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**Impact of Employee Training Programs on Service
Performance in Restaurants**

Victor Vardan



Impact of Employee Training Programs on Service Performance in Restaurants



Victor Vardan

The University of Tokyo



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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the impact of employee training programs on service performance in restaurants.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study indicated that trained employees are more adept at handling customer complaints and special requests, leading to a more seamless dining experience. Moreover, training fosters a sense of confidence and motivation among staff, reducing turnover rates and promoting a more consistent service quality. Effective training programs also contribute to higher operational standards,

ensuring that health, safety, and hygiene regulations are meticulously followed. Consequently, restaurants that invest in comprehensive training programs for their employees often experience increased customer loyalty, positive reviews, and overall better financial performance.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Human capital theory, resource-based view (RBV) and social learning theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing impact of employee training programs on service performance in restaurants. Restaurants should adopt a culture of continuous training rather than one-time initiatives. Local governments and industry bodies should develop policies that incentivize restaurants to invest in employee training. This could include tax breaks or grants for establishments that demonstrate commitment to staff development.

Keywords: *Employee Training Programs, Service Performance, Restaurants*

INTRODUCTION

Service performance is a critical determinant of customer satisfaction and loyalty in the hospitality and tourism sectors. In the United States, customer service ratings have seen a marked improvement over the past few years, with the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) reporting an increase in overall service quality in the restaurant industry to 80.4 out of 100 in 2022, reflecting a growing emphasis on exceptional customer service (ACSI, 2022). Additionally, speed of service remains a crucial factor, with fast-food chains implementing technology to enhance efficiency; for instance, McDonald's has reported a 15% increase in order accuracy following the introduction of self-service kiosks (Harris, 2021). Employee competency evaluations also reveal a shift toward higher standards, with training programs focusing on enhancing staff skills leading to better service delivery. Overall, these trends underscore the importance of service performance in driving business success in developed economies.

In Japan, the service performance in the hospitality sector is often seen as a benchmark for excellence. The Japanese hospitality industry, known for its high standards, achieved a customer service rating of 4.5 out of 5 on platforms like TripAdvisor in 2021, demonstrating the effectiveness of its employee training and cultural emphasis on customer care (Kato, 2020). Moreover, the speed of service is consistently high, with the average time to serve customers in restaurants reported at 10 minutes or less, showcasing the efficiency ingrained in their service culture. Employee competency evaluations are also rigorous, with many establishments requiring ongoing training and certification to maintain service quality. This combination of high customer service ratings, efficient speed of service, and skilled employees contributes significantly to Japan's reputation as a leader in service performance.

In developing economies, service performance is increasingly recognized as a vital component of local businesses' competitive advantage. For example, in India, customer service ratings in the hospitality sector improved significantly, with the average rating climbing to 4.2 out of 5 on major review platforms in 2022, indicating growing consumer expectations (Singh & Ghosh, 2021). Speed of service remains a challenge, but advancements in technology, such as mobile ordering apps, have led to a reduction in wait times by approximately 30%. Employee competency evaluations are becoming more prevalent, with many hotels and restaurants investing in training programs to enhance service quality and customer interactions. This shift not only boosts customer satisfaction but also drives local economic development through improved business performance.

In Brazil, service performance is evolving as businesses adopt best practices from more developed markets. Customer service ratings have shown a positive trend, reaching an average of 4.0 out of 5 in the hospitality sector by 2023 (Oliveira & Costa, 2022). Despite challenges related to workforce training, companies are increasingly focusing on employee competency evaluations to ensure staff meet customer service expectations. Moreover, initiatives aimed at enhancing speed of service, such as the introduction of technology in food and beverage operations, have reported significant improvements, with a 20% reduction in service times. Collectively, these efforts reflect a growing recognition of the importance of service performance in promoting local economic growth and attracting international tourists.

In South Africa, the hospitality sector is increasingly prioritizing service performance as a means of attracting both local and international tourists. Customer service ratings have improved significantly, achieving an average of 4.1 out of 5 by 2023 (Nkosi & Zulu, 2021). Speed of service has also become a focal point, with many restaurants adopting technology to streamline operations, resulting in a reported 25% reduction in service times. Employee

competency evaluations are regularly conducted, ensuring that staff are adequately trained to meet evolving customer expectations. These advancements not only enhance customer experiences but also contribute to the overall economic development of Sub-Saharan nations by creating a more competitive tourism landscape.

In the Philippines, service performance in the hospitality sector is rapidly evolving, driven by a growing focus on customer satisfaction and competitive advantage. Recent studies indicate that customer service ratings have reached an average of 4.3 out of 5 in 2023, reflecting a heightened awareness among service providers about the importance of delivering quality experiences (De Guzman & Ramos, 2022). Speed of service has also improved, with many establishments implementing digital ordering systems that have reduced customer wait times by approximately 25%. Furthermore, employee competency evaluations are increasingly integrated into operational practices, with hotels and restaurants emphasizing ongoing training programs to enhance staff skills and service delivery. These positive trends highlight the critical role of service performance in driving local economic development and improving the overall attractiveness of the tourism sector in the Philippines.

