

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the theoretical foundations and previous studies relevant to the research topic. It discussed the main concepts that support the development of a customer service guidebook as a self-training media for customer service staff at PT Rimba Raya Putra Travel and Shuttle Group. This chapter includes customer service, shuttle travel agents, service quality, guidebooks, and the concept of self-training in competency development. In addition, this chapter also identifies the research gap from previous studies to establish the rationale and significance of the present study.

2.1 Customer Service

Customer service is a crucial component of a company because it serves as the link between the company and its customers in the service delivery process. In the service industry, customer service serves as the frontline that interacts directly with customers, thereby exerting a significant influence on customers' perceptions of the company. According to Kasmir (2017), customer service refers to activities to provide service, information, and assistance to customers in order to meet their needs and ensure their satisfaction. Furthermore, Tjiptono and Chandra (2020) explain that customer service is part of service activities focused on creating value for customers through effective and responsive interactions. Thus, customer service functions not only as an information provider but also as the company's representative in building positive relationships with customers.

The customer service functions in an company are not limited to providing information, but also include handling complaints, offering solutions, and maintaining long-term relationships with customers. Lovelock and Wirtz (2021) state that customer service encompasses various activities that assist customers before, during, and after the use of a service. These activities include providing information, resolving issues, and offering support aimed at enhancing the customer experience. High-quality service can provide added value to customers and serve as a key differentiator for a company compared to its competitors (Kotler and Keller

2016). Therefore, the success of customer service in fulfilling its functions directly impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty levels.

To perform their duties effectively, customer service representatives must possess a number of competencies that support service quality. Specifically, a customer service representative needs to have good communication skills, a friendly attitude, patience, and the ability to understand customer needs (Kasmir, 2017). In addition, empathy and problem-solving skills are also necessary because customer service representatives often deal with various customer complaints and issues. According to Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2018), interpersonal competencies such as the ability to communicate, listen actively, and provide appropriate responses are key factors in creating a positive service experience. With these competencies, customer service representatives can deliver professional service that meets customer expectations.

In the transportation industry, particularly in shuttle travel, customer service plays a highly strategic role due to the high frequency of interactions between staff and customers. Customer service is responsible for providing information regarding departure schedules, the booking process, schedule changes, and handling customer complaints during service use. Based on Lovelock and Wirtz (2021), the quality of interactions between service providers and customers is one of the primary factors influencing customers' perceptions of service quality. In addition, Sharma et al. (2020) emphasize that communication skills and the ability to adapt to customers from diverse cultural backgrounds are essential competencies in the service industry, which serves both domestic and international customers. Therefore, the development of customer service competencies must be conducted continuously to ensure service quality is maintained and capable of meeting increasingly diverse customer needs.

2.2 Definition of a Shuttle Travel Agent

A shuttle travel agent is a type of ground transportation that provides round-trip travel between cities or regions, operating on a fixed schedule with specific routes and predetermined departure and destination points. Shuttle services function as mobility providers that emphasize time efficiency, comfort, and ease of access for customers (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2021).

The primary characteristic of a shuttle travel agent is its direct service model, where interaction between customers and service providers occurs intensively and in real time throughout various service processes. Therefore, the quality of interaction becomes an important factor in customers' perceptions of the company. According to Zeithaml et al. (2018), customer satisfaction in the service industry is influenced by response speed, clarity of communication, and the ability of staff to fulfil customer needs throughout the service process.

Likewise, Lovelock and Wirtz (2021) argue that responsive, informative, and solution-oriented service strongly affects customer loyalty in the transportation sector. Interactions in shuttle travel agencies occur across several processes, such as booking, schedule confirmation, departure, and handling complaints. The high intensity of these interactions makes customer service the most critical element in ensuring operational smoothness and building customer loyalty.

Additionally, shuttle travel agencies serve customers from diverse backgrounds, such as domestic and international tourists. Therefore, customer service staff are required to have adaptive and responsive communication skills in order to adjust their service style according to customer needs. Cross-cultural communication competence is one of the important skills for customer service staff because they deal directly with customers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Sharma et al., 2020).

It can be concluded that the quality of service at a shuttle travel agency is determined not only by operational factors but also by the effectiveness of customer service interactions.

