



The Synergy Of Academics And Industry Practitioners In Improving Tourism Services At Kamuella Resort

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Abstract

This community service program focuses on improving tourism services at Kamuella Resort through a synergy between academics and industry practitioners, aiming to respond to the need for high-quality services amidst rising tourist expectations, especially after the pandemic. This collaboration blends academic insights on traveler trends and preferences with practical expertise in the daily operations of the industry, resulting in a comprehensive and sustainable service improvement strategy. Implementation methods included intensive training of employees in customer service skills, improvement of standard operating procedures (SOPs) to align with the latest quality standards, and strengthening cross-departmental coordination to ensure service consistency in all aspects of resort operations. In addition, regular evaluations are conducted to monitor the implementation of SOPs and identify opportunities for improvement, so that employees' capabilities continue to improve and are able to meet guest expectations more effectively. The results of this program can be seen in improved employee skills, operational efficiency, and guest satisfaction as reflected in positive reviews and increased customer loyalty. In addition to the benefits to the resort, the program also created a model of collaboration that can be replicated in other tourist destinations, ultimately contributing to improved service standards in the local tourism sector. The overall program demonstrates the importance of partnerships between academia and industry to create responsive, high-quality services and build a reputation that supports the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism sector.

Keywords: *Academia and Industry Collaboration, Quality Tourism Services, Employee Training, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Tourism Sustainability.*

INTRODUCTION

The background of this Community Service Program (PKM) proposal departs from the very dynamic development of the tourism industry in Indonesia. Tourism has become one of the main driving sectors of the national economy, making a major contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), creating jobs, and supporting the growth of other sectors such as transportation, culinary, and crafts. However, the sector is also facing increasingly complex challenges, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic which has had a significant impact on travel patterns and traveler preferences (Salimah, Septanaya, & Navitas, 2023). In this situation, service quality is one of the key factors that must be improved to ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of the tourism industry.

Kamuella Resort as one of the leading lodging destinations in tourist areas has great potential to continue to grow. However, in the midst of increasingly fierce global competition and rising traveler expectations, the resort needs to make updates in various aspects of services (Morysa & Lubis, 2023). One approach that is considered effective is the synergy between





academics and industry practitioners. This collaboration allows for the exchange of knowledge and experience that can strengthen efforts to improve the quality of services offered by Kamuella Resort.

This synergy is important as academics, through research and data analysis, have the ability to identify trends, issues and opportunities that may be missed by industry practitioners who are more focused on day-to-day operations. According to (Sugiyono, 2020), cooperation between academia and industry can provide significant benefits in creating innovations that meet market needs and optimize business processes. On the other hand, industry practitioners have valuable practical expertise, which enables them to understand the real challenges on the ground and provide deep insights into travelers' needs.

The need for more personalized, eco-friendly and technology-driven services is becoming increasingly relevant in the current era. Modern travelers, especially millennials and Gen Z, have high expectations of the travel experience offered by the travel industry (Setiawan, Lubis, & Supardi, 2023). They not only want efficient and quality services, but also experiences that are authentic, unique and aligned with sustainability principles. In this case, promotion through Instagram is one of the effective ways to attract their attention (Mabruroh, Supardi, & Lubis, 2023), as the platform enables visualization of engaging travel experiences and sharing of stories that can inspire their travels (Asikin, Pristiwasa, & Lubis, 2024). To respond to this need, resort managers must be able to integrate innovation into their operations, from more sophisticated guest management systems to improved staff competencies in hospitality (Lubis, Supardi, Fatimah, & Wibowo, 2024).

Improving service quality in the tourism industry is essential to ensure business sustainability and competitiveness, especially in the hotel and resort sector. (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2013) emphasizes that superior service is the main key in building customer loyalty in the service industry. (Gronroos, 2007) further explains that managing relationships with customers is a vital element to creating memorable experiences. Thus, improving service quality at Kamuella Villas Lagoi Bay Bintan through resort staff training is a strategic step that is expected to improve guest experience and strengthen the resort's position in the competitive tourism market.

