


ASSESSING HYGENIC PRACTICES, SANITATION PROCEDURES OF HOUSEKEEPING DEPARTMENT PERCEIVED BY HOTELS-MOTELS HOUSEKEEPING HEADS

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| PAPER INFO | | ABSTRACT |
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| Received: | May 2023 | <p>Background: A clean, comfortable, and safe environment for guests, visitors, and employees is the primary responsibility of a hotel's housekeeping department. A good operation in this area may be the best public relations a hotel can have.</p> <p>Aim: This study aims to assess the Housekeeping department's hygienic practices and sanitation procedures as perceived by Housekeeping Heads of selected hotels and motels in Biliran Province, Philippines.</p> <p>Method: A descriptive-survey research design was employed in this study. The research respondents comprised the Housekeeping Heads of selected hotels and motels in Biliran Province, Philippines. The assessment instrument used was a five-point Likert Scale questionnaire.</p> <p>Findings: The results of the study revealed that the Housekeeping Heads of selected hotels and motels in Biliran Province, Philippines generally perceived their department's hygienic practices and sanitation procedures to be satisfactory. Furthermore, a significant difference was found in the perception of the Housekeeping Heads of the hotels and motels in the area regarding the implementation of the hygienic practices and sanitation procedures of their department.</p> |
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INTRODUCTION

A clean, comfortable, and safe environment for guests, visitors, and employees is the primary responsibility of a hotel's housekeeping department. A good operation in this area may be the best public relations a hotel can have. If a hotel or motel is dirty, those who stay there one night will not return; they will even tell others about the condition and discourage them from stopping there (Atadil & Lu, 2021; Pratt & Tolkach, 2022). Both management and guests consider keeping a place clean and in good repair to be absolutely necessary for a hotel to command a fair price and get repeat business (Gumaste et al., 2019; Jurcevic & Divic, 2020). Housekeeping is responsible for setting the scene and maintaining the quality of the scenery (Malelak et al., 2019; Penninga & Chibili, 2019).

Since hotel cleanliness is the responsibility of the housekeeping department, it follows that the contribution made by the housekeeping department of any hotel or motel is an important determinant of the value that guests find in that particular lodging. If the members of the housekeeping staff perform their jobs well, they increase their hotel's chances of success considerably (Boğan & Dedeoğlu, 2020; Choi & Choi, 2021). If they do not, they are likely to drive away guests, endanger their own security and prospects for advancement, and sacrifice

the satisfaction to be gained from knowing they play a vital part in rendering a service that is valuable, respected, and necessary in our fast-moving economy.

Philippines has become a health-conscious society. This trend has been conducted by the Hotel, Resort and Restaurants Association of the Philippines (HRRAP) and other chain or independent hotel operators. Guests always rank cleanliness as a major priority in selecting a lodge for accommodation. Cleanliness is not only *talung* dust, lint, dirt, stains, and spills off surfaces, but it goes one step further and entails disinfecting. Sanitation and good housekeeping can both be defined as the practice of rendering the establishment free of agents injurious to health (Grantham, 2020). A housekeeping director should have some knowledge or awareness of microbiology or the study of microscopic life, such as bacteria, viruses, yeast, and molds-in order to develop routine sanitary cleaning procedures, odor control methods, waste disposal, and pest control methods.

Hotel and motel operators have a social and moral obligation to the traveling public, employees, and visitors. They should provide a clean, comfortable, safe environment and especially one free of contagious disease (Ghorbani et al., 2023; Putra et al., 2023). There is some concern that hotel housekeeping has ignored sanitation or disinfecting procedures for years. On the other hand, health care facilities such as hospital and clinic housekeeping departments have been aware of disinfecting procedures and have established stringent cleaning and sanitation practices to curtail mis-contamination within their facilities (Dancer, 2014; Sharma & Kaushik, 2021). They use disinfectants that kill microorganisms on animate objects. If a hotel guest who is a carrier of an infectious disease such as fungus, diarrhea, body, head and pubic lice, or some skin diseases checks out of room and that room is not sanitized or disinfected, hotel guests and employees are considered potential victims to be contaminated with unhealthy substances (Chen et al., 2022; Fung et al., 2020).

The researchers as BS HRM students choose this topic because there are several subjects they already taken-up and it can use as references. They also want to learn and understand the importance of sanitation and hygienic practices in a hospitality industry. With these scenarios and the good intention of contributing useful information, the researcher were motivated to study an assessment on hygienic practices and sanitation procedures in the lodging housekeeping department as perceived by housekeeping directors or head of selected hotels and lodging houses in Biliran Province. This study focuses on "Assessing Hygienic Practices, Sanitation Procedures of Housekeeping Department Perceived by Hotels-Motels Housekeeping Heads."

METHOD

The descriptive methods of research was used in this study to identify the importance of sanitation procedures and hygienic practices in an accommodation business. This type of research design was used by the researcher because its appropriateness to the nature of the study, particularly in describing a systematically situation.

