

## UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF HOUSEKEEPING DEPARTMENT IN BOOSTING THE SALE AND REPUTATION OF HOTEL INDUSTRY

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### Abstract

This research aimed for attaining a better understanding of the role and importance of housekeeping department. In addition, the role of housekeeping department in boosting the sale of the organization along with enhancing the reputation is also brought under study. To accomplish these objectives, 2 hypotheses were created based on which a questionnaire comprising of 14 questions were distributed among several individuals. 122 responses were received, which were samples and analyzed. The hypotheses were tested using one-way ANOVA and result showed a significant impact of housekeeping in boosting the sale and reputation of hotel industry.

*Keywords:* Housekeeping department, hotel, sale, organization, brand, reputation

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### 1. Introduction

Hospitality is the connection between a guest and a host, whereby the host welcomes the guest with some degree of kindness, inclusive of the receptions as well as guests' entertainment. The business of hospitality is operated by group of professionals and deals with services like tourism, travelling, theme

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\* ISBN No. 978-81-953278-7-4

parks, event organizing and handling, food and accommodations. It comprises of nearly everything that a traveler needs.

The department of housekeeping has a very wide range of roles such as cleaning of hotel, keeping it pleasant for the customers with the aim of providing them with a “Home away from home”. The main aim of the housekeeping department is to keep the customers satisfied by providing them with aesthetic and soothing environment and prompt services. When a customer enters a hotel, the first that impact them is the cleanliness, decoration, view of the hotel along with the behaviour of the staff. All these factors are the responsibility of the housekeeping staff. The housekeeping staff usually don't get proper and sufficient time to rest as they are called by the customers at anytime and for any reason. Sometimes the housekeeping staff get treated rudely by rude customers even when they are not at fault and they have to handle it politely or else it will badly impact the brand name of the hotel and bad review from the customer might impact the sale of the hotel. (Mchigani et al., 2019)

The department of housekeeping can be defined as the provider of a safe, hygienic, clean and pleasant environment for the customers along with maintaining the proper supply of the amenities. In addition, they are also responsible for informing the management of the hotel about the requirements of the customers as to improve the quality of service.

### *1.1. Operations of housekeeping*

Every organization generally comprises of 3 departments specifically for accommodations:

- i.** Receptions: the work of this department is to make the sale and assign the rooms.
- ii.** The department of housekeeping: the work of this department is to plan, provide as well as service the rooms.
- iii.** The department of maintenance: the work of this department is to arrange “adequate hot and cold water, sanitation, heating, lighting and ventilation as well as maintaining and repairing individual articles and area within the rooms operation”.

The business of any hotel depends upon the provision of food and accommodations along with other services. However, accommodation provides the most of the profit for the hotel as the organization have to invest just once for building the infrastructure and rents it on daily basis. The amount of effort that a housekeeping staff provides in completion his/her work decides the satisfaction level of the customers. But the job of a housekeeping staff does not end here, they maintain the freshness and beauty of the property too. Housekeeping, therefore, is an auxiliary department that contributes in a significant manner towards the overall reputation of a property. (Management, 2013)

There are various important jobs that are handled by the hospitality industry, such as:

- i.** To achieve the greatest feasible efficiency in guaranteeing the care and comfort of visitors and in the smooth functioning of the department.
- ii.** To create a pleasant environment and guarantee polite, dependable service from all employees of the department.
- iii.** To maintain a high standard of cleanliness and general maintenance.

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- iv. To maintain the supply in restaurants, rooms, conference venues, banquet hall, health clubs, etc., along with keeping an inventory for the same.
- v. To supply uniforms for all the employees and keep sufficient supplies for the same.
- vi. To cater to the washing needs of the hotel linen, uniform of staff members and guest's clothes.
- vii. To maintain the decoration along with the landscaping areas of the hotel.
- viii. To organise restoration and refurnishing of the property.
- ix. To handle the "lost and found" items.
- x. To guarantee training, management and supervision of all employees connected to the departments.
- xi. To develop a strong working connection with other departments.
- xii. To guarantee that security and safety requirements are made known to all employees of the department.

