

HOTEL HOUSEKEEPING LEADERSHIP: LOCAL WISDOM THAT BRINGS TRUTH AS THE AUTHORITY

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Abstract

Housekeeping is commonly regarded as an unappealing and thus overlooked and undervalued department in the hospitality industry. Shifting the perception of housekeeping from an undervalued to a valued department requires strong value-based leadership that stems from local wisdom and is relevant to contemporary hospitality leadership. This phenomenon piques the interest of the researcher who is looking into proven best practices in local wisdom-based housekeeping leadership that have been shown to be effective in transforming housekeeping value into pride and a significant role in the hospitality industry. The study's goal is to uncover effective local wisdom-based housekeeping leadership traits used in a variety of well-established hotels. The data was gathered through in-depth interviews and social media monitoring. This study's informants were purposively selected, and they included executive housekeepers and hotel managers with first-hand housekeeping leadership expertise and hands-on housekeeping experience. In order to identify the theme and sub-themes of the housekeeping leadership construct, the data were then investigated using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) procedures, which included data reduction techniques such as coding and categorization. According to the study's key findings, local wisdom-based housekeeping leadership effectively improves housekeeping quality performance and transforms housekeeping value to be highly recognized.

Keywords: *housekeeping, leadership, local wisdom, truth, authority*

Introduction

Leadership determines the direction and legacy of the organization. Leaders know what their subordinates cannot see and always do the right things. It also challenges the status quo to make changes so it can leave a legacy for the next generation. Therefore a leader should have three characteristics, namely having insight, inspiration, and integrity (Sadhguru, 2018). This leadership character can be practiced in every business entity or in a smaller scope such as the housekeeping department in hospitality businesses.

Housekeeping leadership in many hotels does not yet have these characteristics. Many housekeeping managers do not have more insight than other leaders, including their subordinates. This happens due to a lack of competence in the field of housekeeping and the ability to become a PRing for the housekeeping department (Zese, 2020). Secondly, housekeeping leaders are also not much able to inspire because not many can show superior performance and ability to climb the organizational ladder to the top such as becoming a Hotel General Manager. Thirdly, many executives in the housekeeping department have not been able to

realize the big goals of the housekeeping department at the organizational level, but are limited to the department so that subordinates continue to feel inferior in front of other departments.

This leadership weaknesses in the housekeeping department has left many impressions, namely this department is seen as an inferior, undervalued and underestimated department (Duverge, 2016). This doesn't only happen in one or two hotels, but in many hotels (Zese, 2020). Jobs in this department are only seen as lowly jobs that can only do the cleaning of dirt and tidying things up. Jobs that are considered to have no knowledge and high skills or other designations such as jobs that are dirty and not glamorous. This reputation has implications for the relationship between the housekeeping department and other departments, where this department tends to be blamed and is not supported with adequate resources. So it's the leadership of housekeeping that causes this image, not the job itself.

To realize housekeeping leadership that is on par with other departments and is seen as equal and provides significant value to hotel performance, it is necessary to develop values-based leadership. These values are used as a basis and reference in exploring the competence of housekeeping leaders. Another thing that can be explored is leadership traits that are relevant to today's housekeeping and hotel management which have a direct impact on real hotel performance.

Hindu Asta Brata leadership in the world of hospitality, especially in managing the housekeeping department has been used and succeeded in increasing the value and performance of this department in the hospitality industry. This leadership model has been imposed in several five-star hotels and its effectiveness is recognized so that hotel leaders and other managers no longer consider this department as inferior and worthless but as the backbone of hotel operations, as conveyed by I Wayan Sudartayana, a practitioner in the field of housekeeping at hotels. He also added that Hindu Asta Brata leadership is very relevant to hotel management and housekeeping, but it takes will and smart work to fulfil these leadership principles with high competence and leadership spirit. If this is not the case, then the housekeeping department is considered only as a complement and is often not a priority in providing the necessary resources. So if you are not qualified in leadership then it is difficult for the housekeeping manager to fight for the truth of this department as the backbone of the hotel and often the power or the most votes will become the truth, the authority is the truth, not the truth which has power, the only truth is the authority.

