

Operational challenges faced by Food and Beverage service employees in Five star Hotels of Pune and Mumbai city.

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ABSTRACT

A study to understand the operational challenges which are faced by F&B service employees in five star Hotels of Pune and Mumbai. The research is specifically for the Food and Beverage service department staff, this particular section of staff face tremendous work pressure during the service operations as they are the mediators between the chef and the guest, their stress level is high. In this situation if they are facing challenges while serving then it has to be resolved. So it is responsibility of management to provide proper infrastructure for the operations. Also the operational staff should be motivated to actively participate and help management in overcoming the challenging situations incase while anything happens.

The study is suggesting that the department staff of star category hotels do face challenges and have responded that operational training will help staff in dealing with the challenges.

KEYWORDS

Challenges: Something that needs great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully and therefore tests a person's ability

Source: Cambridge Dictionary.

Infrastructure: The basic structure of an organization or system which is necessary for its operation.

Source: Cambridge Dictionary.

INTRODUCTION

Food and beverage service department is one of the core departments of Hotel. In five star hotels the food and beverage service department comprises of many outlets like specialty restaurants, bar operations, room service, banquets etc.

The department of Food and beverage should maintain high standards and maintain quality of service. Recently the main shortfall in the department is of skilled staff. It's a major problem in the industry and can cause effects standards of service .It is required that the industry concentrates more on the talent, on staff who wants to continue work and is enjoying doing the work without compromising in the quality standards. The staff working in this department either work in restaurants, coffee shops, banquets, bars etc. The department of F&B Service also hires part time employees during peak seasons.

Food and beverage servers' responsibilities and duties vary considerably from one organization to another also from one outlet to another, some work behind counters and use computerized systems to take orders and tabulate bills. In bars and lounges drinks are mainly served with music whereas in restaurants and coffee shops food is primarily served. In formal dining establishments, they carefully observe established rules of service and etiquette, and pace the meal according to customer preference. Some of the duties of food and beverage servers are:

- Make table arrangements for service
- Maintain par stock of supplies
- Serve customers
- Record orders and coordinate with bar and kitchen
- Ensure customers enjoying food and beverage and served well
- Do suggestive and upselling
- Present bills.

Some attributes needed by servers:

- Serve customer courteously and efficiently.
- Must be good in multi-tasking skills
- good health & good grooming
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Ability to work with little supervision

- Good verbal communication skills and sensitivity to customer needs
- Ability to work calmly under pressure.

Other requirements depend on the policy of the hotels wherever the servers works. The servers in the department have very crucial job to perform which is tough too. They are responsible to coordinate orders between guest and chefs which is challenging. Hence the organization management can make sure that the servers get favorable work environment in order to give efficient service to the guest. The staff needs to be briefed by supervisors about the operations, also team work in department will create better work culture and motivate staff for the success of organization.

This paper investigates the operating issues in food service industry and challenges in current and future of Pune and Mumbai five star hotels F&B Service department The study identifies the challenges of F&B service staff, future challenges to be faced by the restaurant operators to stay competitive and to provide better services to the guest in the present geographical conditions.

Keywords: Challenges, Issues, Restaurant and Food Outlet, services

OBJECTIVE

- To find if F&B service staff face operational challenges
- To find what are the challenges which are faced by F&B service staff
- To find if operational training can overcome these challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. (Miculan Bradley, Doris & Elenis, Tony & Hoyer, Gary & Martin, David & Waller, James. 2017) In this paper the author mentioned that in conference Board of Canada there is assumption of a shortfall of close to 1 million workers in the Canadian economy by 2020. The clear shortfall of manpower is predicted .So it is important to retain the talent and nurture them for future. This paper aims to establish reasons for the shortage and curate a number of strategies to improve the situation. Various solutions are evaluated, prioritized, and categorized .The paper suggests that there are strategies that can be implemented in both the short and long-term that can increase the draw for potential employees to join this industry. Although the specific data is a

prediction, the trend is clear: there are not enough people seeking employment in the food and beverage industry to fill the jobs needed to sustain the industry¹.

