THE USE OF MULTISKILLING IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN HOSPITALITY ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

As the southern African Hospitality Industry strives to become globally competitive, multiskilling is increasingly pursued as a means of increasing employee competitiveness. This study assesses the current state of multiskilling and explores some ways in which practical initiatives could be taken further to promote multiskilling and make it more effective. The purpose of the paper is to ascertain the current state of affairs in hospitality operations in a sample of five southern African countries using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. It also stresses the vital importance of developing effective multiskilling opportunities and practices. Some practical ideas are provided to assist in this regard. Multiskilling at the level of the industry is an ongoing process and a huge challenge and it relies on the passion for the industry of all employees and other stakeholders. The study also concludes that all hospitality industry managers have an invaluable role to play in the promotion of employee multiskilling which cannot be over-emphasized, failing which there will be a negative impact on the efficiency and effectiveness and ultimately profits of hospitality industry enterprises in southern Africa.

Keywords: hospitality industry, flexibility, staff utilization, multiskilling, efficiency, southern Africa.

1. INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry and the effective management of the human resources are of huge economic importance for South Africa and the immediate region, especially given that the number of international arrivals is increasing annually although it is not always as much as was expected. The literature suggests that multiskilling is considered to be an effective operational strategy to resolve concerns including insufficiently qualified employees and the high employee turnover rates that plague the industry. However, the question arises as to how relevant multiskilling is in Hospitality businesses per se. One key question is whether hotels do use multiskilling. Another key question is in which areas precisely, should hospitality operations seek to multi-skil employees, if at all and if so does it lead to greater efficiency. There is clearly a need for hotels and industry players to leverage on technology, and to skill their workers to be able to handle multiple tasks, and thus also to streamline their operating processes. This article analyses why multiskilling is critical but often fails in its quest to assist hospitality companies to obtain a strategic competitive global advantage. In similar vein to what happens in most countries, skill development across the board is undoubtedly a significant factor in determining the competitive advantage of South Africa and since she is undoubtedly the tourism giant of the region, her industry was focussed on in particular in this research.

Hospitality is part and parcel of the tourist industry and tourism is the fourth largest generator of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in South Africa after mining, manufacturing and quarrying (Taal, 2012. www.lrs.org.za). Hotels and other forms of accommodation operate in what is really an unpredictable global environment. There are large fluctuations on both the supply and demand side. Most of the customers emanate from the ranks of business and recreational travellers who seek accommodation in either hotels, guest
houses, bed & breakfast enterprises, inns, time-sharing of apartments at certain resorts, eco-friendly nature and game lodges, camping sites caravan sites or other overnight accommodation. This also impacts on the food and beverage sector which includes restaurants, coffee shops, tearooms, fast food outlets as well as a wide range of catering services. The hospitality sector has grown rapidly over the last few years and it is now one of the fastest growing sectors in the economy.

In 2008 South Africa, like many other countries, was affected by the global recession. However in the latter part of 2011, the hospitality market suddenly began to suggest signs of improvement (CATHSSETA, 2010). The summer 2011-2012 season was the strongest it has been for a number of years. Clearly the impact of the FIFA World Cup 2010 cannot be underestimated. South Africa has also been promoted as a desired global convention destination and the country is guaranteed at the least, 200 international conferences during the next few years, which should attract approximately 300 000 visitors. After the FIFA World Cup 2010, the number of travellers continued to soar, rising by 4.3% to 13.77 million. Given this increase the number of foreign overnight visitors is projected to increase by at least a 4.6% compound annual rate to attain some 10.45 million by the end of 2016 (South African hospitality outlook: 2012-2016 PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc. www.pwc.com/za/hospitality-and-leisure).

In South Africa in 2009 the hospitality and tourism sector generated R179 billion of economic activity and 45 000 jobs through direct employment and just over one million jobs, representing 7.6% of the total employment of South Africa (Taal, 2012. www.lrs.org.za). However, in the South African context, a major human resource challenge facing the hospitality industry, is the high staff turnover rates. This also constitute one of the key issues affecting service quality delivery. Unfortunately large number of employees consider hospitality work to be a pass-through to a job in a different and higher level industry, rather than as a life-time career commitment. There is also low morale and poor motivation levels which are decisive contributory factors to the high employee turnover (CATHSSETA, 2010). The need to develop appropriate retention strategies is imperative if this predicament is to be at all solved. One effective approach could be the multiskilling of employees as a means of motivating, incentivising and encouraging them to stay in the industry as a lifelong commitment. Ottenbacher and Gnoth (2005) argue that the effectiveness of a hotel’s approach to managing employees is a critical source of sustainable advantage-hence, employees must be highly skilled and even multi-skilled. By multiskilling employees, hotels can benefit from increased levels of productivity, greater service quality provision, and higher levels of employee retention. From the employees point of view, they are empowered with new skills and generally benefit from greater job satisfaction, increased remuneration, and greater opportunity for promotion (Riegel, 2002).

