Communicate

The assessment of students' communication ability was conducted through a questionnaire comprising three statements, with five alternative answers ranging from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) in score. By calculating the average score for each criterion, it was found that industry perceptions regarding student communication skills were as follows: 66.7% strongly agreed, 28.6% agreed, and 4.8% were neutral. The majority of respondents, accounting for 66.7%, strongly agreed with the proficiency of students in communication.

b. Ability to Work Together in a Team

In assessing students' teamwork skills, a similar methodology was employed using a three-statement questionnaire with five-point scale responses. The average scores for each criterion revealed that industry perceptions towards students' teamwork abilities

were distributed as follows: 51.2% strongly agreed, 47.6% agreed, and 1.2% were neutral. The highest percentage, 51.2%, expressed strong agreement with students' competence in working collaboratively.

c. Independence Ability

To evaluate students' independence capabilities, a questionnaire with the same structure as the previous ones was employed. The results showed that 11% strongly agreed, 83.3% agreed, and 4.8% remained neutral regarding students' independence skills. The most significant representation, at 83.3%, was in the agreement category, indicating industry recognition of students' self-reliance.

d. Creativity

Assessing creative abilities, the questionnaire consisted of three statements with a five-point scale. The analysis indicated that industry perceptions towards students' creativity were as follows: 20.2% strongly agreed, 71.4% agreed, 7.1% were neutral, and 1.2% disagreed. The largest representation, at 71.4%, expressed agreement with students' creative skills.

e. Basic Hospitality Skills

For assessing basic hospitality skills encompassing housekeeping, food and beverage service, and food and beverage products, the questionnaire structure remained consistent. The findings showed that 58.3% strongly agreed, 38.1% agreed, and 3.6% were neutral regarding students' competency in these areas. The highest percentage, at 58%, strongly agreed with students' proficiency in basic hospitality skills.

f. Grooming (Personal Appearance)

The variable of grooming, reflecting personal appearance, was evaluated using the same questionnaire format. The industry's viewpoint towards students' grooming skills was presented as follows: 65% strongly agreed, 34% agreed. The most significant representation, at 65%, strongly agreed with students' grooming skills. In conclusion, the research and testing outcomes were methodically described through qualitative and quantitative means. The data provided a comprehensive insight into students' abilities related to communication, teamwork, independence, creativity, basic hospitality skills, and grooming. The consistent pattern of responses across various variables indicates the industry's positive perception of the students' capabilities in these aspects.

Based on some of the results of the ability categorization above, there are still perceptions of industrial employees who fall into the Neutral and Disagree categories, even though there are not many presentations. This situation shows that not all students have good job readiness. Therefore, more efforts are needed to improve student's abilities so that they have a better perception. The presentation of industry answers in the categories Strongly Agree and Agree are in a large number of presentations in each criterion. By the opinion of (Santrock, 2003 in (Setyawati & Karim, n.d.)) which states the importance of having work readiness for students to face the world of work. Providing adequate skills provision is very important for the readiness of vocational students to be able to enter the

world of work. The response from the industry on the quality of graduates who are doing internships in their places is an important input in the context of improving and developing the quality of graduates. Unfortunately, many of these are not working in several tertiary institutions, including at vocational colleges.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research above, it can be concluded that industry perceptions of students' abilities to communicate, work together in teams, independence, creativity, basic hospitality skills, and self-appearance are considered ready to face the world of work

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