
TURNOVER IN STEWARDING DEPARTMENT: PERSPECTIVES OF HOTEL EMPLOYEES

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TURNOVER IN STEWARDING DEPARTMENT: PERSPECTIVES OF HOTEL EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the turnover in stewarding department in five star hotels. The stewarding department plays an important role in the food production cycle, it is the third part of this cycle which includes kitchen and food service, The study of this department and its employees comes from how it is very essential and important to the food and beverage sector and how can we retain them in their jobs, To achieve the aim of the study, a self-administered questionnaire with the stewarding department employees was used in a sample of five star hotels. The results showed that salaries does not equal to the physical effort in the job and it is difficult to find candidates for the steward job due to many reasons like society's perception to the job and the selection for this job based on the minimum level of qualifications for the job.⁴

KEYWORDS: Turnover, stewarding department, food production

1. INTRODUCTION

The steward department plays an important role in the food production cycle, it is the third part of this cycle which includes kitchen and food service, steward department is responsible for cleanness of the kitchen area and all kitchen and restaurants' equipments and tools and make it ready to use either for food production like all kitchen equipments or for food and beverage service like the china, glass, and silver ware. Also it is responsible for the stores of the food and beverage tools and equipments. Recently, and after the huge and fast development in the food and beverage sector in the hotels and restaurants, the importance of the steward also increased and developed to keep pace with this development. The food hygiene comes today at the top priorities in food industry and it becomes one of the competition advantages⁵

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. An overview of stewarding department

The stewarding department is one of the most important department in the hotel industry, especially in the food and beverage sector, this importance comes from the relation between the stewarding and the food hygiene whereas this department is fully responsible for the cleanliness of the kitchen areas – starting from the food and beverage receiving area, food stores, refrigerators, freezers, and all kitchen sections. In addition to the kitchen tools and equipments, the cleaning of the china, silver and glass wares, therefore the level of quality of the food hygiene depends on the quality of the stewarding department performance. It is with cooperation from the other elements like the kitchen staff and service staff, but its starting from the steward department.

Due to the fast development in the food and beverage sector, especially in food production, and after the increase of focusing on the food safety and hygiene, and with the new food safety and hygiene programs that concentrate of the quality of food from the hygienic prospective like Hazards analysis and critical control points (HACCP) program, and ISO 22000 – food safety management program, all hotels and restaurants and the other food production companies use it as competitive advantage, from here the importance of the steward department is increased due to the above reasons and according to that duties and responsibilities of the steward department is also increased and developed to coop with this food safety programs

2.2. Employees' turnover in the Hospitality Industry

Employees' turnover is a major problem in the hospitality industry which has a direct effect on costs and productivity (Keiser, 1989 and Ghiselli et al., 2001). Furthermore, Simons and Hinkin (2001) illustrated that employees' turnover is strongly associated with decreased hotel profits and also is substantially lower at large properties and with properties with high room rates. One of the primary challenges facing the hospitality industry is the high rate of employee turnover (Boella, 1996; Bratton, & Gold, 1999; Wash, & Taylor, 2007). Many hotels and other hospitality facilities are still having problems keeping their employees from leaving and taking jobs elsewhere (Smith, 2004).

2.3. Concept of employees' turnover

Employees' turnover is a much studied phenomenon (Shaw et al., 1998). But there is no standard reason why people leave organization.

Employee turnover is the rotation of workers around the labour market; between firms, jobs and occupations; and between the states of employment and unemployment (Abassi et al., 2000). The term employees' turnover means the movement of people or labour out of and into an organization (Argyle, 1989).

Denvir and McMahon (1992) defined employees' turnover as the movement of people into and out of employment within an organization which can be voluntary or involuntary. Boella (2000) defined employees' turnover as the total numbers of leavers expressed as a percentage of the total number of employees in a department, unit or organization. Gómez-Mejia et al. (2001) agreed with Baron and Paulus (1991) in that employees' turnover is a measure of the rate at which employees quit or otherwise voluntarily leave their jobs. Zlotnic et al. (2005) defined employees' turnover as workers who leave the agency that is those who leave for reasons that include retirement, death, marriage, parenting, spousal job move, simple job exit, and intent to leave, among other variables.

