



# Job Stressors and Emotional Exhaustion of Food and Beverage Employees of Selected Hotels in Lagos, Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study examines job stressors and emotional exhaustion, amongst hotel food and beverage employees in five selected hotels in Lagos, Nigeria. For developing an overview in this area, questionnaires were distributed to 44 food and beverage employees, with 88.6% effective response rate. The findings showed that multitasking of employees was the major cause of emotional exhaustion, job stress and burn out. The stressor during working hours include nagging boss, complicated guest, work overload, sexual harassment, long working hour and low income as reported by the respondents. The study identified the problems faced in the study area and recommended the ways of moderation through motivations, creation of enabling environment, training, recruitment of more hands and increment of salary.

**Keywords:** Burn out, emotional exhaustion, emotional intelligence, employee satisfaction, job stress

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## 1. Introduction

The hospitality industry is one of the world's largest labour industry (Foskett, D., Ceserani, V. & Kinton, R. 2007). The hotel food and beverage department consist of both the backroom employees and the service employees. It is pertinent for all employees of the various departments to willingly cooperate and coordinate in carrying out activities as this is necessary for smooth and efficient operation of the establishment. Specifically, periods of intense activity and the necessity of pleasing the customers are inherent in the food and beverage department. Employees are therefore faced with heightened exhaustion due to stressful and demanding situations which invariably lead to burnout.

Emotional exhaustion is a state of feeling emotionally worn-out and drained as a result of accumulated stress from your personal or work lives, or a combination of both (Maslach and Leiter, 1998; Maslach, and Jackson, 1986). It is characterized by lack of energy and a feeling that emotional resources are used up (Burke, and Greenglass, 1995). This may co-exist with feelings of frustration and tension. Emotional exhaustion is one of the signs of burnout.

Job stress is due to the periods of intense activity and the necessity of pleasing the customers on whose gratuities their livelihoods often depend. Many of the workers in this industry are subjected to high levels of job stress. Many of the activities of food and beverage employees, particularly those in kitchens are carried out in stressful



environments featuring high heat and humidity, poor ventilation, poor lighting and noise. Likewise, the restaurant dining room can be a very high stress environment because of the pressure of performing efficiently while working within tight schedules, working shifts, dealing with irate and difficult customers. Other physical stressors such as noise and poor air quality can also be experienced in the restaurant environment.

Stress emerges when pressure experienced by a staff is out of the individual ability to bear with (Difate, 2008). Freeman & Coll, 2017 defined stress as when there are lots of conflicting roles that are needed to be fulfilled by an employee. That is, when the real job task differs from the role expectations and when the employee needs to accomplish too much task and the resources that are provided are not enough to fulfill the task the employee will working at staggering capacity, this will make the employee to experience stress on the job.

Burnout concept was used for the first time by Freudenberger in 1974. Freudenberger defined burnout as alienation, depression, anxiety, loss of idealism, loss of soul, and a response mechanism for coping with the work and stress. Farber indicated burnout as a result of stressed working conditions rather than a coping mechanism (Söderfeldt, Söderfeldt, Söderfeldt & Wark, 1995). Burnout is a chronic and emotional response to highly excessive demands, specifically for the well-being of other persons or directed for the distress and conflicts resulting from responsibility and interaction for success (Warr, 2002). Burnout has been constantly linked with physiological and affective outcomes (Burke & Greenglass, 1995; Cherniss, 1992; Lee & Ashforth, 1993; Maslach & Leiter, 1998; ), as well as with organizational consequences such as increased turnover, increased intention to leave, negative work attitudes, and reduced levels of performance Cameron, S. J., Horsburgh, M. E. & Armstrong-Stassen, M. 1994; Lee & Ashforth, 1996, Wolpin, Burke & Greenglass, 1991; Wright & Bonett, 1997; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002).

Food and beverage employees experience stressors which is characterized by fatigue, sleeplessness, headaches, repeated colds, stomach problems and interpersonal problem which is due to long working hours and excess work load which will in turn affect their productivity. This research study intends to examine the relationship of of emotional exhaustion, job stress and burnout of hotel, food and beverage employees.

