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**Effect of Short Course Training on Service Delivery  
in the Hospitality Industry in Housekeeping and  
Laundry Department of Kenya Utalii College**

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## Effect of Short Course Training on Service Delivery in the Hospitality Industry in Housekeeping and Laundry Department of Kenya Utalii College

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of this study was to establish the effect of short course training on service delivery in the hospitality industry in housekeeping and laundry department of Kenya Utalii College.

**Methodology:** Explanatory and descriptive research designs were employed in this study. The study population was 4,216 which comprised 216 employers and 4,000 employees. The study targeted at least three employers from the 72 establishments. The data was collected from hotels ranging from three, four and five star rated hotels in major tourist towns and game lodges in Kenya. The study employed stratified sampling in dividing the regions and purposive sampling in selecting the respondents. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 20 while qualitative data was analyzed using content and thematic methods.

**Findings:** The findings on operational skills and knowledge in housekeeping techniques revealed that most technical and operational knowledge were well applied in the industry. The results on operational skills and knowledge in laundry techniques by both the employees and employers were generally good as employees had knowledge of the concepts and were able to apply the

knowledge in the execution of their duties and hence deliver quality and professional service. The results on the combined course on housekeeping and laundry techniques were generally good as rated by both the employees and the employers but there was lower rating by employers on the application of most aspects. The aspects of performance of employees that implied high service delivery were rated as good by the employers. The practical aspect of the course was satisfactory to most of the respondents but there was some recommendations that new equipment be used during practical to equip learners with new real experience in the industry.

**Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy:** The study recommended that, there is need for Kenya Utalii College (KUC) to continue producing impactful students in the industry. It suggested that more campaign and awareness drives be established by KUC to market the courses offered at the school with an aim of increasing awareness and possible uptake of the courses across the country. It is recommended to KUC that the names of the courses to be changed to avoid confusing the employers when recruiting the full time students.

**Keywords:** *Short courses, hospitality industry, housekeeping, laundry, service delivery.*

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism and hospitality industry is among the fastest growing industries in the world. International tourist arrivals grew by 7% in 2017 to reach a total of 1,322 million (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2018). The success of the industry is largely dependent on delivery of quality service among other key factors. Satisfaction of clientele needs is a major concern for many tourist's destinations or organizations. This is because customers base their purchase decisions on the perception on the products' or service value and satisfaction they will get. The critical success factors in the industry have been changing over time, driven by global competition and increasing high customer expectation. To this end, it is indeed crucial for organizations to ensure availability of high quality goods and services and ensure highest quality of service delivery that meets and exceeds customers' expectations. By maximizing customers' satisfaction through quality service delivery, a business will be able to retain its customers for long and make an immense contribution to its revenue (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). Its task is to create shareholder wealth by serving and satisfying diverse clientele ranging from hotels, motels, restaurant, beach resorts, to game lodges, recreation centres and other hospitality related establishments. In all the cases, the product purchased is intangible and the service provider is part of the product itself, guests satisfaction is pegged on the value of the service provided and must feel valued and respected by the workers giving the service. Hospitality is derived from a Latin word *hospitare* meaning "to receive as a guest" and reaches every corner of the globe providing services to people of every socio-economic class, cultural background age, religion (Whitelaw et al., 2009).

There are several determinants of quality service delivery in the tourism and hospitality sector and one of this is training as well as the qualities of graduates and retention of those graduates in the hospitality. Many organizations whether service or manufacturing industries have rated training as a key factor in an organization's success. Alexander (2012) asserts that the importance of tourism and hospitality training is recognized as one of the key elements that contribute to the success of many tourism destinations across the globe because training plays a key role in providing skilled and competent human resource. Thus investing in training is a major success strategy for many successful organizations. Tourism and hospitality is a service industry and it is labour intensive and therefore training not only sharpens the much needed skills and knowledge of the workforce but also enhances service delivery and ultimately guest satisfaction (Reynolds, 2018). Furthermore, workers in every facet of hospitality from stewards to general managers and owners affect guest experience and therefore without proper training, employee- guest encounters can go off-track affecting the business bottom line. Though training is considered expensive, in the long run, the benefits can outweigh the costs (Wesley, 2017).

Tourism destinations such as Kenya have developed tourism and hospitality training systems aimed at satisfying the needs of the industry. Kenya Utalii College (KUC) is one of the key and premiere institutions that offer this kind of training. Since its opening in 1975, the college has produced many graduates who work locally and internationally and has grown in terms of students' intake and courses and expanded geographically to coast and western regions (Kenya Utalii College, 2016). On its 43<sup>rd</sup> graduation ceremony, the Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife Hon. Balala acknowledged that KUC is respected not only in Africa, but also globally and further stated that the government through its National Blue Print (NBP) which provides guidance for accelerating the development of the tourism sector in the country was committed in ensuring

availability of highly qualified and human resource in the hospitality industry. Balala aims to see Kenya become the factory that supplies skilled personnel to the African hospitality industry.

