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Service Excellence Training for Creative Economy Actors in Serangan Tourism Village, Bali: A Community Engagement Approach

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Abstract.
Community-based tourism development requires not only attractive tourism products but also the capacity of local actors to provide consistent and appropriate services to visitors. This community engagement program aimed to introduce a Service Excellence approach to strengthen service communication practices among creative economy actors in Serangan Tourism Village, Denpasar, Bali. The program involved 25 participants, particularly tour drivers and souvenir vendors, who participated in Service Excellence training, practical service simulations, introduction of service standards, and initial mentoring. The program was implemented through five stages: needs assessment and preparation, training, initial implementation and mentoring, monitoring and participant evaluation, and follow-up planning. Program evaluation used a ten-indicator questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale and was analyzed descriptively. The results showed an overall mean score of 3.98, indicating generally favorable participant perceptions of the program. The highest mean scores were recorded for understanding of service Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and relevance to creative economy development, both at 4.32, followed by the usefulness of learning modules and supporting materials at 4.24. The lowest score was recorded for clarity of material presentation (3.60), indicating the need for more accessible instructional delivery and additional practice. Across 250 recorded responses, 76.4% were categorized as Agree or Strongly Agree. These findings provide preliminary evidence that a practice-oriented Service Excellence approach can serve as a useful mechanism for community capacity development in tourism villages. However, the findings represent participant perceptions rather than objectively measured competency improvement or economic impact. Further mentoring, monitoring, and endline evaluation are required to assess sustained changes in service practices and longer-term outcomes.
Keywords: *Service Excellence; Service Communication; Creative Economy; Tourism Village; Community Engagement; SDG 8*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an important contributor to local economic development through employment creation, entrepreneurship, and the growth of small and community-based businesses. However, the sustainability of tourism destinations depends not only on the availability of attractions and tourism products but also on the capacity of local actors to deliver quality experiences to visitors. In community-based tourism, residents are not merely beneficiaries of tourism development but also participate directly in providing transportation, guiding, retail, hospitality, and other visitor services. Consequently, the quality of interactions between local service providers and tourists becomes an important component of the overall tourism experience. Recent studies on tourism villages in Indonesia similarly emphasize that community participation, local capacity, and access to training are important conditions for sustainable tourism development (Rahman, A., F. & Natalia, D., C., 2025; Waridah, N., 2021).

Service quality is particularly important in tourism because service encounters are characterized by direct interaction between providers and visitors. Previous research has established that perceived service quality is closely associated with customer satisfaction, loyalty, and behavioral intentions (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In tourism destinations, these interactions may occur repeatedly through relatively simple but highly visible activities, such as welcoming visitors, providing information, responding to questions, handling complaints, and assisting tourists during their visit. Therefore, service communication is not merely a supporting interpersonal skill but an important element of how visitors perceive the professionalism and reliability of a destination. For community-based tourism actors, strengthening service communication requires approaches that can translate general service quality principles into practical behaviors applicable to their everyday activities.

One relevant approach is Service Excellence, which emphasizes responsiveness, professionalism, empathy, effective communication, and consistent attention to customer needs. Rather than focusing exclusively on operational procedures, service excellence places the service encounter and the customer experience at the center of service delivery (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2022). In tourism and hospitality settings, this perspective is particularly relevant because local service providers frequently become part of the visitor's direct experience of the destination. Practical learning approaches, including role-playing, simulations, case-based exercises, and context-specific service guidelines, can help community actors translate service concepts into observable service practices. This is also consistent with recent community-based tourism studies that highlight the importance of strengthening local capacity, participation, and practical access to knowledge in tourism village development (Wahyuni, R., B., et al., 2023; Mustofa, A., et al., 2025).