At the national level, cooperation between the education sector and industry is also expected to encourage broader innovation growth in the tourism sector. This kind of synergy not only strengthens academic capacity in the field of research, but also provides practical benefits to the industry, thus creating a mutually beneficial relationship. Through this PKM, Kamuella Resort can serve as a best practice example in utilizing this collaboration to drive service innovation and improve competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market.

On the other hand, this program also provides an opportunity for academics to contribute directly to the development of the local tourism industry, in accordance with the role of universities





as institutions that are not only responsible for education and research, but also community service. As such, the program is expected to have a wide-ranging impact, both for Kamuella Resort as a direct beneficiary, as well as for the tourism sector in general in the region.

Furthermore, in the long term, this collaboration will create a model that can be replicated in other tourism destinations, strengthen the relationship between academics and practitioners, and encourage the creation of new innovations that can improve the tourist experience in various destinations in Indonesia. Innovation in tourism services is key to creating experiences that not only satisfy, but also inspire travelers to return, ultimately contributing to local and national economic growth.

By bringing a collaborative approach between academics and practitioners, this PKM proposal aims to improve service quality at Kamuella Resort through various structured activities, ranging from training to the implementation of research-based service innovations. The expected outcome is an increase in the level of customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, as well as the resort's competitiveness in the long run.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Kamuella Resort or better known as Kamuela Villas Lagoi Bay Bintan, is a luxury resort located on the north coast of Bintan Island, Indonesia. The resort offers 28 private villas with a choice of one or two bedrooms, spacious living areas, and private pools that exude an atmosphere of privacy, tranquility, and silence like no other. With highly exclusive facilities, Kamuela Villas Lagoi Bay Bintan is the perfect place for guests looking for a vacation away from the crowds.



Figure 1. Front View of Kamuella Resort



Source : (Booking.com, 2023)

Elegant villa interior designs complemented by custom furnishings and spacious sun decks add to the aesthetic appeal, creating an atmosphere that is perfect for relaxing and enjoying tranquility. The resort offers highly personalized service, with experienced staff focused on meeting guests' needs to the highest standards. In addition, guests can enjoy sophisticated cuisine and an atmosphere inspired by distinctive and exclusive design.



Figure 2. Interior Condition of the Villa at Kamuela Resort

Source : (Booking.com, 2023)

Kamuella Villas Lagoi Bay Bintan provides a wide selection of experiences, whether for solo travelers, couples, or families and friends. Its beautiful location also offers the opportunity to enjoy nature, adventure and romance in a charming tropical setting. This makes location a key deciding factor for guests in choosing lodging, as many travelers look for places that offer not only comfort, but also natural beauty that can enrich their experience (Winny, Wibowo, & Lubis, 2024). The resort is designed to provide maximum comfort for guests who desire a luxurious escape and tranquility, making it the perfect destination for an unforgettable vacation.

Despite its exceptional facilities, Kamuella Villas Lagoi Bay Bintan faces challenges in maintaining a consistent high standard of service. Limited employee development and training, as well as poorly structured SOP management, are some of the issues faced. Therefore, through this partnership, the resort hopes to improve service quality through intensive staff training and the development of more standardized operational procedures, ensuring an exceptional guest experience at all times.

METHODOLOGY

This Community Service Program (PKM) activity was carried out at Kamuela Villas Lagoi Bay Bintan, which is located on the north coast of Bintan Island, Indonesia, precisely in the Lagoi Bay tourist area. The resort is a very supportive location for training and skills development activities, with a calm atmosphere and adequate facilities to support an effective training process.

In this training, the staff and employees of Kamuela Villas Lagoi Bay Bintan will receive training materials focused on improving customer service, managing complaints, and strengthening standard operating procedures (SOPs). It is expected that with this training, they can immediately apply the skills gained to improve the quality of service provided to guests.