Housekeeping is an integral part of hotels and is fundamental to the reputation of the business. It is involved in the cleanliness of a property as well as the aesthetic appeal that helps to form a first impression about the hotel. Housekeeping thus plays a crucial role in the success of hotel business since cleanliness is rated as one of the key factors in choosing a destination. Housekeepers' are involved in a wide range of daily tasks of taking care of public and service areas in all classes of hotels and mainly performs behind the scenes duties that ensures all guestrooms and facilities are functioning properly (Gikonyo, Berndt & Wadawi, 2015). They are important in promoting customer loyalty and satisfaction and generating revenue for the establishment. High standards are expected in delivery of services by the housekeeping personnel as well as all hotel staff hence the need for continuous and relevant training.

The housekeeping and laundry department has been offering full time and parallel courses in its regular programs whose duration is one and half years and three short term courses namely: Housekeeping Techniques, Laundry & Dry Cleaning Techniques and a combined Housekeeping & Laundry Techniques mainly in Nairobi campus. The duration for the short courses is three months. The course however have not picked very well in Mombasa and Kisumu campuses. Other beneficiaries of the short courses include those who are already working in the industry without any formal training and have no certificates. The courses are very popular due to their flexible nature in terms of the duration of three months and instruction time of evenings between 4.00 PM -6.00 PM from Monday to Friday. In total, over 15, 000 students have graduated from the short courses offered by KUC from the various departments inclusive of 4,000 from the housekeeping & laundry department, this number does not include refresher courses and MDPs. With this number of graduates being produced each years, it is necessary to gauge their effect and relevance on service delivery backed by empirical data.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The hospitality industry operates in a very competitive environment owing to continual and swiftly changing consumer needs. For this reason, hospitality programs must be keen in adapting to these shifts and responding to them with education content and programs that make practical sense to the graduates so that they possess the desired skills sets for the job market they enter. Assessment of the job market demand in the hospitality industry are essential for supporting training programs. Further, it is the right of every Kenyan student to be offered quality education, and to this end, it is necessary to ensure continuous assessment or review of the curricular. The government expects quality training from KUC and training that is relevant and pegged on the needs of the industry (Tourism Act, 2011)

The tourism and hospitality industry is a service industry and relies heavily on qualified human resource. KUC through training has continuously played a key role in ensuring that the industry workforce is well trained to deliver the required standards of service for the diverse clientele. . KUC has had curriculum reviews in 2013 and 2016 to ensure quality training. The KUC mandate is to ensure high level training for the industry and ensure the right skills and knowledge are imparted for high quality service delivery. In this regard therefore, it is important to gauge the curriculum and its intended outcome in terms of relevance and effect on service delivery for the industry.

The study intended to gauge empirically whether what is continually being taught is relevant to the industry and to address any gaps between what is currently being offered and the industry expectation especially on service delivery in terms of quality, professionalism and customer satisfaction and address any discrepancies to establish whether the graduates are adequately prepared for the industry after the course completion. The skills learned by the students of hospitality in KUC must mirror contemporary skills demanded by today's competitive and quickly changing hospitality industry and should be able to match the skills the industry employers consider important for success in the industry. It is necessary to periodically change the curriculum according to the roles and needs as well as the changes in the broader environment. The present research desires to add to the body of knowledge on hospitality training by providing understanding of the effect of short courses undertaken in housekeeping and laundry department of KUC.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **SERVQUAL Model**

SERVQUAL is a service quality framework; developed in the eighties by Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, aiming at measuring the scale of Quality in the service sectors. It is a model that compares customer perceptions of quality against customer expectation (Morrison, 2010). SERVQUAL "remains the most complete attempt to conceptualize and measure service quality". The main benefit to the SERVQUAL measuring tool is the ability of researchers to examine numerous service industries such as hospitality, healthcare, banking, financial services, and education. Many researchers have used the model as a quality measuring tool which means it is well anchored as a trusted model (Nyeck, et al. 2002). This model is relevant to the current study since it has considered various dimensions of quality in service delivery that should ensure optimum customer experience.

Under SERVQUAL there are five dimensions of service, what a customer expects from an organization:

1. Reliability- Where the quality and level of service is consistent
2. Assurance- Knowledge and courtesy of staff and their ability to control trust and confidence
3. Tangibles- The organizations physical facilities, equipment and also appearance of staff
4. Empathy- The degree of caring , individualized attention that the organization's staff provide to its customers
5. Responsiveness- The willingness of staff to help customers and provide service

When these dimensions are consistently met, a company is well on its way to becoming customer oriented. This model will be used in this study in gauging the service delivery on the three short courses specifically of the services offered by those who have undertaken the courses and meeting the expected needs of the customers.