Veldsman (1994) has suggested that a diagnostic process be followed in ascertaining what an organisation needs to do to achieve effective transformation into a highly competitive global environment. What can be done to make an organisation more effective and efficient, and how can employees be made more competent and capable of meeting the ever-changing needs of organisations is now critical to success (Stalk et al, 1992). Each organisation is of necessity, required to clarify the criteria in terms of which business is conducted including inter-alia, quality of service, speed, innovation, cost and responsiveness (Galbraith & Lawler, 1993). There are no immediate panaceas for the ills plaguing organisations and so consideration must be given to the relative influence of remedies that are sought which would satisfy the criteria of the organisation. What is critical is that the strategic intent, architecture and employees in the organisation must be carefully considered before any value-adding remedy is implemented. While the benefits of training are not immediately linked with financial performance, hoteliers in South Africa must be made to understand that employee training and especially multiskilling has benefits on service quality that in turn, influences both the competitiveness and financial performance of their operation. Remedies must be sought to improve profitability and multiskilling is for example, one such remedy intended to extend the range of skills of individual employees so as to improve their labour flexibility as they seek to react to workplace changes that affect them and the employer (Clark, 1989). A flexible multiskilled employee base has been identified as the
most significant contributor to the development of human resources in reaction to a world in which there are many competitive, technological and labour supply pressures (Kalleberg, 2001; Knox & Walsh, 2005)

2. DEFINING MULTISKILLING

To lay a foundation in which this discourse can take place, it is necessary to define the term ‘multiskilling’ which is viewed from a number of diverse perspectives. Generally speaking, multiskilling is the attainment of supplementary task-related skills and knowledge, which empower an individual to perform a broader range of tasks and functions within any organization. Cordery (1989, p.13) states that: “Programmes of multiskilling generally involve workers on a particular occupational, craft or skill category progressively picking up the capability to perform additional tasks, usually performed by workers in another functional or occupational area within the organisation”. There are three distinct types of multiskilling. Firstly, there is Cross-skilling, which relates to the acquiring of skills of a similar level of complexity but beyond the usual boundaries of the traditional operations. Secondly there is Vertical multiskilling which relates to the acquiring of extra skills at a higher level of difficulty, and thirdly, there is horizontal multiskilling which relates to acquiring other skills which are similar in levels of complexity (Wood, 1993). It is important to ascertain if employers know the exact competences they expect from the employees and only when their expectations match their perception, does service quality result which ultimately benefits the guests and the business (Ladkin, 2005).

Multiskilling is considered to an important tool to assist hospitality industry operations to cope with problematic environmental changes but a return on investment in it is only possible if employee needs in the workplace are correctly identified and if employees are truly committed to, and passionate about their work. However, according to Ingram & Fraenkel (2006), despite the fact that multiskilling can improve service quality, it may also to an extent lower productivity by reducing the number of “point of service” staff. Training for multiskilling benefits hospitality operations, as the employees in attendance are capable of performing other tasks in shifting situations (Huang & Cullen, 2001). It also leads to greater economic success, enhanced productivity and greater profit margins, and more importantly lower levels of employee turnover in an industry that is plagued by inordinately high turnover rates of employees especially in peak seasons (Marchante, Ortega, & Pagan, 2006). Many hotels try to bridge the skill gap by taking on either part-time or casual employees (Lai & Baum, 2005). Multi-skilled employees are able to serve a business in a wider range of operational areas which cut across traditional occupational boundaries. by having an increasing pool of skills and concomitant loss of emphasis on job demarcation (Matias-Reche & Fuentes-Fuentes, 2006).

3. WHY MULTISKILLING IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY?

Multiskilling indicates practical ways in which existing employee workforces can be rationalised through optimally utilizing them so that employee costs can be operationalised, thus leading to greater efficiency and greater profits. Flexible employment practices and the integration of culturally diverse workforces in the hospitality industry are relatively new trends that can cause considerable challenges and opportunities for many countries in the SADC region. The manner in which these issues are handled strategically is becoming a vital issue for human resource managers in hospitality operations to consider. This is particularly relevant given that it is expected that the total number of travellers to South Africa will rise to 16.85 million by 2016, representing a 4.1% compound annual increase from 2011. This increase in travel and tourism will stimulate growth in the hospitality industry in the next five years and hospitality operations will have to have effectively skilled employees in place. In order to meet the demand of providing service quality excellence, employees will need to be multi-skilled. Central to the notion of multiskilling will be the development of formal enterprise-based skills training initiatives that will make provision for both horizontal and vertical skilling. Powell and Wood (1999) state that one of the most noteworthy problems in the hotel industry worldwide is the “brain drain” since the skills and qualifications gained in hotel sectors are effortlessly transferable to others. A continual
and steady economic growth rate both locally and abroad will hopefully assist the average hotel occupancy rate to improve and this is expected to increase by 9.1% to 62.1% in 2016, boding well for the industry (South African hospitality outlook: 2012-2016 PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc. www.pwc.com/za/ hospitality-and-leisure). Consequently, employees should acquire the requisite skills which will eventually allow them to perform all the required tasks of a number of jobs both within and without their current functional areas of operation, when the need arises to do so. Competence in a variety of skills is desirable but employees should be given incentives so as to motivate them to acquire extra skills. Multiskilling will enhance the capabilities of employees and serve to strengthen the employers competitive advantage. Not only the employees, management and the organisation will benefit fro multiskilling, but customers and guests will also benefit because of the quality of products and services received (Sommerville, 2007). Some operations refer to multiskilling as cross training. This ensures the employees obtain knowledge and skills from other departments and increases their ability to adjust to be able to work in these departments at short notice if and when a need arises, or as a matter of course (Walker, 2007).

