



## Role of Online Training on Service Delivery of Waiters in Licensed Hotels in Nairobi County.

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### Abstract

*There are challenges facing waiters in the hotel industry which require training for them to get skills for service delivery. During the COVID-19 pandemic period, people were not allowed to have physical contact with one another and waiters were no exception. People started working at home, and these called for online training needs for various organizations including the hotel industry. There is limited literature about the online training done purposely for waiters justifying the area to be explored through research. The study focused on online training and service delivery to Waiters. Consequently, it purposes to model the Role of online training on Service Delivery of Waiters in licensed hotels in Nairobi City County. The specific objective was to establish a model of online training and service delivery of waiters in licensed hotels in Nairobi County during Covid 19 seasons. Subsequently, the research method was a convergent parallel design which entails that the researcher concurrently conducts the quantitative and qualitative approach of research methodology. There were 71 hotels targeted with a target population of 1300 waiters', and 260 supervisors which were 20 % of the population of the study but the response was (N=242) out of the expected 260. The data was collected by sending online questionnaires (Using Google Forms). IBM SPSS software version 21 was used to clean, present and analyze data. The variables were modeled using a regression model to establish the relationship between the variables. The results showed that there was a positive contribution of technical skills (B= 0.541) and interpersonal skills (B= 0.032) acquired during online training to the service delivery of the waiters. However, there was a negative relationship between conceptual skills (B= -.206) and service delivery. The study outcomes conclude that technical skills and interpersonal skills were required at the operation level than conceptual skills in enhancing service delivery. Therefore, the training department should only focus on the delivery of technical and interpersonal skills when conducting online training.*

**Keywords:** Service delivery, Online Training, Conceptual skills, Interpersonal skills, and Conceptual skills

### INTRODUCTION

As a result, online training is defined as "the process of organizing a procedural technological system for people to learn and acquire skills and knowledge for a specific

purpose" (Mingyue et al., 2020). As a result, it entails teaching, learning, and informing processes and activities primarily aimed at achieving the minimum required threshold in areas such as understanding, abilities, perception, and attitudes required to maximize service delivery (Mingyue et al., 2020). Companies that use an online platform for employee training have a better chance of achieving business and financial returns because their employees were inspired, empowered, and motivated (Bawa, 2016). Few businesses have integrated online training into their operations. Mingyue discovered that in the twenty-first century, some industries still prefer traditional training in African countries (Mingyue et al., 2020). Aside from the scarcity of information about online training and service delivery in hospitality publications. The sector has faced difficult times, with the Covid-19 pandemic affecting business trends and performance (Gursoy & Chi, 2020).

Correspondently Martins and Ledimo (2015) define service delivery as the actual provision of services and products to customers. Service delivery and business growth are linked in terms of growth and meeting customer expectations. When quality was provided, there was a possibility of increased sales and repeat business (Martins & Ledimo, 2015). The service concept explains the "how" and "what" of the service process and design, as well as the proper link between customer needs and the company's strategic goals and expectations. To acquire service delivery techniques, one must first go through training to reach the minimum required level.

Intangibility was a key feature of services, which means they cannot be seen or touched. Once a service was rendered, its quality can be assessed (Kukoyi & Iwuagwu, 2015). There was a need to define the role of online training for waiters in service delivery. Another study looks at robotic service delivery, but it lacks interpersonal and social skills, which causes people to eat out. There were specific job requirements in the hospitality industry that lead to effective service delivery (Hazra et al., 2017). The training was required to improve technical knowledge and keep skills sharp (Cousins et al., 2014). To be a successful hospitality service operator, service providers must have proper product knowledge of the products and processes, as well as practical interpersonal skills.

Employees in the food and beverage service provision industry have opportunities for professional development and advancement. Similarly, a career motivates employees by providing a fulfilling, exciting, and interactive field for waiters who have met the required skills such as basic and people-oriented conceptual and personal attributes (Nimri et al., 2020).