2.4. Causes of employees' turnover:

There are varieties of reasons why employees leave a job for a better job offer. Of these reasons are dissatisfaction with the job or with their supervision, and lack of advancement opportunities. Hotels also terminate employees for a variety of reasons, including excessive absenteeism, inability to perform assigned duties, unsafe practices, and dishonesty. Whether initiated by the employee or the hotel, a termination often constitutes a management failure (Nebel III, 1991).

Puckett and Ninemeér (1992) as well as Woods (1995) stated the major causes of hospitality turnover are quality of supervision, ineffective communications, working conditions, quality of co-workers, low pay and few benefits, lack of clear definition of responsibilities. No direction on what to do, commercialized expectations, no career ladder, change in leadership, limited career opportunity, change in philosophy or practices, lack of clear direction in company basis, and job transferability and low compensation.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. A self-administered questionnaire

A self-administrated questionnaire was designed and distributed to a sample of hotel employees in stewarding department in five star hotels (see Table 1). The form was written and distribution in Arabic languages only to be easy to fill it for the employees in the stewarding department. A 165

forms was distributed, among them 156 were valid for analysis which represent 94.5% of. SPSS version 25 was used in this study to analyze the data gathered from the questionnaire. The form was designed to illustrate the perspectives of employees regarding the main reasons that push them to leave the job

Table 1: list of hotels and the number of the distributed forms

Hotel	No. of forms distributed	Valid forms	
		No.	%
Four Seasons Cairo at Nile Plaza	15	14	93.3%
Grand Nile Tower (Ex Grand Hyatt Cairo)	15	15	100%
Fairmont Nile City Hotel	15	13	86.7%
Dusit Thani Lake View Hotel	15	14	93.3%
Kempinski Nile Cairo Hotel	15	15	100%
Semiramis Intercontinental Cairo Hotel	30	30	100.0
Sofitel El Gezira Hotel	15	14	93.3%
Le Meridien Pyramids Hotel	15	14	93.3%
Fairmont Heliopolis Hotel	15	13	86.7%
Safir Cairo	15	13	86.7%
Total	165	156	94.5%

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis of self-administered questionnaire:

The form was consisted of three sections, section one dealt with personal data, meanwhile section two dealt with objective questions that related to years of experience in the department and the future plan for his professional life, the last section focused on variables that related to issues in stewarding department and to what extend are they agree with it. A 5 point Likert-scale was used in this study ranging from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 5 "Strongly agree"

Part one: Personal Data analysis:

Table 2: Personal data analysis

Personal Data		Freq.	%
Gender	Male	156	100
	Female	0	0
Age	Under 25 Years	23	14.7
	From 25 to 35 years	71	45.5
	From 35 to 45 years	44	28.2
	Over than 45 years	18	11.5

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Marital Status	Single	44	28.2
	Married with no children	19	12.2
	Married with children	92	59
	Widower / Divorced	1	0.6
Educational Level	Illiterate	12	7.7
	Literacy	14	9
	Basic Education (Preparatory)	23	14.7
	Secondary School or Technical Diploma	85	54.5
	Hotel Diploma	9	5.8
	University or higher institute	12	7.7
	Other (Please specify.)	1	0.6

As shown in Table 2, all the respondents were males. This indicates that this job needs high physical efforts and it is suitable for male more than others.

For the age of the respondents, the age category less than 25 years represents 14.7% of all respondents, while 28.2% of them had age category from 35 to 45 years, the low percentage represent 11.5% respondents were over than 45 years, and the highest percentage of employees' ages was found in the range from 25 to 35 years which represents 45.5% (see Table 2). That means the main age range of this job is from youth due to the heavy duties and the physical efforts that needed for this job

Regarding to the marital status, the obtained results indicate that status of married with children occupy higher percentage representing 59.0% of the sample, whereas Widower / Divorced employees are lower representing 0.6% of the sample, single status percentage representing 28.2% and married with no children stewarding employees presenting 12.2% of the total sample, this means that employees who are married and have children are more committed to their jobs than others.

