

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY THE EMPLOYEES OF SELECTED HOTELS IN BATANGAS CITY, PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the demographic profile and the problems encountered by the hotel employees with their management and with the customers and discuss the significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents, and problems encountered with the management and with the customers. It also aimed to establish a plan to solve the problems encountered by the hotel employees. The researchers used descriptive method with forty-five (45) respondents. The employees encountered problems with the management are incomplete equipment and facilities, incentives, company benefits, holiday pay, special treatment and problems with social behavior with co-workers that affect their performance at work. On the other hand employees are faced with the following problems concerning customers such as: demanding, messy, impatient and bossy customers that caused stress on the part of the employees. However respondents disagreed on the issues on management having no specific job description, pressure from boss, manager being bossy, company policy for promotion, unfair advancement and employees discriminated by customers.

Keywords: Encountered Problems, Hotel, Tourism Industry, Batangas City

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INTRODUCTION

Hotel industry is a place often times visited by travelers and with a large number of people who love to rest and relax by lodging, attending reception parties, anniversary celebration, wedding, business meetings and seminars. They are looking for nice and convenient location where they can hold the event. By this, hotels are blooming in the country right now. Hotels can be classified into different categories or classes, based on their operational criteria. For example, the type of accommodation they provide, location of the property, type of services provided facilities and the client they cater. The hospitality industry includes a number of interrelated businesses—lodging properties, airlines, restaurants, cruise lines, car rental firms, travel agents, and tour operators, among others, and it is growing (scps.nyu.edu).

Batangas is visited due to the affordability of the tourist attractions and destinations including the amenities offered (Vizconce & Felicen, 2012). Though Batangas City is known as the industrial hub of CALABARZON, the city government is also gearing the strength of its tourism potentials. The city has vast areas of sand covered beaches which could be developed into resorts. To boost development and transform made Batangas into a prime investment area which lead to the establishment of various travel inns and lodge. The city combines the essence of nature's gift and latest technology by which any first class metropolis could envy. There are numerous reasons why more and more new comers prefer to stay in Batangas City.

To improve the quality of life of the citizen is the mission of Batangas government. While their vision is “a progressive and globally competitive industrializing city characterized by an orderly and environmentally-sound setting and inhabited by skilled and dynamic citizens”, the major goals of Batangas are to meet the minimum basic needs, to provide basic services, and to harness the productive capacity of city's human resources.

The main concern of this study is for the researchers to be aware of the different problems that they may encounter when they work in this kind of industry in the future. By being aware of these problems, researchers can avoid and handle them. Dealing with problems caused by customers and the management will be handled properly since problems are already identified.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research aimed to determine the problems encountered by the employees of selected hotels in Batangas City. More specifically, this study obtained the profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, position and years of service; determined the common problems encountered by the hotel employees with the management and with the customers; sought the significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents, and problems encountered with the management and with the customers; established a plan to solve the problems encountered by the hotel employees.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researchers used the descriptive method of research in order to determine the problems encountered by the hotel employees since it involved collecting data in order to answer the questions concerning the status of the study. Descriptive method is defined as a general procedure employed in the studies that have for their chief purpose the description of the phenomena in contract to ascertain what causes them or what are their value and significance.

The research depicted the main focus of the study which are hotel employees; specifically the problems that they encountered in terms of management and costumers. However, for a more precise presentation of the materiality of the said specific subject, the researchers include 45 hotel employees. The researchers selected three hotels which include Alpha Hotel and Restaurant, Batangas Country Club International Resort and Hotel and Days Hotel Batangas. The researchers used questionnaire as the major instrument used in data gathering. The set of questionnaire are in form of checklist, where the respondents ranked their answer into four categories such as Always, Often, Sometimes, and Never in the scale of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Part 1 is composed of the profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, position and years of service . Part II composed of common problems encountered by the hotel employees with the management and Part III composed of the problems encountered with the customers.

The researchers formulated the research title and presented it to the adviser for suggestions, revisions and approval. After the approval of the title, the researchers started to research for information using various resources like face to face interview, books, journals, internet, and magazines, published and unpublished thesis. The researchers partly adapted the questionnaire that was used by Ilagan et al (2012) in their research entitled “Problems Encountered by the Employees of Selected Hospitality Industries in Pallocan”.

Frequency, percentage distribution, ranking, and weighted mean were used in determining the profile of the respondents, problems encountered by the employee of the hotels in terms of management and customers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

These data indicate that most of the respondents are in the range of 21-25 years old with the frequency of 17, which is equivalent to 37.78 percent. It is followed by respondents whose age ranges from 36-above with a frequency of 11, which is equivalent to 24.44 percent. Among the age bracket 31-35 years has the lowest frequency (7 or 15.56 percent). This implies that the respondents are of young age and neophyte to the field and are willing to work hard and face all the problems that their job may brought. From the result, one may presumed that the reason behind for having young age in the hotel industry is that the industry needs employees who are good-looking and of young age.