Despite the growing emphasis on community participation in tourism development, a practical challenge remains tourism village actors may have substantial experience in interacting with visitors while having limited access to standardized service guidance and structured training. Recent evidence from Indonesian tourism villages indicates that community empowerment is closely related to the ability of local actors to develop their own capacities, participate collectively, and access relevant training and information (Rahman, A., F., & Natalia, D., C., 2025). Similarly, the implementation of service standards and SOPs has increasingly been recognized as relevant to maintaining consistent visitor services in community-based tourism destinations (Kemala, Z., & Rasid, K., A., 2026). These findings indicate that tourism village development should not focus

exclusively on destination infrastructure or tourism products but should also address the human and service dimensions of tourism.

Although service quality and community-based tourism have been widely discussed, there is still a need for practice-oriented community engagement approaches that connect service excellence concepts with the everyday realities of informal and small-scale tourism actors. In particular, evidence on how local tourism actors perceive the usefulness of standardized service guidance, practical simulations, and service communication learning materials remains limited in the context of Indonesian tourism villages. This article addresses this practical gap by reporting the implementation of a Service Excellence-based community engagement program for creative economy actors in Serangan Tourism Village and examining participants' preliminary perceptions of the training and supporting learning materials.

Accordingly, this article aims (1) to describe the implementation of Service Excellence training and initial mentoring for creative economy actors in Serangan Tourism Village, (2) to examine participants' perceptions of the training, service standards, practical activities, and supporting learning materials, and (3) to discuss the implications of the program for community-based tourism development and SDG 8. By focusing on preliminary participant evaluation rather than claiming definitive long-term competency or economic impacts, the article provides a practice-oriented account of how Service Excellence can be introduced as part of community capacity development in a tourism village context.

II. METHODS

2.1. Program Setting and Participants

This community engagement program was conducted in Serangan Tourism Village, Denpasar City, Bali, Indonesia. The program targeted local creative economy actors who have direct interactions with tourists, particularly tour drivers and souvenir vendors. A total of 25 participants took part in the Service Excellence training and program evaluation. The selection of participants was based on the needs identified during the initial coordination and assessment process, particularly the need to improve service communication practices and introduce more standardized approaches to tourism services.



Figure 1. Community Engagement Team

2.2. Community Engagement Approach

The program employed a participatory community engagement approach in which community partners were involved in identifying service-related needs, participating in the training activities, practicing the proposed service standards, and providing feedback on the learning materials and program implementation. This approach was intended to ensure that the intervention was relevant to the participants' daily service activities and the characteristics of the tourism village.

The program consisted of five main"stag's: (1) needs assessment and preparation, (2) Service Excellence training, (3) implementation and initial mentoring, (4) monitoring and participant evaluation, and (5) follow-up and sustainability planning. At the stage reported in this article, the main training activities had been completed, while further mentoring, final monitoring, and endline evaluation remained part of the planned continuation of the program.

Table 1. Stages of the Community Engagement Program

Stage	Main Activities	Expected/Reported Output
1. Needs Assessment and Preparation	Coordination with community partners, identification of service-related needs, preparation of training materials and service resources	Identified service communication and standardization needs; preparation of learning materials
2. Service Excellence Training	Interactive presentation, discussion, role-playing, case-based activities, and service simulations	Participants received Service Excellence knowledge and practiced service communication
3. Initial Implementation and Mentoring	Introduction and initial application of service SOPs, communication practices, and learning materials	Initial application of service standards and communication practices
4. Monitoring and Participant	Participant feedback and evaluation using a ten-indicator Likert-scale	Preliminary participant evaluation data

	Evaluation	questionnaire	
5.	Follow-up and Sustainability Planning	Identification of needs for further mentoring, monitoring, and endline evaluation	Basis for continuation and improvement of the program

Table 1 summarizes the implementation stages and the main outputs of the community engagement program. The sequence was designed to connect the initial identification of community needs with practical training, initial application of service standards, and participant evaluation. At the stage reported in this article, further mentoring, monitoring, and endline evaluation remained part of the program continuation.

