

## **Challenges Militating Against Services of Guestroom Attendants in Hotels in Edo State.**

**Abusomwan, V.I**

Department of Vocational and Technical Education (Home Economics)  
Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City.

**and**

**Lano - Maduagu, T**

Department of Science and Technical Education  
Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos.

### **Abstract**

This study focused on challenges militating against services of the guestroom attendants in hotels in Edo State. Two research questions were answered. The population was made up of 188 guestroom attendants in 180 registered hotels in Edo State. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Means were used for data analysis. The findings revealed 14 problems militating against the services of guestroom attendants in Hotels in Edo State. These include among others, poor knowledge and skills on how to use modern cleaning equipment, lack of regular water supply too much work load. It also identified 18 ways that could help to improve on guestroom cleanliness in hotels in Edo State. These include training and retaining of guestroom attendants, allocating specific maintenance tasks to the guestroom attendants. Based on the findings, three recommendations to improve the services of guestroom attendants in Edo State were made.

**Keywords:** Hotels, Challenges, Services, Guestroom Attendants'

### **Introduction**

Hotel is a commercial establishment that provides accommodation, meals, drinks and other services like laundry, transportation among others in a comfortable and hospitable manner for people who are away from home. Hotel is very important because of movement and travelling from places of abode to other places for

conferences, businesses, education, leisure and vacation. Before now, people travel and look for relatives to stay with but now people travel far and wide not considering whether there is a relative there or not provided there is a hotel to be accommodated in. (Raghubalan, 2008). The various department in a hotel include room division department,

housekeeping department, front office department, maintenance department, food and beverage department, Human resources department, sales and marketing department, purchase department, financial control department and security department. Rooms and division department is the department responsible for maintaining and selling the room in a hotel. In most hotels, this is the departments that directly or indirectly generate more revenue than any other department because the sale of rooms constitutes a minimum of 50 percent of the total revenue (Armstrong 1999).

A hotel largest margin of profit comes from room sales because a room, once made, can be sold over and over again (Armstrong 1999). The housekeeping department is responsible for the cleanliness and upkeep of the front of the house areas as well as back of the house areas so that they appear as fresh and aesthetically appealing as on the first day the hotel property opened for business (Jiboku 2007) this department is headed by the executive housekeeper. The front office department is an operational department that is responsible for welcoming and registering guests, allotting those rooms and helping guests that are checking out (Akin Bankole 2009). The maintenance department is responsible for all kinds of maintenance, repairs and engineering work on equipment, machines, fixtures and fittings. The food and beverages department (F & B) includes the restaurants, bars, coffee

shops, banquets, room service, kitchen and bakery. This department is responsible for the preparation and serving of meals and drinks to guests. The room division department is in charge of the guestroom. Guestroom is the main product of a hotel as it contributes to more than 50 percent of the total sales, making the profit percentage from room sales very high (Raghubalan 2008). The sale of a room means renting the room for occupation for 24 hours at a pre-determined cost. A room sold on a particular day earns revenue for that day and it can be sold again and again (Eja 2011). Guestrooms also have a role in the image building of the hotel. Guest stay in the hotel for pleasure, convenience among other reasons, they expect a certain standard of service and comfort, neat, hygienic, private and above all safe room (Apaokagi 2010). A neat room is the basic minimum expectation of any guest and attendants need to ensure this by laying out fresh linen and presenting a clean room on a daily basis. The guest room should not only be attractive but comfortable and functional. Hotel guests expect a high degree of cleanliness, leading to a hygienic environment to stay in (Ward 2008). There are different types of guestrooms in a standard hotel. Guest are offered a choice of more expensive rooms with upgraded facilities as well as the establishments' standard options (Dauda 2010). These include: single room, twin room, double room, triple room, queen room, king room, twin double room, sico room, mini

suite, suite room, cabana, duplex suite executive room among others.

The contents of a guest room vary depending on the hotel and room categories. Generally, the contents of a standard guestroom of any hotel include furniture, fixture and fittings, soft furnishings, accessories and guest supplies. Furniture in the guestroom include: beds, upholstered chairs, sofas, tables, wardrobes, luggage rack, bedside tables, dresser and drawers. Fixtures in guestroom include: doors, windows, locks, telephone, guestroom safe, mini bar, television, radios, air conditioner, lighting fixtures, and sanitary fittings. Accessories in guestroom include pictures on the walls, decorative, ceramic vases and lamps, brass articles and artifacts, stone sculptures, crystal artifacts, candlesticks, wall hangings, ornamental mirrors among others. Guest supplies include all the items that are conducive to the guest's material comfort and convenience, they are divided into guest amenities, essentials expendables and loan items (Ward 2008 ). Guest amenities include coffee maker, bathroom amenities, nail clipper, scissors, bathrobes, among others. Guest expendables include laundry bags, stationeries, magazines, disposable slippers, toilet tissue, face tissues, bath soaps, face wash. Guest essentials include cloth hangers, drinking glasses, plastic trays, water jugs, ashtrays, waste baskets 'polish my shoes' card , 'make my room card' the Bible or gita or Quran. Guest loan items include pressing iron, hair-dryer,

