Training Employees of the Food and Beverage Service Departments in Five-star Hotels of Jordan

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Introduction

Training of hotel employees has gained drastic importance in today’s time specially for turning them into high-skilled to perform in food and beverage (F&B) service teams. (Breiter & Woods, 1997) these Training programs in the hotel industry has received more attention therefore, many studies have dragged their focus on the smaller sectors of them such as restaurants. (Barrows, 2000) Several hospitality academies have discussed the potential effect that the trainings can have on the success of each hotel in particular and the industry as whole. (Barrows, 1997, 2000) Training of F&B employees plays a vital role in increasing the quality of services offered (Barrows, 1997; Breiter & Woods, 1997; Kline & Harris, 2008). Especially in the hotel industry in which the quality of F&B service continues to be the most essential factor to differentiate a hotel from its competitors (Barrows, 2000; Roehl & Swerdlow, 1999, p.177)

Furthermore, Roehl and Swerdlow, (1999, p.177) have mentioned, “The value and benefits of training seems to be universally accepted.” In other words, almost all the hotels have realised the necessity of the training programs on the performance of the entire operational team to function the tasks given. Moreover the numerous subjects are discussed in the training of employees in the F&B service within the hotel industry, trying to provide the minimum level of training for them to avoid cost benefit issues. (Barrows, 2000; Ference, 1982; UL afaq et al., 2011)

In Jordan the hospitality and tourism industry is dominated by the services sector and slowly is becoming one of the world’s largest and fastest growing industries, (Ministry of Tourism, 2011 - 2015) along with their service sectors which are already amongst the largest growing sectors in a developing country (UL afaq et al., 2011) The increase in the number of hotel
construction results in the widening of the hotel industry in Jordan, indeed it has become largely competitive to keep the quality of F&B services provided in very high standards.

Undoubtedly the tourism industry in Jordan is benefiting the wealth of the country in its own way. The tourism alone, is constantly contributing more than US$800 million (Ministry of Tourism, 2011 - 2015) to Jordan’s economy and counts for approximately 10% of the country’s gross domestic product. To maintain this imported wealth for the country, major attention has to pay for the performance of hotels within the industry which accommodate tourists and play a big role in attracting more tourist which are persistently taking an impression by seeing the quality of services specially including the F&B sector. Hence directly or indirectly the training program of employees at the hotels can exert a pull on the tourists who are the exchange of this treasure of the country.

In addition Jordan is a popular destination with many iconic tourism attractions, such as Petra, Wadi rum and particularly the Dead Sea. According to Ministry of Tourism of this country, the tourism revenue increased from JD570 million in 2003 to JD1.3 billion in the year 2010. Beside that the industry has created more than 51000 jobs in 2004–2010, (Ministry of Tourism, 2004 - 2010) which the nation has to be grateful for and must have awareness to maintain and help it grow in each and all sectors.

From all the above literature it quite evident that the sensitivity of providing the facilities for tourists to keep up the rate of their visits with all the excellence and quality experiences are on everyone's shoulder, especially within the hotels where are deniable place to stay and observe. These explanations can signify the urgency to keep the quality of F&B services high to meet the expected international standards, as the services of skilful employees who have been professionally trained has a big share of the profitability and success of hotels.
Therefore the best service in the F&B department can be maintained through the continuous development of employees and the consistency in good quality of services.

This study aims to review the current literature on the issues of employee training a whole and focuses on the training in the F&B service in the hotel industry in Jordan. The literature and training theories are applicable to the trainee of the service employees in the F&B department of all hotels which have been evaluated.