In terms of educational level, Secondary School or Technical Diploma had the highest percentage which represents 54.5% of all respondents. A further 14.7% had a basic education. Literacy has 9% of the total sample, where 7.7% were the percentage of illiterate and university degree or higher institute, Hotel Diploma had 5.8%. While a low percentage (0.6%) of respondents were other level of education. The main educational level is Technical diploma that means the hotel management trying to select the educated employees in this job to be able to develop them in the future.

Part two: Objective data:

Table 3: Objective data analysis

Objective Data		Freq.	%
Years of Experience	Less than 1 year	18	11.5
	From 1 to 2 years	19	12.2%
	More than 2 to 5 years	33	21.2%
	More than 5 to 10 years	32	20.5%
	More than 10 to 15 years	29	18.6%
	Over than 15 years	25	16.0%
Future Plan	Get promotion in same department	107	68.6
	Transfer to another department	33	21.2
	Changing Career	14	9.0
	Other (please specify)	2	1.3

The analysis clearly depicts that, 21.2% of all employees have more than 2 to 5 years experience in the stewarding department, compared to 20.5% who have more than 5 to 10 years of experience in the stewarding department, 18.6% of respondents have more than 10 to 15 years of experience in stewarding department. However, only 16.0% of them stay over than 15 years in the stewarding department, from 1 to 2 years represent 12.2%, and less than 1 year experience were 11.5%. that means from 2 years experience to 10 years represent more than 41% of the total sample, so there is stability in the department.(see Table 3)

For the future plan for the next step in their professional life, the analysis clearly depicts that, 68.6% of the respondents need to get promotion within the department, compared to 21.2% who prefer to transfer to another department, 9.0% want to change the career and leave the stewarding department. However, only 1.3% of them choose another answer with no specifications. That means the majority – 68.6% - are happy and comfortable in the stewarding department and they prefer to continue there. (See Table 3)

Part three: To what extend are you agree:

Table 4: The mean and standard deviation of the respondents agreements towards causes of turnover

Phrase	Mean	Std Deviation
Firstly: Inside the Stewarding Department		

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The operation in the department is going according to specific professional standards	4.0128	1.08946
I find appropriate appreciation from my supervisors for my work	3.9038	1.10002
At work, my supervisors are interested in my point of view	3.9423	1.00477
I can easily communicate with my supervisor and they are available all the time	4.0641	.94820
I believe that my performance has affect effectively in the operation of the department	4.1731	.89561
There are a clear regulations for reward and punishment and it is applied with fairness	3.9295	1.04796
I see that there is fairness in evaluating my performance	3.8077	1.10783
My supervisors are listening to my complains and they help me to solve it	3.9936	.94012

Table 4 (continued)

In my department there are the equipments and the tools that help me to get the job done	3.8333	1.08855
In my department, all the ways of success are available	3.8077	1.07232
I found the work environment as I expected before I join the job	3.7500	.98128
In my department, I get training for everything new in my work field	3.7628	.99101
My supervisors are care of my personal issues	3.8462	1.08452
In my department, there are a lot of work pressures that influence on my personal life	2.6474	1.32862

Secondly: the Hotel Management

Hotel Management is caring of my health	3.7949	1.28875
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Hotel Management is caring of my social life side (Social Events)	3.6795	1.25973
Hotel management provide me a good benefits grids	3.7115	1.18054
Hotel management provide me the best systems of industrial safety and health programs	3.8462	1.12539
Hotel Management give me the opportunity to develop my professional career (Cross Training)	3.7372	1.07830