hot water bottles alarm clocks, electric shavers, cribs.

The guestroom attendants are the workers responsible for the cleaning and arrangement of the guestroom. Their duties include arranging the room attendants cart, bed-making, dusting (damp and dry), vacuuming, floor and carpet cleaning, cleaning of hard surfaces, window and mirror cleaning, bathroom cleaning, performing the turn-down service, using equipment, safety and security procedures.

Hotel business has grown in the aspect of being a very large employer, offering a wide range of job opportunities and employment thereby contributing to the economic growth of the nation (Edo 2010). Ofobruku (2012) found out that most hotels are being managed and operated by people without basic knowledge and skills in the hotel organization. Osaseri (2010) also observed that there are challenges militating against hotel services in Edo State. Among these challenges are inexperience and unskilled staff, lack of training and update of staff, poor kitchen hygiene, poor refuse disposal facilities, poor attitude of the front office staff, manhandling of the laundry, poor attitude of the waiter and waitresses, poor cleaning methods, poor maintenance of guest room among others (Anerua 2009).

Guestrooms have a role in the image-building of the hotel. Primarily, a neat room is the basic minimum expectation of any guest and the staff needs to ensure this by laying out

fresh linen and presenting a clean room on a daily basis. Hotel guests expect a high degree of cleanliness, leading to hygiene environment to stay in (Raghubalan 2008). Cleaning is the removal of dust, dirt, foreign matter, tarnishes and stains from various surfaces with the aid of certain cleaning agents and equipment (Ofobruku, 2012). Dust, dirt and foreign matter deposited on a surface as stated by Raghubalan (2008) are referred to as soil. This may include substances such as sand, mud, pollutants, smoke and fumes brought into the building from outside. Guestroom cleaning is carried out for the following reasons

- ❖ Aesthetic appeal – the room is made visually attractive and appealing
- ❖ Hygiene – effective frequent cleaning controls and eliminates the growth and reproduction of pathogenic bacteria and other germs.
- ❖ Maintenance – surfaces and articles, however good in quality, will have a long, functional life span only when they are cleaned on a regular basis.
- ❖ Safety – cleaning is done for safety against health hazards, fire hazards and slip hazards.

There are different standards of cleaning for different surfaces and areas. These involve the following aspects:

*Physically clean:* when this standard is set, the area or surface is supposed to

be free from apparent dust and dirt as when wiped by hand.

*Chemically clean:* this standard means that the area should be free from harmful chemicals on the surfaces and in the surrounding air,

*Bacteriologically clean:* to meet this standard, the surfaces should be cleaned so as to be free from any harmful bacteria that may cause disease or infection,

*Entomologically clean:* this means that the area must be free from harmful insects or pests,

*Cosmologically clean:* this means that the surfaces and areas should be free from any organic or inorganic matter that may emit an odour.

Efficient cleaning and maintenance are dependent upon high-quality cleaning equipment correctly used. However efficient cleaning may be, will not show result unless the optimal frequency for various cleaning tasks is maintained. Thus cleaning tasks may be scheduled as daily, weekly and periodic according to their frequency (Apaokagi 2010). It is observed that most of the hotels in Edo State not keeping to cleaning standard in the various guestroom of the hotels.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The major purpose of the study was to find out the challenges militating against the services of guestroom attendants in Hotels in Edo-State. Specifically the study determined:

1. problems militating against guestroom attendants' in Hotels industry in Edo state.

2. ways of improving operations of attendants in the Hotels industry in Edo State.

### **Research Questions**

The study sought answers to the following research questions.

1. What are the problems militating against services of the guestroom attendants' in hotel industry in Edo State.
2. What are the ways of improving operations of attendants in the Hotel industry in Edo State.

### **Methodology**

**Area of the Study:** The area of the study was Edo State. There are 18 Local Government Area in Edo State.

**Design of the Study:** A survey design was adopted for the study. It sought information from hotel Supervisors, and hotel attendants from various registered hotels in Edo State.

