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# Community Services & Social Work Bulletin

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# RESTAURANT SERVICE SYSTEM DURING SPECIAL EVENTS BASED ON INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AT LANTA NICE BEACH RESORT, THAILAND

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**Abstract:** This study examines the strategic role of restaurant servers in enhancing guest experience and operational success during major festive events, specifically Christmas and New Year's celebrations at Lanta Nice Beach Resort, Thailand. Based on insights from an international internship program, the paper underscores how restaurant staff perform multiple roles that extend beyond food delivery, including creating an inviting atmosphere, facilitating communication between guests and management, and serving as cultural intermediaries in a multicultural hospitality setting. The analysis identifies core responsibilities of servers, highlights service challenges during peak demand, and emphasizes the competencies required to accommodate diverse international guests. Findings reveal that effective restaurant service relies on a combination of technical proficiency, interpersonal communication, cultural sensitivity, and stress management under time constraints. These results contribute to a deeper understanding of frontline hospitality roles in tourism studies and offer practical implications for workforce training, event management, and service quality improvement in resort settings.

**Keyword:** Hospitality Management; Restaurant Service; Cultural Mediation; Event Tourism; Guest Experience

## INTRODUCTION

Lanta Nice Beach Resort is located in the Klong Nin beach area of Koh Lanta Yai, Krabi Province, Thailand. The resort is a popular destination among international tourists due to its beautiful beach, comfortable accommodations, and friendly service. One of its key operational divisions is the Maralaley Restaurant, which handles both daily food service and major annual events such as Christmas and New Year celebrations.

These events often involve a large influx of international guests who expect high-quality service that reflects both efficiency and cultural sensitivity. In this context, restaurant service becomes not only about food delivery but also about managing the overall guest experience. The role of the service staff expands to include responsibilities such as creating a welcoming atmosphere, managing large-scale coordination, and addressing various guest needs with professionalism.



During the internship program from December 11, 2024, to January 9, 2025, the author worked as part of the restaurant service team. This role provided practical insights into guest management, service techniques, and interpersonal hospitality workplace nuances. Through this hands-on experience, the author was able to observe the importance of teamwork, time management, and cultural awareness in ensuring the success of large-scale events. The internship also offered the opportunity to directly interact with guests from various countries, which helped improve communication skills and adaptability in high-pressure environments.

This paper aims to share these experiences and reflect on the restaurant service system during special events, offering insights that may be valuable for hospitality students, educators, and practitioners who are preparing for or designing international internship programs. Service in the hotel and restaurant industry is a key aspect in shaping the guest experience. According to (Koc, 2020), high-quality service in the hospitality sector relies not only on technical skills but also involves emotional and cultural aspects, especially in direct interactions with international guests. In the context of special events such as major holiday celebrations, service becomes increasingly complex, as it must accommodate high expectations and a more dynamic atmosphere (Kotler et al., 2023).

The role of restaurant servers has also expanded from simply serving food to becoming "hospitality ambassadors," as stated by (Jones et al., 2004). They serve as crucial intermediaries between guests and management and play a role in establishing a pleasant and professional service image.

In a study on international internships, (Fang & Zhang, 2020) highlighted that cross-cultural work experiences provide students with the opportunity to strengthen their interpersonal skills, cultural adaptation, and global professionalism. Internship placements in international tourist destinations, such as Thailand, enhance understanding of global service standards and diverse guest preferences.

Furthermore, executing large events in a resort context requires a collaborative event management system. According to (Tum & Norton, 2006), the success of an event depends on interdivisional coordination, detailed planning, and the staff's ability to cope with high work pressure.

From this review, it can be concluded that restaurant service systems for large events require a combination of technical skills, team coordination, intercultural communication skills, and an understanding of event dynamics.