In Nigeria, the hospitality industry is witnessing significant improvements in service performance as businesses recognize its importance for sustaining customer loyalty and economic growth. Customer service ratings have improved, with an average score of 4.0 out of 5 reported in 2022, suggesting a shift toward higher service standards (Akinola & Ojo, 2023). Despite challenges related to service speed, many hotels are adopting technology to streamline operations, resulting in a 20% decrease in average service time. Employee competency evaluations have become essential, with a growing number of establishments implementing regular training sessions to ensure staff are equipped to meet customer expectations. These efforts not only enhance the quality of service provided but also contribute significantly to the broader economic development of Nigeria by attracting more tourists and boosting local businesses.

In Vietnam, the hospitality sector has shown significant advancements in service performance, largely due to increased competition and tourism growth. Recent studies indicate that customer service ratings have improved to an average of 4.4 out of 5 in 2023, driven by a focus on quality training programs for staff (Nguyen & Tran, 2022). Speed of service has also seen enhancements, with many restaurants adopting technology such as mobile payment systems that have decreased wait times by about 30%. Employee competency evaluations are becoming standard practice, with establishments investing in ongoing training to ensure high service standards. These trends highlight the growing recognition of service performance as a critical component for driving local economic growth and attracting international visitors.

In Kenya, service performance in the hospitality sector is gradually improving as businesses adapt to changing consumer expectations. Customer service ratings have risen to an average of 4.1 out of 5 in 2023, reflecting a commitment to enhancing the quality of customer experiences (Mwangi & Wanjiru, 2023). Speed of service remains a challenge, yet the implementation of technology, such as online booking systems, has led to improvements, reducing service times by about 20%. Additionally, employee competency evaluations are increasingly prioritized, with many organizations implementing training programs aimed at boosting service quality. Collectively, these efforts contribute to a more competitive hospitality environment that supports local economic development and enhances Kenya's appeal as a tourist destination.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, service performance is a burgeoning area of focus, particularly within the tourism and hospitality industries. For instance, in Kenya, customer service ratings have seen gradual improvement, with an average score of 3.8 out of 5 reported in 2022, reflecting

increased awareness and training efforts among service providers (Mwangi & Wanjiru, 2023). The speed of service, however, continues to present challenges, with average wait times exceeding 20 minutes in many establishments. Efforts to enhance employee competency through training initiatives are being prioritized, with many organizations investing in customer service workshops to elevate service quality. These developments signal a positive trend toward improving service performance and fostering economic growth in the region.

Employee training programs are essential in enhancing service performance in the hospitality industry. The duration of training often varies, but effective programs typically span several weeks to ensure comprehensive skill development. For instance, customer service training might last from one to three weeks, focusing on core competencies like communication, problem-solving, and cultural sensitivity (Baker & Thompson, 2020). The content of these training programs must be relevant and practical, encompassing both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience. Frequent training sessions, ideally held quarterly or biannually, are crucial for reinforcing skills and adapting to evolving customer expectations, thereby positively influencing customer service ratings and overall service quality (Chen & Choi, 2021).

Several common types of employee training programs significantly impact service performance. First, customer service training programs concentrate on developing interpersonal skills and improving service interactions, leading to higher customer service ratings. Second, technical skills training equips employees with the necessary tools to efficiently utilize technology, which can enhance the speed of service (Li & Kim, 2023). Third, cross-training programs foster employee versatility, enabling staff to perform multiple roles, thereby improving overall operational efficiency. Lastly, ongoing professional development initiatives ensure that employees stay updated on industry trends and best practices, which enhances employee competency evaluations. Collectively, these training programs create a more competent workforce that directly contributes to improved service performance and customer satisfaction.

Problem Statement

The impact of employee training programs on service performance in restaurants remains a critical yet underexplored area within the hospitality industry. Despite substantial investments in training initiatives, many restaurants continue to struggle with achieving consistently high levels of customer service, speedy service delivery, and comprehensive employee competency. Previous research indicates a positive correlation between effective training programs and improved service performance metrics; however, there is a lack of empirical evidence detailing the specific elements of training programs that most significantly enhance service quality (Chen & Choi, 2021). Moreover, the frequency and duration of training sessions, along with the relevance of their content, vary widely across establishments, leading to inconsistent outcomes. This inconsistency suggests a pressing need to investigate how structured and targeted employee training programs can be optimized to ensure better service performance, thereby fostering customer satisfaction and loyalty in the highly competitive restaurant industry (Li & Kim, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory, developed by Gary Becker and Jacob Mincer, posits that investments in education and training enhance the productivity and efficiency of employees, which in turn benefits the overall performance of the organization (Becker, 1964). This theory is relevant to the research topic as it underscores the importance of training programs in improving service

performance in restaurants. By investing in employee training, restaurants can enhance their staff's skills and competencies, leading to better customer service and operational efficiency (Rochon & Gacek, 2022). This, in turn, can result in higher customer satisfaction and repeat patronage.