Multiskilling is used by many international hotel groups as well as local and regional groups to enhance the skills of employees and also serves the role of grooming them for supervisory positions and is thus also linked to monetary incentives. Consequently when employees upgrade their skills their salaries are also upgraded. There is of course the primary notion of focussing on quality service provision. The multiskilling training of employees together from diverse departments cultivates a team spirit and this promotes higher operational efficiency as the various departments coordinate their activities especially during peak tourism periods. When information and skills are shared across departments, new skills are taught and knowledge is increased and so an effective learning culture is the result. Multiskilling is thus generally perceived to be a very cost-effective way to enable hotels to deal with the cyclical discrepancies in the demand for seasonal employees (Baum, 2006). Multiskilling, cross deployment and the use of the latest technology are generally at the pinnacle of the initiatives that most hotels are looking at to increase the levels of productivity of their employees.

It is important that the competency and skill levels of all multiskilled trained employees should be uniform so that no function is lacking in terms of guest expectations and service quality provision. A major benefit of multiskilling across hotel departments for example, is that allows flexibility of employees and provides supervisors with extra time to allocate team members important and pressing tasks especially when large amounts of guests are expected. The ongoing success of hospitality operations in general relies heavily on the efficient and effective implementation of daily operations (Hrebiniak, 2005). According to Hinkin and Tracey (2000), employee turnover in the hospitality industry has been one of the biggest concerns for a number of years and it results in high direct expenditure as well as intangible costs (Woods and Macaulay 1989). The direct expenditure includes the administration costs of regular employee resignations, attracting new and efficient employees and recruiting and selection as well as seasonal hiring. The intangible costs comprise lost-man-hours, sub-standard service quality provision, and especially very low morale which all adversely affect a hotel’s reputation if left unchecked (Hinkin and Tracey, 2000). Riegel (2002) maintains that high employee turnover is the outcome of an intricate chain of factors, including job satisfaction and organisational commitment to maintain an employee base. There is no doubt that hotels in particular, but also other hospitality enterprises, need to vigorously promote a culture in the workplace which promotes the notion that when employees assume positions that they do so on a permanent basis. Long-term employment must be promoted as the required and preferred option by especially managers as only in this way can a strong internal labour market develop.

Many employees leave since they feel they do not have the required skills and they thus become unhappy at work and seek other forms of employment which appear more rewarding and attractive to them ( Mobley, 1982). Hinkin and Tracey (2000) explain that poor supervision and training, badly planned working environments, as well as poor rates of compensation cause the high rates of attrition in the industry workforce. Cheng and
Brown (1998) explain that hotels need to effectively induct and socialise employees as this is generally not happening in hotels worldwide. Furthermore they require training and personal development that highlights the desire of a company to invest in their employees which in turn should lead to an increase in employee commitment and to job satisfaction in general. Multiskilling training can help reduce employee turnover rates since employees will increasingly find meaning in their work and be able to cope with challenges on a day-to-day basis. Employees will become more creative and innovative and be satisfied even though their salaries and conditions of employment may not be as they desire them to be (Kelliher & Riley, 2003). Heskett et al. (1990) propose that service organisations need to ‘become employers of first choice...develop and retain such people through...ministering’. This notion is furthered by Schneider and Bowen (1993) who explain that the customers’ experience is the central issue in appreciating service quality provision. Their research also advocated that the solution to managing the customer’s experience of service quality provision is to manage employees’ experiences in their place of employment. Hence where multiskilling is in place, employees more likely to be positive and more receptive to customers and their needs and wants. Multiskilling empowers employees and helps them to better understand their work in the broadest sense and it encourages self-confidence and self development. They are able to learn a wide range of problem solving skills and generally makes them more productive. In terms of managerial benefits, it aids in the maintenance of desirable standards and makes it easier to identify possible promotion candidates. It also leads to improved profitability and reduces the risk of accidents at work and violations of safety issues. Wastage is minimised, especially in food and beverage operations.

Boella and Goss-Turner (2005) state clearly that any organisation’s primary objective is to provide service quality. This necessitates that all employees must initially be carefully selected, sufficiently trained, and motivated to be committed to service quality provision. Multiskilling will essentially better equip the employees to provide more effective and efficient service, but also allow for service which is more personalised and which makes a difference to the guests’ perceptions and experiences. Where there are job vacancies, these can also be promptly filled by multi-skilled employees and this facilitates both the sideways and upward mobility of employees from one post to a different one (Matias-Reche & Fuentes-Fuentes, 2006). Multi-skilled employees are able to move with ease from one task to another as they are skilled to perform a variety of jobs and participate in decision-making and thus add value to the organization as a whole (Kalleberg, 2001). Based on personal experience, there appears to be a chronic shortage of skills in many hospitality staff and this possibly suggests that these are not imparted to employees during their training. In other words the requisite skills are lacking and this invariably impacts negatively on the industry. Davids and Fredericks (2004, p.6) state that multiskilling is the acquirement of skills, knowledge, competency, and experiences, which empower the individual to perform tasks beyond the scope of their immediate job requirements. Multiskilling thus endows the organization with highly flexible and adaptable employee, and thus provides for a more greatly skilled team of employees. Haas, Rodriguez, Glover, & Goodrum (2001) state that productivity in organisations can be increased by 5% or more where multiskilling exists. There is also a possible 35% reduction in total hiring of employees as a result of multiskilling and the financial benefits of this aspect are thus clear.