2.3. Needs Assessment and Program Preparation

The initial stage involved coordination and discussions with community partners to identify service related challenges and training needs. The assessment focused on participants' existing service practices, communication with tourists, the need for service standardization, and the types of learning materials that would be practical for daily use.

The findings from this stage were used to prepare the Service Excellence training materials and supporting service resources. The program developed a Service Excellence Module, Frontliner Service Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and a Service Communication Pocket Guide. At the implementation stage covered by this article, these resources were introduced and used as supporting materials for training and initial practice.

2.4. Service Excellence Training

The training was designed as a practice-oriented learning intervention combining explanation, discussion, examples, role-playing, and service simulations. The training content addressed the principles of Service Excellence, professional service communication, verbal and non-verbal communication, service ethics, responding to tourist inquiries, complaint handling, and practices for creating positive service experiences.

Role-playing and service simulations were used to provide participants with opportunities to practice situations that could occur during their interactions with tourists. These activities included greeting visitors, providing information, responding to questions, using appropriate service expressions, and handling service-related situations. The practical activities were intended to translate the concepts presented during the training into behaviors that could be applied in participants' daily service activities.

2.5. Initial Mentoring and Implementation

Following the training, initial mentoring activities were conducted to support the introduction of service standards and communication practices. The mentoring focused on discussing the application of the service SOPs, reinforcing appropriate communication practices, and providing feedback related to the implementation of Service Excellence principles.

The mentoring at this stage should be understood as initial implementation support, rather than evidence of completed long-term behavioral change. Further mentoring and monitoring were planned as part of the continuation of the community engagement program.

2.6. Program Evaluation Instrument

Program evaluation was conducted using a structured questionnaire administered to the 25

participants. The questionnaire consisted of ten evaluation indicators measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Table 2. Participant Evaluation Indicators

No.	Evaluation Dimension	Indicator
1	Training Materials	Appropriateness of the training materials
2	Instructional Delivery	Clarity of material presentation
3	Service Excellence	Relevance of Service Excellence content
4	Service Communication	Perceived improvement in service communication competence
5	Service Standards	Understanding of service Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
6	Practical Learning	Practical exercises and service simulations
7	Creative Economy Relevance	Relevance of the program to creative economy development
8	Inclusive Service	Understanding of inclusive service practices
9	Learning Materials	Usefulness of the learning module and supporting materials
10	Overall Evaluation	Overall participant satisfaction

As presented in Table 2, the evaluation instrument covered ten aspects related to the training process, service communication, service standardization, practical learning, and participants' overall perceptions. Each indicator was rated using a five-point Likert scale. The fourth indicator was interpreted as perceived improvement rather than an objective measure of competency gain because the reported evaluation did not employ a pre-test/post-test design.

The fourth indicator was treated as perceived improvement, rather than an objective measurement of competency gain, because the evaluation reported in this article did not employ a pre-test/post-test design.

2.7. Data Analysis

The evaluation data were analyzed descriptively. The mean score for each indicator was calculated by summing the participant responses for the respective indicator and dividing the total by the number of participants. An overall mean score was subsequently calculated across the ten indicators.

The distribution of responses across the five Likert categories was also summarized to identify the proportion of responses falling into the Agree and Strongly Agree categories. The descriptive analysis was used to characterize participants' preliminary perceptions of the training, service standards, practical activities, and supporting learning materials.

Because the evaluation was based on participant perceptions and involved a single participant group, the analysis was not intended to establish causal effects or statistically demonstrate changes in competency, tourist satisfaction, or economic performance.

2.8. Ethical and Data Considerations

The evaluation was conducted as part of the community engagement program, with participants providing responses concerning their perceptions of the training and learning materials. The

evaluation data were used in aggregate form to describe the program outcomes. No individual participant-level results are reported in this article.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Implementation of the Community Engagement Program

The community engagement program was implemented in Serangan Tourism Village, Denpasar City, Bali, with 25 participants consisting of tour drivers and souvenir vendors. These participants were selected because they have direct interactions with tourists and therefore play an important role in shaping visitors' service experiences. The program combined Service Excellence training, practical service simulations, introduction of service standards, and initial mentoring.