### **Problem Statement**

Correspondently The hospitality industry has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted normal hotel operations, necessitating a review of approaches needed for service delivery training to improve customer satisfaction (Gursoy & Chi, 2020). There was a gap in how to reach new employees for on-the-job training because gathering has been prohibited or limited to a small number of people. Nairobi City Hotels were also affected. Though there are numerous methods of conducting training, recent trends in rapid technological growth have resulted in a constant change in the economy of the hotel industry and societal preferences. Because of the same reason, there was a need for continuous training for hotel employees (Ibrahim, 2020). The hotel industry must adopt online training, or they will adopt and few studies and knowledge will not be established, training and learning will not take place normally in hotels, and organizations will be unable to conduct training as usual (Francis & Wamathai, 2020).

According to Gursoy and Chi (2020), various technologies in hospitality service delivery have emerged over the years as a result of the widespread adoption of the most intelligent technology. Recently, developments in artificial intelligence (AI) and social service robot technologies for service delivery have occurred, and as a result of COVID-19, the technology was required in the operations and proper online action of empowering employees for public safety reasons. On the same note, Gursoy and Chi (2020) stated that hospitality researchers needed to investigate how AI will be used in the delivery of services with links to operations, employees, and customers. New procedures are required to facilitate service delivery by waiters and hoteliers in terms of knowledge and skill acquisition (Gursoy & Chi, 2020). Following that, Gursoy and Chi (2010) included the role of online training and new methods of facilitating service delivery.

The COVID-19 crisis was hurting food and beverage operators and customers, confirming that this pandemic was unprecedented. As a result, the purpose of the study was to apply previous literature and theoretical frameworks to develop a new model of the role of online training in the service delivery framework, which was important in generating new knowledge that can provide insight into the hospitality and tourism industry and fill existing gaps (Gursoy & Chi, 2020). These studies can look into new ways of conducting training to transform service operations and delivery in response to newly emerging customer needs and desires as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Gursoy & Chi, 2020). Because there was a scarcity of empirical literature relating to online training and service delivery, this study was of critical importance in society.

### **Purpose of the Study**

To establish the role of online training on Service Delivery of Waiters in licensed hotels in Nairobi City County.

### **Specific objectives**

1. To evaluate the level of competency of online trained waiters on Service Delivery in licensed hotels in Nairobi County.

### **Research Hypothesis**

- 1) There was no relationship between technical skills impartation through online training on customer satisfaction by service delivery
- 2) There was no relationship between conceptual skills impartation through online training on customer satisfaction by service delivery
- 3) There was no relationship between interpersonal skills impartation through online training on customer satisfaction by Service Delivery

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Online Training and Service Delivery in Hospitality**

Online training connects trainees and instructors from a distance and through a channel that was not found in a single classroom. There were two approaches to online training: antecedent training and training outcome (Mingyue et al., 2020). Online training programs were beneficial because they increase employees' self-efficacy and confidence in their areas of specialization. However, the training must be tailored to the required competencies. Aside from planning, consider experiences to fill skill gaps in trainees (Mingyue et al., 2020). This study by Mingyue et al. (2020) focused on bank employees and their efficacy; while it can contribute to service delivery, it was not a field related to the hospitality industry; thus, the study applied to the hospitality industry. The training was required at the workplace and should be well planned with

clear objectives. In the same process, qualified trainers who can deliver the content as proposed to meet the desired goals must be identified. There was a need to conduct situational analysis to determine environmental training needs and approaches, as well as to develop modern training methods that were commensurate with the specific objectives of the training operations. Finally, qualified instructors were required for effective training and can help waiters increase service delivery to customers (Koc, 2020).

### **Conceptual Skills and Service Delivery**

According to Marneros et al. (2020), conceptual skills perspectives were knowledge-based, cognitively oriented, functional, attitudes, and behavior-based competencies and skills, as well as employees' motives and traits toward the job. Conceptual competencies were the ability to solve problems related to hospitality service operations in the food and beverage sector that require a specific set of skills and knowledge (Mohd S. et al, 2015). According to Weber et al.'s (2020) research, learning outcomes for hospitality students were linked to their attitudes and prior experience in the process of applying knowledge and skills within the hospitality sector. The need for an interdisciplinary approach in integrating hospitality service operations knowledge and teamwork in working together to get relevant information and effectively communicate the knowledge established, and problem-solving related to food and beverage service delivery requires cognitive skills, analyses, and finally, there was a professional mandate on the performance employees to improve operational skills and know-how (Whitelaw et al., 2015). Although seasons such as Covid-19 do not allow for one-on-one training, the skills to handle aspects of operations in the hotel industry have limited literature related to online training and service delivery.