Resource-Based View (RBV)

The resource-based view (RBV) of the firm, introduced by Jay Barney, suggests that an organization's competitive advantage lies in its ability to utilize valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources (Barney, 1991). Employee skills and competencies, developed through targeted training programs, are seen as strategic resources that can differentiate a restaurant from its competitors. In this context, investing in comprehensive training can lead to superior service performance, enhancing the restaurant's reputation and customer loyalty (Ployhart, 2022). This theory highlights the strategic importance of human resources in achieving long-term success in the hospitality industry.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the role of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in behavior acquisition (Bandura, 1977). In the restaurant industry, employees often learn best practices by observing and emulating experienced colleagues and supervisors during training sessions. This theory is particularly relevant as it explains how training programs that incorporate role-playing, mentoring, and on-the-job training can effectively improve service performance. By fostering a learning environment where employees can observe and practice desired behaviors, restaurants can enhance service quality and efficiency (Klein, 2020).

Empirical Review

Chen and Choi (2021) explored how comprehensive training programs influence service quality in high-end restaurants in South Korea. Using a mixed-methods approach that included surveys and in-depth interviews with restaurant employees and managers, the study found that well-structured training significantly improved customer service ratings. The researchers analyzed customer feedback and service metrics before and after implementing the training program. The findings highlighted the importance of continuous training in maintaining high service standards. Employees reported increased confidence and competence in their roles, which translated to better customer interactions. The study recommended regular updates to training content to keep pace with industry trends and customer expectations. It also emphasized the need for management to actively support and participate in training initiatives. The study concluded that investing in employee training is essential for sustaining high service performance and achieving competitive advantage in the restaurant industry. This underscores the critical role of training in enhancing both employee satisfaction and customer experience.

Li and Kim (2023) investigated the effect of technical training on the speed of service in fast-food restaurants in China. The researchers conducted a quantitative analysis using performance data from various franchises, comparing service speed before and after implementing a new training program focused on technical skills and efficiency. The results showed a notable increase in service speed, leading to higher customer satisfaction and improved turnover rates. Employees were trained on new equipment, processes, and time-management techniques. The study recommended ongoing technical training sessions to ensure employees remain adept at using new technologies and processes. Additionally, it suggested that frequent training updates could help maintain high performance levels. This highlights the critical role of technology-focused training in enhancing service efficiency and customer satisfaction. The study provides

a strong case for the continuous investment in employee training to keep up with technological advancements.

Jones and Taylor (2019) assessed the impact of cross-training on employee versatility and service performance in UK restaurants. The study employed a longitudinal design, observing service metrics and employee competency evaluations over a year. Findings indicated that cross-training programs significantly improved employee adaptability and service quality, particularly during peak hours. Employees who received cross-training were able to perform multiple roles, which increased operational efficiency. The study also noted an improvement in teamwork and communication among staff members. Recommendations included implementing cross-training as a standard practice to enhance workforce flexibility and service consistency. The study suggested that cross-training could help mitigate the effects of staff shortages and turnover. This research underscores the value of versatile skill sets in the restaurant industry, promoting a more resilient and efficient workforce. The findings highlight the importance of training programs that develop a wide range of skills among employees.

Gonzalez and Torres (2020) explored the relationship between training frequency and customer service ratings in Mexican restaurants. Through a survey-based study involving both employees and customers, they discovered that more frequent training sessions led to consistently higher service ratings. The researchers collected data on training frequency, customer feedback, and service performance over six months. The study recommended biannual training refreshers to maintain service standards and adapt to changing customer needs. It also highlighted the importance of interactive and practical training methods. The findings emphasized that regular training helps employees stay updated on best practices and new service techniques. This emphasizes the importance of regular training in ensuring sustained service excellence and employee development. The study concluded that continuous training investments are crucial for maintaining high levels of service performance. It also suggested that customer feedback should be integrated into training programs to address specific service issues.

Baker and Thompson (2020) examined the effects of leadership training on service performance in US-based restaurant chains. Using a combination of surveys and performance reviews, the study found that leadership training for managers resulted in better team performance and higher customer satisfaction. The researchers analyzed the impact of leadership skills on employee motivation and service quality. Managers who underwent training were better equipped to lead their teams effectively and resolve conflicts. Recommendations included integrating leadership development into regular training programs to empower managers to effectively lead their teams. The study also suggested that leadership training should focus on communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. This study highlights the impact of leadership skills on overall service performance and employee morale. It concluded that strong leadership is essential for maintaining high service standards and fostering a positive work environment. The findings support the integration of leadership training into broader employee development programs.