2.3 Service Quality

Service quality is one of the most important factors in determining customer satisfaction and maintaining business sustainability, particularly in service-based industries. According to Tjiptono (2020), service quality refers to a company's ability to meet or exceed customer expectations through the services provided. Similarly, Kotler and Keller (2016) state that service quality reflects how well a service fulfills customer needs and expectations. Therefore, service quality is often used as an indicator of organizational performance in delivering services to customers.

In the transportation service industry, service quality is not only reflected in operational aspects such as punctuality, safety, and comfort, but also in the quality of interactions between customers and service personnel. Zeithaml et al. (2018) explain that customers evaluate service quality based on their overall experience during the service process, including communication, responsiveness, and the professionalism of employees. As a result, customer service personnel play a crucial role in shaping customers' perceptions of service quality.

Referring to the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuman, Zeithaml, and Bery (1988), service quality can be measured through five main dimensions that serve as indicators in assessing customer perceptions of the services provided. These five dimensions include tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuman et al., 1988; Lee et al., 2023).

1. **Tangibles:** The physical evidence aspect includes things that are visible and can be felt by customers. It could be: office facilities, staff appearance, form of brochure, website, equipment supporting its functions.
2. **Reliability:** Services that are promised consistently and accurately such as; travel schedules and ticket reservations, accurate information, handling complaints or problems, providing the best service.
3. **Responsiveness:** The willingness and ability of travel agencies to help customers and provide services quickly.

4. Assurance: The trust given by agents to customers, which is built through knowledge, courtesy, and the ability of staff to instill confidence.
5. Empathy: The ability of the travel agency to provide personal attention and service to customers and understand their needs and wants.

Service quality is also a major factor affecting customer loyalty because customers who are satisfied with their personal values and experience a positive mood towards service will have high loyalty to the company. Customers are often disloyal due to poor service or service quality that has decreased from what customers expect (Fauzi, 2019; Wijaya & Presetyo, 2022).

Customer service is responsible for providing information, assisting customers, handling complaints, and maintaining effective communication throughout the service process. According to Zeithaml et al. (2018), effective communication, empathy, responsiveness, and problem-solving abilities are important competencies that contribute to the delivery of quality service. When customer service personnel are able to perform these responsibilities effectively, customers are more likely to feel satisfied and develop trust in the company.

Service quality directly shapes customer loyalty. Satisfied customers return and recommend the company to others while those who experience poor service often share negative impressions, which can erode trust over time (Tjiptono & Chandra, 2020; Kotler & Keller, 2016). Therefore, maintaining consistent service quality is essential for organizations that seek to sustain customer relationships and remain competitive in the market.

Based on the explanations above, service quality can be understood as the ability of a company to provide services that meet customer expectations through professional, responsive, and customer-oriented interactions. In the context of shuttle travel services, service quality is closely related to the competencies of customer service staff, as they serve as the primary point of contact between the company and its customers. Therefore, improving customer service competencies

through a structured self-training guidebook is expected to support more consistent and effective service delivery.

2.4 Definition of Guidebook

A guidebook is a written document containing operational guidelines that are systematically arranged to assist individuals in carrying out tasks or jobs consistently. A guidebook includes procedures, service standards, and practical steps that employees are required to follow (Noe, 2017; Miller & Davis, 2021). According to Michael Armstrong (2020), documented work guidelines are one of the most important elements in a training system because they help maintain performance consistency and service standards.

Structurally, a guidebook generally consists of several main components, such as basic concepts, work procedures or work standards, case examples, and problem-handling guidelines. According to Armstrong (2020), effective work guidelines should contain clear, structured, and easy-to-understand instructions so that they can be directly applied in workplace situations. This is consistent with the view of Noe (2020), who states that well-designed training materials can improve employees' shared understanding of job duties and reduce operational errors. In addition, good training materials should be oriented toward real work practices so that they can have a direct impact on improving employee performance (Noe, 2020).

Beyond its general structure, a good guidebook is also characterized by several specific qualities that determine its effectiveness as a training tool. First, clarity of language is essential instructions should be written in simple, unambiguous sentences so that employees with varying levels of experience can understand and apply them without misinterpretation (Armstrong, 2020). Second, a good guidebook should be systematic, meaning the content is arranged in a logical sequence that mirrors the actual flow of work, starting from basic concepts, moving to procedures, and ending with problem-solving guidance (Noe, 2020). This sequencing helps employees follow the material step by step rather than encountering information out of order.