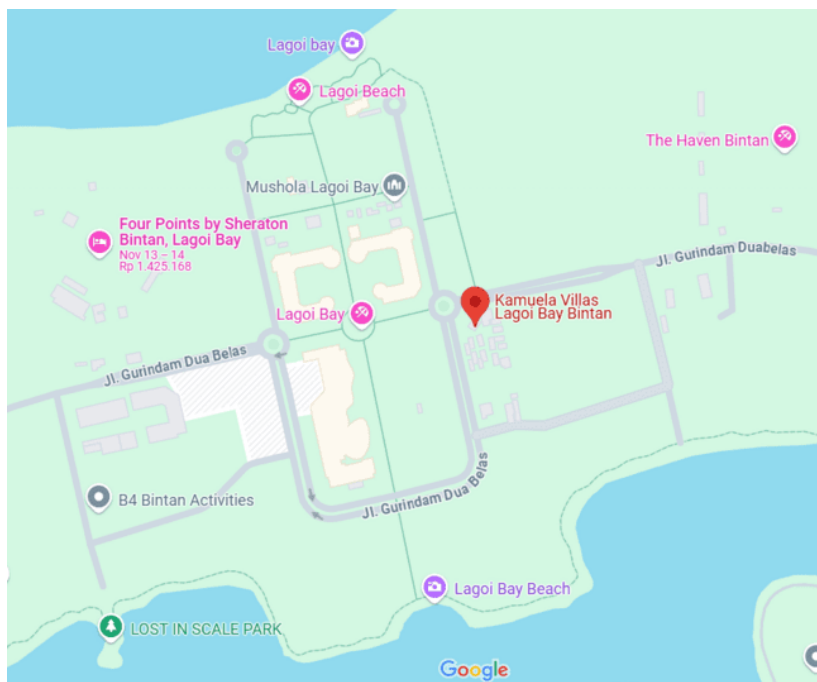


Figure 3. Location Map of Kamuela Resort

Source : (Google, 2024)

The comfortable venue and complete facilities at Kamuela Villas Lagoi Bay Bintan provide the best opportunity for trainees to focus and concentrate fully on the material presented. This activity will be conducted with a practical and interactive approach, so that it can be directly applied in resort operations.

This Community Service Program (PKM) aims to improve the quality of service at Kamuela Resort through a series of activities that include employee training (Wirts & Lovelock, 2016), preparation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), development of synergies between academics and practitioners, optimization of limited resources, and evaluation of training results. Employee training focused on customer service skills and complaint handling (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985), while SOPs were collaboratively developed to provide clear guidance for each department. Synergy between academics and practitioners was built through knowledge



exchange, resulting in solutions that are practical and immediately applicable. The program was also designed to be effective despite funding and time constraints, with approaches that were efficient and directly useful to resort staff. The program concludes with an evaluation and application of the training outcomes to ensure service improvement and identify areas that require continued improvement.

The objectives of the PKM activities at Kamuella Resort include improving the skills of employees in service (Lubis, Supardi, Fatimah, & Rajin, 2024) consistent and professional (Parhusip, Wibowo, & Lubis, 2023), support management in the development and implementation of SOPs for cross-departmental consistency, and strengthen synergies between academics and practitioners for research-based solutions. In addition, this activity aims to contribute to the improvement of service quality in the local tourism industry through a collaborative model that can be adapted by other destinations, as well as increase the satisfaction of staying tourists, which has the potential to increase loyalty and visits (Jeniffer, Fatimah, & Lubis, 2024). This goal is achieved through training, SOP development, and service innovation based on research and best practices.