Even though it was a requirement for quality service delivery, there was a significant gap between conceptual skills, online training, and service delivery. The hospitality industry has been linked to empathic intelligence, which aids in service delivery. The concept of conceptual skills and the context of reality has caused organizations to work on Artificial Intelligence to replace humans with robots to perform similar duties (Rosete et al., 2020). This means that waiters will still require training to operate the robots and social skills was required for human interaction, as one of the reasons people eat out (Cousins et al., 2014).

### **Technical skills and Service Delivery**

According to Cousins et al., (2014) technical skills in the food and beverage service sector include; holding a service spoon and fork and using a service spoon and fork during silver service and service at the buffet. Secondly, the process of carrying plates, setting the table, and then clearing plates from the table. Thirdly using a service salver for carrying glasses, carrying tea, and coffee services, as well as under liner (Cousins et al., 2014). Next use a service plate for carrying items to and from a table such as clean cutlery, clearing side plates and knives, crumbing down, and clearing accompaniments carrying glasses. The process of service delivery involves technical skills and practical knowledge required from the onset of mis en place to the time the guest Cousins et al., (2014) claim that technical skills in food and beverage leave the hotel (Waller, 1996). These skills, however, were also used when providing other types of service, such as carrying trays for room service or using a service salver for the bar (Cousins et al., 2014).

### **Interpersonal Skills and Service Delivery**

In Kenya, there was a skills gap in the hospitality industry, particularly in core competence required skills (Francis & Wamathai, 2020). The training institution uses

supply-driven training rather than demand-driven training, resulting in a shortage of adequately trained and skilled workers for the tourism job market (Marneros et al., 2020). According to Marneros et al., (2020), there were soft skills that influence service delivery such as personal, leadership, interpersonal, team spirit, and organizational skills. The right combination of soft skills, hard skills, and personal attributes makes service exceptional (Cousins et al., 2014). It was also linked to a wide range of concepts known as soft skills, also known as people skills and employability skills (Marneros et al., 2020).

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The use of evidence-based procedures, protocols, and guidelines that provide the tools and framework for conducting a research study was defined as research design. This research will use a descriptive cross-sectional survey with a convergent parallel design. Creswell (2017) defines convergent parallel as the process by which a researcher conducts both qualitative and quantitative research at the same time. This will aid in gathering more data on waiter skills dispatched online and service delivery variables. The design allows for the use of both descriptive and inferential statistics, addresses many aspects of a problem, captures population characteristics and tests hypotheses, and allows for control manipulation of variables (Creswell, 2017).

The design allows for greater insight and in-depth investigation into the issue of the role of online training on waiters in service delivery. It also allows data to be analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods, which was known as mixed methods (Asenahabi, 2019). This design will aid in the acquisition of knowledge from the respondents, in this case, waiters, human resource officers, and waiters' immediate supervisors. Using triangulation to collect qualitative and quantitative data in depth. To bridge the knowledge gap that exists between theoretical and practical knowledge.

### Study Area

The Location of the Study was Nairobi County, Kenya. The area was selected because approximately 20% of tourism visitors visit Nairobi and most of the licensed hotels were classic and of outstanding standards.

### Target Population

The target population was the subset of the population that remains after refinement and has specific characteristics of interest and relevance (Baxter & Bartlett, 2001). Waiters in licensed hotels in Nairobi City County were included in this study's population. In Nairobi, there were 71 licensed hotels. Asiamah et al. (2017) define a study population as a group of individuals who share one or more characteristics of interest. As a result, waiters who provide services were chosen and samples were taken, as shown in the table.