Third, completeness and relevance are important characteristics, where the content covers all necessary aspects of the job while avoiding unnecessary information that could distract from core tasks (Rothwell, 2015). A guidebook that is too general risks being unhelpful in real situations, while one that is overly detailed may overwhelm employees, particularly those who are still in the early stages of learning.

Fourth, the use of visual elements such as diagrams, tables, flowcharts, or illustrative examples is considered an important characteristic of an effective guidebook, since visual aids can simplify complex procedures and improve retention of information (Miller & Davis, 2021). Fifth, a good guidebook should be practical and applicable, meaning the content is grounded in real workplace scenarios rather than purely theoretical explanations, so that employees can directly relate the material to situations they may encounter on the job (Noe, 2020).

Finally, accessibility and flexibility are also key characteristics, particularly for guidebooks intended to function as self-training media. The material should be easy to access, organized so that employees can study specific sections independently based on their needs, and adaptable enough to accommodate different learning paces (Hutasuhut et al., 2021). Taken together, these characteristics clarity, systematic structure, completeness, visual support, practicality, and accessibility determine the extent to which a guidebook can effectively support consistent performance and serve as a reliable self-learning tool in the workplace.

A guidebook also functions as a job aid, namely a tool used to support employees in completing tasks efficiently without having to rely continuously on formal training (Rothwell, 2015). Based on the study of Hutasuhut et al. (2021), the use of self-learning media in the workplace can improve understanding, competence, and individual performance in carrying out tasks, especially through flexibility and ease of access for employees in adapting to the organization.

As a self-training media, a guidebook allows employees to study materials independently according to their needs and available time. Noe (2020) states that the independent use of structured training materials can improve performance consistency in the service industry. Building on the characteristics described above, a well-structured and accessible guidebook not only functions as self-training media, but is also designed to help employees understand, implement, and maintain work standards consistently a foundation that connects directly to the broader concept of self-training discussed in the following section.

2.5 Self-Training

Self-training is a competency development approach that emphasizes an individual's ability to learn and improve work-related skills independently through various available media and learning resources. Self-training is considered part of a workplace learning strategy that enables employees to continue developing without relying entirely on formal training programs (Noe, 2020). According to Vithayaporn, Yong, and Chai (2021), effective independent learning in the workplace should encourage employees to actively manage their own learning processes in order to adapt to dynamic job demands.

The concept of self-training is closely related to self-directed learning, which is a process in which individuals take the initiative in identifying learning needs, selecting methods, and evaluating learning outcomes (Garrison, 1997). This approach is highly relevant in work environments that require rapid adaptation and efficiency, such as the transportation service sector. Armstrong (2020) emphasizes that a good company requires a training system that is flexible, sustainable, and independently accessible to employees.

This is particularly relevant to the characteristics of customer service staff in shuttle travel agencies, whose work is dynamic and oriented toward direct interaction with customers. Customer service staff are required to handle various situations while serving customers with diverse characteristics. Vithayaporn et al. (2021) state that the effectiveness of workplace training is strongly determined by an individual's ability to apply knowledge directly in real work situations. In

addition, self-training allows customer service staff to repeatedly learn the service standards established by the company (Hutasuhut et al., 2021).

Thus, self-training becomes an effective approach to developing customer service competencies, especially in the shuttle travel environment, which demands flexibility, speed, and high-quality service interactions.

2.6 Company Profile

PT Rimba Raya Putra is a transportation company that has been in operation since 1989. Upon its establishment, the company provided AKDP (Intra-Provincial Intercity) bus services on the Jepara–Semarang and Jepara–Pati routes using a fleet of 10 buses. As public demand for transportation services grew, the company continued to expand its business to broaden its service coverage.



Figure 2. 1 Rimba Raya Staffs
Source: Rimba Raya Official Instagram

In 2012, PT Rimba Raya Putra began expanding its business into the tourism bus rental sector. This service remains operational to this day and has become one of the business units supporting the company's growth. Furthermore, on March 6, 2019, the company expanded its business again by launching travel, shuttle, and package delivery services under the name Rimba Raya Premium. These services provide both intra-provincial (AJDP) and inter-provincial (AJAP) pick-up and drop-off services covering various regions across Java.