Young men and women between the ages of 18-34 are most likely to frequent restaurants, visit clubs and participate in activities that revolve around the hotel and hospitality industry. According to a report by Caterer.com and People 1st, individuals in the 18-34 age bracket are twice as likely to go out as individuals in the 35-54 age group, and, three times more likely to go out than those age 55 or older.

Marketing firms and advertisers have long known that it is a young person's world. While those that fit into the older demographic are not being ignored, more emphasis is being placed on serving the needs of the younger crowd.

According to the Caterer.com and People 1st report, hospitality industry jobs are in high demand. Recruiting has been robust with younger people applying for positions that promise social interaction, career advancement and excitement. Even though there has been a reduction of 8 percent in the number of ads for the industry, there is more competition than ever for hospitality positions.

Why is the 18-34 year old group dominating the hospitality industry in terms of both targeting audiences and recruiting workers? Dealing with people everyday requires a lot of energy. One always have to be friendly and greet people with a smile. Work can be demanding. Customers expect hotel workers to know how to use all of the technology to check them in and provide services. Management needs people who are very comfortable with technology. As much as one love his 50 year old mother or 60 year old grandmother, they just do not have the same skills or energy to meet the requirements of the new job demands.

Table 1 also presents percentage distribution of the respondents' demographic profile. The table shows that out of 45 respondents, there were 23 (51.11%) female and 22 (48.89%) male respondents. This implies that there is almost equal number of males and females in a certain hospitality industry.

Breaking through the glass ceiling certainly isn't unique to the hospitality industry and the good news is that there has been significant progress. Compared to twenty or thirty years ago, it is now much easier for women to obtain leadership roles and career opportunities are more plentiful. Technological advances have also helped.

In Asia, where the hospitality industry is expanding rapidly, this is particularly the case. New properties are opening up faster than general managers can be found and increasingly it is women that are securing some of the plum jobs.

"It is becoming easier for women to get into more senior management roles as the hospitality industry has become keenly aware of women's abilities to lead and there are examples for the younger female population which makes up more than 50% of the workforce (particularly in the Asia Pacific)," says Hou. "Additionally, as the hospitality sector is growing at a rapid pace, the industry has to consider both male and female candidates equally for positions that traditionally have been dominated by men."

It can be seen that 25 respondents equivalent to 55.56 percent are single. Only 37.78 percent equivalent to 17 respondents are married. Only 2 respondents or 4.44 % are separated and only one respondent, which is equivalent to 2.22 percent, is widower. This implies that most of the respondents are free from different family responsibilities, which can be the cause of their problems while they are at their duty.

Young people go out more because they are young. They have fewer family responsibilities and are still heavily into the social life. It only makes sense that older people get pushed toward the back.

The above results revealed that majority of the respondents are college graduate, which has 77.78 percent equivalent to 35 respondents. Only 6 respondents equivalent to 13.33 percent are vocational graduate and 4 or 8.89 percent are high school graduate. This implies that the respondents have enough knowledge on how to cope up with the problems that they encounter at work.

The results show that most of the respondents are housekeeping staff (21 or 46.67%). It is followed by manager (7 or 15.56%) and receptionist (6 or 13.33%). However, only two respondents equivalent to 4.44 percent are kitchen staff and only one respondent or 2.22 percent is room service staff. This implies that most of the positions in a hotel industry were used by the researchers and different problems are encountered depending on the position. Housekeeping is a lucrative job and the staff enjoys great benefits. The remuneration packages are competitive. The

department enjoys recognition of being the one with the lowest turnover rate on account of increased job satisfaction.

Based from the table, most of the respondents work less than five years which has 26 respondents or 57.78%. Only 10 out of 45 or 22.22% work for 6-10 years in certain establishment. However, only one respondent or 2.22 percent works for 10-15 years. Most of the respondents only serve the industry for 1-5 years and it is supported that most of the employees are of young age ranges from 21-25 years. From this data, one may presume that the reason for having young age in the industry is that most of the respondents do not stay more years in the hotel industry. This implies that there is small percentage of retention of the employee in a certain hotel industry.

Problems Encountered by Hotel Employees with the Management

The respondents sometimes encountered problems with the management with a composite mean of 1.55. All the items yielded very low-to-low mean which ranges from 1.29-1.82. Among the managerial problems, social problem (1.62) is the highest and moral problem (1.42) is the lowest. This implies that the respondents dealing with the co-workers see it as problem.

As the results stated, the respondents sometimes encountered economical problems (1.60). The problems that the respondents have sometimes encountered and have the highest rank are the management does not have complete equipment and facilities (1.82). It is closely followed by not giving incentives for extra work and benefits like 13th month pay (1.76) and interpreted as "sometimes". Last in rank is that the respondents never encountered that management are delayed in paying salaries and overtime which has a weighted mean of 1.20.