Essentially, competent employees contribute to enhanced customer satisfaction amongst other things (Nwenre, 2005). Employees should have a range of skills and attitudes that affect a major part of their jobs (Nwenre, 2005) which impacts on service quality excellence. The literature suggests that employees who are functionally flexible through the effective practice of multiskilling are far less likely to be part of a high turnover rate of staff (Hoque, 2000; Kelliher & Riley, 2003). Consequently multiskilling training can lead to greater functional flexibility and thus help hotels to often vexing and difficult labour market. Research has shown that especially five star hotels are always seeking to improve their internal labour market through making improvements in skills training provisions and employee career development programmes (Knox & Walsh, 2005) and so, multiskilling training is commonly utilised in the hospitality industry in southern Africa. It is viewed by many managers as a labour deployment strategy that enhances the productivity of employees (Nankervis & Compton, 2006).
4. WHICH SKILLS ARE REQUIRED?

A number of researchers have explained that in diverse countries the employers may expect employees' to possess a different set of skills in the workplace. Cotton (2002) has isolated a number of skills and competences that hospitality employees are expected to have, including people management, persuasion, communication, relationship-building, planning and organizing, analyzing information, decision-making skills, commercial acumen and flexibility. In addition to a set of desired skills being taught, there is also a need for example, to develop attainable career paths for employees so as to increase employee commitment. This will also aid in the drive to retain employees who are well qualified. A number of skills are desirable, but Gilmore and Gregor (2001) have recognized that characteristics such as integrity, honesty, adherence to an ethical code of conduct, suitably attired employees, fairness, respect and harmonious working relationships are important skills to impart. Being punctual, careful, reliable and trustworthy were also considered to be appropriate professional behaviours. Multiskilling would undoubtedly provide for the acquisition of valued skills, but this is only possible if the job design, work organisation, management commitment and empowerment to use the skills obtained are in place. The absence of these aspects will impact negatively on the outputs of the multi-skilled employee who is thus wasted. Of course, all required skills are fine-tuned by learning and constant practice and interaction with other employees. Teamwork is another crucial skill in hospitality and should be part of multiskilling and cut across departments if there is to be a sustainable quality of service. Multiskilling also offers front-line managers the prospect of learning new skills and provides for job variety. Organizations tend to be more productive where there is labour flexibility. This also allows hotels to manage in service environments that are unstable due to a plethora of impacts from the macro-environment. Multiskilling should initially encompass employees from middle management down to the most basic levels in each of the departments of a hotel, including the front desk, housekeeping, laundry services, engineering, stewarding, culinary or food and beverage service and even security and health and safety aspects.

Managers also require multiskilling in both technical and generic aspects of work. In a nutshell, managers should possess the knowledge and skills that enable them to function effectively. The generic managerial competences allude to a manager’s ability to self-regulate and self-control themselves in their job development. Many managers are also unable to meet their responsibility for training and skilling of staff because they themselves lack the knowledge and skills required to be effective trainers. Managers lack competence in skills and knowledge and this is a huge gap in their technical ability. Especially financial management and computer skills were found to be lacking according to Agut et al. (2003) in a study of Spanish hotels. Other skills requiring attention through multiskilling, included communication and motivational skills, understanding of the hotels mission and vision, and the expectations and behaviour of different types of guests. People management skills were also found to be lacking as were problem solving, control of information and decision-making. Food and beverage skills and other functional skills such as housekeeping and customer care were also in need of a revamp. Agut et al. (2003) also found that all employees, irrespective of rank, lack even the most basic understanding of the levels of service expected by all guests but especially international guests.

As a work philosophy, on-the-job training is an intrinsic aspect of multiskilling. It requires outlays of time, effort and financial investment. It is important that the entire process be carefully monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. A positive attitude on the part of employees is required for success and they should desire the acquisition of new skills and an opportunity to grow in the workplace. However for this to happen there should be a ‘primary’ multiskilling conducted in the same discipline where the employee currently serves and in which he or she has displayed ability. This means that specialisation is not watered down but rather that the quality of service is improved. Employees must be tangentially empowered to act on guest needs and wants even though what they are asked to do is not be directly related to their job description.
Employees also require a measure of autonomy, responsibility and should be given regular feedback relating to their newly acquired skills. Research conducted by Burgess and Aitken (2004) in their survey of employers ascertained that functional skills, conflict resolution skills, computer skills and basic good work habits were the expected skills employees should possess. Additionally, they also made known what were considered to be chronic skills shortfalls including chef skills, kitchen control, general housekeeping, management techniques, sales techniques and most importantly customer service quality provision. The latter skill is rated as having the greatest impact on a business as a result of multiskilling consequently this skill as well as others should be imparted by industry. Only when employees have attained thorough skills, will quality service improve. After the reviewing of a total of 18 hotels ranging from 4 star -5 star ratings, other skills were also identified by the researcher as requiring training. There should also be a focus on the development of skills in areas such as language, non-verbal communication and business etiquette, adaptation skills, cultural skills, host culture values and stress management. Language usage and service quality provision were especially found to be lacking and in need of urgent training. It is desirable that at a moments notice, employees should be able to step forward to perform functions outside their disciplines in other departments.

5. SERVICE QUALITY PROVISION

Service quality is the primary factor which creates competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. Consequently, any operation that does not make efforts to continually improve its service quality will certainly lose ground. All hospitality operations are service-oriented and so, service quality provision is a major concern. Service quality is defined as the gap between the customer’s expectation of a service and the customer’s perception of the service actually received (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2005).