**A review of training employees in the hotel industry**

Many researchers have done several studied in the training of all employees of the hotel industry. (Barrows, 1997, 2000; Breiter & Woods, 1997; Cannon et al., 2002; Fan, 2009; Ference, 1982; Frash et al., 2010; Kimungu & Maringa, 2010; Kline & Harris, 2008; Leckie et al., 2001; Parsley, 2006; Roehl & Swerdlow, 1999, p.177; Taylor & Davies, 2004; Torrington & Hall, 1995; UL afaq et al., 2011; Yang, 2010). Armstrong, (2000) discussed the training methods which have been adopted so far, to help the hotels in achieving their goals of adding more values to the services that they offer by investing in the training programs of their employees especially in the food and beverage service department seeking better performance and delivering good service to the guests.

Following this further, other Scholars such as Bell and Winters, (1993) discuss crucial lack of strategic planning in employee training and recommended a step-by-step approach, addressing some of the ongoing employee problems faced by the industry. This way, all the issues will be investigated and after sorting out the major ones, they could be addressed in priority and individually to achieve the ultimate aim of the industry which is the achievement of higher values in services offered.
There are numerous direct and indirect effects of the training programs, all working out in a single direction which is benefiting the industry growth in many ways such as the quality of services, the finance of the hotels and also better communication amongst employees with themselves and with others, which could be clearly seen in literature and the work of many researcher which have been studying all aspects of it for years and the entire scenario claims that such trainings are essential and worth investing.

To explain in deep, although the training programs require immediate investigation but over a period of time, this could even add to the financial level of the industry. The training costs and the subsequent cost–benefit analysis were determined to brand the long-term financial benefits of training. Breiter and Woods, (1997) discussed the general training budget in the hotel industry and highlighted training in mid-sized budget hotels in the US. This study established the training needs and discussed the methods of developing employee’s skills in the hotel industry. In the same way, Kline and Harris, (2008) identified the barriers of calculating the return on investment (ROI) of the training programmes. He suggested some strategies for human resource managers being able in developing an ROI for these programs and to assess development programs and the accurate budgets for the employees in the hotel industry.

Subsequently McMahon, (1999) examined the potential benefits of these trainings and found that it could be an effective method of communicating the entire hotel organizational objectives to employees, this could lower the employee turnover rates, and improve the overall quality of services. Randall and Senior, (1996) recognized the relationship between training and service quality, the authors’ concluded that training could provide a link to improve customer service when effectively managed.
Barrows, (2000) represented an exploratory study on the training line-level of F&B employees in the private clubs in the US, which its result can be related to the same department in the hotel industry. Roehl and Swerdlow, (1999, p.177) examined the relationship between training and the level of organizational commitment of employees in hotels and finally, both the studies confirmed the positive effect that training has on lodging organizations. Similarly, it was found that, an apparent positive relationship exists between training and several aspects of the work environment, which shows how tangibly the necessity of them is to make everything works with lesser effort and management.

After knowing all the positive aspects of this training, the key to the success of the industry will be the implementation of the same as Clements and Josiam, (1995) verified that increasing training in the hotel industry and the potential benefits of the training must be recognized and implemented. These recognitions comes from the inspection of other researchers work such as Yang, (2010) who studied staff training in the hotel industry and according to his detailed observation and fine data, these programmes wherever applied has helped each employee in the hotel industry discover the importance of staff training by developing the skills of good employees and let their inner potential grow.

After a successful recognition and realization of the training programs and the decision to execute it and train the workers, it is most important to see how employees can conduct the tasks in a better way as the consequence of them. For the same reason, Frash et al., (2010) had examined the major factors influencing the ability of hotel's employees’ to apply the training concepts in their actual work. The study was conducted during a major hotel training program to see the quality of services and the enforcement of tasks given the difference of
carrying them out as compare to the time when the employees were not trained which had come out to be positive.

Following up the same studies Molnar and Watts, (2000) initiated to discuss job-process training to build consistency. A “big brother” program was implemented to construct the general workplace skills of the young (and older) employees, and the team ideas were finally utilized. The training gap was identified, and the training objective was discussed using the learning curve and on-the-job training. On the same line, Tracey and Cardenas, (1996) believed that training is a tool management that should be used to increase employee efficiency as well as the effectiveness of the training program.