## METHODS

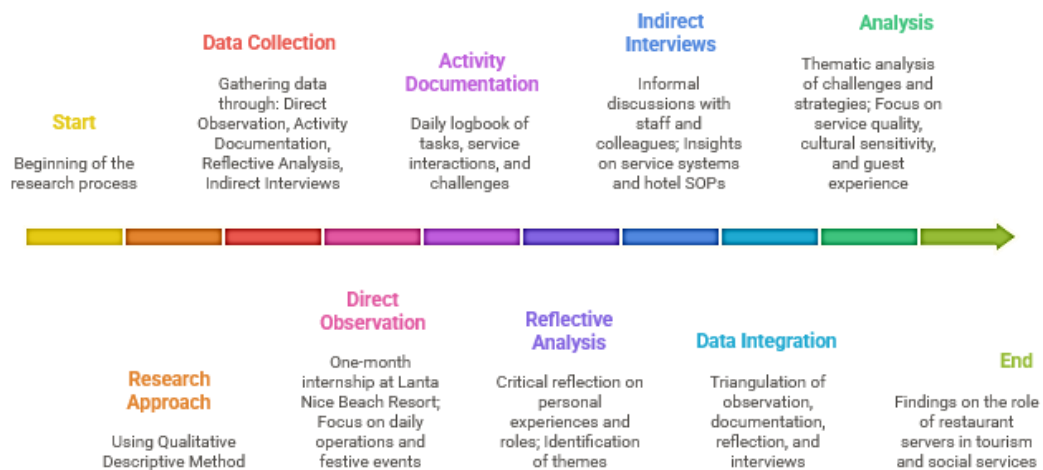
This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the strategic role of restaurant servers in enhancing guest satisfaction and event success within a hospitality context. The research was conducted during a one-month international internship program at Lanta Nice Beach Resort, Thailand, which provided direct exposure to daily operations in a resort restaurant setting.

Data collection was carried out through several complementary techniques. First, direct observation was employed as the primary method, allowing the researcher to immerse in the working environment and record



practical experiences during regular operations as well as during peak festive events, particularly Christmas and New Year's celebrations. Second, activity documentation was systematically maintained through a daily logbook, which captured detailed notes on tasks performed, service interactions, and challenges encountered. This log served as a structured record for tracking patterns of staff responsibilities, guest behavior, and operational adjustments.

**Figure 2. Research Flow**



In addition, reflective analysis was applied to critically examine personal involvement and experiential insights. This reflexive process enabled the identification of key themes related to the multifaceted roles of servers, including cultural mediation, communication facilitation, and atmosphere creation. Furthermore, indirect interviews were conducted with resort staff and fellow colleagues to triangulate findings. These informal discussions provided valuable perspectives on service systems, hotel standard operating procedures, and institutional expectations for quality assurance.

The combination of observation, documentation, reflection, and informal interviews ensured methodological rigor by integrating both experiential and contextual data. This approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of the dynamic interactions between restaurant servers and international guests, particularly during high-pressure events. Overall, the chosen methodology supports the study's aim of highlighting the intersection of tourism services, cultural sensitivity, and social interaction in hospitality practices.

**Figure 2. Cashier Resto Lanta Nice Beach Resort**



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Core Duties of Restaurant Servers

The field data collected at Lanta Nice Beach Resort indicate that the core duties of restaurant servers are instrumental in delivering superior event-driven hospitality service, especially during peak festive seasons such as Christmas and New Year. These duties—guest welcoming, menu explanation, order-taking and delivery, table resetting, and interdepartmental communication—form a cohesive operational framework aligned with established service quality dimensions (responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles) and significantly influence guest satisfaction (Ali et al., 2021).

First, the act of welcoming guests serves as the initial point of contact and shapes patrons' service expectations. This aligns with the SERVQUAL model, wherein assurance and empathy greatly impact perceived service quality in hotel settings (Ali et al., 2021). A warm welcome and prompt seating set the tone for the entire dining experience.