Service delivery is often variable and difficult to standardize due to the personal nature of the contact between a customer and an employee. Employees may often vary in interpretation of what precisely a customer is asking, but even though service may be intangible, its quality is reflected across five broad dimensions: tangibles (appearance of physical elements), reliability (dependability, accurate performance), responsiveness (promptness and helpfulness), assurance (competence, courtesy, credibility and security), and empathy (easy access, good communications and customer understanding) (Boella & Goss-Turner 2005, p. 297). The five dimensions of service quality that are mentioned here, originate from the SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988) service quality measurement instrument. It is thus important that multiskilling at least attempts to standardize the intangible elements of the average service encounter to an extent scripting what employees’ say, and so training must essentially include words and phrases that are likely to be used in service provision. Customer expectations of service quality are an important definition aspect of service quality when these are set against the experiences of the service (Lashley, 1997).

6. LANGUAGE SKILLING

Language training is very important since many South Africans speak English as a second language. Efforts should thus be made to teach employees simple phrases or terms that have subtle meanings. Many terms in indigenous languages have no English equivalents, so knowledge of their approximate meanings will serve the purpose of saving much time in explanation in dealing with especially customers. A hotel employee speaking English relatively well will invariably make a good impression on customers and will also forge stronger ties between him/herself and the management. Improved language proficiency is thus critical. Service interactions involve a variety of critical incidents where employee responses are fundamental to a customer’s satisfaction or otherwise with a service provided. In this context, language usage and understanding is critical.
7. FUTURE OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN HOTEL INDUSTRY AND CHALLENGES

Much optimism prevails in the industry and as a result various companies in the sector are seeking to refurbish and expand their properties. The Hospitality Partners Association issued a report in February 2012 in which they stated that a number of international brands seeking a foothold in Africa through South Africa. The large groups including Accor, Starwood and Hilton have announced aggressive development plans in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular (Taal, 2012). The hospitality industry in South Africa, and across the globe, is a labour-intensive industry and working conditions are harried by often extensive and irregular working hours. This is of course exacerbated by relatively low wages and a for the most part a lack of job security which permeates the entire industry (SA Tourism, 2007). CATHSSETA (Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority), maintains that Hospitality is a sector that employs the highest percentage of black people, and in excess of 70% of employees are black. The majority of them are in the lower skilled occupational categories so it is evident that multiskilling is even more crucial. In fact 30% of labour in the hospitality sector in South Africa is classified as unskilled. The Department of Labour is the primary department for national skills development in South Africa. The National Skills Development Authority (NSA) and its extensive network of 24 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), including the CATHSSETA, deals with skills development within specified sectors such as hospitality. The Department of Education also has a directive for curriculum development, schooling and other educational institutions. Thus, there is thus essentially a close relationship between education and skills development of hospitality employees in South Africa and adjacent countries since many students and employees from these countries come to South Africa to further their studies and careers. CATHSSETA thus plays a facilitation and co-ordination role between industry and higher education institutions to align education with the many needs of a burgeoning industry.

The South African hospitality sector engaged just over 112 000 employees in 2010, and this is a steadily increasing number according to the CATHSSETA. In the CATHSSETA hospitality sub-sector, business is represented by a number of employer associations including, Culinary Arts Association of South Africa (CAASA), Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa (FEDHASA), Housekeepers Association of South Africa (HASA), National Accommodation Association of South Africa (NAASA) Restaurant Association of South Africa (RASA) and South African Chefs Association (SACA). These are employer organisations and each one is a key skills development stakeholders. Many of them are active in CATHSSETA ranging from board to chamber committee level and each of them provides sub-sector specific expertise, knowledge and input into all CATHSSETA skills development initiatives and projects which are undertaken. The efforts of these role-players is noteworthy but more needs to be done.

CATHSSETA states that there is a shortage of skilled people in general to fill certain positions such as for example Operational Managers, Pastry Chefs and Head / Executive Chefs. Skills shortages in other vacant positions do not necessarily exist because there are no skilled people to take up the positions but because they do not have the additional skills that are required for such positions. In other words there is a lack of industry specific skills and this also includes Trainers / Facilitators. CATHSSETA has also determined that qualifications to address the scarce and critical skills in the Hospitality sub sector do exist for all levels ranging from Senior Management positions to even the most basic occupational levels. The problems that were identified with the Hospitality related qualifications were in most cases with the packaging of course material and course content lacking essential aspects for the industry which result in skills gaps for the future employees who acquire these qualifications. There are thus a large number of challenges that hamper the provision of skills in the hospitality sector (CATHSSETA, 2010). There is also a skills mismatch in that the qualifications available within the hospitality sub-sector for example, have a relevant title but the content is not what the industry requires in a particular occupation. For example a qualification in Hospitality Management has different course content to what its title reflects and far greater emphasis is spent in such a course on Food and Beverage operations and management is sidelined. Such aberrations make multiskilling even more critical.
Productivity needs to improve in the industry and employee speed and outputs require re-energising. Strategies must be devised which consider an aging workforce and existing workers must be encouraged to boost their adaptability and hunger for learning new skills. Ways need to be sought to consider the needs of especially women who are wives and mothers in the workforce who are expected to work very arduous shifts in many cases. It is clear that in the years lying ahead, the majority of the workforce will comprise non-traditional employees, many emanating from other SADC countries. The challenge is to teach them the latest technology and to skill them in as many operational areas as possible. Without such training and skilling, it is unlikely that the increased expectations of more demanding customers will be satisfied as they use hospitality products and services that cost them money. Quality service provision will continue to be an issue that will also have a direct impact on multiskilling trainers.

