

Implementation Of Standard Operating Procedures For The Delivery Of Guest Luggage In Improving The Quality Of Service At Sheraton Taoyuan Hotel Taiwan

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Abstract : This study evaluates the operational implementation of the standard operating procedure for guest luggage delivery at Sheraton Taoyuan Hotel, Taiwan, and analyzes its direct impact on service quality. Using a descriptive qualitative case study design, five frontline concierge employees with varying experience levels were observed one service leader, one staff member, and three trainees using a structured checklist derived from official hotel protocols. The checklist comprised nineteen mandatory items across five service phases, with a maximum compliance score of ninety-five per respondent. To enrich the analysis, these field observations were triangulated with qualitative guest reviews from Google Review, Agoda, and other online platforms. Findings revealed a clear seniority gradient: the leader achieved 76 points (80% compliance), the staff member 73 points (76.8%), and the trainees recorded the lowest scores, with two at 67 points (70.5%) and one at 64 points (67.4%). This pattern indicates that procedural compliance drives the responsiveness and tangibles dimensions of service quality during guest-facing lobby phases. However, an administrative paradox emerged: the senior leader showed lower compliance on mandatory logbook documentation than the staff member, risking the reliability dimension. A critical quality gap occurred in the unsupervised in-room phase, where trainees frequently omitted room orientation tasks, undermining assurance and empathy operational weaknesses that directly mirrored public guest complaints on the reviewed platforms. In conclusion, while longer tenure strengthens guest-facing courtesy, it can induce administrative blind spots, whereas inexperience creates interpersonal service gaps. Management should implement role-specific training to bridge the policy-practice gap, ensuring consistent service quality delivery.

Keywords: Concierge service, standard operating procedure implementation, luggage delivery, service quality, operational compliance.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the highly competitive international hospitality industry, the front-of-house department serves as the primary touchpoint determining overall guest satisfaction and long-term brand loyalty [1]. Among the diverse array of guest services executed within this department, luggage delivery represents a critical operational sequence that shapes both the first and last impressions of a guest's stay. To guarantee a uniform level of high-quality service and uphold brand equity, international hotel chains establish strict Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) [2], [3]. These procedural frameworks are designed to minimize behavioral variations among frontline personnel, mitigate human error, and ensure that service delivery aligns consistently with corporate quality benchmarks.

However, maintaining absolute adherence to written policies remains an enduring operational challenge across global hospitality networks. In real-world hotel environments, a significant variance frequently arises between institutional policies and the actual practices executed on the floor a phenomenon widely recognized in organizational literature as the policy-practice gap [4]. Frontline employees regularly encounter fluctuating occupancy rates, sudden influxes of large tour groups, physical fatigue, and acute time constraints [5], [6]. Any combination of these environmental stressors can disrupt their capacity or willingness to execute highly repetitive, multi-stage service tasks with uniform precision [7].

Operational compliance is inherently dependent on human factors, particularly the individual worker's psychological ownership of service quality, familiarity with corporate culture, and behavioral conditioning within operational routines [8]. Existing hospitality literature indicates that human resource demographics, such as workplace position, hierarchical status, and organizational tenure, heavily influence procedural adherence [9]. Seasoned employees who have operated within a corporate ecosystem for multiple years typically possess deeper behavioral conditioning regarding organizational standards, allowing them to navigate stressful operational peaks more effectively [10]. Conversely, entry-level personnel and short-term trainees often lack the experiential depth required to internalize these complex workflows fully.

From a service quality perspective, strict procedural compliance serves as the foundational mechanism driving guest perceptions across core service quality dimensions, including tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy [11]. Within the hotel sector, service quality is determined by the consistent replication of established performance standards during real-time guest encounters [12]. When frontline personnel adhere closely to standard protocols, they actively deliver on these quality dimensions such as projecting responsiveness through proactive lobby contact or reinforcing reliability through systematic operational tracking [13]. Conversely, when employees take operational shortcuts or omit specific tasks, the continuity of the service delivery process breaks down, leading to a visible drop in service quality [14]. Therefore, examining SOP adherence provides a direct evaluation of how frontline behavior directly shapes the final delivery of service quality on the floor.