2.(**Jayawardena, Chandana & Lawlor, Fred & Charles Grieco, J & Savard, Michel & Tarnowski, Michael.2013**) The research paper aims to analyses the main challenges which are faced by Canadian hotels, and to suggest appropriate innovative solutions to make hotel operations in Canada more successful. This paper gives valuable information about the management and operations of a hotel, and outlines innovative solutions to key challenges they face. The paper highlights effective approaches to managing hotel operations. The researcher propose department related, tailor-made training sessions for the diverse workforce of today².

3. (**Jayawardena, Chandana.2017**) The aim for the study was to provide practical solutions to the research question on the hospitality industry in Canada and what are the challenges and their solutions.³

4. (**Adeola, Ogechi & Ezenwafor, Kennedy.2016**) This paper is based on the Nigerian hospitality sector. It suggests a partnership amongst private and public agencies hospitality

¹ Miculan Bradley, Doris & Elenis, Tony & Hoyer, Gary & Martin, David & Waller, James. (2017) Human capital challenges in the food and beverage service industry of Canada: Finding innovative solutions , Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes 9(1)

² Jayawardena, Chandana & Lawlor, Fred & Charles Grieco, J & Savard, Michel & Tarnowski, Michael (2013)Challenges and innovations in hotel operations in Canada, Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes 5(2)

³ Jayawardena, Chandana(2017) The hospitality and tourism industry in Canada: innovative solutions for the future ,Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes 9(4)

colleges and hospitality businesses. A well planned partnership between business schools and hospitality sector will rope in better future for the industry in Nigeria.⁴

5. (Lee, Sanghyeop & Lee, Kai-Sean & Chua, Bee-Lia & Han, Heesup. 2019) The restaurants of a Hotel are of great importance in hotels, and the factors for this have so far been considerably understudied. This study investigated the challenges and critical success factors (CSFs) of restaurants owned and operated by five-star luxury hotels in Klang Valley, Malaysia.

It was revealed that the immense competition of Klang Valley's restaurant industry leads the frontline of hotel restaurants' challenges. As per study identified challenges are - Growing competition of Klang Valley's restaurants , Staffing issues due to high competition and poor working conditions , Unrealistic employee demands , Hospitality graduates' reluctance to join the industry , Costly food safety procedures , Seasonality of the hotel rooms division , Inconspicuous location of hotel restaurants , Difficulty in attracting non-hotel guests , Guests' high expectations on five-star hotels , Strict policies and extensive organization hierarchy , Limited resource allocation to hotel restaurant marketing , Large communication gap between hotel restaurants and other departments , Dependence on imported items⁵.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Data collection: The primary data which was required for this research was collected using the following technique:

Questionnaire: A questionnaire with straight forward and relevant questions was drafted and sent over to the sample to obtain their response.

2. Sample technique

⁴ Adeola, Ogechi & Ezenwafor, Kennedy (2016) The hospitality business in Nigeria: issues, challenges and opportunities. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes* 8(2)

⁵ Lee, Sanghyeop & Lee, Kai-Sean & Chua, Bee-Lia & Han, Heesup. (2019). Hotel restaurants' challenges and critical success factors in Klang Valley, Malaysia: the inseparable roles of support centers and revenue streams. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*. 20. 16–43.

The population for the research was Food and beverage service operational staff from five star Hotels of Pune and Mumbai city. In all 3 Five star Hotels of Pune and 2 Five star Hotels of Mumbai were selected. The data was collected from operational F&B Service employees working in various outlets. Apart from the above mentioned other secondary data was collected from various journals books and internet.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The Food and beverage service department is facing operational challenges. There are difficulties which are encountered by the operational level staff which are as follows:

Manpower shortage , long duty hours ,Growing customer expectation, Poor equipment’s inventory in the department ,Lot of physical work ,Limited recreation duty breaks ,Lack of coordination amongst F&B service team ,Frequent transfer in the department, Briefing issues , lack of clarity with supervisor ,Gender bias, Lack of proper menu knowledge amongst staff . The challenges faced by service staff needs to be resolved by the management by providing proper infrastructure and effective operational training.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Figure	Data Analysis										
<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>1.Age</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Figure 1: Age Distribution</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>18-25</td> <td>88%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25-35</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35-45</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>45 Above</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Figure: 1</p>	Age Group	Percentage	18-25	88%	25-35	6%	35-45	6%	45 Above	0%	<p>1. As shown in the bar chart the age group of 18-25 has 88% employees and 25-35 6% whereas 35-45 are 6% and no one above 45 years of age in F&B Service department working as operation staff.</p>
Age Group	Percentage										
18-25	88%										
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45 Above	0%										

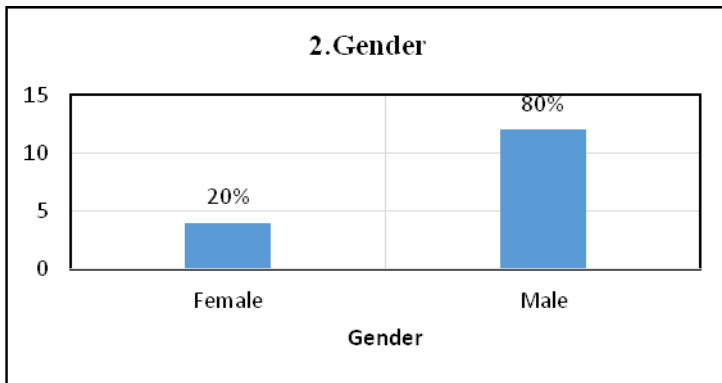


Figure: 2

2. The bar chart shows %age of male employees as 80%age and of female staff as 20%age in F&B Service department of five star hotels.

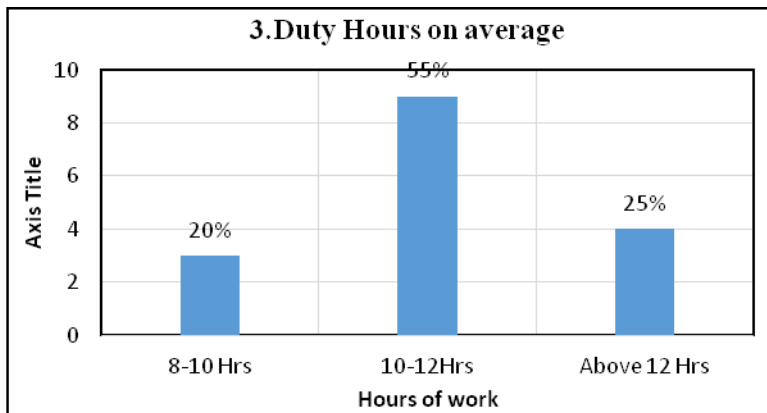


Figure: 3

3. The above bar chart represents the duty hours on an average done by F&B Service operation staff. Wherein 10-12 hrs are done by 55 %age, above 12 hrs done by 25%age and 8-10hrs by 20 %age staff.

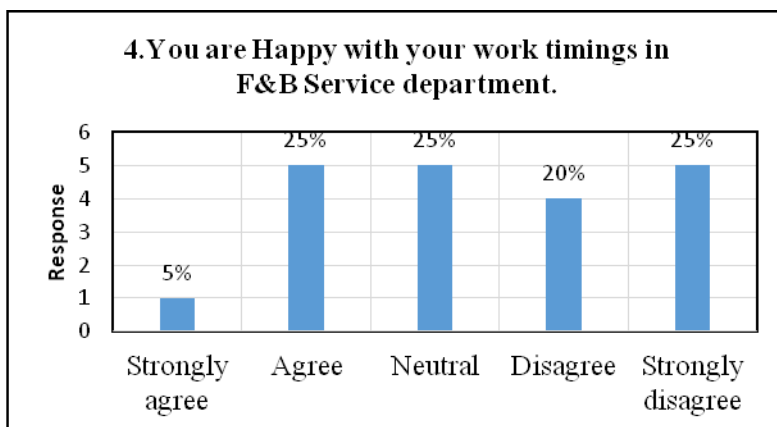


Figure : 4

4. The data is suggestive of mixed response for parameter happy with work timings. 5%age strongly agree 20%age disagree and 25%age said neutral, agree, and strongly disagree.