The training activities focused on the practical application of Service Excellence principles in everyday tourism service encounters. Participants were introduced to professional service communication, appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication, service ethics, responses to tourists' inquiries, complaint handling, and practices for creating positive service experiences. Role playing and service simulations were used to allow participants to practice service situations that could occur in their daily activities.



Figure 2. Service Excellence Training Session with Creative Economy Actors

The program also introduced supporting service-learning materials, including a Service Excellence Module, Frontliner Service Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and a Service Communication Pocket Guide. These materials were designed to translate general Service Excellence principles into practical guidance that could be used by local tourism actors. At the stage covered by this evaluation, the materials were still in draft or initial implementation stages, and further refinement and mentoring were planned. The implementation therefore emphasized a combination of knowledge transfer, practical experience, and service standardization. This approach was particularly relevant for community-based tourism actors because service quality is experienced directly through interactions between visitors and local service providers. Rather than treating Service Excellence as a purely conceptual topic, the program attempted to connect service principles with concrete situations encountered by participants.



Figure 3. Practical Service Communication Training

3.2. Participant Evaluation of the Program

Program evaluation was conducted using ten indicators assessed by the 25 participants on a five-point Likert scale. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Participant Evaluation

No.	Evaluation Dimension	Mean
1	Appropriateness of training materials	3.64
2	Clarity of material presentation	3.60
3	Relevance of Service Excellence content	3.96
4	Perceived improvement in service communication competence	3.88
5	Understanding of service SOPs	4.32
6	Practical exercises and service simulations	4.12
7	Relevance to creative economy development	4.32
8	Understanding of inclusive service practices	3.92
9	Usefulness of the learning module and supporting materials	4.24
10	Overall participant satisfaction	3.84
	Overall Mean	3.98

The overall mean score of 3.98 indicates that participants expressed generally favorable perceptions of the program. All ten indicators obtained mean scores above 3.50, with scores ranging from 3.60 to 4.32. The results indicate that the participants generally perceived the training content, practical activities, service standards, and learning materials as relevant to their service activities.

The highest mean scores were obtained for understanding of service SOPs (M = 4.32) and

relevance to creative economy development (M = 4.32). These findings indicate that participants particularly valued the practical and contextual aspects of the intervention. The SOP component provided participants with more concrete guidance concerning how service activities could be conducted consistently, while the high score for creative economy relevance suggests that participants perceived a connection between service quality and their own economic activities.

The usefulness of the learning module and supporting materials also received a relatively high score (M = 4.24), followed by practical exercises and service simulations (M = 4.12). These findings provide preliminary evidence that participants responded positively to learning resources and activities that were directly connected to practical service situations. For community tourism actors, such materials may be more readily applied when they use simple language, concrete examples, and situations that resemble their daily interactions with tourists.

The indicator concerning perceived improvement in service communication competence obtained a mean score of 3.88. This result indicates a favorable participant perception regarding their own service communication development. However, this finding should be interpreted as a perceived outcome rather than an objectively measured competency gain, because the reported evaluation did not employ a pre-test/post-test design. Therefore, the result provides evidence of participants' perceptions but does not establish the magnitude of actual competency improvement.

The lowest score was found for clarity of material presentation (M = 3.60), followed by the appropriateness of the training materials (M = 3.64). Although these scores remain positive, they indicate an area requiring further attention. The program progress report also identified variation in participants' educational and experiential backgrounds and noted that participants requested additional practice, longer training duration, and continued training. These observations suggest that future implementation should place greater emphasis on visual explanations, shorter and more focused learning segments, interactive discussion, and repeated practice.