The department of housekeeping is the primary support of the hotel. Every approach which is brought in use by the hotel organization for maximizing the revenues targets at boosting occupancy as well as ADR. It is well-known that to attain a larger size of profit, it is important to reduce the expenses to their minimum and maximize the occupancies. Both of these factors can be attained when the activities of housekeeping are optimized. Few of the such most important approaches are mentioned below (A. Singh, 2019):

1. **"Reducing Marginal Costs"**: Major income share for a hotel comes from Rooms segment. Rooms are a very perishable commodity and the maintenance is of great importance. Housekeeping comprises approximately 20 to 25 percent of cost for rooms division. If operations are optimised expenses like unused inventory, guest & cleaning supplies, washing & linen, flowers, etc. may be decreased by 5 to 7 percent which would result in an increase in Gross profit.
2. **"Guest Satisfaction Index"**: This is the main instrument for evaluating the performance of the service industry. It is the wonderfully constructed comfy bed, beautifully equipped bath and indigenously kept decor which would make the visitor experience unforgettable. This will lead to favourable comments and excellent ratings, reducing complaints and understays, guaranteeing repeat customers and eventually higher profits.
3. **Creating Brand Value**: Besides adding to the Net Profit after Tax, efficient housekeeping operations will contribute to setting a benchmark for the discriminating visitor. Thus, a Brand value will be established for the product/service. This excellent service by housekeeping will further advertise the property and minimise the expenditure on advertising, and marketing thereby boosting revenues.
4. **"Tapping Human Resource Potential"**: The quick service and a minimal "Minutes Per Room (MPR)" should be maintained, which will allow the front desk for dealing efficiently at the time of rush and overload. It helps in making sure that the "Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)" are properly followed. If the shift of rooms from filthy to empty is quick, the check-ins will be speedier, resulting to smoother operations. Therefore, it will maximize the sales of the rooms.

5. **“Curtailling CTC”**: A fleet of happy workers who are giving their best, who are driven and feel pleased will remain longer with any company, which will decrease the cost of recruiting new staff. If the attrition rate is low, the cost of recruiting and further sustaining HR staff will also further decrease.
6. **“Increasing Point of Sale Income”**: Housekeeping department may offer fresh and creative ways to boost the sale of Guest Laundry by providing that little additional value to the service. For eg: the clean Laundry may be packed in beautiful boxes depending on the concept of the hotel and returned quickly in minimum time.
7. **“Using Technology”**: there are numerous optimum outcomes which are brought in use by the hotels globally. From booking a room to checking out and payments, everything has now upgraded with the help of modern technology. There are systems which records the preference of the customers which helps in modifying the menu, infrastructure, view, etc. of the hotels.
8. **“Optimising Resources & Conserving Environment”**: Hotels can fulfil both corporate responsibility and sustainability by complying to worldwide conservation, solid waste management, preservation, and energy efficiency standards. The hotel will be able to reduce HLP expenses by implementing “Reduce Recycle and Reuse”, and therefore increase income, as a result of these green practises.
9. **“Enhancing Longevity”**: Preventive and planned maintenance on daily, weekly as well as linen, fixtures, timely upkeep of furniture, upholstery, monthly cleaning schedules, etc., along with effective housekeeping is capable of increasing the assets’ life span which proportionally increases the value and reduces its cost.
10. **“Using Guest Intelligence”**: This is an in-depth look into visitor feedback, including online reviews and questionnaires. It's possible that information is readily accessible, yet putting it to good use may be difficult. It is possible to improve customer satisfaction by utilising GI to educate and motivate employees, deal with complaints, and create customer-centric culture. As a result, there will be an increase in profits.

## **2. Literature review**

(R. Singh & Nika, 2019) Specifically, this research examines the link between service quality components like customer satisfaction and brand image, as well as customer retention. The present study was qualitative in nature, thus content analysis was used to examine relevant literature while also analysing the impact of service quality and brand image on repeat business in the hotel sector. According to the study's findings, there was enough research to establish the link between hotel service quality characteristics and customer satisfaction, brand image, and repeat business. Both service quality and satisfaction have been shown to be intertwined since high quality also boosts customer satisfaction. Hotels are better equipped to please customers now that service quality has improved. According to research, visitors who are more satisfied/delighted tend to be more loyal to a hotel. When guests are

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happy with their hotel experience, they become repeat customers, which influences their buying decisions. A hotel's brand image is closely linked to customer loyalty and service quality, according to the research. The loyalty of hotel customers improves the hotel's brand image in their minds. Service interactions at hotels should prioritise the pleasure of their customers. To promote repeat business, hotels must improve their image in the eyes of their customers by improving their comfort levels. The hotels will benefit from this by being more profitable and having a greater overall beneficial effect on the economy. Future research should experimentally examine the link between service quality characteristics and repeat patronage, according to the findings.