**Population for the study:** The population of the study consisted of all the 188 registered hotels in Edo state, both in the urban and rural areas. (Revenue office, Edo State 2012)

**Sample for the study:** A random sampling technique was used to obtain a representative sample of 100 guestroom attendants from 60 selected registered hotels in Edo State. (Edo State Revenue Office, 2012).

**Instrument for Data Collection:** Structured questionnaire was used for

the study. The questionnaire was also used as an interview schedule for non-literate respondents. Four point scale response options were used for data collection.

The instrument was face-validated by three experts including two Home Economics lecturers and one hotel manager. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha procedure as it dealt with multiple score items. A reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained.

### **Data Collection and analysis:**

Distribution and collection of the instrument were by hand. Two research assistants were trained and used for data collection. All the 100 questionnaire distributed were duly completed and returned. This represents 100% return rates. Mean scores were used for answering the research questions.

### **Findings**

The following findings were made

- Fourteen out of fifteen problems militating against guestroom cleanliness in hotel industry were revealed. These are summarized in Table 1
- Seventeen out of eighteen ways to improve guestroom cleanliness were agreed on which are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 1:** Mean responses on the problems militating against Services of the Guestroom Attendants' in Hotel Industry.

Guestroom Cleanliness Related Problem	Mean	St. Dev	Remark
Room attendant carts not been used during cleaning of the guest room.	3.54	0.62	Agreed
Lack of ventilation by drawing back the drapes and opening the windows before cleaning the room.	4.35	0.39	Agreed
Inadequate water supply	3.87	0.45	Agreed
Inadequate cleaning equipment	3.76	0.40	Agreed
Poor systematic method of cleaning surfaces by moving clockwise or anti-clockwise, from higher level to lower levels.	3.31	0.88	Agreed
Poor use of damp-dust method of cleaning.	2.76	0.77	Disagree
No innovative and modern method of bed making.	3.31	0.82	Agreed
Too much work load on the guest room attendants.	4.23	0.62	Agreed
Poor approach and manner on entering the guestroom.	4.35	0.51	Agreed
Delay in replenishing bedroom supply.	2.43	0.66	Agreed
Lack of protective gloves and apron especially when cleaning the toilet and bathroom.	3.87	0.85	Agreed
Poor knowledge on how to use modern cleaning equipment.	4.30	0.31	Disagree
Cleaning not done daily	1.71	0.98	Agreed
Not using the right equipment for the right task.	4.30	0.38	Agreed
Poor lighting system in the guestroom	4.48	0.40	Agreed

N = 100, SD = Standard deviation, A = Agreed, DA = Disagreed.

Table 1 showed that the respondents agreed with 14 out of 15 problems identified as problems militating against guest room cleanliness in hotel industry in Edo State. Their means are above the cutoff point of 2.5. The respondents only disagree on the item that showed cleaning not done daily. This showed that cleaning is done daily but not properly.

**Table 2:** Mean Response of Ways of Improving Operations of Guestroom Attendants' in Hotels Industry in Edo State

S/N	Ways of Improving Operations of Guestroom attendants	Mean	St. Dev.	Remark
1.	Regular water supply	3.54	0.62	Agreed
2.	Regular electricity supply	3.02	0.85	Agreed
3.	Training and retraining of guestroom attendant	4.11	0.39	Agreed
4.	Encouraging the guestroom attendance by giving incentives	2.43	0.71	Disagreed
5.	Proper training on how to use modern equipment	4.35	0.40	Agreed
6.	Engagement in regular enlightenment campaign on the importance of clean environment.	3.50	0.62	Agreed
7.	Set cleaning standard for daily and weekly guestroom maintenance.	3.76	0.45	Agreed
8.	Allocate specific maintenance task to the guestroom attendant.	3.40	0.72	Agreed
9.	Cleaning process should be efficient, using a minimum of equipment, cleaning agent, labour and time.	3.86	0.39	Agreed
10.	The simplest method of cleaning should be tried first, using the mildest cleaning agent.	4.10	0.32	Agreed
11.	When cleaning an area, start with the cleaner surfaces and articles and then go on to clean the more heavily soiled ones, so as to prevent the spread of soil from dirty to cleaner surfaces.	4.48	0.40	Agreed
12.	Suction cleaning should be preferred over sweeping wherever possible.	3.12	0.52	Agreed
13.	Sweeping should be done before dusting and dusting Before suction cleaning.	3.50	0.62	Agreed
14.	Noise levels while cleaning should be kept as low as possible.	2.25	0.77	Disagreed
15.	Stains should be removed as soon as they occur.	4.40	0.21	Agreed
16.	Guestroom attendant should take all safety precautions while cleaning.	4.21	0.30	Agreed
17.	Cleaning should start from the farthest end of an area, working towards the exit.	4.20	0.28	Agreed
18.	After the cleaning process is over, all equipment should be washed or wiped as applicable, dried and stored properly.	3.52	0.62	Agreed