3.3. Distribution of Participant Responses

To further examine the overall pattern of participant responses, the 25 participants generated a total of 250 responses across the ten evaluation indicators. The distribution of responses is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of Participant Responses

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	8	3.2%
Disagree	12	4.8%
Neutral/Moderately Agree	39	15.6%
Agree	108	43.2%
Strongly Agree	83	33.2%
Total	250	100.0%

The distribution shows that 108 responses (43.2%) were categorized as Agree and 83 responses (33.2%) as Strongly Agree. Combined, these categories accounted for 191 responses or 76.4% of all recorded responses. In contrast, 20 responses (8.0%) were categorized as Disagree or Strongly

Disagree, while 39 responses (15.6%) were in the middle response category.

The predominance of positive responses supports the overall mean score of 3.98 and indicates that the program was generally well received by the participating community actors. Nevertheless, the presence of 23.6% of responses outside the Agree and Strongly Agree categories indicates that participant perceptions were not uniformly positive across all aspects of the intervention. This reinforces the importance of using participant feedback to refine the delivery of future training and mentoring activities.

3.4. Discussion

3.4.1. Practical Service Standards as a Key Program Component

One of the most important findings is the relatively high score for understanding of service SOPs (M = 4.32). This result suggests that participants responded particularly positively to concrete and procedural guidance. The finding is relevant in a tourism village context because local tourism actors often perform multiple service functions while relying heavily on personal experience. Introducing simple and context-specific service standards can provide a common reference for how basic service interactions should be conducted.

The result also suggests an important distinction between knowing service principles and knowing how to apply them in practice. General explanations of Service Excellence may be useful for developing awareness, but SOPs provide more specific behavioral guidance. For community-based tourism actors, this practical orientation can make training content easier to connect with routine service encounters.

However, the high evaluation of SOP understanding should not be interpreted as evidence that the SOPs have already been consistently implemented in daily operations. The evaluation measured participants' perceptions of their understanding, while continued mentoring and monitoring were still required to assess actual implementation. Future evaluation should therefore complement self reported perceptions with direct observation of service practices.

3.4.2. Relevance of Service Excellence to Creative Economy Activities

The second-highest score was observed for relevance to creative economy development (M = 4.32). This finding is important because it demonstrates that participants perceived Service Excellence as connected to their economic activities rather than as an isolated training topic.

For tour drivers and souvenir vendors, interactions with tourists occur as part of their daily economic activities. Communication, responsiveness, courtesy, and the ability to provide useful information can therefore become part of the value delivered to visitors. Service quality may consequently complement the physical tourism products and services offered by the destination.

The finding supports the broader principle that community-based tourism development should include human-resource development alongside destination and product development. In this context, Service Excellence training can be viewed as a capacity-development intervention that supports local actors in delivering more consistent visitor services. Nevertheless, the current study does not measure changes in sales, tourist satisfaction, repeat visits, or income. Therefore, the relationship between service training and economic outcomes remains a potential pathway rather than an empirically demonstrated impact in the present evaluation.

3.4.3. Value of Practical Learning and Supporting Materials

The relatively high scores for the usefulness of the learning module and supporting materials (M = 4.24) and practical exercises and service simulations (M= 4.12) indicate favorable perceptions

toward the practice-oriented components of the program.

This finding is consistent with the nature of service work, where communication skills are developed not only through conceptual understanding but also through repeated practice. Role-playing allows participants to experience common service situations in a controlled learning environment before applying similar behaviors in actual interactions with tourists.

The supporting materials also have an important function because community-based tourism actors may need simple references that can be consulted after formal training has ended. The Service Excellence Module, Frontliner Service SOP, and Service Communication Pocket Guide were therefore designed to extend learning beyond the training session. However, because these materials were still being refined at the reported implementation stage, their long-term usefulness and adoption require further evaluation.