## **The Training Process**

Training plays a vital role in the attainment of organization goals. Indeed, training is the most essential factor in the business world as it increases the competence and effectiveness of both employees and organizations and is beneficial to employees in particular and organizations in general. Training needs to be designed to meet the needs of the organization. ‘Training’ is the process that involves improvement of the aptitudes, skills, and abilities of the employees to perform specific jobs (Kulkarni, 2013). Furthermore, in training, the aim is to modify or transfer knowledge, skills and attitudes and there is use of systematic and planned instructional activities that promote learning. It involves the use of formal processes to impart knowledge and help people to acquire the skills necessary for them to perform their jobs satisfactorily (Armstrong, 2006). The training models is applicable to the current study since it considers various elements when training programs are offered for the short courses in KUC.

## **Empirical Literature**

Housekeeping department plays a key role in guest attraction and their retention and is also very crucial in building the reputation of the hotel since it is expected to maintain high standards of service in the entire hotel. Wanja (2015) notes that poorly cleaned and poorly maintained surfaces can damage the reputation of a hotel. On the other hand, housekeeping determines whether guests will be happy and comfortable during their stay since the proper functioning and upkeep of rooms, all public areas and service areas is bestowed upon the department (Gikonyo et al., 2015) guests expect value for their money.

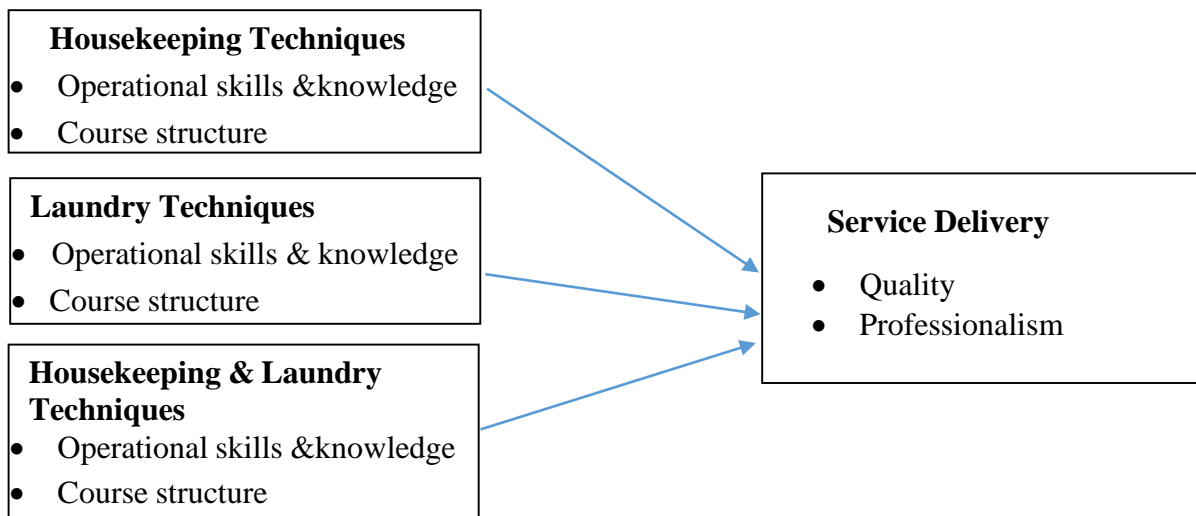
Hospitality students who graduate face many challenges when looking for a job in the competitive job market. Graduates must meet the expectations of the prospective companies as well as recruiter expectations. Questions arise to how education is responding to the industry. Academic hospitality are designed to teach the skills that will prepare them to the competition in the workplace. These skills should enable the graduate to manage the rapidly changing demands in today’s hospitality industry, addressing increased competition, changing consumer attitudes and employer demands (Wood, 2003). In a rapidly changing society, employee training is not only desirable but is an activity that an organization must commit resources to if it is to maintain a viable and conversant workforce. Moreover, receiving training gives them a feeling that their works are somehow important which motivate or retain them to work for an organization apart from just money. The industry has a high diversity nature by the product itself and also by customers. It provides a wide range of services including accommodation, food and beverage and other services such as private clubs, and recreation (Hayes & Nimeier, 2009).

Laundry operations are very critical for the smooth operations of any hospitality establishment. The Laundry becomes necessary for the success of the housekeeping department and at large critical to the success of the entire hotel operations. The Laundry is responsible for cleaning tones of soiled linen, uniform and guests’ garments daily (Andrews, 2013) and therefore the revenue generating capacity of the hotels is greatly enhanced or impaired by the efficiency of the laundry services. In this regard, a hotel will need the services of well trained staff to offer the highest quality of services to its clients wherever a laundry is operated. A hotel can operate its own laundry-own premises laundry (OPL) or outsource the services from a commercial dealer. The former is usually recommended in terms of efficiency and convenience in three to four star hotels.

Same as for housekeeping techniques course, the laundry & dry cleaning techniques course is offered in the evenings between 4pm-6pm but demonstration classes are given in the morning hours at the KUC Laundry plant. It takes 90 hours and an exam both theory and practical is given at the end of the course. There are two weeks of practical before students go for internship. The current fee is Kshs, 30,700 (USD 307) which has been reviewed upwards to Kshs. 35,000 (USD 350) from January 2019. Most of graduands from this course work as laundry attendants in hotels, hospitals, institutions, laundry shops and other related hospitality places. Some have ventured in their own businesses. 900 students have graduated from this program.