Table 2 revealed that the respondents agreed with all the items identifying ways to improve guestroom cleanliness in hotel industry in Edo State. They all have the cutoff point of 2.5 and above, which shows that all these items can help to solve problems

militating against guestroom cleanliness in hotel industry in Edo State.

#### Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that the respondents agree with items

identified as problems militating against guestroom attendants' in hotel and cleanliness in the hotel industry in Edo State. Guestroom attendants do not have knowledge of cleaning process has the highest rating as shown in table1. This is in line with the findings of Armstrong (1999) who noted that poor knowledge in housekeeping maintenance can mar hotel business. Poor knowledge of the guestroom attendants on the cleaning process can affect customer's patronage in the hotel industry without the knowledge of the management. No wonder Raghubalan (2008) stated that, guestroom is the main products of the hotel as it contribute to more than 50% of the total Income in the industry.

Guestroom attendants do not have knowledge of principles in cleaning process has the highest rating as shown in Table 1. This is in line with the findings of Onwunedo (2008) who noted that basic knowledge of principles of cleaning are needed by guestroom attendants in order to carry out their cleaning procedures such principle included- soil should be removed without harming the surface being cleaned or the surrounding surfaces, the surface should be restored to its original state after the cleaning process, the simplest method should be tried first, using the mildest cleaning agent, start cleaning with the cleaner surface and articles and then go onto clean the more heavily soiled ones so as to prevent the spread of soil from dirty to cleaner surfaces. Stains should be removed as soon as they

occur, the cleaner should start cleaning from the farthest end of an area, working towards the exit, the cleaning process should be efficient, using a minimum of equipment, cleaning agents, labour and time. Kupoluyi (2013) observed that guestroom attendants in most hotels are schooled and trained in their job hence recommended that there should be a retooling training programme for the guestroom attendants so as to improve on their daily task and duties to enhance sustainable hotel business. Inadequate water supply was also rated highly by the respondents. Water is an important resource for which there is no substitute. The findings are also in agreement with the findings of Onwunedo (2007) who regretted that consumers in the topics are faced with problems associated with scarcity of water. Poor personal and environmental sanitation practices adopted by guestroom attendant may be attributed to the problem of water shortage because; cleanliness has a lot to do with water. Ogbene (2003) also observed that there is a direct link between poor sanitation, contaminated water supply and creating breeding grounds for pathogens and their vectors. Similarly, Raghubalan (2008) also observed that when sanitation and water supply are improving, the incidence of diseases such as cholera, dysentery, diarrhea and guinea worm decline.

The respondents also lamented poor knowledge on how to use modern cleaning equipment as shown in table 1. Efficient cleaning and

maintenance are dependent upon high-quality cleaning equipment, correctly used. Selecting the ideal equipment plays a major role in the cleaning process.

This finding is in agreement with the findings of Kupoluyi (2013) who noted that, the guestroom attendant and the executive housekeeper should be trained and retained on the use of modern cleaning equipment because it is their responsibilities to select the most appropriate piece of cleaning equipment, according to the hotel's requirement. The correct choice of quality cleaning equipment could save costs due to breakdown reduce fatigue and also ensure overall efficiency in operations. Cleaning equipment are divided into two which are manual and mechanical equipment. The manual equipment include brushes, brooms, box sweeper, dry mops, wet mops, clothes, polish applicators, containers, and sundry equipment. Mechanical cleaning equipment include vacuum cleaners, scrubbing and polishing machines, wet-extractions systems, carpet shampoo machines, scrubbers-driers sweepers, high pressure washers, scarifying machines.

The respondents lamented of too much work load on the guestroom attendants. Most hotels in order to reduce cost and maximize profit, they over use guestroom attendants and other staff. Kupoluyi (2013) observed that most hotels prefer to have few guestroom attendants who will be occupied and engaged throughout the day. Some hotel management also

prefer to contact the section of guestroom attendants to external management who will recruit staff and manage the room cleaning on behalf of the hotel (contract staff).