## **2. Materials and Method**

The study was carried out in Ikeja, Lagos state. Lagos state was chosen as the area of study because it is highly populated and known to be a center for business attraction which attracts businesspeople and tourist which contributes to high hotel patronage by guest. A convenient sampling method was used in the selection 44 food and beverages employees of the selected hotels. Structured questionnaires were distributed 44 copies, and *the effective response (39) rate was 88.6%*. The data for this research study was collected using structured questionnaire drafted by the researcher. The information contained in the questionnaire was not limited to socio-demographic information of the respondents and information on exhaustion and job stress. Analysis of the research study was carried out using descriptive statistics. The descriptive part of the analysis comprises of frequency, percentage and pictorial representation. Frequency and percentage analysis was adopted for the socio-demographic information of the respondents while responses on emotional exhaustion, job stress, burn out of hotel food and beverage employees were analyze using frequency, percentage and charts for diagrammatic representation. Chi-Square was used to analyse the hypothesis.



### 3 Results and Discussion

Table I: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents Socio-Demographic Characteristics

S / N ITEMS		FREQUENC Y	PERCENTAG E
1 Gender	Male	16	44.5
	Female	20	55.5
	Total	36	100
2 Marital status	Single	25	69.5
	Married	11	30.5
	Total	36	100
3 Age group	21-30 year	14	38.9
	31-40year	12	33.3
	41- and above	10	27.8
	Total	36	100
	SSCE/GCE	-	-
4 Educational status	OND/NCE	10	27.8
	HND/BSC	21	58.3
	M.Sc/MBA	5	13.9
	Total	36	100
	1-5years	16	44.4
5 Length of service	6-10years	10	27.8
	11-15years	5	13.9
	16-20years	5	13.9
	Total	36	100
	Christian	30	83.3
6 Religion	Muslim	6	16.7
	Traditional	-	-
	Total	36	100
7 Income	16,000-25,000	5	13.9
	25,000 and above	31	86.1
	Total	36	100
8 Section	Reception	26	72.2
	Accounts	10	27.8
	Total	36	100



	Floor Worker	-	-
9 Job Status	Junior Employees	23	63.9
	Senior Employees	13	36.1
	Total	36	100
1 Proximity of residence and work	Very Close	10	27.8
	Close	15	41.7
	Far	11	30.5
	Total	36	100

The data in the table above shows the frequency and percentage analysis of respondents' socio-demographic information. It reveals that there are more female staff than male staff as they constitute 55.5% of the total sample while the male constitute 44.5% respectively, this indicates the female staff are more than the male staff in the front office of hotel may be because they have better opportunity than male.

Item 2 indicates the marital status of the respondents. It can be seen that 69.5% of them are single while 30.5% are married; this indicates that the majority are single in the Front office department because they are more available for whatever hour they are needed in the hotel and better ability to withstand stress than the married. On the age distribution, as evidenced in item 3, analysis revealed that 38.9% of the respondents are between age 21- 30 years, 33.3% were within 31- 40 years while 27.8% were between 41-and above respectively, this indicates that most of the employees are still in their prime age, therefore they can carry out their daily activities effectively, most especially where there are less hands.

Item 4 shows the educational status of the respondents, majority of the respondents are HND/B.Sc holders which constitute 58.3% of the total sample while 27.8% have OND/NCE and also 13.9% have M.Sc/MBA.

Taking the length of service into consideration, majority of the respondents (44.4%) have worked between 1-5 years while (27.8%) have worked for between 6-10 years. Also, the respondents' that have worked for between 11-15 years and 16-20 years constitute 13.9% respectively. This implies that most of the employees are not really experienced and coping with stress may seem to be difficult.

Item 6 shows Religion of respondents, this indicates that majority of the respondents are Christians (83.3%) while the Muslims constitute 16.7%. It indicates that the employees are religious.