Housekeeping and Laundry technique is a combined course and has been offered once in a year between September - December semester. The course covers 180 hours ie.100 hours for housekeeping and 80 hours for laundry. The practical classes are scheduled in the mornings and the demonstration classes are offered in Utalii Hotel and the laundry according to the timetables. The students are given exams and issued with a certificate of merit upon successful completion. There are two weeks of intense practical on the skills learnt under the supervision of the lecturers. The students are then encouraged to undergo a three month internship to enhance their housekeeping and laundry operational skills and knowledge. The course is taught by the lecturers in housekeeping and laundry department. Due to large number of students, only a few students are offered a chance for internship at Utalii hotel and at the KUC laundry. Other students have to look for their own internship places. The fee for this course has been Kshs. 40,000 (USD 400). The course targets those students who need skills in both laundry as well as housekeeping and they have a better chance of getting jobs since they are multi skilled in both sections. 750 students have graduated from this program so far.

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

*Source: Author (2018)*

### METHODOLOGY

The research designs employed in this study was explanatory and descriptive research designs. Explanatory research was more appropriate for this research as it showed the effect of the three

short courses in housekeeping and laundry department on the dependent variable, service delivery. Secondly the researcher used descriptive research design to be able to assess the existing relevance, applicability and need of the course in the industry. The study population was 4,216 which comprised the employers on one side and the employees on the other. The population for employees was 4, 000 students and 216 employers. The study had targeted at least three respondents who represented employers from each establishment of the 72 establishments. The employers were represented by: executive housekeepers, supervisors and managers and also owners of some establishments while the employees are the KUC alumni who undertook the KUC short courses in the housekeeping and laundry department.

The data was collected from hotels ranging from three, four and five star rated hotels in major tourist towns and game lodges in Kenya: Nairobi, Mombasa, Malindi, Kisumu, Eldoret, Nyeri, Nakuru, Tsavo East and West and Machakos. The data for employees included hotels, cleaning companies, hospitals and other related institutions where majority of them are working. The study employed stratified sampling in dividing the regions and purposive sampling in selecting the respondents of the study so as to get a variety of the views from three, four and five star hotels and also to locate the former students of KUC working in different hospitality institutions. A total of 72 establishments were sampled and the sample size was 365 based on Yamane's (2001) formula representing 300 from the employees and 65 from the employers. 365 questionnaires were distributed. A total of 191 questionnaires (102 employees and 89 employers) were filed and returned representing a 52 % response rate from respondents.

In this study, the questionnaire used had both closed and open ended questions for the two categories of employers and employees which were divided into various sections for each course. The first section in both questionnaires detailed the demographic information of the respondents. The other sections dealt with operational skills and knowledge on the three courses and further, the employer's questionnaires included aspects of service delivery. A 5 point Likert scale was used in the design of the questionnaires. The data collected from the field was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Quantitative data was analyzed through scientific method using SPSS version 20 while qualitative data was analyzed using content and thematic methods. The questionnaires from the field were subjected to a thorough process of validation to ensure completeness of the questionnaires. Completely answered questionnaires were then sorted, coded and entered into a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 20) to aid in analysis of inferential statistics and descriptive statistics. The qualitative data was analyzed through content and thematic analysis.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The survey comprised of both employers and employees working in different establishments dispensing hospitality related services. The proportion of the employees was 54% while that of the employers was 46%. The respondents of the study were both male and female for both employers and employees. About 53% of the employees were female and 47% were male. The proportion for the employers was 39% female and 61% male. The employers are mainly working in hotels of different stars and other institutions across the country as well as other hospitality related establishments such as conference centres and hospitals among many more. The results of the study indicate that majority of employees (69%) did not disclose the current rating of the hotels they were working in but a few indicated the current rating of the hotels as follows; 12 were working with 3-star hotels, 10 others with 4-star hotels and 13 others with 5- star hotels in different



places within the country such as Nairobi, Mombasa, Naivasha, Nakuru and Machakos among other places. Other employees indicated that they were working in conference centres such as KICC, others in universities such as USIU and other institutions such as KSMS, while others were in cleaning companies and hospitals.

The respondents hold different positions in hospitality and related establishments. According to the results however, 21% of the employees did not disclose their position. A bigger number worked as guest room attendants (GRAs) in hotels at 15%, 11% worked as laundry attendants, 6% as machine operators, 2% as support staff while others indicated that they were still looking for jobs and others were still doing internship in hotels after completing their courses hoping to be employed. The results further showed that 1% were working as executive housekeepers and also 1% as assistant executive housekeepers and 4% worked as supervisors. On the other hand, the employers held high position ranging from supervisors to general managers and directors. The majority of the respondents were executive housekeepers at 32% followed by floor supervisors at 25%. A proportion of 63% of the employers at hospitality establishments were alumni of Utalii College who had done various courses such as Front Office, Housekeeping and Laundry Operations, Hotel Management, Service Basic and Advanced courses, and also short among others. This high number of alumni who are employers in the industry shows KUC is still a leader and highly rated in the hospitality industry in Kenya. The results further show that employers took the courses in 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and others recently in 2017.