Currently, Rimba Raya Premium operates more than 70 Toyota Hiace vehicles serving various routes across Central Java, including Jepara–Semarang, Jepara–Yogyakarta, Jepara–Surakarta, Jepara–Cirebon, Jepara–Purwokerto, Jepara–Cilacap, Tayu–Pati–Kudus –Semarang, Tayu–Pati–Kudus–Surakarta, Tayu–Pati–

Kudus–Yogyakarta, and Rembang–Pati–Kudus–Semarang–Yogyakarta. This increase in the fleet size reflects the company’s business growth in meeting the needs.

Based on interviews with company representatives, the idea to establish the travel service originated from the company owner’s personal experience while studying out of town from 2014 to 2019. During that period, he frequently used travel transportation services and found that some operators did not provide sufficient comfort for long-distance journeys. Issues such as vehicle conditions, limited facilities, and inconsistent service quality often affected the overall travel experience. These observations later became the foundation for establishing a travel service that prioritizes passenger comfort through well-maintained fleets, improved facilities, and professional service.



Figure 2. 2 Rimba Raya Staffs
Source: Rimba Raya Official Instagram

Nowadays, PT Rimba Raya Putra has a vision to create a transportation service that is comfortable, high-quality, and accessible to the public at an affordable price. Additionally, the company strives to contribute to reducing unemployment rates by providing job opportunities. To realize this vision, the company is committed to providing easy access to transportation for workers, students, and tourists; continuously innovating in service; maintaining the quality and cleanliness of its fleet; offering same-day package delivery services; and creating employment opportunities for the community.

PT Rimba Raya Putra's head office is located in Bangsri, Jepara Regency, Central Java. In addition, the company also has several branch offices located in Jepara City, Semarang, Surakarta, Yogyakarta, and Tayu. With a continuously expanding service network and a focus on improving service quality, PT Rimba Raya Putra strives to maintain cusrtrust while expanding its service reach.



Figure 2. 3 Rimba Raya Branch Semarang
Source: Rimba Raya Official Instagram

2.7 Previous Studies

Previous research relevant to this topic indicates that the quality of customer service plays a crucial role in determining customer satisfaction and loyalty. A study conducted by Kusuma and Marlana (2021) examined the influence of service quality and brand image on customer satisfaction in the transportation sector, finding that both variables had a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. This indicates that the quality of interaction is a key factor in service delivery.

In addition, the study by Nisa and Permana (2024) found that service quality and brand image significantly influenced customer satisfaction among shuttle transportation users, reinforcing the importance of structured service standards for frontline staff.

On the other hand, the study by Hutasuhut et al. (2021) emphasized that cultivating a self-directed learning culture within an organization supports employees in developing work-related competencies more consistently. Similarly,

Noe (2020) highlights that structured training media, including guidebooks, can improve employee consistency and competence in service delivery.

In terms of training media development, several studies published between 2019 and 2024 have applied the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) as a systematic framework for designing employee training tools. For example, research by Pratama and Wulandari (2021) on the development of employee training modules using the ADDIE model found that this approach enabled training media to be designed based on actual needs analysis, tested through structured development stages, and evaluated for effectiveness before being fully implemented in the workplace.

Similarly, a study by Lestari et al. (2023) applied the ADDIE model to develop a digital training guidebook for service staff and reported that the resulting product was considered valid and practical by both material experts and end users, with a significant improvement in employee understanding after using the guidebook. Another study by Saputra and Anggraini (2022) used the ADDIE model to design a self-training handbook for hospitality employees and found that the systematic stages of ADDIE particularly the evaluation phase were effective in ensuring that the training material remained relevant to real job competencies. These studies consistently report that the ADDIE model produces training materials that are more relevant, valid, and aligned with real job competencies, since each stage involves systematic validation by experts and end users prior to final implementation.

Based on these studies, it can be concluded that customer service quality is influenced by individual competence as well as the effectiveness of the training provided. However, there is still a research gap, as only limited studies have developed training media in the form of guidebooks as self-training tools to improve service quality, particularly in the context of shuttle travel services. Moreover, although several studies have applied the ADDIE model to develop employee training media in various sectors, research that specifically utilizes the ADDIE model to develop a guidebook as a self-training tool for customer service

staff in the shuttle travel industry remains very limited. Therefore, this study aims to develop a guidebook as a self-training media using the ADDIE model, which can be used to improve customer service quality systematically and sustainably.