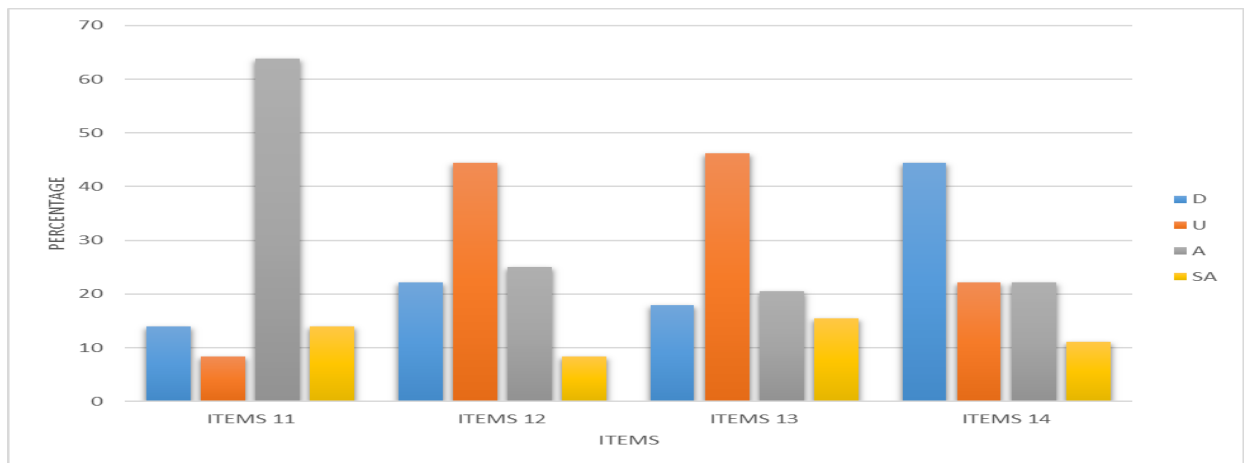
On the monthly income of respondents' in item 7, majority of respondents constituting 86.1% earn 25,000 and above. This indicates that the Front Office employees are been paid averagely high, to boast their working ability.

Item 8 shows that reception employees constitute about 72.2% while accounts employees constitute 27.8% implies that there are more hands in the reception than the accounts maybe because the reception employees serve directly to the guest.

Item 9 shows the job status of the respondents. Analysis indicates that 63.9% of the respondents are junior employees while 36.1% are senior employees. This implies that majority of the respondents are junior employees and they have majority of the burden for customer satisfaction to thrive.

From item 10 of the table, proximity of residence and work indicates that 27.8% of respondents live very close, 41.7% respondents do not live very close and 30.5% respondents live far. This shows that majority of them live do not live far away from their workplace.

Figure I, depicts the frequency and percentage distribution analysis of respondents perception to stress and emotional exhaustion. From item 11, the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that Front office activities are stressful (63.9% and 13.9%), but disagreed that long working hours and family time is easily matched together as evidenced from 44.5% of the total respondents in item 2. From item 3, (50%) of respondents disagreed while on the contrary (27.8%) Agreed that the monthly income suites the daily stress as 11.1% of respondents’ opined that carrying out more than a person’s duties are conveniently done.



*Figure I: Perception of Respondents to Stress and Emotional Exhaustion*

Figure II, indicates the responses of participants on their stressors. Item 15a showed that their nagging boss do not contribute to their stress (33.3%), 44.5% respondents agreed it is occasional; while 22.2% of respondents reported their nagging boss often contribute to their stress. Item 15b indicates that 52.8% which indicates majority opined that complicated guests occasionally contribute to their stress, 30.5% respondents confirm it is often while 16.7% respondents agreed it is very often.

Work overload also confirmed it that it contributes mostly to the respondent’s stress as majority of them (44.5%) agreed it is often and (36.1%) agreed that it is occasional as depicted in item 15c.

Item 15d indicates that 22.2%, 16.7% and 16.7% agreed that sexual harassment is a stressor to them because it occasionally, often and very often respectively happened but 44.4% of the respondents said sexual harassment has never been a stressor to them as analysed in table.

However, item 15e indicates that long working hour of the respondents is often a stressor to them as they will have to meet up customers and organization target. Also, low income of the respondents was also evident that it occasionally and often (36.1% and 36.1% respectively) stress them the more. This inferred that worker taking low income and multitasking will be stressed out since she/he will have it in mind that the work done is more than the pay received.