After completing their short courses, a few respondents (17%) took other short courses in KUC to enhance their knowledge and skills. Such courses included front office operations, housekeeping supervision, kitchen operations, laundry techniques, refresher courses in housekeeping, supervisory management, customer care and tours and travels courses among others. The respondents who particularly had not any other course were further asked whether they had any intention of studying in KUC in future by taking any other courses and a majority of them (91%) expressed their willingness. The result shows that approximately 75% of the employers were aware of the short courses offered at Kenya Utalii College. The results further indicate that the employers had knowledge of short courses in various departments such as kitchen operations, front desk operations, cake making, F&B control, food production, food beverage service and sales, travel and tourism, laundry techniques, housekeeping, housekeeping and laundry techniques. However, a majority of employers from coast and western were not aware of the short courses across the KUC departments but were aware of other programs such as refresher courses, MDPs and NTC.

Employers who took part in this study indicated that most of their staff members working under them had taken courses in KUC. The results show that 88% of the employers had staff members who had trained in housekeeping techniques in KUC, 79% of the employers had employees who had done laundry techniques while 82% of the employers had staff in their premises who had undertaken housekeeping and laundry techniques in KUC implying that high number of students who had trained on the three short courses were working in the hospitality industry. The average number of staff from Utalii College were 6 per each employer with others with as many as 15. Some staff members had trained on short courses from other institutions apart from KUC. However, 95% of those who had no staff from Utalii College expressed willingness of considering staff members from the college in future citing that they would wish to work with trained staff members from a reputable institution, others indicated that they would provide them with some attachment and later consider them for jobs. Some employers (5%) indicated they would not

employ trainees who had taken short courses from KUC for a number of reasons. Some from highly rated hotels expressed caution that they would rather employ fully trained personnel than somebody who only took a short course, some of the employers stated that they had employed some of the KUC trainees and they worked with little interest, others expressed concerns that they were not detailed and required more detailed and highly trained personnel to match the required standards.

### **Operational skills and knowledge on Housekeeping Techniques in the industry by employees**

The results showed that 70% of the staff indicated that they were able to apply various housekeeping tasks and procedures very well in the industry. A proportion of 62% of the employees indicated that they were able to identify and use various cleaning use equipment and materials in their operations. The results showed that 58% were knowledgeable and able to use various cleaning agents used in cleaning various surfaces within the establishments. Personal and environmental hygiene was much applied at 78% and application of various cleaning methods was 67%. Application of hygienic personal and environmental practices (59%) and knowledge on various cleaning methods in guestrooms and public areas (51%). Understanding safety hazards and their measures and ability to identify various security risks and their measures was 59% and 55% respectively while the ability to provide customer care and handle various guest complaints was rated at 58%. The results showed that 47% of the employees indicated that they were able to identify various floorings and other surfaces.

**Table 1: Operational skills & knowledge in housekeeping techniques by employees**

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
Knowledge and application of various housekeeping tasks and procedures	0%	0%	0%	30%	70%
Identification and use of various cleaning equipment and materials	0%	2%	4%	32%	62%
Knowledge and use of various cleaning agents/chemicals	0%	2%	2%	38%	58%
Application of hygienic practices-personal & environmental hygiene	0%	0%	0%	22%	78%
Application of various cleaning methods in guestroom and public areas	0%	4%	0%	29%	67%
Identification of various floorings and other surfaces	0%	12%	4%	37%	47%
Understanding of various safety hazards and preventive measures	0%	6%	6%	29%	59%
Ability to identify security risks/threats and preventive measures	0%	8%	2%	35%	55%
Ability to provide customer care and handle various guest complaints	0%	13%	2%	27%	58%

The results from the employers on the operational skills and knowledge of the employees give varied results. The results showed that 64% indicated that the employees are good on knowledge

and application of various tasks and procedures. On the aspect of identification and use of various cleaning equipment and materials, the results was at good 49%. The aspect of knowledge and use of various cleaning agents/chemicals was also rated as good at 49%. The aspect of application of hygienic practices indicated good at 49%. Application of various cleaning methods in guestroom and public areas was rated as good at 61% same as that of identification of various floorings and other surfaces. The aspects of understanding safety hazards, ability to identify security risks and ability to provide customer care and handle various guest complaints were rated as good at 55%, 42% and 55% respectfully.