### Sample Size

**Table 1: Population and Sample Size**

Category	Target Population	Sample size
Hotels	71 (TRA,2020)	14
Employees(waiters) approximation	1300	260
Food and Beverage service supervisors	300	60

Source: Researcher, 2023

Kisilu, Kimani, and Kombo (2012) recommend a sample size of 10% to 20% of the population. As a result, the researcher used 20% of the population to determine the

sample size. Nairobi City has 71 licensed hotels and approximately 1300 waiters and 300 food and beverage supervisors. The sample size was calculated to be 20% of the population, resulting in 14 hotels out of 71, 260 waiters out of 1300, and 60 food and beverage service supervisors out of 300.

### **Sampling Technique**

The researcher will employ both the probability random sampling technique and the non-probability sampling technique, namely simple random sampling and purposive sampling. When selecting hotels, random sampling was used, and waiters and supervisors were sampled on purpose. Purposive sampling makes use of the available respondents during the data collection process. Because the population was heterogeneous, random and purposive sampling was best suited for this research. The procedure will aid in reducing bias in sample selection (Kisilu, Kimani, and Kombo, 2012).

### **Data Collection Methods**

Questionnaires in Google Forms were sent to the email address of the hotels to share with their waiters during the session. Besides direct administration of the closed and open-ended questionnaires physically and on the online platform to the respondents (Asenahabi, 2019).

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Tools were instruments designed for data collection. Because all respondents are assumed to be literate, the study will employ questionnaires (David et al., 2008). In addition, an interview will supplement the questionnaire (Njuguna, 2018). The hotel administrators were contacted and informed about the online questionnaire administration and in-person delivery procedures. Waiters and hotel administrations were sent online Google Forms questionnaires to answer or facilitate access to the appropriate respondent.

### **Procedures of Data Collection**

The questionnaires and interview guide were developed and tested in three hotels outside of the study area. The main study will then be conducted after any necessary corrections have been made. During the main study, the database of hotel emails was used to send Google forms to the hotels containing questionnaires and interview guides. The researcher and assistant will then contact the hotel to confirm receipt of the questionnaires and interview guides for waiters and supervisors, respectively.

### **Validity**

Ringui (2012) defined validity as the extent to which the instrument to be used in the study will measure what it was supposed to measure. The researcher will concentrate on the content validity and accuracy of the instrument, which was used to measure the variables in the study. To determine the validity of the research instrument, a team of experts comprised of five Human Resource Officers, three restaurant supervisors, and a food and beverage manager from various hotel establishments was formed. The process was carried out by informing them of the study's purpose and objectives, as well as the instruments to be determined. The comments will then be discussed via Zoom meeting or in-person meeting, depending on their convenience and the season of the study.

### **Reliability**

The instrument's reliability was determined by measuring the instrument's internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. The precision and accuracy of the instrument to be used in this study were examples of reliability (Cohen et al., 2007). It was expected that even if the instruments were used on a similar group of respondents in a similar

context, the results were the same (Cohen et al., 2007). The standard minimum alpha value was expected to be 0.7.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis will sort and arrange the data that has been collected. Data was cleaned, edited, coded, and tabulated using IBM SPSS Software Version 21 (Opondo, 2018). The variables will then be tested using the t-test and one-way ANOVA in descriptive and inferential analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic Description

The demographic characteristic of the respondents on gender, age, level of education and designation are presented in table 2 to 5.

**Table 5: Gender of the respondents**

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Male	89	36.8	36.8	36.8
Valid	Female	153	63.2	63.2	100.0
	Total	242	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher, 2023

There were more female respondents than male which was 63.2% and 36.8% respectively. This showed that most females were employed as waiters in Nairobi than men.

**Table 6 Age in Years**

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	18-25	39	16.1	16.1	16.1
	26-35	142	58.7	58.7	74.8
Valid	36-45	49	20.2	20.2	95.0
	46-Above	12	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	242	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher, 2023

The age groups of 18-25 were 16.1%, 26-35 were 58.7%, 36-45 were 20.2% and 36-45 were 5.0%. In the table of Age in Years, the majority of the waiters (58.7%) were between the ages of 26 and 35. It appears that this group was more energetic and experienced than the ages below them. Then, 46 and up were the weakest due to the strength required for restaurant operations.



**Table 7: Level of Education**

Level of Education		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Secondary	78	32.2	32.2	32.2
	College/University	164	67.8	67.8	100.0
	Total	242	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher, 2023

There were more respondents with a college or university diploma than those with only four certificates. 67.8 percent and 32.2%, respectively. All respondents held secondary school diplomas.