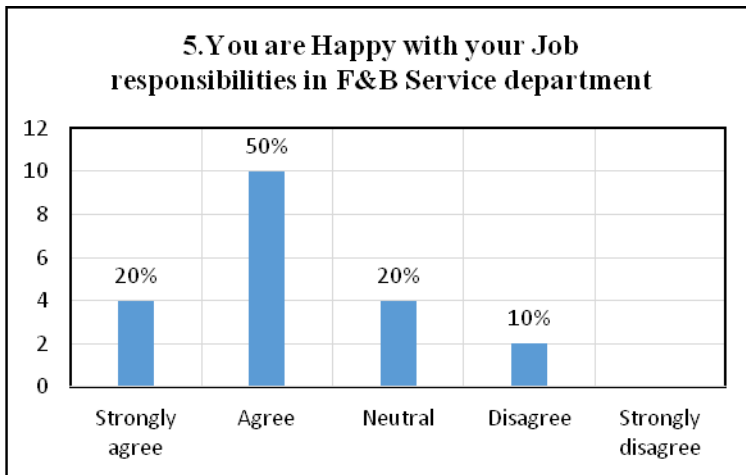


Figure : 5

5. Whether operational staff is happy with job responsibilities to this 50% age agree , 20% age are neutral 20% age strongly agree and 10% age disagree.

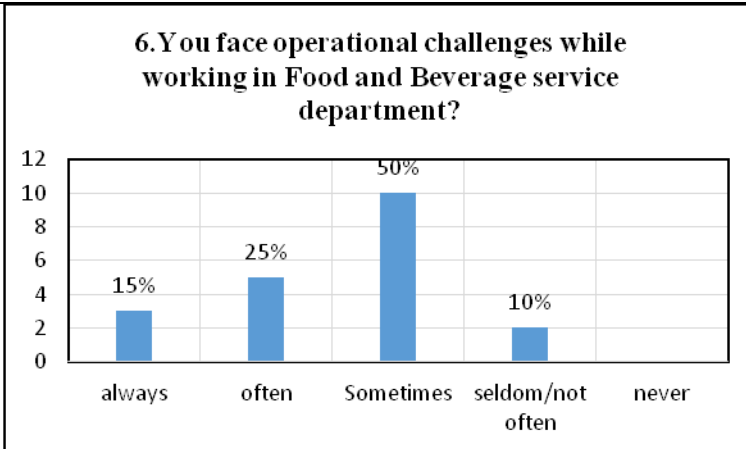


Figure: 6

6. Response for operational challenges faced while working in F&B service department 50% age said sometimes, 25% age said often, 15% age said always and 10% age said seldom.



Figure 7

7. If operational training will help to overcome challenges, to this 45% agree, 40% age strongly agree, 10% age disagree and 5% age are neutral.