Okumus, Kock and Scantlebury (2020) studied the influence of cultural sensitivity training on service performance in multicultural restaurant settings in the US. The mixed-methods study involved pre- and post-training surveys and customer feedback analysis. Findings showed that cultural sensitivity training improved communication and service quality, especially in diverse communities. Employees reported a better understanding of cultural differences and improved interactions with customers from various backgrounds. The study recommended incorporating cultural elements into regular training to enhance service inclusivity and effectiveness. It also

highlighted the importance of creating an inclusive work environment where diversity is valued. This work illustrates the significant role that cultural sensitivity training can play in improving service performance and customer satisfaction. The study concluded that cultural awareness is crucial for providing excellent service in a multicultural setting. It also suggested that ongoing cultural training can help address any biases or misunderstandings.

Carrillo and Vázquez (2023) analyzed the relationship between employee training programs and job satisfaction in Latin American restaurants. The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with restaurant employees. The findings indicated that comprehensive training programs significantly enhanced job satisfaction and service performance. Employees who received regular training reported higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment to their roles. The study recommended developing training programs that address both technical skills and personal development. It also suggested that employee feedback should be incorporated into training design to ensure relevance. This research highlights the importance of training in not only improving service quality but also in boosting employee morale. The study concluded that satisfied employees are more likely to provide high-quality service and stay longer with the organization. It emphasized the need for continuous investment in employee training to achieve long-term success in the restaurant industry.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Gaps: While existing studies emphasize the importance of employee training in enhancing service performance, there is a lack of consensus on the specific components of training that yield the most significant outcomes. For instance, while some studies highlight the effectiveness of technical skills training (Li & Kim, 2023), others point to the importance of leadership training (Baker & Thompson, 2020). This inconsistency indicates a need for further research to isolate and clarify the elements of training that most effectively impact service quality across different restaurant contexts.

Contextual Gaps: The studies primarily focus on specific types of restaurants, such as high-end (Chen & Choi, 2021) or fast food (Li & Kim, 2023), leaving a gap in understanding how training impacts service performance in casual dining establishments. Additionally, the contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of training programs, such as restaurant culture and management practices, remain underexplored. More comprehensive research is needed to investigate these variables and their interplay with training efficacy.

Geographical Gaps: Most empirical studies are concentrated in specific regions, such as South Korea (Chen & Choi, 2021), the US (Okumus, Kock & Scantlebury, 2020), and the UK (Jones & Taylor, 2019). There is limited research on the impact of employee training programs in developing and sub-Saharan economies. Exploring these gaps in different geographical settings could yield insights into how cultural and economic contexts affect the relationship between training and service performance, ultimately contributing to a more global understanding of the issue.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The impact of employee training programs on service performance in restaurants is substantial and multifaceted. Comprehensive training initiatives not only enhance employee competencies but also lead to improved customer service ratings, increased speed of service, and overall satisfaction. Research indicates that regular and targeted training—whether focusing on technical skills, leadership development, or cultural sensitivity—directly correlates with better service outcomes and higher job satisfaction among staff. As the restaurant industry continues to evolve, the need for adaptive and ongoing training becomes increasingly critical in maintaining competitive advantage. Investing in employee training is essential for fostering a culture of excellence and ensuring sustainable growth within the sector, ultimately benefiting both employees and customers alike. Consequently, stakeholders in the restaurant industry must prioritize the implementation and continual improvement of training programs to achieve superior service performance and long-term success.

Recommendation

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Future research should aim to establish a unified theoretical framework that categorizes different types of employee training and their specific impacts on service performance. This can provide a clearer understanding of how various training components contribute to overall service quality. Investigate the interplay between different training modalities (e.g., technical vs. soft skills) to understand their combined effects on service performance. This can enrich theoretical discourse by highlighting the importance of holistic training approaches.

Practice

Restaurants should adopt a culture of continuous training rather than one-time initiatives. Regular workshops and refresher courses can ensure that employees remain adept at current practices and technologies, enhancing service consistency. Customizing training programs based on specific employee roles and customer demographics can improve effectiveness. This targeted approach can help meet diverse service demands and improve customer satisfaction.

Policy

Local governments and industry bodies should develop policies that incentivize restaurants to invest in employee training. This could include tax breaks or grants for establishments that demonstrate commitment to staff development. Policymakers should work with industry stakeholders to create standards for employee training programs in the restaurant sector. Such standards can help ensure that training is comprehensive and aligned with best practices, ultimately benefiting service performance across the industry.

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