

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter elaborates procedures of how the study was conducted to answer the following research questions: (1) What complaints regarding the hospitality business are made by hotel guests to the hotel employees? (2) How do the guests complain to the hotel employees? (3) How do the hotel employees respond to the guests' complaints? (4) What strategies do the hotel employees use when responding to the guests' complaints? This chapter is divided into four sections including research design, data collection, data analysis, and concluding remarks.

3.1 Research design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method since this study aims to describe a phenomenon on complaints and their responses occurred in a hotel in northern part of Bandung. According to Creswell (2012), a descriptive qualitative method is defined as a method that allows the researchers to analyze a phenomenon, which has a little information, by digging information from people who are involved in the research. By using this method, the study tried to explore, analyze and classify the guests' complaint and the employees' responses. The data were gained through the audio-recording and taking notes. Furthermore, unlike a quantitative method that relies on statistical data in revealing the phenomenon, a descriptive qualitative method relies on all kinds of data which come from individual, group, object and other things (Creswell, 2012). Thus, this method is appropriate to analyze the data of the study which were gained from the hotel guests and the hotel employees.

The data of the study were taken from the real events occurred in a hotel in capital city of Bandung. The information of the process of collecting the data is provided in detail in the next subchapter.

3.2 Data collection

To collect the data, this study employed audio recording and was supported with notes. The following subsections discuss further details about the sources of the data and the procedure in collecting the data.

3.2.1 Data source

All data presented in this study were natural conversations of complaints and complaint responses toward the services given by the hotel employees. The data were recorded from the conversations between the hotel guests and the hotel employees. Since the data were natural conversations, the study relied more on the number of data which were gained in a month, not on the number of the participants. The data of study were collected from 3 front officers, 2 hotel keepers, and 14 hotel guests at one hotel in Bandung. When the data were taken there were some groups stayed at the hotel in the same period of time. The hotel was overwhelmed because of the lack of the employees who worked there.

The participants involved in this study were the hotel guests, the front officers, and the hotel keepers. The hotel guests were people who visited and stayed in the hotel for a certain period of time. Most of the guests involved in this study were guest groups like company workers, family groups, and a few individual guests. They came from different backgrounds, but due to some obstacle like the limited time of interaction between the researcher and the guests with the guests during taking the data, the detailed information was not successfully gained.

Meanwhile, the front officers involved in this study were two females and one male. The age of the front officers ranges from 20 to 30 year-olds. Their work time is divided into three shifts: 6 a.m to 2 p.m, 2 pm to 10 pm and 10 pm to 6 am, in which the women mostly work in the morning and afternoon. The last, the hotelkeepers involved here were two hotelkeepers which are males. They have different work times. One work from 8 am to 6 pm and the other works from 6 pm to 8 am. Their ages range for 25 to 30 year-olds. They serve the guests by preparing the room amenities and fulfilling the guest orders.

3.2.2 Data collection procedure

Before the data were taken, an approval from the hotelier was requested. By this approval, a recorder was put on the front office's table where the guests did the reservation and registration. When the conversations were held, the researcher was in the front office table

watching and hearing their conversations and also following the hotelkeeper when they gave service. During the recording process, neither the guests nor the hotel employees knew that their conversations were being recorded. Thereby both of them would not exaggerate the complaints and their responses.

Besides recording the data, the researchers also wrote some notes regarding the conversation. Anything which could support the audio recording was written on the notes. Thus, it could help the researcher to recall the complaint events and to add the additional information to explanation of complaint and responses.

During a month there were only fourteen complaints gained in five days. This was because the process of the gaining the data was held when the researcher had opportunity to record the data.

In processing the data, the audio recording was transferred to the computer. Before it was listened carefully, some noises in the audio recording were cut using software namely *moviemaker*. By cutting the noises, the researcher was able to focus more on the conversations. The audio was listened for six times and the transcriptions were made during the four times playing. The next step, the transcriptions were typed. To make sure there was no left in the transcriptions, it was listened once again.