8. METHODOLOGY

A quantitative methodology was adopted in this research (Neuman, 2006). However, aspects were qualitative, i.e. investigating the perceptions of employees on multiskilling initiatives in the hotel industry. A qualitative approach is, according to Creswell (2003) appropriate for an exploratory and descriptive study. It was thus deemed appropriate to use an extensive exploratory survey to gain required information (Frazer & Lawley, 2000). The main purpose of quantitative research is to determine the quantity or extent of a phenomenon, in this case multiskilling, in the form of numbers. The research may be a single investigation or a range of informal studies intended to provide background information. The aims of the research investigation were communicated to the respondents as comprehensively as possible as well as the anticipated consequences (Brynard & Hanekom, 2008). This exploratory research would assist in diagnosing the dimensions of multiskilling use and would thus enable successive research projects to be accurate. The survey was intended to acquire information about the opinions of employees and their attitudes or even previous experiences by asking them questions and tabulating their answers. The goals was to establish the views of a large population by surveying a sample of the population namely, hospitality employees. This was thus in a sense a normative survey. The primary research question was to ascertain whether or not training for multiskilling was common in the hospitality industry. The survey would also test the extent to which multiskilling led to organizational efficiencies and which skills were needed the most.

Sample size is generally an issue of concern for the researchers in quantitative research due to the cost and efficiency involved in the research (Ruane, 2005). A non-probability convenience sample was chosen as there were respondents that where easy for the researcher to access-this is often referred to as an available subjects sample. A priori power analysis was used to ascertain the sample size as this ensured that the researcher did not waste time and resources carrying out a study which has very little chance of finding a significant effect, and also ensured that time and resources were not wasted by testing more subjects than was necessary in order to detect an effect that would be similar to that uncovered by surveying a larger population. The sample selected was however, representative of the larger population and included all the elements of the population. Males and females were included from a multi-cultural population of approximately 10 000 employees and the number of respondents was 450. The desired sample size of this research was 450 samples as suggested by De Vos et al (2002), which were collected through the participation of the eighteen, 4-star and 5-star hotels in southern Africa that were willing to participate in this research. The processes the researcher was testing were assumed to be so basic and universal that they could be generalized beyond such a narrow sample. Employees from eighteen hotels were thus surveyed in this research, in countries including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Mozambique and Namibia of which seven were part of international chains.

The sample population consisted of front-line managers in the industry including supervisors and managers who work in or across the departments of food and beverage operations, front office, human resources and housekeeping. The sampling scale focused on eighteen, 4-star and 5-star hotels because they were considered to be investing
considerably more in training as a quality measure when compared to other hotels. The survey questionnaire was emailed to the possible respondents as this is a common method to survey members of any organization (Zikmund, 2003). Such a survey in the hospitality industry may expose the gaps in education and training and therefore be used to identify the competencies required in the industry that lead to employee empowerment, better quality service provision and may also encourage employees to remain in an industry where employee turnover rates are high.

The questionnaire used in this research was a standardized, multi-client attitude and usage study which contained 20 questions relating to multiskilling (see Figure.2). Respondents had to answer questions relating to multiskilling in their place of employment. The respondents were selected from a range of business cards and names and emails provided by managers who were willing to be involved, and were in the possession of the researcher, as well as a personal database, consisting of names and e-mail addresses of other relevant hospitality employees. Each of the respondents was sent an e-mail explaining the nature of the research as well as a request to participate by responding to the 20 questions. They were also assured that their responses would remain anonymous- thus it is was more likely that they would be more truthful than they would be in a personal interview when addressing sensitive issues. A major weakness of research using a survey is that it depends on self-report data and there is often intentional deception on the part of respondents. There is also the problem of questions that are poorly worded and possible memory lapses by respondents.

9. MEASUREMENT

The questionnaire comprised general questions in regard to employee personal details, using both nominal and ordinal scales. The survey also covered questions highlighting age and gender (Brace, 2004). Questions relating to employee multi-skills training actions in their place of employment were also posed, followed by questions which were aimed at obtaining employee attitudes and perceptions to this training, if any. Yes/No responses were required as well as marking options with an X. There were also basic questions requiring short written responses and listing statements in order of importance.

The survey covered questions which were piloted to a sample of ten employees in a preliminary investigation. Comments and criticism of the pilot group were noted and carefully considered in the final choice of survey questions. The result of the preliminary investigation thus highlighted where modifications were required so that the final survey could be acceptable and this helped to ensure that data obtained would be both valid and reliable. The survey had to be couched in language which was intelligible to all respondents.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to examine the accuracy of the data since this allowed results to be analyzed, and frequency and percentages were used to show a direct and understandable analysis which increased the reliability of the results. SPSS thus provided a measurement of internal consistency (reliability) of the test items called Cronbach’s alpha. The higher the correlation among the items, the greater the alpha. The high correlations implied that high (or low) scores on one question were associated with high (or low) scores on other questions asked in the questionnaire. In this case, the Alpha was 0.78, indicating that the questionnaire was perfectly reliable. Most of the participants were thus consistent in the way they responded to the various questions, the scale thus yielded consistent results and was considered reliable. This was an interesting find since the respondents were from diverse educational backgrounds and were expected to have very different views.

10. DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Two dependent variables i.e. the response that was measured, were examined in this study namely the rate of response of the respondents and the quality of their responses. These variables were thus the presumed effect and refers to the status of the outcome in which the researcher was interested.
The response rate= 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of valid responses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of respondents approached</td>
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</table>

A high response rate is likely to reduce biases, however one not overlook other types of bias which cannot be overcome by achieving a high response rate. Where self-completion surveys are completed is it highly likely that potential respondents with low literacy levels will not respond. However, in this study there were 382 valid respondents for subsequent analysis since 68 respondents did not respond. The response rate was thus 84.88%, which is a fair response rate, but it still does not guarantee that the results were totally free of bias. The researcher thus only considered the percentage of questionnaires that reached the respondents, and e-mails that were undeliverable were excluded.

The researcher tried to increase response rate by phoning or faxing those to whom e-mail was undeliverable. The length and difficulty of the survey was also minimized and the format was simple, ensuring questions are not ambiguous and had clear instructions. In ascertaining response quality the comprehensiveness and correctness of the responses was considered (Goetz et al.1984). The former was measured by the number of non-opinions provided by respondents as well as the number of partly finished questionnaires. Bias was also considered as an important factor. All design for data collection in surveys’ for example, is to an extent biased in that it will, systematically, exclude less favourable responses and inadequate survey design may sometimes result in biases. One such bias issue in this survey questionnaire was that it was in the English language and not translated into each of the official languages of South Africa and so a language barrier bias may have existed to an extent. To reduce bias, the researcher thus asked simple questions and very few were open-ended.

Generally, the measurement was estimated to be both reliable and consistent and will not likely change every time when the testing is the same with the same subject. The measure measured what it intended to analyze and was thus valid in that the relationship between the test and behaviour of the respondents was similar.

**11. RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The collection of the data took place from August 10, 2012 to November 15, 2012.

The profile of the respondents demonstrated a gender balance of 53% male (n=203) and 47% female (n=179) respondents. Some 30.36% (n= 116) of respondents were between 18 and 25 years of age, while 40.05% (n=153) fell in the age range of 26–45 years, 29.5% (n=111) were in the range of 46–64 years. Only 0.5% (n=2) of the respondents were over 65 years of age.

In terms of educational attainment, 27.48% (n=105) completed higher education, 6.8% obtained a mid level of education (n=26), and 65.7% (n=251) only had minimal education.

On average, it took respondents 8 days to complete and return the questionnaire.

In total, 450 e-mails were sent out. 68 of those e-mails were undeliverable, which left 382 usable e-mails, from which we received 382 completed questionnaires. This yielded a net response rate of 84.88%. Previous hotel or hospitality industry experience was found to be as follows: 11 employees had 0-2 (2.87%) years experience, 144 had 2-6 years experience (37.69%), 119 had 7-10 years (31.15%) experience and 108 had greater than 10 years (28.27%) experience. A total of 85 employees (22.25%) were in their current employment for less than one year. 194 (50.78%) were at their place of employment for over a year and 81 (21.20%) for more than 5 years, while 22 (5.75%) were at work more than 10 years.

Of the 382 respondents, 344 (90.05%) were in the middle to low levels in the hotel hierarchy, while 38 (9.95%) were in the upper management levels. A total of 319 (83.5%) of
the employees responded that they had some form of limited training on an irregular basis including a little multiskilling in the sense that they had exposure to different tasks in their department or that they underwent brief alternation in other departments. A total of 31 (8.11%) stated that training was regular and included multiskilling training actions for their functional area or department and to an extent included other functional areas as well and that alternation to other department was involved and for longer duration. Based on comments made by some employees, multiskilling training appears to have been conducted when it was believed that there would be a shortage of appropriate employees to perform certain tasks and when there were high employee turnover rates, and this was just before peak seasons. Effectively serving guests and satisfying their needs, language proficiency and interpersonal communication were identified as the most common areas in which skills were trained. Despite 105 employees indicating that they had university or college education in hospitality, many felt they were not be adequately trained during their university education and that their levels of on-the-job competence were limited. Since the hotels selected had somewhat different Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) this made multiskilling and re-training necessary. This highlights the need for higher education providers to provide more efficient training for their students while at university or college and also emphasises the importance of a Work Integrated Learning component in any course related to the hospitality industry. 68% (259) felt that skills training activities enabled them to work in different functional areas and were thus more flexible. The employees who believed they were multiskilled believed that they were able to produce higher service quality than their colleagues who were not multiskilled. These employees were able to respond promptly to individual guest needs.

The initial training received was considered to be simply routine by 279 (73%) of employees while 33 (8.6%) felt it was important and 28 (7.3%) felt it was necessary. 42 (10.9%) respondents maintained that multiskilling was simply not important to them. The frequency of multiskilling training was also varied. A total of 23.29% of employees reported daily training of about one hour per day including multiskilling, 41.88% once a month for between 1-3 days, 23.82% once per annum for about a week, 8.6% twice per annum for about 6 days in total or more but not more than 8 days.