Some researches on the implementation of Hindu leadership principle has been used in handling the Covid-19 pandemic (Muliana, 2021) and reducing conflict in the world of education (Aryawan, 2021). This is emphasized again that Asta Brata is relevant in today's leadership (Adisastra, 2021). There is no research so far investigating the implementation of Hindu leadership in housekeeping management.

Based on these research gaps and practical issues, this research is very significant for exploring the implementation of Hindu leadership, Asta Brata, in housekeeping management. Thus, this department is recognized and treated like other departments. Therefore, workers' pride and housekeeping performance increase, so the slogan "the only truth is the authority" becomes a reality.

Literature Review

Bali with its cultural tourism should not only focus on packaging cultural attractions but also be able to use local wisdom in managing hotel management in general and the housekeeping department in particular. Several studies on Hindu leadership have been carried out with the finding that Hindu leadership is relevant in managing organizations, both public and private companies. The Hindu leadership principle that has been identified in Lontar Niti Raja Sasana is Asta Brata Leadership which consists of eight principles (Sukabawa, 2019) and Niti Sastra (Suweta, 2013). Hindu leadership can also be actualized in handling the Covid-19 pandemic (Muliana, 2021). Besides that, exploratory research on constructs or abstract concepts as latent variables found that Asta Brata Hindu leadership can be explored from various sources, namely Manawa Dharmasastra; Serat Rama; Serat Nitiruti; Serat Pustakaraja Purwa, and Serat Makhuta Rama from each of the Asta Brata leadership principles (As'ad et al., 2011). Asta Brata can also be used to reduce conflict in the world of education (Aryawan, 2021). This is emphasized again that Asta Brata is relevant in today's leadership (Adisastra, I.N.S;Made, 2021).

Based on the above literature review there has been no research that specifically discusses the implementation of Hindu leadership, Asta Brata, in managing hotels and housekeeping departments and advocating the truth of housekeeping roles in hospitality businesses.

Research Methodology

This research is a qualitative research with explorative descriptive approach in housekeeping leadership. Qualitative research is research that aims to understand phenomena and explore the phenomena behind the noumena studied so that an in-depth understanding of phenomena can be revealed. An exploratory descriptive approach is used to describe the phenomenon in depth and explore data that can enrich the Asta Brata leadership construct in the context of housekeeping leadership. Qualitative research designs use natural settings with detailed processes for obtaining data, reducing data, analysing and interpreting data or drawing conclusions.

The informants in this study were selected purposively consisting of one executive assistant managers and nine housekeeping leaders who have experience leading this department in both small and large hotels on an international scale and have been proven to transform housekeeping departments from inferior to equal status and from undervalued to equally be valued. The number of informants was adequate that the data collected was saturated. Interviews and documentation studies were employed as data-gathering approaches, and the results would be cross-checked with guest review at OTA. In qualitative research, the instrument is the researcher himself, so that interview questions can be tailored to the conditions in the field and valid and trustworthy data can be acquired.

This study uses analytical techniques of The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This IPA analysis technique is a qualitative analysis technique with a phenomenological approach (Alase, 2017). This study focuses on exploring the experience of housekeeping leaders in managing their

departments. This analysis technique aims to explore the experiences of the informants in managing the housekeeping department which is equivalent and is considered as the backbone of the hotel. The stages of this analysis are data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, 1994). The data collected was codified which was used to determine the categories and sub-themes of the housekeeping leadership theme. Sub-themes can be explored to enrich the Hindu Asta Brata leadership-based housekeeping leadership construct.

Results and Discussion

In any organization leadership has been proven to determine the direction of the organization. Good leadership can direct the organization to move forward and make continuous improvements. Therefore, leadership is the core that determines the direction and success of the organization in managing its resources (ISO, 2012). Leadership also ensures that the organization does what is right, do the right things, so that the authority and power of the leader is always based on the truth, the truth is the authority.