**Table 8: Designation**

Designation		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lounge waiter	65	26.9	26.9	26.9
	Head waiter	75	31.0	31.0	57.9
	Floor waiter	38	15.7	15.7	73.6
	Supervisors	64	26.4	26.4	100.0
	Total	242	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher, 2023

The highest percentage of head waiters was 31.0%, followed by 26.9% of lounge waiters, 26.4% of supervisors, and 15.7% of floor waiters. It appears that most floor waiters were preoccupied and did not have time to complete the questionnaires as expected. Another possible explanation for the low percentage of floor waiters is a lack of skills in responding to questionnaire competencies for service delivery.

### Hypothesis Testing and Confirmations

The objective was to establish the relationship between skills impartation and service delivery during online training. The same objective has four hypotheses which were tested through a regression model. The results were shown in the table 6 below.

**Table 9: Hypothesis Results by Regression Model**

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.024	.345		26.143	.000
	Interpersonal skills	.193	.031	.326	6.205	.000
	Conceptual skills	-.301	.018	-.610	-16.960	.000
	Technical skills	.073	.016	.153	4.575	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Service delivery

Source: Researcher, 2023



**Table 10 Summarized Hypothesis Results and Inference**

Hypothesis	Results /Beta coefficient/Significant levels		Inference/comments	
H <sub>0,1</sub> : There was no relationship between technical skills impartation through online training on service delivery	B .193	Significance .000	Null hypothesis rejected	
H <sub>0,2</sub> : There was no relationship between conceptual skills impartation through online training on service delivery	-.301	.000	Null hypothesis rejected	
H <sub>0,3</sub> : There was no relationship between interpersonal skills impartation through online training on Service Delivery	.073	.000	Null hypothesis rejected	

Source: Researcher, 2023

**Hypothesis 1:** There was no significant relationship between technical skills impartation through online training on service delivery

The relationship between technical skills and service delivery is positive, as evidenced by the beta coefficient of .193, which indicates that as a unit imparts technical skills, the level of service delivery rises by .193. According to Table 12, the inference regression model indicated statistical significance. According to the table, the probability significance (P value) is .000, which was less than .05, implying that increases in technical skills statistically significantly predict waiter service delivery in the course of work. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** There was no significant relationship between conceptual skills impartation through online training on service delivery

The beta coefficient of -.301 indicates a negative relationship between conceptual skills and service delivery. When a unit imparts conceptual skills, the level of service delivery decreases by -.301. According to Table 12, the inference regression model indicated statistical significance. According to the table, the probability significance (P value) was .000, which is less than .05, implying that increases in technical skills statistically significantly predict a decrease in waiter service delivery during work. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This was because conceptual skills were more associated with management and supervision than with the operation process.

**Hypothesis 3:** There was no significant relationship between interpersonal skills impartation through online training on Service Delivery

The relationship between interpersonal skills and service delivery was positive, as evidenced by the beta coefficient of .073, which indicates that as a unit imparts interpersonal skills, the level of service delivery rises by .073. According to Table 12, the inference regression model indicated statistical significance. According to the table, the probability significance (P value) was .000, which was less than .05, implying that

increases in interpersonal skills statistically significantly predict waiters' service delivery in the course of work. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

Service delivery was effective with technical, interpersonal, and conceptual skills acquired through online training. This study, however, established that conceptual skills should not be facilitated through online training.

### Recommendations

- 1) Hoteliers should be encouraged to use online training to improve their technical and conceptual skills for Waiters and food and beverage service providers.
- 2) Because there was no relationship with service delivery, online training of waiters should not be used to improve interpersonal skills.
- 3) Technical skills should be facilitated, but only partially because the positive change was minimal in this study.
- 4) Online waiter training should not be used to improve conceptual skills.
- 5) In policy making there is need to encourage Human Resource for facilitate online training for service delivery
- 6) In TVET set up competency based training can be done online in relation to food and beverage service practical.
- 7) There is still need for further study in line with online training modes and service delivery of Hospitality Staff

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