**Table 2: Operational skills & knowledge on housekeeping techniques in the industry by employers**

Aspects	Poor	Fair	Not Sure	Good	Very Good
Knowledge and application of various housekeeping tasks and procedures	0%	12%	0%	64%	24%
Identification and use of various cleaning equipment and materials	0%	9%	3%	49%	39%
Knowledge and use of various cleaning agents/chemicals	0%	12%	0%	49%	39%
Application of hygienic practices-personal & environmental hygiene	0%	12%	9%	49%	30%
Application of various cleaning methods in guestroom and public areas	3%	3%	6%	61%	27%
Identification of various floorings and other surfaces	3%	12%	12%	61%	12%
Understanding of various safety hazards and preventive measures	0%	15%	15%	55%	15%
Ability to identify security risks/threats and preventive measures	3%	12%	33%	42%	9%
Ability to provide customer care and handle various guest complaints	3%	6%	15%	55%	21%

Table 3 shows that the employees' were very much knowledgeable and were able to apply various laundry tasks and processes at 90% and identify and use laundry machines and equipment at 82%. Further, the results indicated that they had of Knowledge and could use various cleaning agents at 77% and are able to control and conserve of water & energy 72%. The ability to take proper care of linen, understand plant safety, identify security risks, ability to provide customer care & handle complaints and Knowledge of various types of textiles were rated at 86%, 82%, 72%, 76% and 72% respectively. Other aspects on laundry techniques that the employees indicated were able to perform included; ability to sort and clean the textile at right temperatures and detergents for good end products, ability to classify linen according to colour, control of movement on linen, knowledge of dry cleaning, handling of revenue documents such as receipts in the laundry section, handling guest laundry and stubborn stains among others.

**Table 3: Operational skills & knowledge in laundry techniques in the industry by employees**

Aspects	Poor	Fair	Not Sure	Good	Very Good
Knowledge and application of various laundry tasks and processes	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%
Identification and use of various laundry equipment and machines	0%	0%	0%	18%	82%
Knowledge and use of various cleaning agents/chemicals	0%	0%	4%	20%	77%
Proper control of water & energy resources and conservation	0%	0%	2%	26%	72%
Proper use and care of linen	0%	0%	4%	10%	86%
Understanding of plant safety and preventive measures	0%	0%	6%	12%	82%
Ability to identify security risks/threats in the laundry	0%	0%	2%	26%	72%
Ability to provide customer care and handle complaints	0%	0%	0%	24%	76%
Knowledge of various types of textiles	0%	2%	2%	24%	72%

Table 4 shows the results of the study based on the perspective of the employers on Operational Skills & Knowledge in Laundry Techniques of the employees in the Industry. Knowledge and application of various laundry tasks and processes was rated as good with 57% while employees' ability to Identify and use various laundry equipment and machines was 46%. Knowledge and use of various cleaning agents/chemicals was lower at 39% and ability to properly control of water & energy resources and conservation resources was at 50%. Proper use and care of linen as well as Understanding of plant safety and preventive measures were both rated at 64%. Ability to identify security risks/ in the laundry and Ability to provide customer care and handle complaints was rated at 50% and 61% respectively. Knowledge of various types of textiles was rated lowly at 29% and ability to handle guest laundry was 56%.

**Table 4: Operational skills & knowledge in laundry techniques in the industry by employers**

Aspects	Poor	Fair	Not Sure	Good	Very Good
Knowledge and application of various laundry tasks and processes	0%	4%	7%	57%	32%
Identification and use of various laundry equipment and machines	4%	0%	0%	46%	36%
Knowledge and use of various cleaning agents/chemicals	4%	7%	14%	39%	36%
Proper control of water & energy resources and conservation	7%	7%	14%	50%	21%
Proper use and care of linen	4%	7%	7%	64%	18%
Understanding of plant safety and preventive measures	0%	4%	18%	64%	14%

Ability to identify security risks/threats in the laundry	4%	14%	14%	50%	18%
Ability to provide customer care and handle complaints	4%	4%	11%	61%	21%
Knowledge of various types of textiles	4%	14%	2%	43%	29%
Ability to handle guest laundry	4%	7%	4%	56%	30%

Table 5 shows that 82% of the employees were very knowledgeable on the various housekeeping and laundry tasks and procedures while 77% indicated that they could apply various cleaning methods and 73% could identify use various cleaning equipment and materials. Those who indicated their Knowledge and use of various cleaning agents were 73% and 82% indicated they had the ability to give customer care and to handle complaints. Ability to handle guest laundry was rated at 68% and their ability to understanding of various safety hazards and preventive measures in the industry were 77%. Ability to identify different floorings and other surfaces and ability to use and care for linen and other textiles were both at 55%. Ability to identify security risks/threats in was rated at 68% but ability to ensure conservation and apply control measures of energy, water and other resources was very low at 38%.