Many leadership models have been introduced by experts, such as democratic, authoritarian, paternalist, servant leadership and so on. In hotel management, not many researchers have raised local wisdom leadership like Asta Brata. According to As'ad et al.(2011) Asta Brata is a leadership model that uses eight natural symbols as leadership characteristics, namely Surya Brata with the character of the sun; Bayu Brata with the character of the wind; Candra Brata with the character of the moon; Agni Brata with the character of fire; Prithiwi Brata with earth character; Indra Brata with the character of the sky; Baruna Brata with the character of the ocean; and Yama Brata with a star character. Niti Sastra (in Darna 2018) also mentioned the eight leadership values conveyed by Sri Rama to Wibhisana which consisted of Asta Brata or the eight foundations of the mental attitude of a leader including Indra Brata, Yama Brata, Surya Brata, Candra Brata, Bayu Brata, Baruna Brata, Agni Brata, and Kwera Brata.

Based on the results of interviews with informants, I Wayan Sudartayana and others, the good practices of Asta Brata leadership in the field of housekeeping can be narrated in table 1.

Table 1 Good Housekeeping Leadership Practices Based on Asta Brata

<i>Principle</i> Character	Housekeeping Leadership Good Practices
<i>Surya Brata</i> Sun	Leadership is the essence of the organization, because it can burn the enthusiasm of subordinates by providing motivation, that housekeeping is easy and without knowledge is a myth. Housekeeping competence requires high knowledge related to the material being cleaned and the materials and tools used in areas with different weather and climates. Besides that, housekeeping personnel can become entrepreneurs by creatively creating cleaning materials and amenities to be produced with local materials and using a green concept.
<i>Bayu Brata</i> Air	The leader is always there to help subordinates in solving housekeeping or other problems with full attention without differentiating their status so that the leader is always there for their members. He is available in helping team members to learn and grow on a daily basis.
<i>Candra Brata</i> Moon	Leaders have a jovial nature and can kindle enthusiasm to be proud of doing work so that they are interested in increasing competence and quality of work. For this reason, leaders must have energy that radiates higher than their team members by having more competence, role models in daily behaviour, always cheerful, and being part of the solution.
<i>Agni Brata</i> Fire	Leaders have a firm nature both to subordinates and co-workers or superiors. The housekeeping manager is not a yes man but is able to convince the boss which is right. It can also build a culture of getting used to what is right, the truth is the only authority. However, this requires leadership and management competence as well as high technical work. Always convince superiors with sufficient data so that besides aiming for what is proposed to be approved as well as a medium to educate superiors on the complexity and significance of housekeeping work.
<i>Prithiwi/Kwera Brata</i> Earth	Leaders are fair by observing the work of subordinates and giving awards according to their achievements. Down-to-earth behaviour is demonstrated by a very good understanding of technical problems in the field and being able to solve problems well. Problems related to higher authority are carried out by approaching superiors armed with observational data and interviews with subordinates. This data is used to defend the interests of employees and guests.

<i>Indra Brata</i> Sky	Leaders are able to act as role models in learning and build a learning culture. He must also be able to train subordinates to solve practical problems and educate them to face life with joy. He has a super vision to do the best for the present and prepare for the future. His insight is important to balance short and long term goals.
<i>Baruna Brata</i> Ocean	Leaders are able to accommodate the aspirations of their main subordinates related to operational housekeeping issues. These aspirations are analysed and then submitted to superiors to find a way out. As a leader, when submitting suggestions to superiors, you always come up with a way out or solution.
<i>Yama Brata</i> Star	Leaders adhere to principles by upholding integrity. Housekeeping leaders struggle that the housekeeping department is the backbone of the hotel where managers must have qualified competence and be proven to be able to increase guest satisfaction. Leaders address the needs of paying guests for quality products and services.

Source: Results of interviews with informants

The above good practices are supported by the testimonials of housekeeping managers who have successfully climbed the organizational ladder and made this department commensurate with other departments in the hotel. These managers are protégés or subordinates who are orbited by key informants in realizing the housekeeping department as the backbone of the hotel. Besides that, the search results for guest comments on the online travel agent (OTA) page showed that the cleanliness score obtained was very high, above 9 to 10 at Dukuh Retreat, an inn managed by the main informant (Agoda, 2023 and TripAdvisor, 2023).

Based on the results of the interviews, the data then be codified so that several themes related to Asta Brata's leadership are obtained in table 2.