(Bhatnagar & Nim, 2019) When it comes to running a hotel, the cleaning staff is essential. It's not only responsible for keeping the hotel clean; it also helps fund a wide range of other hotel activities. Keeping track of and maintaining all of a hotel's accommodations and public spaces is a difficult task in and of itself, therefore it's an important department to have. The cleaning staff's efforts have a significant impact on the hotel guests' overall experience. The research looked at how customer satisfaction and repeat business are affected by housekeeping services and procedures. Hotel guests from the Chandigarh Tri-city area stayed at the study's sample hotels, all of which were rated five stars or above. The hotels gathered 150 completed surveys from visitors. A number of categories were examined, including: Laundry Services; Decor; Room Amenities; Cleanliness; Guest Satisfaction; and Repeat Business. All statements based on the aforementioned dimensions were scored on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 out of 10 possible. Convergent and discriminant validity were found along with high levels of internal consistency. Four hypotheses were found to be true based on the data. Guest Satisfaction was shown to be positively correlated with both decor and cleanliness, while repeat business was positively correlated with laundry services. Repeat Business has a favourable connection with Guest Satisfaction.

(A. Singh, 2019) Today's hotel housekeeping goes much beyond just cleaning and maintaining the hotel's different surfaces. It is the purpose of this article to examine current hotel housekeeping problems, best practises, and future trends in order to help the hotel business develop and become a more cost-effective tool. Hotel housekeeping patterns have been examined in this study, as well as academic research. In order to remain competitive, hotel housekeeping must address today's most pressing issues, including eco-friendly practises, outsourcing, IT-savvy housekeeping, staff retention, payroll performance, and ergonomics. Hotel development and long-term profitability are possible if these trends are implemented properly by the establishments. New trends in hotel cleaning are urgently needed for a variety of reasons, as discussed in this article.

(Patil et al., 2020) Changing the housekeeping department from one that just cleans hotel rooms to one that contributes significantly to the overall guest experience is urgently needed today. Housekeeping departments at hotels are seeing innovative trends and practises emerge as a consequence of market competition, varying guest needs and preferences, and technological advancements. There are a number of different types of eco-friendly goods and materials being used. Design, process and amenity trends along with digitization of operations, outsourcing of skilled professions, and total quality management are some of the major creative trends in housekeeping. Innovative methods such as feeling appreciated by the employees, mandated training, checklists and tools, quality control inspections follow these

trends, making a difference to the entire visitor experience. This study reveals the cutting-edge techniques and trends that hotels across the world are using.

(Mchigani et al., 2019) The study's goal was to find out whether the quality of a hotel's cleaning services affects guests' pleasure. The research made use of a cross-sectional survey design. The intended audience consisted of 1298 people, 1033 of whom were hotel guests, 21 of whom were executive housekeepers, and 244 of whom were guestroom attendants. The 149 GRAs and 221 hotel guests were selected using stratified random selection methods. As an alternative, purposive selection was utilised to narrow the study's participants down to 21 executive housekeepers. Data was gathered via the use of questionnaires, interviews, and observation checklists, all of which were combined. Quantitative data was analysed using regression, whereas qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. Visitor satisfaction was assessed using regression analysis, which showed that  $R=0.323$  suggested that there was a modest but positive connection between housekeeping service quality and guest contentment. A unit change in decision-making process strongly affects service-delivery quality, according to the study's results about the connection between hotel housekeeping quality and management decision-making. According to the findings, hotels in Nairobi City County should compare their housekeeping quality to that of other nearby properties. Hotels must also create new marketing tactics to keep up with changing visitor needs. Housekeeping quality services may be identified by providing guest cards in bedrooms and asking visitors to identify them.

### **3. Methodology**

To accomplish the objectives of this study, a survey methodology was brought in use. To conduct a survey, a questionnaire was prepared on the basis of the hypotheses. The questionnaire comprised of 14 questions. This questionnaire was sent to several individuals who are related to hotel industry of Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. A total of 122 responses were received, which were samples and analyzed with the help of ANOVA one way factor.

### **4. Data analysis and interpretation**

This section presents the responses of the respondents along with the hypothesis testing and further discusses it. The collected data was sampled and then analyzed.