Second, menu explanation demands cultural acumen and effective communication skills. Empirical studies demonstrate that staff cultural sensitivity and intelligence correlate positively with guest satisfaction, especially in multicultural contexts (Gumaste et al., 2024; Muiri, 2024). Servers adept in catering to dietary restrictions and explaining menu items foster trust and inclusivity.

Third, taking and serving orders promptly and accurately reflect operational competence and responsiveness—two critical dimensions of service quality (Oh & Parks, 1996). Delays or errors in this phase can undermine guest satisfaction, particularly during high-volume service periods.

Fourth, cleaning and resetting tables reinforce tangibles and hygiene standards, contributing to perceptions of cleanliness and professionalism (Kim et al., 2021).

Fifth, communication between servers, kitchen, and cashier enhances coordination and reduces service disruptions. Research in restaurant environments confirms that strong internal communication skills lead to better employee performance and customer outcomes (Muda, 2021).

In sum, these core duties position restaurant servers as frontline ambassadors who integrate technical precision, interpersonal and intercultural communication, and time-management capabilities. Their performance not only supports seamless service flow but also enhances cultural bridging and guest satisfaction in tourism-driven hospitality contexts.

### 4.3 Challenges During Christmas & New Year Events

Major holiday periods such as Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve pose distinct operational and service challenges for restaurant servers at Lanta Nice Beach Resort. Firstly, the significant surge in guest numbers, particularly from European markets, intensifies pressure on staffing and service delivery. In Europe, festive dining traffic typically increases by over 14 percent compared year-on-year (Mastercard.com, 2023), aligning with industry reports of threefold event booking increases during peak seasons (Fazzi, 2024).

Secondly, higher demand for special meals and personalized service creates complexity. Guests often request dietary modifications or bespoke dishes—requiring servers to respond with in-depth menu knowledge and flexibility. The luxury hospitality literature indicates that this customization correlates with increased guest satisfaction and loyalty when delivered effectively (Gumaste et al., 2024).

Thirdly, the time pressure is acute—guests expect simultaneous, precise delivery across large tables. This environment elevates employee stress and risk of error. Research confirms that peak-season service significantly heightens burnout risk without robust staffing and support systems (harri.com, 2023).

Fourth, intensive interdepartmental coordination is essential. Servers must synchronize closely with kitchen, bar, and front office teams to manage order flow and payment in high throughput settings. Studies emphasize internal communication as a critical determinant of service quality in event contexts (Muda, 2021).

Lastly, managing atmosphere and ambiance requires server involvement in table layouts, décor, and event setup. Maintaining festive ambiance contributes to guest experience but adds to staff workload. Seasonal adaptations in hospitality call for multifunctional staff roles to manage both service and aesthetic elements efficiently (Fang & Zhang, 2020).

Taken together, these challenges confirm the abstract’s emphasis on the need for technical expertise, cultural awareness, communication skills, and time management under pressure. Servers act as frontline ambassadors, balancing operational demands with personalized guest engagement during major events. From a practical standpoint, the results highlight the importance of proactive holiday staffing strategies, cross-training, and integrated team coordination to optimize service delivery and minimize burnout during high-volume event periods.

#### 4.4 Required Skills

The field observations at Lanta Nice Beach Resort illustrate that restaurant servers face heightened demands around effective communication, multitasking, endurance, and professional service ethics, especially during festive event periods.

First, effective communication emerged as critical. Servers proficient in English and basic Thai serve as bridges between international guests and local staff. In Thailand, interactional competency, strategic communication techniques, and non-verbal cues significantly influence hospitality performance (Tiansoodeenon et al., 2023). Furthermore, English listening and speaking difficulties—such as understanding varied accents—have been documented among Thai hotel staff (Pinsirikul et al., 2023), underscoring the importance of bilingual proficiency for service staff.

Second, multitasking is essential. During high-volume events, servers simultaneously take orders, serve drinks, assist with décor, and manage guest inquiries. Research on hospitality in Mongolia finds that multitasking roles enhance employee engagement and overall job performance, particularly in high-pressure environments (Dalkhjav et al., 2024).