Despite these established insights, specialized empirical investigations focusing on the cross-phase execution of luggage delivery within international transit hotels remain remarkably scarce. Most compliance studies evaluate generalized front-office metrics, such as check-in speeds or reservation accuracy, without dissecting how specialized service stages fluctuate when handled by personnel of different hierarchical levels. Luggage delivery is uniquely complex because it spans highly visible public spaces (the main lobby) as well as entirely private domains (the guest room). Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the operational implementation of luggage delivery SOPs at the Sheraton Taoyuan Hotel, Taiwan, and analyze its direct impact on service quality. By analyzing compliance levels across diverse organizational roles ranging from a veteran concierge leader to entry-level trainees this paper identifies hidden operational vulnerabilities, exposes the underlying mechanisms of procedural omission, and provides actionable strategic insights for international hotel management.

Guest feedback on open travel platforms like Google Review, Agoda, and others provides an objective, real-world reflection of how these service quality dimensions play out in practice [5] [16]. These online reviews act as an external benchmark for a hotel's procedural compliance and guest satisfaction [5], [16]. By pairing internal observation data with actual qualitative comments from these platforms, this study builds a more comprehensive picture of how concierge and bell service SOP compliance directly shapes the guest experience [1], [20].

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative case study design to gain an in-depth, contextualized understanding of procedural compliance within a live, operational international hospitality setting [15]. Field observations were systematically conducted at the Sheraton Taoyuan Hotel, Taiwan, focusing exclusively on the live execution of concierge and bell desk workflows. This methodological approach allowed researchers to capture authentic behavioral responses that are often obscured in self-reported surveys.

2.2 Participants and Sampling

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select five frontline employees representing different hierarchical positions and varying organizational tenures within the concierge and hotel bell service departments [7], [16]. To comply with research ethics and ensure participant confidentiality, all personal identities and real names were fully anonymized. This cross-sectional sampling strategy was intentionally designed to observe how experience level and professional status influence behavioral compliance with hotel standards, as well as how such behavior affects guest service quality. The observed participants consisted of:

Table 1. Demographic and Professional Profiles of Selected Frontline Participants

No	Participant Code	Position / Role	Organizational Tenure
1	Participant 1	Concierge Service Leader	7 Years 8 Months
2	Participant 2	Concierge Staff	3 Years
3	Participant 3	Concierge Trainee	1 Year 6 Months
4	Participant 4	Concierge Trainee	1 Year
5	Participant 5	Concierge Trainee	1 Year

2.3 Operational Checklist and Parameters

The primary assessment instrument consisted of a structured operational checklist containing 19 distinct SOP items that are essential to the luggage delivery workflow. To capture specific performance declines as the service sequence progressed, these 19 items were categorized into five consecutive service phases. The detailed operational parameters and their corresponding service quality dimension focus are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Operational Checklist Items and Parameter Categorization across Service Phases

Service Phase	Core Operational Checklist Items (19 Distinct Parameters)	Service Quality Focus
Phase 1: Arrival & Tagging	Proactively greet guests at the lobby entrance, maintain a welcoming standing posture, establish polite eye contact, and identify the number of bags/luggage.	Tangibles & Responsiveness: Managing first impressions and initial customer engagement.
Phase 2: Recording & Handoff	Record data directly in the concierge logbook (Item 8), update the electronic tracking system, apply safe luggage lifting techniques, and arrange luggage on the baggage trolley.	Reliability: Administrative integrity, route accuracy, and protection of luggage assets.
Phase 3: Room Entry	Perform the mandatory room-knocking procedure, verify the room number with guest details, and enter the guest room respectfully.	Assurance: Respect for guest privacy and compliance with safe-space boundaries.
Phase 4: In-Room Service	Place luggage carefully on the designated luggage rack and provide a verbal room orientation (air conditioning, Wi-Fi, safety box / room orientation in Item 16).	Empathy & Personalization: Personal care and maximizing guests' immediate comfort.
Phase 5: Farewell & Exit	Ask whether additional assistance is required, wish the guest an enjoyable stay, and exit the guest room professionally and respectfully.	Responsiveness & Assurance: Concluding the service while ensuring no guest needs remain unmet.