Table 2 revealed that the respondents agreed with 16 out of 18 items identified as possible ways to improve on guestroom cleanliness in hospitality outfit. The respondents supported the idea of setting cleaning standard for daily and weekly guestroom maintenance, proper training and allocation of specific maintenance task to the guestroom attendants among others. This finding is in agreement with Raghubalan (2008) who stated that training is the overall enhancement of human ability by developing knowledge, skills, attitude and behavior in order to achieve individual goals. Training relates not only to new employees but is an ongoing process for the entire team.

Cleaning tasks may be divided according to the frequency of their scheduling which depends upon the level of soiling, the type of surface, the amount of traffic, the type of hotel and the cleaning standards set. There are daily tasks which include the daily and regular servicing of guestrooms, cleaning of bathrooms and toilets, suction-cleaning of floors and floor coverings. Weekly tasks include the polishing of metal surfaces, dusting of hard-to-reach areas while periodic tasks are carried out on a monthly, quarterly, half-yearly or annual basis. These include shampooing of carpets, washing of walls, cleaning of

chandeliers, stripping and polishing of floors among others.

### Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn base on the findings of the study. Among the challenges militating against services of the guestroom attendants in Edo State is poor guestroom cleanliness. It was observed that most guestrooms in the hotels are not hygienic enough for guest accommodation. It was also found out from the study that there are possible ways to improve guestroom cleanliness in hospitality outfits.

### Recommendations

1. Public health authorities and other health related organization should not only inspect hotels environment and kitchen but should go further to inspect the guestrooms for proper sanitation.
2. There should be training and re-training of guestroom attendants and cleaners in the hotels.
3. There is also the need to enforce the use of correct cleaning equipment for the right task in the guestroom cleaning.

### References

- Akin-Bankole, D. (2008). Beyond the front desk: *Manpower development strategies*. Lagos: Nigeria Diamond Publication Ltd.
- Anerua F.A. & Obiazi A.E. (2009). Entrepreneurship Education in Home Economics: problems and prospects.

Being a paper delivered at the National Conference of association for encouraging qualitative education in Nigeria. (ASSEQEN), 11-15<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

Apaokagi, M.N (2010) Manpower development process in Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Nigeria *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management Association of Nigeria*, 1 (1), 56.

Armstrong, C. (1999). Importance of hospitality management training. File: /E/importance of hospitality management training. Htm retrieved 11/22/2008

Dauda G.K. & Opadeyi, J.J. (2010), Home Economics Education A Viable Tool for overcoming Financial Crisis, *Journal of women in Colleges of Education*. 14 (v): 46.

Edo, A.P. (2010), Skills Acquisition in Nigerian Education System: Problems and Prospects in Technical Education. *Journal of qualities Education* 6(1) 20.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), National Policy on Education (4<sup>th</sup> Ed). Lagos NERDC, Press.

Eja (2011). The Impact of hospitality industry in poverty alleviation in a Tourist destination: Cross River State Scenario. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 2(3).

Jiboku T.O. (2007): The impact of information Technology in Hotel Operation: (Unpublished student work) National Open University of Nigeria.

Kupoluyi, A.A.(2013) Development of Retooling Programme for Operatives in the Hotel Industry in Nigeria. (Unpublished PhD Thesis), University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Molokwu, N. (2007). Home Economics in Response to changes in Contemporary Society and human needs for

- sustainability. A paper presented at 3<sup>rd</sup> IFHE Africa Regional Conference at Yaoundé, Cameroun, 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>, August, 2007.
- Ofobruku S.A. (2012). Hospitality and manpower training and Education in Nigeria. *Afro Asian Journal of social sciences* volume 3, No. 3, 4 Quarter iv 2012.
- Ogbene, A.E. (2003). Water Pollution Management Techniques of Home Makers in Oil Producing communities of Delta State. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Nigeria Nsukka.
- Onwunedo G.O.(2008). Development of an Intervention Programme for Improving on The Hygiene practices of fast food Industries in Anambra State. (Unpublished Thesis).
- Osaseri, G. (2010). Entrepreneurship Training / Education for job creation. A potent tool for youth empowerment and suitable national development. Being a paper delivered at 5<sup>th</sup> annual national conference of the Association of Nigeria Teacher (ASSONT) at college of education, Ekiadolar, Benin-City.
- Raghubalan G. (2008). *Hotel Housekeeping Operations and Published in Indian* by Oxford University Press, Oxford New York.
- Ward, T (2008). In Nigeria hotels and boom in tourism by Amadi, O, *Business day Newspaper*, September 7, 9.