Third, physical and mental endurance are proving decisive. Restaurant servers routinely endure long shifts, standing for hours without reprieve. Studies highlight that frontline hospitality workers face elevated levels of stress, fatigue, and emotional exhaustion due to sustained job demands (Elshaer, 2023). Protective factors include strong social support and coping strategies to mitigate burnout.

Fourth, adherence to service ethics and professionalism—remaining friendly, composed, and responsive under intense pressure—is consistently linked to superior guest satisfaction. Ethical leadership cultures help reduce burnout and promote resilience among hospitality workers (Wiyono et al., 2024). Moreover, emotion management and surface-acting strategies deployed by servers affect both their emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction (Fishman, 2024).

Collectively, the findings reinforce the abstract's emphasis on how restaurant servers serve as frontline ambassadors. Their performance depends not merely on technical skills, but also on cultural intelligence, multilingual communication, multitasking ability, physical stamina, and emotional resilience. These data suggest the need for resort management to provide targeted bilingual training, cross-training for multitasking roles, formal strategies for fatigue mitigation, and supportive leadership models to uphold service standards during high-pressure event tourism periods.

#### **4.5 Role in Event Atmosphere**

The role of restaurant servers at Lanta Nice Beach Resort extends well beyond conventional food service, positioning them as integral contributors to the overall event experience. One notable responsibility is arranging VIP tables, where attention to detail and personalization reflect service excellence. Prior studies emphasize that personalized seating arrangements and exclusivity significantly enhance perceived value and guest satisfaction in luxury hospitality contexts (Suhartanto et al., 2020).

Additionally, servers are tasked with setting up themed decorations, an activity that aligns with the growing trend of experience-oriented tourism. Event atmospherics, such as lighting, décor, and layout, have been shown to influence customer emotions and behavior, thereby strengthening the immersive quality of festive celebrations. This suggests that servers contribute not only to functional service but also to the sensory and symbolic dimensions of hospitality.

The responsibility of escorting guests to event locations underscores the importance of hospitality navigation and personalized attention. Such practices embody the service principle of empathy, which directly correlates with positive guest evaluations (Han & Hyun, 2017).

Finally, participating in staff-guest activities, including group dining and cultural performances such as fire shows, highlights the cultural mediation role of servers. Engaging in these activities fosters emotional connections, cultural exchange, and memorable experiences, aligning with literature on co-created value in tourism services (Campos et al., 2018).



Together, these findings illustrate that servers are not passive actors but dynamic facilitators of cultural immersion and guest engagement, essential to sustaining competitive advantage in event-based hospitality.

## CONCLUSION

The internship experience at Lanta Nice Beach Resort provided meaningful insights into the operational, cultural, and interpersonal dimensions of restaurant service within an international hospitality context. The festive periods of Christmas and New Year highlighted how restaurant servers function not only as providers of food and beverage but also as cultural mediators and emotional facilitators who shape the overall guest experience. Their roles extend beyond technical service delivery to encompass atmosphere management, intercultural communication, and the creation of memorable moments that define the resort's reputation.

Findings suggest that successful service during major events is dependent on three interrelated elements: a well-structured service system, competent and adaptable staff, and seamless interdepartmental collaboration. When these elements converge, service quality is elevated, guest satisfaction is maximized, and the resort strengthens its competitive position within the global tourism market.

To sustain this performance, several practical measures are recommended. First, providing basic Thai language training for servers can strengthen communication between local staff and international guests. Second, conducting event service simulations prior to celebrations enhances preparedness and reduces errors under time pressure. Third, clear task distribution coupled with intensive coordination among service, kitchen, and management staff ensures smooth service flow. Finally, the implementation of equitable shift scheduling safeguards employee well-being and prevents fatigue during peak demand.

Together, these strategies reinforce the central role of servers as the frontline ambassadors of hospitality, bridging cultural differences and sustaining service excellence in event tourism.

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