Table 2 Codification and Categorization of Research Data

Category	Sub-Category	Code
Housekeeping Leadership	Live the principles of leadership	Determinant of organizational direction (Surya Brata) Honest and integrity (Yama Brata) Dare to defend the interests of guests and subordinates (Bayu Brata) Role model in behaviour both inside and outside the organization (Indra Brata) Absorb the aspirations of subordinates/guests, have a spirit of ownership, high entrepreneurship, and as agents of change (Baruna Brata) Firm in dealing with superiors, colleagues and subordinates by

	<p>Competent in housekeeping management</p> <p>Competent in housekeeping operations</p>	<p>upholding the principle of The Truth is the Authority (Agni Brata) Fair in the distribution of tasks, rewards and punishments (Prithiwi/Kwera Brata) High Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills (Candra Brata) Understand management principles Determine key performance indicators Planning organization Organizing green hotels Doing physical inventory Determine the level of inventory Manage green purchases Prepare annual budget Control cost Analyse the jobs/ positions Determine the number of housekeeping employees (Manning) Recruit staff Train/coach/mentor staff Manage Reward & Punishment Analyse housekeeping operations Manage quality Make continuous improvements</p> <p>Understand the principles of cleaning Understand the types of cleaning tools and materials Understand the type of material being cleaned (floors, walls, furniture, sanitary ware, linen, etc.) Carry out wet and dry cleaning techniques according to the characteristics of the material being cleaned and the tools and materials used Use and disposal of environmentally friendly cleaning agents Manage pest control & rodent control</p>
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Source: Data analysed by the researcher

The codification and categorization results show that the housekeeping leadership category consists of four namely the leadership principle of Asta Brata; competent in housekeeping management; and competent in housekeeping operations. The leadership characteristics of Asta Brata which are the key to the success of housekeeping managers are having managerial and technical competencies in the field of housekeeping as well as learning competencies. These three competencies enable housekeeping managers to produce superior products

and services and build teams with high collective intelligence. This intellectual capital is used as the basis for familiarizing the truth with the slogan, the truth is the authority.

To implement this slogan, the housekeeping manager must be able to absorb the needs and desires of employees, consumers and co-workers. This information is processed into data that is used to convince superiors in submitting recommendations for improvements, purchasing goods/materials, and other changes for the benefit of organizational progress. Communication made by the housekeeping manager with his superiors must be based on honesty and high integrity. With these characteristics, the housekeeping manager will boldly and effortlessly fight for housekeeping as the backbone of the hotel and have the same values as other departments so that the required resources will be met by management.

The Asta Brata leadership model has proven successful in lodging managed by key informants, namely The Dukuh Retreat with customer satisfaction scores above 9 and even up to 10 for some consumers or guests staying overnight. Moreover, several subordinates who have been trained to become housekeeping managers and work at their respective hotels provide amazing testimonials. Astra Brata's leadership model has succeeded in turning young talents into housekeeping managers and has succeeded in championing housekeeping as a department that is on par with other departments, no longer as a department that is undervalued or underestimated.

The discussion above proves that Asta Brata's leadership model has succeeded in creating new leaders with the ability to produce products and services that meet consumer expectations as evidenced by a high guest satisfaction score. Implementing and familiarizing yourself with the slogan the truth is the authority is not easy at first, but with high integrity and confidence you can face all obstacles and succeed in convincing management as the decision maker.

Conclusions

The good practice of housekeeping leadership based on the local wisdom of Balinese Hindu leadership, Asta Brata, is essentially fighting for a balance of organizational and individual and consumer interests as well as the social and natural environment. This balance can be achieved by exercising authority or power based on truth, the truth is the authority. The truth is that housekeeping is the backbone of the hotel which provides the main hotel products to meet the needs of guests staying at hotels with a high level of cleanliness. To be sure of this truth, housekeeping managers must have qualified leadership characteristics, management competencies, and operational competencies to build good interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships so that there is a work-life balance.

Housekeeping practitioners are advised to continue to improve their leadership quality and competencies by mastering leadership characteristics based on the Hindu Asta Brata leadership principles, management competencies, operational competencies, and continue to have life-long learning attitude to ensure their competencies are relevant to the developments and needs of the hospitality industry.

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