3.3 Data analysis

The process of analyzing the data in this study was done by content analysis procedure. This procedure enables the researcher to analyze the natural speaking by counting the occurrence of the words, phrases and themes that show the existence of complaints and complaint responses (Hancock, Ockleford, and Windridge, 2009). It is also suitable for classifying, summarizing and tabulating the data (Hancock as cited in Septiany, 2013). This process was divided into two steps namely identifying and classifying.

3.3.1 Identifying complaint and complaint response.

The first step in analyzing the data was identifying complaint and complaint response utterances by discovering *Illocutionary force indicating devise* (IFID). For example, one complains “AC 217 kayak angin doang. Kalau kamar yang lain dingin” (The air conditioner in room 217 is only the blowing air, while the ones in other rooms are cold) The phrases “the blowing air” in utterance describes the condition of air conditioner at the time the

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complainant stayed in the room. By uttering “the wind only” the complainant informs that the air condition does not work as it should be.

Meanwhile, in complaint response, when the complaineer responds “please wait [asking] for it Sir, there are still many others’ orders.” The word “wait” performs that the complaineer actually acknowledges what the problem faced by the complainant and ask him/her to wait the solution. It may indicate that the service given by the complaineer is tardy. Even though the complainant has complained to him/her, the complainant, wanted or not, have to still wait for the order.

3.3.2 Classifying complaint, complaint response and complaint response strategies

The second step was classifying the categorizations of complaint, complaint response, and the types of response strategies applied in the complaint response. The complaints were classified based on the five complaint categories by Cunliffe and Johnston (2008). For example, “air conditioner at room 217 is like the wind only. Meanwhile, other rooms are cold.” This complaint belongs to *product quality* since the complainant mentions clearly which product that need to be fixed “the air conditioner.” The complainant also believes what he gets is not as what he expects. Due to the way the guests complain, *direct* and *indirect*, it was based on the request realization of the change or compensation (Boxer and Pickering, 1995). In the aforementioned statement, the complainant complains by describing the condition of the air conditioner. This statement is not merely description and information about the air conditioner, rather it indirectly asks the hearer to give a solution whether he checks or fixes the problem. Moreover, to strengthen his complaint, the complainant give a comparison between his air conditioner and others.

Next classification was classifying complaint responses based on response categorizations proposed by Linli (2014). Linli’s categorizations were used because it is more comprehensive to classify each response. The categorizations are favorable response, unfavorable response, and concessive response. The response, “please wait [asking] for it Sir, there are still many others’ orders,” for instance, is type of concessive response. In this response, the complaineer acknowledges the problem and accepts it as her mistake. However, the complaineer refuses to give a solution to the complainant by explaining that there are still many orders and the complainant’s order is one of those orders. By saying “wait” reflects the order is still on process.

The last classification was classifying the response strategies applied in the response statements based on categorizations proposed by Linli (2014). The responses were firstly divided into three parts, which were opener, body and closing. The occurrences of the responses in each part were classified into these strategies: indicating appreciation or compliment, admitting the responsibility, expressing concern or understanding, approving the customers' claim and offering compensation, increasing consolidation of solidarity, be conventionally indirect to convey refusal, apologizing, and redress other wants of customers. For example, "Oh, yes. [it] will be checked later." The statement "oh yes" shows that the complaineer accepts the claim of the complainant. He/she also grants the complainant by saying "[it] will be checked later" It means the complainant give the complaineer a promise to solve the problem.

The last step after classifying was interpreting the findings and drawing conclusions. Each finding might similar or different with the expectation of the study. To show the result of the study, in this section, the researcher's perspectives were presented. It was ended by the conclusion of the study.

3.4 Concluding remarks

In short, this chapter describes the method used in the study, the steps of collecting the data and the process of analyzing the complaints and the complaint responses. Indeed, those steps have helped a lot to describe and to discuss the results and the findings of this study. In the following chapter the results and the findings are discussed.