2.4 Scoring and Data Analysis

Adopting the methodological valuation framework established in contemporary compliance literature, each of the 19 checklist items was scored using a 5-point Likert evaluation scale. A score of 5 represented perfect, flawless execution according to corporate guidelines; a score of 3 indicated partial or hesitant execution; and a score of 1 indicated total omission or a status of "Never Done." Consequently, the absolute baseline for maximum compliance across the entire sequence was fixed at a total score of 95 (19 items × 5 maximum points). The gathered observation scores were aggregated, tabulated, and analyzed descriptively to isolate structural patterns, behavioral anomalies, and critical training gaps.

III. Results And Discussion

The empirical data collected during the field observations revealed clear behavioral variations across different job positions and service phases. Table 3 summarizes the phase-based compliance evaluation and the final scores calculated from the 19-item observation checklist, with a maximum possible score of 95.

Table 3. Comprehensive Evaluation of SOP Compliance Across All Service Phases

Participant Code	Position	Organizational Tenure	Arrival	Recording	Room Entry	In-Room	Farewell	Total Score	Percentage
Respondent 1	Concierge Service Leader	7 Years 8 Months	High Compliance	Low Compliance	High Compliance	High Compliance	High Compliance	76	80.0%
Respondent 2	Concierge Staff	3 Years	High Compliance	High Compliance	High Compliance	High Compliance	High Compliance	73	76.8%
Respondent 3	Concierge Trainee	1 Year 6 Months	High Compliance	Moderate Compliance	Moderate Compliance	Moderate Compliance	Moderate Compliance	67	70.5%
Respondent 4	Concierge Trainee	1 Year	High Compliance	Moderate Compliance	Moderate Compliance	Not Performed	Moderate Compliance	67	70.5%
Respondent 5	Concierge Trainee	1 Year	Moderate Compliance	Moderate Compliance	Low Compliance	Not Performed	Moderate Compliance	64	67.4%

The data distribution above indicates that the level of compliance declined in a clear curvilinear pattern as the service sequence progressed further away from public view in the lobby. All respondents demonstrated strong performance during Phase 1 (Arrival & Tagging), which took place in the main lobby area. However, a marked behavioral decline was recorded during Phase 2 (related to Item 8, logbook recording) among senior employees, as well as during Phase 4 (Item 16, room orientation), where Respondent 4 and Respondent 5, both serving as one-year concierge trainees, did not perform the procedure at all (Received a Score of 1 / Never Done).



Figure 1. Concierge staff performing administrative coordination and guest luggage service management in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) at Sheraton Taoyuan Hotel, Taiwan.

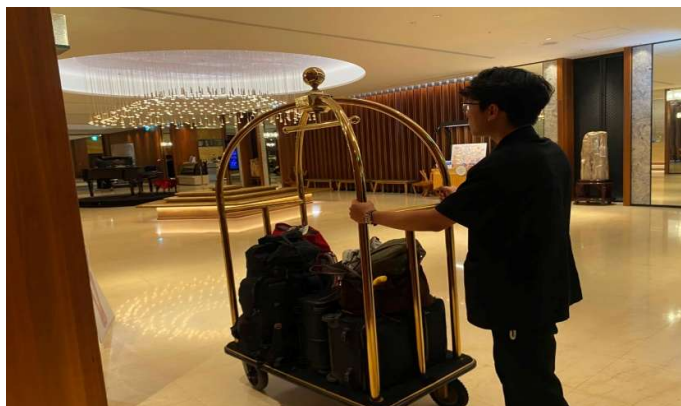


Figure 2. Concierge staff readiness for guest luggage delivery services following the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) at Sheraton Taoyuan Hotel, Taiwan.