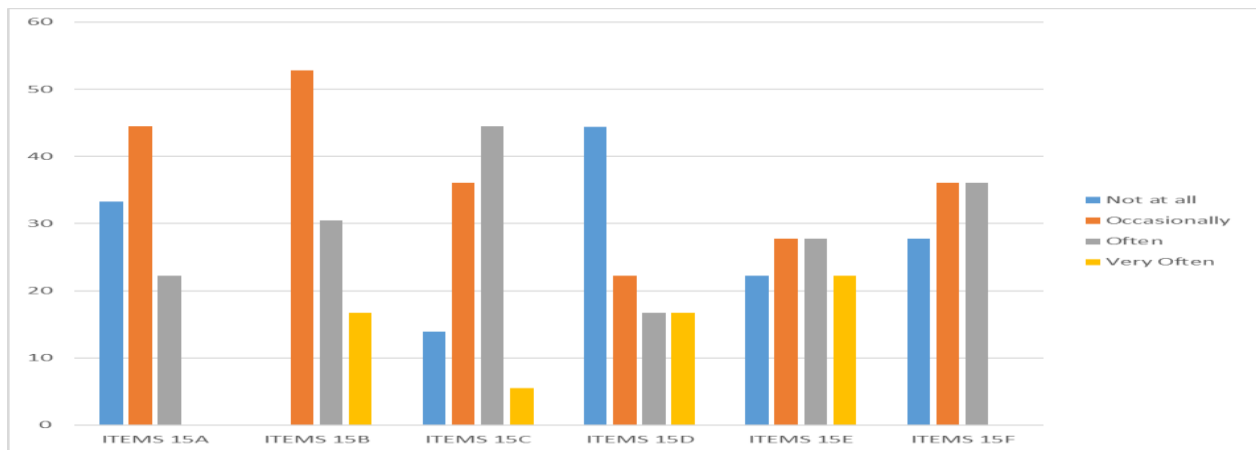


Figure II: Percentage Distribution of Respondents Stressors

From Figure III, majority of the respondents (55.5%) often experience job stress, 41.7% of respondents confirmed they occasionally experience burn out while 41.7% opined that they never experience emotional exhaustion. This implies that majority of the respondent's experience job stress, burnout and emotional exhaustion either occasionally, often, and very often.

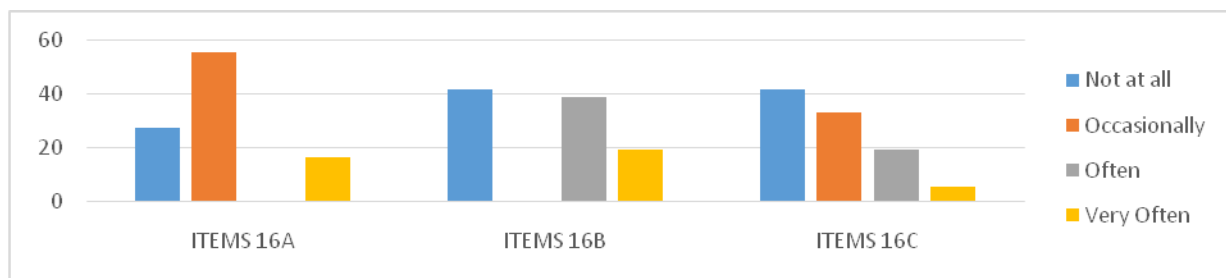


Figure III: Percentage Distribution of Respondents Experience during High Customer Turnover/Patronage Period

The data in the chart above shows that about 27.8% of the respondents agreed that their working ability is fairly efficient, 44.4% respondents agreed it is efficient while 27.8% of the respondents confirmed it is very efficient. This implies that majority of the respondents working ability is efficient during high customer patronage.