Through the Community Service Program (PKM), Kamuella Villas Lagoi Bay Bintan will receive a number of important benefits. Firstly, training for employees will improve their skills in customer service (Bowen & Chen, 2001), which has the potential to increase guest satisfaction and loyalty. Secondly, the development and updating of SOPs will improve operational efficiency by ensuring that all staff follow clear and standardized procedures. Thirdly, improved service quality and management will make the resort more competitive in a dynamic tourism market, strengthening its reputation and appeal as a premium tourist destination. In addition, the program also offers sustainability in human resource development, with a training curriculum that can be followed regularly. The utilization of technology in operational management will improve efficiency and productivity, while collaboration with academics and practitioners opens up opportunities for further innovation and development. Overall, the PKM will provide long-term benefits in terms of improved service quality, competitiveness, reputation, and development of resort staff and management.

Supporting factors in the success of PKM activities in resorts include management commitment that fully supports the coordination, implementation and evaluation of the program, especially when management considers it important and allocates the necessary resources. Synergistic engagement between academics and practitioners is also crucial in designing training that is research-based and meets the practical needs of the resort. Training effectiveness increases when competent human resources are available with a good customer service skills base, supported by adequate infrastructure such as training rooms and supporting equipment. The commitment of staff to improve service quality makes them more open to competency





development through training and SOPs, and ensures that training needs are targeted and relevant to conditions in the field, especially in communication skills and complaint handling.

The inhibiting factors in this program include limited time and resources that make it difficult to allocate time for training in the midst of busy resort operations, as well as resistance to change from employees who feel uncomfortable with new training methods or SOPs that are considered a burden. Limited funding was also a challenge in providing training materials, resource persons' honorarium, and necessary facilities. In addition, a lack of experience in collaboration between academics and practitioners can cause difficulties in scheduling and communication, while obstacles in the implementation of standardized SOPs arise due to a mismatch between theory and reality on the ground. Ineffective post-training evaluation and limited access to technology, such as hardware and software, may hinder the success of this training program.

SUSTAINABLE RESULT AND POTENSIAL

Result

The implementation of the Community Service Program (PKM) at Kamuella Resort showed significant results in several aspects. First, the improvement of employees' skills can be seen from their ability to provide more consistent services (Giovani, Wibowo, & Lubis, 2023), professional (Andriyatno, Lubis, & Fatimah, 2023), and responsive (Putri, Wibowo, & Lubis, 2024), especially in effective communication (Wulanda, Wibowo, Lubis, & Fatimah, 2023) and complaint handling. With these new skills, employees became more confident in dealing with guests and handling difficult situations, which improved overall service quality.

In addition, the program successfully drafted and implemented comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for various departments, helping employees perform their duties with standardized procedures, thus ensuring service quality is maintained. Collaboration between academics and practitioners also strengthens the synergy between research and industry practice, resulting in innovative solutions that can be directly applied in the field and improving the effectiveness of training and SOP implementation.

With a streamlined approach, the program optimizes limited resources, ensuring that training materials remain applicable and easy to understand. Post-training evaluations show that the skills taught have largely been applied in interactions with guests, although there is still room for improvement in the implementation of SOPs. Improved employee skills have resulted in higher guest satisfaction, which is reflected in positive reviews and increased customer loyalty.

The program also provides a solid foundation for long-term sustainability, with post-training monitoring showing progress in service quality management. In addition, its contribution to the local tourism industry serves as a model for other resorts to follow, raising service standards in the local tourism sector. Overall, the PKM successfully improved service quality at Kamuella





Resort, creating a foundation for long-term development in more efficient and professional resort management (Syaharani, Fatimah, & Lubis, 2024).

Implementation of the Community Service Program (PKM) at Kamuella Resort began with thorough preparation, including making banners and training equipment such as projectors and laptops. Banners were installed in strategic locations to provide information to participants and resort guests, while technical equipment was prepared several days before the event to ensure smooth delivery of the material. Apart from that, service providers also ask for official permission from the resort management so that training can be carried out without disrupting other operational activities. The permission request includes details about the purpose, timing and expectations of the training.