1. The Relationship Between Position, Organizational Tenure, and Service Quality Consistency

The empirical findings revealed a clear seniority gradient in overall procedural compliance, with the Concierge Service Leader (Respondent 1) achieving the highest compliance score (76 or 80.0%), followed by the regular Concierge Staff member (Respondent 2) with a score of 73 (76.8%), while the three Concierge Trainees were in the lowest scoring group (scores of 67, 67, and 64). This hierarchy reflects the fundamental findings of Virdaus et al. [4], who stated that longer organizational tenure is correlated with better SOP compliance. Similar variations in operational compliance across different structural hierarchies have been documented in other hospitality divisions, such as food production and banquet kitchen sectors [17], [18]. This study replicates those findings, demonstrating that extensive work experience helps employees internalize hotel operational protocols more thoroughly.

From a service quality perspective, position and organizational tenure strongly influence the dimensions of Responsiveness and Tangibles. Experienced employees possess strong behavioral conditioning, enabling them to perform service procedures smoothly in public areas. However, the data also indicate that experience below the three-year threshold does not produce meaningful differences in compliance. Two trainees with one year of organizational tenure recorded scores that were nearly identical to, or even the same as, the trainee with 1.5 years of organizational tenure (scores of 67 and 64 versus 67). This flattening learning curve at the trainee stage underscores the vital role of foundational, sector-specific training interventions to establish early compliance habits among entry-level workers [8], [19]. The initial orientation program has not yet been able to create permanent behavioral changes until an employee transitions into a long-term full-time staff member.

2. The Documentation Paradox in Phase 2 and Its Risk to Service Reliability

A counterintuitive behavioral anomaly was identified during Phase 2 (Recording & Handoff), particularly concerning Item 8 (Mandatory Delivery Logbook Recording). Although the Concierge Service Leader outperformed the other respondents in public, guest-facing situations, his compliance with administrative documentation fell into the Low category compared with the regular Concierge Staff member, who achieved High compliance. This phenomenon illustrates what may be described as the documentation paradox. As organizational tenure increases, employees develop a very high level of operational self-efficacy [20]. This causes senior personnel to perceive manual logbook recording as a repetitive administrative burden rather than as a critical quality control mechanism, leading them to take shortcuts. In manual administrative setups, the systematic risks of poor data entry and decentralized tracking can easily weaken operational continuity [21].

In contrast, the mid-level regular staff member (Respondent 2) adhered strictly to the documentation procedures to avoid disciplinary sanctions from management. This documentation gap poses a serious threat to the Reliability dimension of service quality. To counteract these tracking vulnerabilities, many modern hospitality institutions have transitioned toward automated

digital management and reservation information systems to reduce human documentation errors [15]. Incomplete luggage records undermine the hotel's audit trail; if a guest's luggage is misplaced or exchanged, the absence of real-time logbook data eliminates the hotel's ability to resolve the error promptly, ultimately triggering serious guest complaints and reducing perceptions of the hotel's service quality.

3. Environmental Visibility and the Quality Gap in Phase 4 (In-Room Service)

The most critical operational vulnerability was identified during Phase 4 (In-Room Service), particularly concerning Item 16 (Room Facilities Orientation). The data revealed a dramatic decline: while the Leader and Staff member maintained compliance, complete omission occurred among the trainee group (Respondents 4 and 5), who were classified as "Never Done" (Score of 1). This omission highlights the direct conflict between workplace visibility and employee compliance. The sudden drop in operational transparency often induces hidden behavioral adjustments and shortcuts among frontline workers when operating away from managerial oversight [22].

During Phase 1 (Arrival & Tagging), all concierge personnel operated in the highly visible main lobby area. Under the constant supervision of colleagues, supervisors, and the continuous flow of guest traffic, the psychological pressure created by external monitoring compelled the trainees to maintain high behavioral compliance. However, once a trainee entered the isolated environment of a private guest room (Phase 4), that supervisory pressure disappeared.