In terms of social problems, the respondents sometimes encountered problems with a composite mean of 1.62. Among the social problems are special treatment with some co-workers (1.69) and problems with the social behavior of the co-workers (1.69). The respondents never encountered problems that the management do not have the specific job description (1.49).

Most of the respondents never encounter moral problems. Among the problems are over pressured by the boss (1.49) which is the highest. It is followed by having managers that are too bossy (1.47) interpreted as “never”. Among the problems, those which tackles company’s policy for promotion and advancement is not fair (1.29) received the lowest in rank.

This suggests that even the employees encounter management problems they are still satisfied with the way the management deals with the employees. The results suggest that most participating hotels are focused on dealing with the day-to-day operational challenges of shortages of appropriately skilled staff, seasonal variations in workforce demand and employee turnover. While they perceive these issues as significant and challenging, they were mostly inclined to view these as ‘facts of life’ in the industry, and were relatively limited in their thinking about more fundamental and considered solutions for dealing with co-workers. However, some hotels are developing more innovative approaches to effectively engaging with these challenges, such as having a program or activity for a good working relationship of the employees to the management and also increasing employee empowerment and giving them incentives.

It is important for the workplace to be a positive one. When the workplace is positive it makes going to work a better experience for the employees and the employer. People tend to work better in a positive work environment and more employees will enjoy coming to work instead of dreading it. There are many ways to promote the good and positive working relationship, one is to give the employees an incentives or appreciation. There are variety of incentives that a business can use to help create a positive work environment for their employees and for themselves. In addition, the kind of incentive will vary depending on the type of workplace and the position of the employee.

Problems encountered by Hotel Employees with the Customers

Table 3 presents the problems encountered by the employee with the costumers. It can be gleaned from the table that the employees sometimes encounter problems with the customers, which has a composite mean of 1.75. All the items yielded very low-to-low mean ranging from 1.42-2.00.

As the results stated, the employee sometimes encounter customers who are too demanding (2.00), too messy (1.98), too impatient (1.87) and too bossy (1.82). However, most of the respondents never encountered customers who discriminate the employees (1.42). This implies that even the employees encountered problems with the customers; the employees did not recognize it as a problem because it is just part of their job.

The most problem that an employee of hotels encountered are the guests who are demanding. All businesses have customers that are demanding and sometimes more trouble than they are worth. Keeping customers satisfied is the primary job requirement of customer service personnel, especially in hotel industry. A demanding customer is still a customer, and should be treated with concern and gratitude just like any other customer. When a demanding customer registers a complaint, always thank her for taking the time to bring something to your attention and indicate that you'll do everything you can to solve the problem. Listen attentively and ask questions as she talks; this helps reinforce the notion that you are genuinely interested in what's being said. Avoid putting on a fake smile. A demanding customer is not interested in being patronized, so have a genuine conversation with her and use a steady but compassionate tone.

Relationship Between the Demographic Profile of the Respondents and Problems Encountered with the Management and Customers

The resulted p-value of gender, civil status and educational attainment when correlated with management-related problems and customers-related problems shows no significant relationship since the obtained value is greater than 0.05 level of significance, thus the hypothesis of no significant relationship when gender, civil status and educational attainment is correlated to management-related problems and customers-related problems is fail to reject.

However, the resulted p-value of age (0.03) and years in service (0.01) when correlated to management problems shows significant relationship since the computed p-value is greater than 0.05. This implies that age and years in service greatly affects the management-related problems. As the results of the demographic profile stated, most of the respondents are of young age and serve the hotel for only 1-5 years, from this result one may presume that employees that are of young age encounter more management-related problems and that may be the reason for having small percentage of retention in the hotel industry.

The results also shows that customer-related problems are influenced by the position (0.01) since the computed values is less than 0.05. This shows that there is significant relationship between position and customer-related problems. Since most of the respondents are housekeeping staff who were the one in front of the customers, they encounter customer related-problems. This implies that positions who are in front or concerned with the customers encounter more customer related-problems.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Most of the respondents are 21-25 years old, female, single, college graduate, kitchen staff and less than 5 years in service. The employees sometimes encountered economic, social and moral problems with the management. The employees sometimes encountered problems with the customers. Age and years affect the management related problems, however, position affects the customer related problems. An action plan to address the problems of employees was devised by the researchers.

The establishment may hold a seminar concerning the duties and responsibilities of their staffs. Trainings for new employees or neophytes should be implemented to enhance their knowledge about the industry. Employees should be aware of all kinds of customers that they may encounter in their duties. Additional equipments and better facilities must be provided by the management for a more productive service. New people in the industry must learn how to handle management

related problems for them to stay longer in hospitality business. The managers may consider an action plan that was devised by the researchers. Future researchers may conduct similar study with a different setting.

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