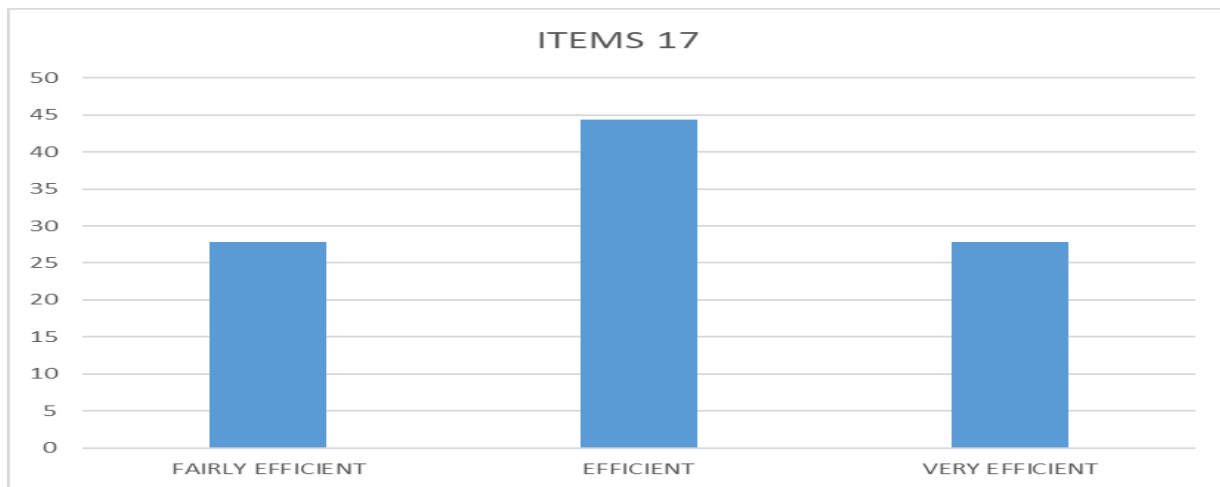


Figure IV: Percentage Distribution of Respondents Ratings on Working Ability during Customer High Patronage

Figure IV depicts the responses obtained from different category of query given to the respondents, it shows that 63.9% of respondents have never been given any query due to lateness to work, 55.6% have never been given due to lack of time management but, 41.7% of respondents have been given query occasionally due to customer dissatisfaction. Few of the respondents have been queried as a result of lateness to work and lack of time management as evidenced from the chart.

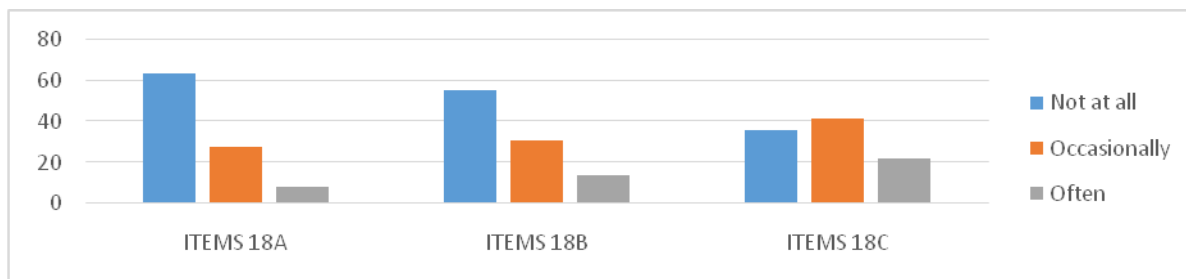


Figure V: Percentage Distribution of Respondents on Query Given By Their Employer

On the perception of respondents to multi-tasking, item 19 shows that 16.7% of respondents are not multitasked, 33.3% respondents are occasionally multitasked while 50% of respondents are multitasked often. This implies that majority of the respondents are multitasked. However, majority of them said they been rewarded occasionally for the work down as a result of the multitasking but also occasionally find it easy.

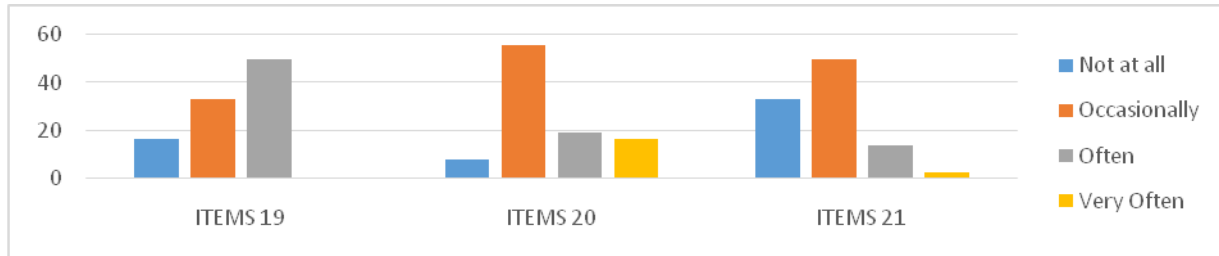


Figure VI: Respondents' Perception to Multi-Tasking

The data in figure VII shows that 38.9% of the respondents have health challenges while 61.1% do not. About 22.2% of respondents with health challenges reported that their organization did not know about it while 16.6% of respondents reported their health challenges.