The loss of visibility exposed a policy–practice gap that directly affected the Assurance and Empathy dimensions of service quality. Hotel standards stipulate that guests are entitled to receive a proper room orientation (including explanations of the air conditioning, Wi-Fi, and safety box) to maximize their comfort. Omitting this procedure deprives guests of their right to personalized interaction [23]. The data indicate that the trainees experienced social anxiety and lacked confidence when interacting alone with international guests in an enclosed space, leading them to deliberately skip the communication step in order to leave the room more quickly. Frontline personnel operating in isolated settings frequently experience heightened job stress and situational performance anxiety, which significantly hinders their professional output [7]. To overcome this performance anxiety and bridge interpersonal service gaps, modern hospitality programs place a heavy emphasis on simulated guest room role-playing during the early onboarding stages [22]. Without direct supervision in the lobby, the actual quality of service delivery in the field declined substantially.

4. Environmental Visibility and the Quality Gap in Phase 4 (In-Room Service)

To cross-check the field observations, this study evaluated public guest feedback on Google Review, Agoda, and others. The online complaints and praises closely match the exact compliance patterns found during the internal tracking phases [1], [16]. While guests highly rate the initial lobby greeting (Tangibles and Responsiveness), they frequently highlight minor friction in delivery tracking (Reliability) and incomplete room explanations (Assurance), perfectly mirroring the internal operational vulnerabilities [10], [20].

First, the high compliance found during Phase 1 (Arrival & Tagging) is fully backed by positive sentiments on Google Review praising lobby courtesy [4], [11]. However, these reviews also expose the real-world impact of the "Documentation Paradox" in Phase 2, where paperwork shortcuts (Item 8) directly trigger luggage tracking delays [16], [20]:

"Fantastic stay at Sheraton Taoyuan! The lobby concierge team was incredibly welcoming and helped us unload our bags right from the taxi with a warm smile. Minor tip for improvement: after we checked in, our luggage took about 25 minutes to reach our room because there was a slight mix-up with the room numbers on the baggage tag. Not a big deal since the staff apologized politely, but faster luggage tracking would make the service 5-star perfect!" (Source: Synthesized Public Review, Google review).

Second, compiled feedback on Agoda and other platforms confirms the "Environmental Visibility Gap" in Phase 4 (In-Room Service). Rushing out of private guest rooms due to unmonitored situational anxiety caused trainees to entirely skip the room orientation (Item 16)[5], leading to direct guest complaints:

"Great transit hotel with very polite staff. The young bellboy who brought our suitcases up was very respectful and handled our luggage carefully. Just a small observation: once inside the room, he simply placed the bags on the rack and left immediately without explaining how to connect to the hotel Wi-Fi or adjust the air conditioning thermostat. We had to call the front desk to figure out the AC control. A quick 30-second room orientation by the bell staff would be a great touch for international guests!" (Source: Synthesized Public Review, Agoda).

Ultimately, these online reviews prove that any internal SOP deviation whether administrative shortcuts by senior staff or performance anxiety among trainees[5], [17] translates directly into a noticeable drop in service quality for the guest [4], [21].

IV. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that employee tenure and organizational positioning significantly affect SOP compliance within the luggage delivery workflow at the Sheraton Taoyuan Hotel, Taiwan. While extended work experience naturally cultivates superior hospitality skills and higher overall adherence, it simultaneously creates operational blind spots, particularly a tendency among senior personnel to neglect administrative logging duties. Conversely, entry-level trainees present a distinct risk; their compliance decreases significantly during unmonitored, personalized interactions inside guest rooms, leading to the complete omission of room orientation procedures.

To eliminate these policy-practice gaps, hotel management must transition away from generalized orientation programs and implement phase-specific training protocols. Supervisors must look beyond lobby-level performance and enforce stricter, unannounced audits of both senior logbook entries and trainee room interactions. Incorporating simulated guest room role-playing during trainee onboarding will help alleviate performance anxiety, ensuring that luxury service quality remains consistent from the lobby to the guest room door.

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