**Table 5: Operational skills & knowledge in housekeeping and laundry techniques by employees**

Aspects	Poor	Fair	Not Sure	Good	Very Good
Knowledge and application of various housekeeping and laundry tasks and procedures	0%	0%	0%	18%	82%
Application of various cleaning methods in guestroom and public areas and laundry	0%	0%	0%	23%	77%
Identification and use of various cleaning equipment and materials in housekeeping and laundry	0%	5%	0%	23%	73%
Knowledge and use of various cleaning agents/chemicals in housekeeping and laundry	0%	0%	5%	23%	73%
Ability to give customer care and to handle complaints	0%	0%	0%	18%	82%
Ability to handle guest laundry	0%	0%	0%	32%	68%
Understanding of various safety hazards and preventive measures in housekeeping and laundry	0%	0%	0%	23%	77%
Ability to identify different floorings and other surfaces	0%	0%	0%	46%	55%
Ability to use and care for linen and other textiles	0%	5%	5%	32%	55%
Ability to ensure conservation and apply control measures of energy, water and other resources	0.0%	4.1%	4.1%	57.1%	34.7%
Ability to identify security risks/threats in housekeeping and laundry	0%	5%	0%	27%	68%

In comparison to the employees' high rating on most aspects, the employers' results indicated low rating on most of the aspects of operational skills and knowledge. Knowledge and application of

various housekeeping, laundry tasks and procedures was rated at 53% compared to 82% of employees. Application of various cleaning methods in guestroom and public areas and laundry was at 59% in comparison to the employees rating of 77%. Identification and use of various cleaning equipment and materials in housekeeping and laundry at 64% and for employees was 73%. Other aspects included knowledge and use of various cleaning agents (62%), ability to give customer care and handle complaints (66%), ability to handle guest laundry (52%), understanding of various safety hazards (52%), ability to identify different floorings and other surfaces was low at (41%), ability to use and care for linen and other textiles (62%), ability to ensure conservation and control various resources (67%) while the ability to identify security risks or threats was rated at 41% in comparison to the employee rating of 27%.

**Table 6: Operational skills & knowledge in housekeeping and laundry techniques by employers**

Aspects	Poor	Fair	Not Sure	Good	Very Good
Knowledge and application of various housekeeping and laundry tasks and procedures	0%	7%	3%	53%	37%
Application of various cleaning methods in guestroom and public areas and laundry	3%	3%	10%	59%	24%
Identification and use of various cleaning equipment and materials in housekeeping and laundry	0%	4%	7%	64%	25%
Knowledge and use of various cleaning agents/chemicals in housekeeping and laundry	0%	3%	4%	62%	21%
Ability to give customer care and to handle complaints	0%	7%	14%	66%	14%
Ability to handle guest laundry	3%	3%	17%	52%	24%
Understanding of various safety hazards and preventive measures in housekeeping and laundry	0%	14%	24%	52%	10%
Ability to identify different floorings and other surfaces	3%	10%	24%	41%	21%
Ability to use and care for linen and other textiles	3%	7%	10%	62%	17%
Ability to ensure conservation and apply control measures of energy, water and other resources	0%	7%	7%	67%	19%
Ability to identify security risks/threats in housekeeping and laundry	3%	17%	3%	41%	7%

The employers provided information on the quality of the service provided by the staff they had in their premises. The results show that 57% of the employers had reliable staff members, 54% who performed well in responsiveness and 57% had employees who did well on the virtue of assurance. A proportion of 51% and 57% indicated that they had employees who did well on empathy and tangibility. The results shows on aspects of quality, the employees did well across most of the employers in the industry.

**Table 7: Quality of service delivery**

Aspects	Poor	Fair	Not sure	Good	Very good
Reliability	3%	3%	6%	31%	57%
Responsiveness	3%	6%	3%	54%	34%
Assurance	3%	9%	11%	57%	20%
Empathy	3%	11%	9%	51%	26%
Tangibles	3%	9%	11%	57%	20%

Another aspect of performance examined in this study was professionalism of the employees. According to the results, majority of the employers had ethical staff (63%) with good communication skills (60%) full of self-motivation (60%). A substantial proportion of the employers had employees full of respect for the authority (57%) who knew personal grooming and appearances (56%) and worked with less supervision (56%) with confidence and loyalty both aspects at 54%. Further the results show that 51% of the employers had employees who were accountable and responsible. The employees had some sense of punctuality and timeliness (49%), self-discipline (46%) and had ability to relate well with the rest of the people (46%). A sizeable proportion of 44% of the employers also rated the honesty and integrity of their employees as being good. This shows that in terms of professionalism, most of the employees portrayed an amazingly outstanding professional standard in their work.

**Table 8: Professionalism in service delivery**

Aspects	Poor	Fair	Not Sure	Good	Very Good
Ethical	3%	6%	6%	63%	23%
Communication Skills	3%	11%	3%	60%	23%
Self-Motivation	6%	6%	9%	60%	20%
Respect for authority and others	3%	3%	0.0%	57%	37%
Personal grooming and appearance	3%	6%	6%	56%	29%
Working with less/no supervision	6%	9%	3%	56%	27%
Confidence	3%	9%	3%	54%	31%
Loyalty	3%	3%	9%	54%	31%
Accountability	3%	3%	9%	51%	34%
Responsibility	6%	0.0%	9%	51%	34%
Punctuality and timeliness	3%	3%	6%	49%	40%
Self-discipline	3%	3%	6%	46%	43%
Team player	3%	6%	3%	46%	43%
Integrity/honesty	3%	9%	3%	44%	41%