Thirdly: the relation between me and my colleagues in the workplace

My colleagues in the department give me help when I need	3.7115	1.10722
My colleagues in the other departments help me to get the job done	3.6410	1.15255
My colleagues in the other departments appreciate the importance of my job	3.6410	1.15255
The perception of My colleagues in the other departments to my job based on equality and equivalency	3.6474	1.22240
I like to spend the rest of my professional life in stewarding department	3.5769	1.00347
The society's perception to my job has negative effect on continuing in the stewarding department	2.6859	1.32375

Table 4 (continued)

The physical effort that I do in my job has negative effect on continuing in the stewarding department	2.5577	1.25076
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The educational level, the efficiency in the work and the trainings that I received are effective factors in the promotion decision in the department	3.7564	1.00561
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Fourthly: the relation between me and my job

I like to spend most of my time in the work	3.5256	1.09808
I see the salary that I received it is equal the physical effort that I do in my job	3.2564	1.28451
I encourage my friends and relatives to join my job in case of availability of job opportunities	3.3269	1.19765
I feel that my future is secured in my job and my career future is clear	3.4038	1.23799
I feel Satisfaction in my job	3.5897	1.19067
I feel happiness in my job	3.5641	1.21379
I feel proud in my job	3.5833	1.18571
If my supervisors asked to work to overtime, I accept without hesitation	3.6410	1.17473
I see that the number of the daily required duties are not suitable with the daily working hours	2.7372	1.27057

As shown in Table 4, it was divided into four sections, the first section was about what are happened inside the stewarding department, the highest mean rank score in this section was 4.1731, followed by score 4.0641, while the lowest mean rank score was 2.6474. For the analysis of the standard deviation for the first section, the highest rank score was 1.32862, followed by score 1.18783, in the other hand the lowest standard deviation rank score was 0.94012.

The second section was about the role of the hotel management, the highest mean rank score in this section was 3.8462, followed by score 3.7949, while the lowest mean rank score was 3.6795. For the analysis of the standard deviation for the second section, the highest rank score was 1.28875, followed by score 1.25973, in the other hand the lowest standard deviation rank score was 0.07830.

The third section was about the relation between the employees in the department, the highest mean rank score in this section was 3.6410, followed by score 3.7115, while the lowest mean rank score was 2.5577. For the analysis of the standard deviation for the second section, the highest rank score was 1.32375, followed by score 1.23799, in the other hand the lowest standard deviation rank score was 1.09808.

The fourth section was about the relation between the employees in the department and their colleagues in other departments, the highest mean rank score in this section was 3.6410, followed by score 3.5833, while the lowest mean rank score was 2.7372. For the analysis of the standard deviation for the second section, the highest rank score was 1.28451, followed by score 1.23799, in the other hand the lowest standard deviation rank score was 1.09808.

From the previous results, I can see that the employees are happy and satisfied with their jobs in the stewarding department and they plan to continue in the department with promotion within the department.

5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study was designed to studying employee's turnover in stewarding department: perspectives of the hotel employees, to provide recommendations and solutions to reduce the employees turn over in stewarding department; we have to identify the reasons that push them to leave their jobs and how to keep them.

A field survey was conducted to deal with and to manage employees in the stewarding department. The research was conducted on a sample of five hotels. The study depends on self-administrated questionnaire; it was designed and distributed to the employees in the stewarding department at the investigated hotels. The purpose of this questionnaire is to know the reasons that push them to leave their jobs and how they are satisfied with working in this job. Results obtained from the distributed forms were statistically analyzed using mean, standard deviation and percentage methods.

Based upon the literature reviewed and the data gathered from the field survey, the following recommendations could be suggested to be followed to reduce the employees' turnover in stewarding department:

1. The hotel management has to increase the salaries of this job to encourage the employees to join and stay in the job.
2. The hotel Management has to provide the stewarding department with the tools and equipments with high technologies to help them to facilitate

their work duties and save the fitness efforts that they spend to perform their job duties.

3. Increasing the awareness sessions that concentrate on the importance of the stewarding department especially with the kitchen and service staff.
4. Performing cross training plan for all kitchen and Service staff in stewarding department for certain period of time to let them feel how this job so difficult and important for them.

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