Figure 4. Permitting Process with Kamuella Resort Manager

Source : Penulis, 2024

On the day of the training, Ms. Arina Luthfini Lubis acted as moderator and opening act, welcoming participants and facilitating discussions to ensure the smooth running of the event. Next, Mr. Andri Wibowo gave the keynote speech on PKM, explaining the concept and objectives of the program as well as the importance of collaboration between academics and practitioners in improving service quality in the tourism industry. As part of the team, Yudha Wardhani was responsible for administrative aspects, ensuring licensing and training needs, as well as preparing presentation materials and necessary technical equipment.



Figure 5: Conditions during the PKM

Source : Penulis, 2024

Student Oktora Aji Pratama plays a role in ensuring smooth transportation for participants and documenting the entire event. This documentation includes photos, videos, and reports that will be used for the evaluation of PKM activities. Through a clear division of tasks and good coordination, this program successfully ran according to plan and had a positive impact on the resort and the local tourism sector.



Figure 6. Group Photo with Kamuella Resort Manager

Source : Penulis, 2024

Sustainable Potential

The sustainability of the Community Service Program (PKM) at Kamuella Resort has various potentials that can continue to grow and provide long-term impact. One important aspect is the continuous improvement of employee competence. The resort can develop an internal





training program that is conducted periodically, involving senior employees or external parties as trainers to keep service quality high. In addition, the implementation and improvement of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) can be continuously carried out through annual evaluations to ensure SOPs are relevant and effective, as well as conducting regular training for staff to ensure their implementation.

Collaboration between academics and practitioners also has the potential to develop into long-term partnerships. Resorts can expand cooperation with educational institutions to conduct further training or research programs. In addition, regular monitoring and evaluation of the impact of training and SOP implementation is essential to ensure the sustainability of the program, by conducting regular evaluations of changes in service quality and identifying areas for improvement.

The sustainability of this program can also be strengthened by involving local stakeholders, such as tourism associations and local governments, to expand the positive impact of this program to other tourist destinations. The program can be adapted and introduced to other places, involving various stakeholders to strengthen the local tourism sector. In addition, with improved service quality, resorts can continue to improve guest satisfaction and reputation through reviews and feedback, and utilize loyalty programs to strengthen relationships with guests.

Overall, the sustainability of PKM at Kamuella Resort depends on continuing to develop and integrate the program into the resort's management system, as well as introducing the model to other tourism destinations. With continued training programs, regular evaluations, and expanded collaboration, the program has the potential to have a positive long-term impact on the resort and the local tourism industry as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The following are the conclusions of the Community Service activities:

1. Improved Employee Skills: The training improved staff professionalism in customer service and guest complaint handling.
2. Development and Implementation of SOPs: Clear SOPs improve efficiency and consistency of service across departments.
3. Collaboration between Academics and Practitioners: Collaboration results in research-based solutions that strengthen service quality and open up further development opportunities.
4. Monitoring and Evaluation: Post-training evaluation enables continuous improvement to maintain service quality.

It improves employee skills, service consistency through SOPs, and strengthens collaboration for continuous development.





SUGGESTION

The following are suggestions for improvement of similar activities:

1. Advanced and Specialized Training Programs: Develop advanced training that focuses on specialized skills such as hotel management and digital marketing to keep up with industry developments.
2. Periodic Evaluation and Improvement of SOPs: Conduct regular evaluations of SOPs to ensure relevance and improved service quality.
3. Increased Collaboration with Educational Institutions: Expand collaboration with educational institutions for more in-depth research and data-driven solutions.
4. Implementation of Structured Feedback System: Establish a structured feedback system from guests, employees, and management for service quality improvement.
5. Increased Stakeholder Engagement and Replication Model: Introducing the PKM model to other resorts to improve tourism quality at the local and regional level.
6. Socialization and Strengthening of Service Culture: Increase socialization of service excellence culture among staff to improve guest satisfaction. (Sipahutar, Fatimah, & Lubis, 2024).

With these suggestions, the sustainability and long-term impact of PKM at Kamuella Resort can be maintained, supporting the competitiveness of the tourism sector.

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