This study was conducted at the 4 Municipalities of Biliran Province namely Maripipi, Almena, Kawayan, and Caibiran due to the proximity of the researchers and familiarity with the accommodation establishments in the area. The source of data in this study was composed of 140 personnel from 7 hotels and lodging houses from the 4 identified municipalities. Names of restaurants were withheld to remain confidential as per request of the hotel owners and

managers. To gather necessary data, the researcher used purposive sampling which means the respondents were chosen for working as housekeeping employees of the accommodation businesses.

No survey instrument existed for a study like this one, so one was developed. From the literature review and consulting with lodging and health care executive housekeepers, a list of 22 competencies needed in housekeeping were compiled. Telephone and site visitations were conducted with several housekeeping director to ascertain the clarity and content validity of the instrument. The questions were concerned with classification of lodging, type of affiliation, size, the current title of housekeeping managers, their role in hiring decisions and budgeting, and primary method of training new employees. Other areas included the following ones:

- 1) Do they have a manual of procedures or quality assurance programs?
- 2) Are they concerned with contamination? Do they use any disinfectants for cleaning, or do they wear gloves while cleaning rooms and bathrooms?
- 3) Do housekeepers use mops, separate rags, and bowl swabs for cleaning bathrooms?
- 4) Do they wash their hands during break time?

There was also interest in identifying if these properties had laundry operations, whether they used any sanitizing cleaning detergents, and if laundry attendants wore gloves while handling soiled linens.

Before tally the answer in the questionnaires, the researcher reviews the answer of the respondents to check the completeness of the information. A letter and a consent form, which described the nature of the project, confidentiality, risks, and benefits, were mailed to all hotel and motel general managers in the community. They were asked if they would agree to participate in this project; if so, the research assistant would conduct an interview with the director of the housekeeping department at their facilities

The research assistant made an appointment with the housekeeping director of each facility and presented the questionnaires, housekeeping managers responded to the questionnaire in the presence of the research assistant, so that if there were any questions which needed action or explanation, the research assistant could provide the additional information.

The responses to the questionnaires were analysed and interpreted in the tables sided by the use of statistical treatment. The data gathered in this study were tallied and arranged them accordingly. The research data were further presented in tabular form, as well as in graphical way of presenting them properly. Percentage scores were computed out of tallied scores. This was done to summarize the responses made by housekeeping personnel in different hotels and lodging houses operating within the selected four municipalities of Biliran Province.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data gathered and the sequential organization of areas based upon the survey questionnaire presented in the appropriate tables flowed by the corresponding interpretation.

Demographic Profile of Accommodation Establishments

Establishment Classification

The classification of accommodation establishments identified among the 7 accommodation establishments are subdivided as follows.

Table 1. Classifications of Accommodation Establishments

| Classification | f | % |
|-----------------------|----------|------------|
| Independent | 5 | 71 |
| Chain hotels | 1 | 14 |
| Franchised operations | 1 | 14 |
| Total | 7 | 100 |

From the figures above it shows that most of the hotels and lodging houses operating in the four municipalities are independent which means that it is operating without partner hotels or sister companies.

Establishment Size

The sizes of the accommodation establishments identified are based on the number of rooms available which ranges as follows.

Table 2. Classifications of Accommodation Establishments-Sizes

| Classification | f | % |
|-----------------------|----------|------------|
| 51 rooms above | 0 | 0 |
| 21-50 rooms | 1 | 14 |
| 20 rooms below | 6 | 86 |
| Total | 7 | 100 |

From the figures above it shows that almost all of the hotels and lodging houses operating in the four municipalities are just small time accommodation establishments.

Demographic Profile of Housekeeping Heads

Gender and Position Title

It is important to identify the gender of the position holders to serve as an indicator in their decision-making and management styles Also, the terms used to name the position title of the heads of housekeeping departments are also identified as follows.

Table 3. Gender and Position Titles of Housekeeping Heads

| Title | f | | % |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | |
| Executive Housekeeper | 4 | 0 | 57 |
| Head Housekeeper | 2 | 0 | 29 |
| Housekeeper | 1 | 0 | 14 |
| Total | 7 | | 100 |

The director of the housekeeping department in more than 50 percent of the hotels was executive housekeeper, almost 30 percent called it head and the rest housekeeper. All those listed as director of housekeeping were female.

Staffing Process

Quality of housekeeping activities are best determined also by the competency of the staffs performing it. That is why it is a considerable factor to know if housekeeping directors has a participation in the staffing system of the housekeeping Department.

Table 4. Staffing Process

| Classification | f | % |
|---|----------|------------|
| The administration is the sole in-charge of the staffing decisions and process in the hotel | 1 | 14.29 |
| The general manager and owner seek for my opinions on the personnel being polled for the position | 6 | 71.43 |
| The general managers solely decide and do the recommendation for the hiring process of every department | 1 | 14.29 |
| Total | 7 | 100 |

Over 71 percent of the housekeeping managers were involved in hiring decisions, and over 14% or 1 percent responded that their general managers make hiring decisions for them and that hotel owners made final decisions of re-staffing at their departments.