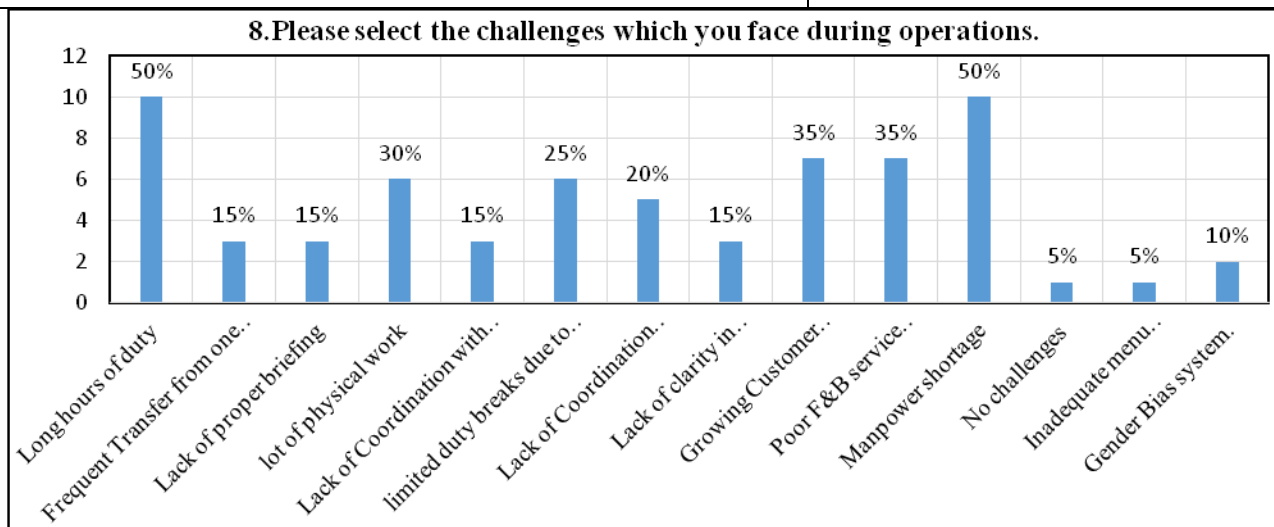


Figure: 8

8. As per survey top challenges faced by F&B service staff are as follows:

Manpower shortage and long duty hours- 50% have rated for this challenge.

Growing customer expectation, Poor equipment's –35% staff rated for this challenge.

Lot of physical work – 30% staff rated for it.

Limited duty breaks, – 25% staff rated.

Lack of coordination among F&B – 20% staff rated.

Frequent transfer, Briefing, lack of clarity with supervisor – 15% staff rated.

Gender bias – 10% staff rated this challenge, Lack of proper menu knowledge – 5% staff rated.

FINDINGS

1. To find if F&B service staff face operational challenges: The findings are suggestive of some operational challenges which are faced by F&B Service staff working at operational level. The F&B Service department is a major contributor in the total revenue of the hotel. There are many outlets in the department which have different style of operations as well as the staff has different skill requirements as per the outlet. Hence this department deals with uncommon situations in all outlets, making it challenging to the staff. The department staff also does lot of physical work and are working in vague shifts, this usually causes manpower shortage which is a big challenge.

2. To find what are the challenges which are faced by F&B service staff: It has been observed that the staff working in F&B Service department does face challenges during operations. As per their response major challenges which are faced are as follows:

- Manpower shortage and long duty hours – Due to manpower shortage the other staff who are working end up doing long shift hours.
- Growing customer expectation – Customers are well aware about hotel setups and are well-travelled. Which makes the customer more demanding.
- Lot of physical work, limited duty breaks, and Poor equipment's – Department has jobs like lifting tables, chairs, and equipment's for service. Hence staff does lot of physical work. Limited duty breaks are either because of manpower shortage or due to customer rush.
- Lack of coordination among F&B team – If staff is changing every month and not stable for long tenures they lack bonding hence creating coordination issues. Also if not briefed well there can be coordination issues.
- Frequent transfer- Reason for this is skilled manpower shortage.
- Gender bias – If less female staff are working in the department then sometimes gender bias is felt by other staff.
- Lack of proper menu knowledge, Briefing, lack of clarity with supervisor- Operational training will make a change in this kind of challenge.

3. To find if operational training can overcome these challenges: There has been positive response on the research question whether operational training can overcome F&B Service challenges. The F&B Service operational staff believes that operational training will help them deal with day to day department challenges. The operational training will also improve skill sets of employees making them more efficient in their work.

CONCLUSION

The study is indicating that the F&B staff working in five star hotels do come across some operational challenges. These are majorly related to skilled manpower crunch. The staff feels that proper operational training programs can make staff capable of handling challenging situations.

SUGGESTION

- Operational training to be conducted on regular basis and with trendy or innovative training methods.
- Staff motivation by appreciations can help in retaining them this will also reduce manpower shortage issues.
- Quality circle group formation and staff suggestions to be considered seriously as they are in contact with the guest and deal with challenges.
- Additional assistance to staff to attend various certificate courses related to the skill requirements in their jobs.

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