Benefits and importance of food and beverage service training

The F&B employee training enhances the skills of employees and strengthens their comparative advantages. Effectively and excellent training in F&B service improves the employees’ characteristics and professional abilities. The hotel management also can be benefited from the employee, and accordingly the guests who can enjoy from better quality services offered. Yang, (2010) said In training, employees are introduced to their work in the F&B department and are trained to provide better service to increase their level of job satisfaction and explore the on the skills.

The trainees are provided with information, knowledge, and experience during the training to understand the service required in an F&B department; subsequently, their self-development and self-confidence are encouraged. The entire team of the employees can learn service tasks, advanced knowledge and techniques that will improve their capabilities to increase productivity, also to solve the problems and complaints from guests.
When it comes to execution of tasks, the effective training allows employees to work and respond faster (Barrows, 1997; Roehl & Swerdlow, 1999, p.177; Yang, 2010). Therefore, the training theory suggests that training should be based on the analysis of needs, making everyone to be learning oriented and be provided by skilled trainers using appropriate methods, and have the support of the entire organization (hotel) for optimum efficiency and benefits.

**Description of the food and beverage training theory process**

The purpose to review this literature is to identify the training theory process and to analyse the existing studies on training F&B employees in the hotels of Jordan based on the training these theory processes. (Barrows, 2000; Yang, 2010). The complete process of the theory has been illustrated in figure1, only for the food and beverage department as seen below.
The training theory process depends on four main factors firstly, the planning of the training programme which is going to be held, secondly the assessment of the training needs, thirdly the evaluation of the training which has been conducted and lastly, the execution of the training. The whole theory process cannot be completed without the existence of the above mentioned process and the quality of each stage will have a direct effect on the overall result.
Some other bonus key points to know is that, the training is provided for new employees to familiarize them with the rules and regulations of the F&B service department and their respective tasks and responsibilities. Besides that, The F&B manager should consider the related aspects for job analysis and performance objectives. The immediate step in the training theory process is the planning of the actual training. Planning is categorized into specific training objectives, designing training programs, and selecting training service methods. Training goals, duration, program structure, location, and selection of trainees are included in planning. Based on the plan, the training program can be effectively performed. The trainer should be well prepared and skilful in terms of knowing the type of services and the appropriate service methods and to make sure that the trainees are encouraged to participate actively in the training. The evaluation of the training is necessary to receive the feedback required in the adjustments of future F&B training (Yang, 2010).

**Discussion and conclusions**

F&B service is a very important department in the hotel industry which is in charge of training employees so that they can provide better service to guests and also in developing the human resource management quality to increase training plans for the employees in the hotel sector. The F&B department prepares the basic requirements for the enterprise when dealing with people and a good plan for training employees. Training is the most effective way to develop employees and to provide better service to the guests. Therefore, many business sectors are concerned about employee training, making it evident that training is an essential management tool in providing many benefits such as shortening of learning and adaptation.
time, increasing worker effectiveness, helping employees and the F&B department to compete in the fast changing environment, and reducing damage and wastage.

Assuredly, Employee training is a way of motivating employees, upgrading their skills, expanding their knowledge, and preparing them for self-development. The benefit of training employees and the company should be emphasized to understand its value. As employees and trainers from hotels are invited by the human resource department, their experiences are introduced to the trainees and in effect remind the employees of the importance of staff training. The main purpose of employee training in hotels is to provide the employees with the qualities required to offer better guest service, leading to self-development.

Finally, this study highlights the importance of staff training to assist the hotel management in solving the current problems of F&B employees with adoption of proper training methods. In the same way the hotel needs and issues can be worked out with acquired cooperation of the hotel management team and its employees and in whole, the training theory process helps the personal development of the employees of the F&B service department. Very few studies have discussed the necessity of an employee training programme within the F&B service department in the country of Jordan. Thus, further research expects from future scholars to address on the subject.
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