#### **Demographic information:**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Female</b>	52	42.62%
<b>Male</b>	70	57.38%
<b>Total</b>	122	100.00

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Based on the above-mentioned responses, there are a total of 122 respondents comprising of 52 females and 70 males.

AGE GROUP	Count	Percentage
18-25 years	27	22.13%
26-35 years	47	38.52%
35- 45 years	39	31.97%
46 and above	9	7.38%
<b>Total</b>	122	100.00

Based on the above-mentioned responses, most of the respondents are from the age group of 26-35 years and from age group of 46 and above, only 9 respondents are there.

EDUCATION	Count	Percentage
10 <sup>TH</sup> PASSED	9	7.38%
12 <sup>TH</sup> PASSED	5	4.10%
GRADUATION	58	47.54%
PG and above	50	40.98%
<b>Total</b>	122	100.00

Based on the above-mentioned responses, maximum of 58 respondents are graduate followed by 50 respondents who are post-graduated or above.

**Responses:**

<b>Do you think housekeeping is the most important department of hotel industry?</b>		
	Count	Percentage
Yes	108	88.52%
No	14	11.48%
<b>Total</b>	122	100.00

It can be clearly understood from the above responses that housekeeping is the most important department of hotel industry.

<b>Do you think housekeeping department has been less valued than they should be?</b>		
	Count	Percentage
Yes	72	59.02%
No	26	21.31%
Maybe	24	19.67%
<b>Total</b>	122	100.00

As it can be seen from the above-mentioned table, most of the respondents stated that housekeeping department has been less valued than they should be.

<b>QUESTIONS/RESPONSES</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Dis agree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>Housekeeping can be considered as the backbone of hotel industry</b>	25	46	6	17	28
<b>The performance of housekeeping impacts the reputation of a hotel</b>	21	32	18	24	27
<b>For customers, housekeeping is the face of the hotel.</b>	60	29	1	1	31
<b>For improving the brand image of a hotel, it is important to train the housekeeping and take measures to keep them satisfied from their job</b>	18	36	14	25	29
<b>The re-visit of customers is mostly dependent on the performance and behaviour of the housekeeping staff</b>	41	50	2	11	18
<b>Housekeeping staff builds a relation with the customers, encouraging them to promote and plan for the same place again.</b>	25	32	20	40	5
<b>There are many customers who stay at the same hotel again and again because of the housekeeping staffs.</b>	33	35	35	10	9
<b>Housekeeping staff plays an important role in increasing the sales of the hotel through showing the good side of hotel such as clean environment, hygiene, peace, etc.</b>	46	36	10	8	22
<b>Housekeeping helps in understanding the demands of the customers and hence bringing the required and related changes.</b>	19	36	34	28	5

The responses of the respondents mention in the above table exhibits that housekeeping department is a valuable asset for the hotel industry and acts a back-bone. In addition they helps in promotion and increases the sales for the hotel through direct their direct interaction with the customers.

**4.1. Hypotheses testing**

**Hypothesis 1**

H<sub>a1</sub>: There is no significant impact of housekeeping over brand image of the hotel industry

H<sub>02</sub>: There is a significant impact of housekeeping over brand image of the hotel industry

ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	6037.2	4	1509.3	4.202773	0.00973	2.75871
Within Groups	8978	25	359.12			
Total	15015.2	29				

The testing of hypothesis clears that there is a significant impact of housekeeping over brand image of the hotel industry, since the value of  $p < 0.05$ .

**Hypothesis 2**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant impact of housekeeping over increase in the sales in hotel industry

H<sub>a2</sub>: There is a significant impact of housekeeping over increase in the sales in hotel industry

ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	2257.6	4	564.4	4.401809	0.010282	2.866081
Within Groups	2564.4	20	128.22			
Total	4822	24				

The testing of hypothesis clears that there is a significant impact of housekeeping over increase in the sales in hotel industry, since the value of  $p < 0.05$ .

**5. CONCLUSION**

Housekeeping department holds the most important liability of hotel industry and yet they are highly undervalued. On the basis of the obtained responses, this research concluded that housekeeping department of hotel industry not only helps in boosting the sales but also creates and boosts the brand name. The housekeeping department interacts with the customers and helps in creating a positive image of the hotel and hence, encourage them to revisit the hotel. This creates a positive image of the brand and increases the sales for the hotel. Housekeeping also helps in understanding the demands of the customers and hence bringing the required and related changes.

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