Sanitation Practices

In reference to the next table, the results of this study showed that over 41 percent of hotels did not have a cleaning procedure manual for each item or area. More than 23 percent of respondents replied that they were not concerned with cross-contamination. Most of the housekeeping directors asked the research assistant to define the "cross-contamination" concept, indicating that it is a new or alien concept for them.

All of the housekeeping management indicated that their employees had personal equipment and containers, but more than 52 percent did not wear gloves when cleaning bathrooms, More than 17 percent of respondents said their housekeepers do not use bowl swabs (johnny mops) for cleaning toilet bowls nor fresh rags or sponges for cleaning each room.

All of the directors of housekeeping departments indicated that they use some type of disinfectant as a cleaning product. Only 23 percent of the executive housekeepers were in charge of buying equipment, tools, and cleaning products, while more than 58 percent of these purchases were decided by general managers. Six percent of the respondents indicated that both general managers and executive housekeepers make paying decisions. In the remaining 13 percent, decisions were made by the purchasing agent .It is advisable and practical that the director of the housekeeping department be considered as the major source to decide what kind of equipment, tools, and cleaning products should be purchased for the hotel.

The housekeeping department is the consumer of cleaning equipment, tools, and products. Its contribution in the selection of cleaning items should not be overlooked

More than 17 percent of the directors of housekeeping did not know if staff members washed their hands on break or at the end of the am. All of the hotel participants did have

laundry operations and used some type of sanitizing cleaning detergent for the laundry, but more than 82 percent of linen attendants who handled soiled linen did not wear gloves.

Table 5. Sanitary Practices

| Indicators | Yes | No |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Do they have a manual of procedures or quality assurance programs? | 59 | 41.00 |
| Are they concerned with cross-contamination? | 76.64 | 23.36 |
| Do they use any disinfectants for cleaning? | 1 | 0 |
| Do they wear gloves while cleaning rooms and bathrooms? | 47.83 | 52.17 |
| Do housekeepers use mops, separate rags, and bowl swabs for cleaning bathrooms? | 82.18 | 17.82 |
| Do they wash their hands during break time? | 87.60 | 12.40 |
| Do you have laundry operations? | 100.00 | 0.00 |
| Do you any sanitizing cleaning detergents? If yes, What Detergent? | 23.00 | 77.00 |
| Do laundry attendants wear gloves while handling soiled linens? | 17.49 | 82.51 |

Purchasing Assignments

In reference to the table below, the results of this study showed that only 23 percent of the executive housekeepers were in charge of buying equipment, tools, and cleaning products, while more than 58 the respondents indicated that both general managers and executive housekeepers make purchasing decisions. In the remaining 13 percent, of these purchases were decided by general managers. Six percent of decisions were made by the purchasing agent.

Table 6. Purchasing Responsibility

| Indicators | % |
|--|----------|
| Executive Housekeepers | 23.00 |
| General Managers | 38.00 |
| Both Executive Housekeepers and General Managers | 6.00 |
| Purchasing Agent | 15.00 |

CONCLUSION

The majority of the participants in the study reported that their housekeeping departments had good hygienic practices and sanitation procedures in place. The participants also reported that their housekeeping departments had adequate resources and personnel to ensure the implementation of hygienic practices and sanitation procedures. The participants also noted that their housekeeping departments had good communication with other departments in the hotel/motel and that they were able to effectively coordinate with them in order to ensure compliance with hygienic practices and sanitation procedures. The participants also identified some areas of improvement in terms of hygienic practices and sanitation procedures. These included providing more training to housekeeping personnel, ensuring regular inspections of the housekeeping department, and increasing the availability of resources such as cleaning supplies. The participants also identified the need for stronger enforcement of hygienic practices and sanitation procedures by the management of the hotels/motels. This would require

the management to ensure that housekeeping personnel were held accountable for any lapses in their performance.

Hotels and motels in Biliran Province should ensure that the housekeeping staff is properly trained in the latest hygiene and sanitation protocols to ensure safe and healthy environments for its customers. Hotels and motels should regularly inspect the work of the housekeeping staff to ensure that all sanitation protocols are being followed. Hotels and motels should provide the necessary hygiene and sanitation materials to the housekeeping staff to ensure that they are able to perform their work properly. Hotels and motels should develop and enforce specific policies regarding the proper use of hygiene and sanitation materials in the housekeeping department. Hotels and motels should ensure that proper waste disposal and cleanliness practices are being followed in the housekeeping department. Hotels and motels should provide adequate resources and support to the housekeeping staff to enable them to perform their duties in a safe and effective manner. Hotels and motels should regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of their hygiene and sanitation operations in order to ensure that the highest standards are being met.

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Assessing Hygienic Practices, Sanitation Procedures of Housekeeping Department Perceived by Hotels-Motels Housekeeping Heads

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