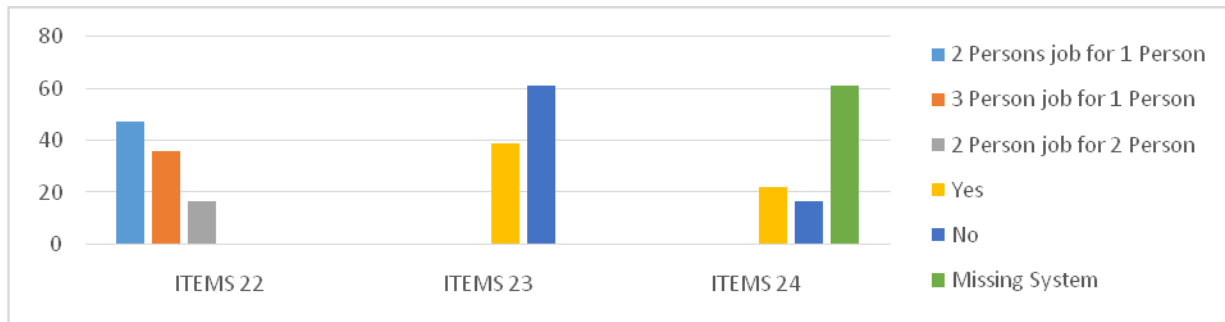
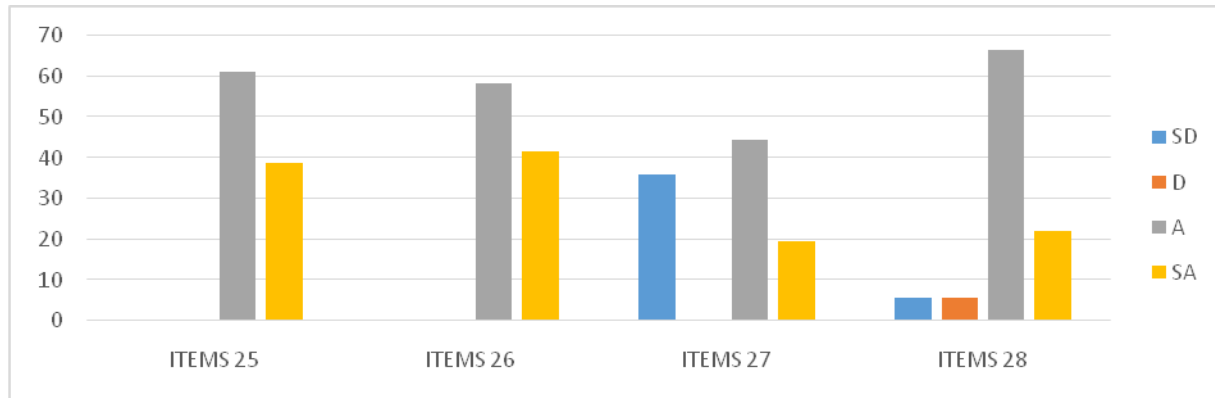


Figure VII: Percentage Distribution of Responds to multitasking category and health challenges

From figure VIII, analysis shows that in item 25, 61.1% of respondents agreed and 38.9% strongly agreed. This depicts that all of the respondents opined that regular training will be of help in moderating influence of coping behaviour and control of stress outcomes. On the response of motivation of employees in item 26, 58.3% agreed and 41.7% strongly agreed. This shows that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that employees in the respective organization should be motivated to reduce stress and promote their quality of work life. Respondents also opined in item 27 that technology should be used to improve operational skills of employees 44.4% agreed, 19.5% strongly agreed while 36.1% strongly disagreed and a friendlier atmosphere in work place should be encouraged as agreed and strongly agreed by 88.8% of the total respondents.





*Figure VIII: Percentage Distribution of Respondents’ Taking Care of Employees’ Well-Being and Promotion of Quality of Work*

#### 4. Conclusion

Empirical analysis of the research study indicated that the major causes of emotional exhausting, job stress and burn out in the hotel front office department were due to multitasking of the employees that is carrying out more than one person’s duties. This was as a result of deficiency in employees’ recruitment. In addition, analysis indicated that major stressors during working hours in the hospitality industry were nagging boss, complicated guests, work overload, sexual harassment, long working hour and low income as reported by the respondents. Empirical analysis of the research study also indicated that job stress and exhaustion can be managed through motivation, creation of enabling environment and training. Also, increment in salary and recruitment of more hands for better productivity

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