3.4.4. Clarity of Material Delivery as an Area for Improvement

The lowest evaluation score was obtained for clarity of material presentation (M = 3.60). This finding should not be interpreted as a failure of the program because the indicator remained positively evaluated. Instead, it identifies an important area for program improvement.

The lower score may be related to differences in participants' educational backgrounds, work experience, and familiarity with formal service terminology. In community engagement settings, standardized instructional materials designed for formal educational environments may not always be directly suitable for adult community participants with diverse learning experiences.

The finding therefore suggests that subsequent training should use shorter explanations, more visual examples, local service scenarios, demonstrations, and repeated practice. Additional mentoring can also provide opportunities for participants to ask questions and receive individualized feedback. This is particularly relevant for service communication, where participants need to transform abstract concepts such as empathy, professionalism, and responsiveness into observable behaviors.

3.4.5. Implications for Community-Based Tourism

Taken together, the findings suggest that a practice-oriented Service Excellence approach can provide a useful framework for community engagement in tourism villages. The combination of service standards, simulations, and accessible learning materials was generally well received by the participating tourism actors.

The most notable pattern is that concrete service guidance received stronger evaluations than the clarity of conventional material delivery. This provides a practical implication for future community engagement programs: training for local tourism actors should not rely predominantly on classroom based explanation. Instead, learning should emphasize contextual examples, demonstrations, role playing, simple service standards, and opportunities for repeated practice.

The findings also highlight that community empowerment in tourism should be understood as an ongoing process rather than a one-time training activity. The positive participant evaluation provides an initial indication of program acceptance, but sustained changes in service practices require continued mentoring, monitoring, and follow-up evaluation.

3.5. Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

The program's primary contribution is related to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, particularly through capacity development among local actors involved in tourism-related economic activities. By providing Service Excellence training, practical communication exercises, and service standardization tools, the program supports the development of human capabilities within

community-based tourism.

The program may also contribute indirectly to SDG 4: Quality Education through the provision of accessible, practice-oriented learning resources for community actors. In addition, collaboration among the university, international partner, and local tourism community provides a supporting connection to SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

These SDG contributions should, however, be interpreted as program contributions rather than measured SDG impacts. The present evaluation does not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that the intervention has already increased income, employment, tourist satisfaction, repeat visitation, or destination competitiveness. Such outcomes would require longer-term monitoring and additional indicators.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Service Excellence training program provided a practical community engagement approach for introducing service communication and service standardization among creative economy actors in Serangan Tourism Village, Bali. The program involved 25 tour drivers and souvenir vendors through interactive training, service simulations, the introduction of service SOPs, and initial mentoring supported by learning materials.

The participant evaluation indicated generally favorable perceptions of the program, with an overall mean score of 3.98 on a five-point Likert scale. The highest ratings were observed for understanding of service SOPs (M = 4.32) and relevance to creative economy development (M = 4.32), followed by the usefulness of the learning module and supporting materials (M = 4.24). In contrast, clarity of material presentation (M = 3.60) received the lowest rating, indicating the need for simpler instructional delivery, more visual explanations, and additional practice in subsequent activities. Overall, 76.4% of the 250 recorded responses were categorized as Agree or Strongly Agree, indicating favorable participant perceptions of the intervention.

These findings suggest that a practice-oriented Service Excellence approach, particularly the use of concrete service standards, simulations, and accessible learning materials, can serve as a useful mechanism for community capacity development in tourism villages. The program also provides a practical contribution to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by supporting the development of service-related capabilities among local tourism actors.

However, the findings should be interpreted as preliminary evidence of participant perceptions rather than definitive evidence of competency improvement or economic impact. The evaluation was based on a single group of 25 participants and descriptive self-reported data, without a pre-test/post-test comparison or direct measurement of tourist satisfaction and economic outcomes. Further mentoring, monitoring, and endline evaluation are therefore needed to determine whether the positive perceptions identified in this study are translated into sustained changes in service practices and longer-term benefits for the tourism community.

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