## SUMMARY

The findings on operational skills and knowledge in housekeeping techniques revealed that most technical and operational knowledge were well applied in the industry. Majority of the employees indicated that they were able to apply various housekeeping tasks and procedures and cleaning methods, identify and use various cleaning equipment and materials in their operations, were knowledgeable and able to use various cleaning agents and applied personal and environmental hygiene very well in the industry thus implying a positive effect of the skills taught in service delivery in the industry. The employers on their part felt that the employees were good at most aspects of the housekeeping techniques content but required more practice to master the concepts to the highest level particularly in five star hotels where the clients need top notch services. Additionally, improvement is needed in the areas where the aspects were rated as being low or moderate.

The results on operational skills and knowledge in laundry techniques by both the employees and employers are generally good as employees have knowledge of the concepts and are able to apply the knowledge in the execution of their duties and hence deliver quality and professional service. Various tasks received high rating including application of various laundry tasks and processes, identification and use of laundry machines and equipment, Knowledge and use various cleaning agents, control and conservation of water & energy and ability to take proper care of linen, understand plant safety, identify security risks, ability to provide customer care & handle complaints as well as knowledge of various types of textiles. This means that the content was not only relevant but also useful. The employers felt the employees needed to improve on certain aspects which were not performed such as: identification and use of various laundry equipment and machines, Knowledge and use of various cleaning agents/chemicals and Knowledge of various types of textiles.

The results on the combined course on housekeeping and laundry techniques was generally good as rated by both the employees and the employers but there was lower rating by employers on the application of most aspects. The findings revealed that some of the course topics were well understood and applied by the employees while a few needed improvement. The high rated were housekeeping and laundry skills, cleaning methods in guest rooms and public areas, use of cleaning equipment and materials, use of cleaning agents and chemicals, handling of customer care and complaints, guest laundry, ability to identify different floorings, linen and textiles. The employees' ability to conserve and apply control measures of energy, water and other resources was low indicating an emphasis of this aspect should be ensured when teaching. The employers felt that those who had done the combined courses needed more improvement compared to those who did either housekeeping techniques or laundry techniques alone. The reason for this was due to the fact that the course content was double but offered within the same timeline of three months.

The aspects of performance of employees that implied high service delivery was rated as good by the employers. On quality of service delivery, the results showed that all the aspects; reliable, responsiveness, assurance, empathy as well as tangibles were rated highly. In terms of their professionalism, the employers cited good communications skills, self-motivation, personal grooming, confidence and loyalty. Some of the employers lauded the accountability of their employees, punctuality and honesty. Other professional standards portrayed by the employees



included ability to go extra mile to train others, passionate, self-checkers, ability to meet deadlines, readiness to learn and maintaining good working relationships.

The practical aspect of the course was satisfactory to most of the respondents but there was some recommendations that new equipment be used during practical to equip learners with new real experience in the industry. The trainees of the short courses were very much employable in the industry while the attachment was good and useful in training. Suggestions were made to have the attachment be made outside the college to equip learners with new set of skills and exposure in the industry.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the KUC Alumni are dominant in the hospitality industry since they occupy and have big presence in the industry as both employers and as employees. There is also demand and willingness to take KUC short courses in the market. Most of the employers in the hospitality industry were aware of the short courses offered at Utalli College. The programs are well taken in the industry thus it is advisable that KUC continues offering the courses. There was also a high rating on; reliability, responsiveness to clients, empathy and assurance as well as tangibles in the industry. Utalii-trained staff are professional and perform well in the industry and the attitude aspects of the training is applied in the industry. The curriculum for short courses was acceptable to a majority of the industry players. The delivery of the short courses in terms of teaching was good. The lectures were good with relevant experience in skills and knowledge to deliver the programs. The amount of fees paid for the short courses were affordable to majority of the respondents. The mode of payment was however suggested to be made favorable.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study recommended that, there is need for KUC to continue producing impactful students in the industry. A need for KUC to introduce or retain courses which are new and exciting to remain relevant in the market. It is suggested that more campaign and awareness drives be established by KUC to market the courses offered at the college with an aim of increasing awareness and possible uptake of the courses across the country. KUC should continue offering the courses but enhances the delivery and the quality of the courses offered as suggested elsewhere in this study. The attitudinal teaching by Utalii-trained staff should continually be taught to instill the necessary values that will ensure the graduates succeed in the industry. It is recommended by the students to KUC that the names of the courses be changed to avoid confusing the employers when recruiting the full time students. The combined course to be abolished or the duration and the content to be increased. There should be uninterrupted supply of steams and water to enhance provision of guest services. The structure of the courses can also be restructured to have more practical sessions and incorporate skills and knowledge in decorations and customer care. The rude lecturers to change their attitudes and be more accommodative and focus on timely delivery of the programs. It is suggested that payment options be made convenient to allow many people enroll for the programs.

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