The respondents indicated that their multiskilling training involved mainly professional training, customer services and dealing with guests requests as well as language skills and attitudes to work. The stated that the multiskilling was used to assist them to receive knowledge and skills sets on work conducted in other departments. For example, some waiters reported that they were trained and multiskilled in housekeeping operations or as security or health and safety employees. Generally, most of the respondents praised the level of multiskilling training they received and believed training to be useful and well planned. Others felt that the training was part of their everyday work and were annoyed at having to remain after hours in many cases, to re-learn aspects of work in other departments that they already had training in. A greater diversity in training was desirable and it would be prudent of managers to take note of the complaint that very often, training was considered by some respondents to be time consuming and not at all building their self-confidence or developing them in any way.

A total of 87.17% of all respondents stated that training was mandatory and 96.85% said they did not need to apply for multiskilling. An amount of 95.54% reported that multiskilling training was conducted in-house and 93.19% were multiskilled by existing hotel employees at supervisory levels or higher. Some 99.21% stated that training was important to them and that they felt empowered by it and were also motivated to perform even better in the workplace. This was especially true for food and Beverage department employees in the sample group studied. Multiskilling was found to cover, although in varying degree, aspects such as basic language skills, technical skills, conflict resolution, interpersonal skills, IT skills, self-initiative, motivation, marketing, geography and appropriate industry grooming and product knowledge. There are clearly many gaps that are not covered by higher education providers that require attention. Hospitality businesses as well as higher education providers have failed to teach students the appropriate values of professionalism and discipline in the workplace.
The responses to satisfaction with multiskilling in the workplace were varied considerably as indicated in table 1 below.

*Insert Table 1 Here*

The questions as to how multiskilling can be improved and the employees personal opinions as well as which skills were deemed necessary by them yielded interesting results as per table 2 below (a sample of the most representative answers were used). The importance of employee motivation is thus also a consideration as identified in both the literature and in the respondents replies in this study.

*Insert Table 2 Here*

Employees should be guided to a realization that improving themselves is the main aim of multiskilling while it also solves staffing problems that may arise and ultimately leads to greater guest satisfaction and thus higher profits for the company. A carefully designed multiskilling training programme, enough relevant communication and appropriate and effective multiskills facilitation training are important if hotels are to minimise the possible negative effects of multiskilling as perceived by numerous employees. It was clear that Front-Line Managers were more the most pleased with multiskilling raining provision and were the most satisfied in their jobs. Employees who felt that they were multiskilled were more job satisfied than those who believed they were not multiskilled. This shows that effective multiskilling training should increase job satisfaction by providing employees with meaningful challenges and highly monotonous and repetitive work is limited (Kelliher & Riley, 2003). Job satisfaction can be increased through the use of multiskilling training as it enhances the employees’ need for development and this can be a critical moderating factor when it comes to deciding on whether or not to stay at the same company.

Almost 20% of multi-skilled employees felt that they were more likely to be promoted than the non-multi-skilled employees. Promotion opportunities for employees are undoubtedly enhanced through multiskilling and it also to an extent, provides a career path for employees who acquire new knowledge and skills which provides them with greater opportunities (Armstrong, 2006). Organizational efficiency appears to be better supported by multiskilled employees when compared to non-multiskilled employees (Ottenbacher, Gnoth, & Jones, 2006).

**12. RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are a number of vital interventions that hospitality enterprises can employ to transform the industry to become more multi-skilled and thus more effective and efficient. A major challenge for the hospitality sector is getting hotels to change from being overly labour-intensive. They will need to have employees who can not only perform single job functions, but who can assume cross-functional roles. Essentially, they will need to be multi-skilled. Once employees have gaining greater competency from multiskilling training, it is conceivable that they could obtain higher salaries. Manpower must in any event be optimized and a drive must be made to introduce a range of labour-saving IT systems and other relevant technology and innovation that will free employees to assist with other tasks. Job functions and roles will need to be re-designed so that employees can be multi-skilled and be deployed where they are needed the most at short notice. For example, front-desk employees could thus be trained to serve in restaurant operations. A doorman could double as a security officer. An HR manager could take care of VIPs on Executive Floors. Valet parkers and reservation agents can collaborate to prepare a banqueting hall after a function with 500 guests at lunchtime, for an international function with over 1000 guests for dinner. Waiters can assist in the laundry and a restaurant manager of a restaurant operating only at night can assist with reservations in the morning. A valet service can be done by housekeeping employees. Food and beverage staff can serve as registrars for a conference. All maintenance employees can be cross-skilled in plumbing, electrical work and general carpentry.
Multiskilling of employees is a great way to curtail costs and increasing guest satisfaction with service provision. Where a company has huge budgets, it would be wiser to stick with the idea of specialisation but in the current global economic meltdown this is less and less an option for the foreseeable future. Such labour flexibility can augment organizational productivity in response to a tentative service setting. Multiskilling training makes the retention of hospitality employees more likely. The literature suggests that job enrichment and alternating in functions leads to greater employee retention and minimizes their turnover (Brotherton, 2004). Multiskilling indicates to employees that they can develop their career in their current place of employment and this tends to attracts them to remain at their work longer thus increasing labour retention. “The introduction of multiskilling and/or generic working can give an organization greater efficiency and also provide job enrichment for its workers” (Akhalghi & Mahony, 1997). Multiskilling also leads to improved level of interdepartmental communication and greater empathy between employees and thus promotes solidarity in the workforce.

13. CONCLUSIONS

The basis of this research was the principle of confidentiality and anonymity. It was ascertained that in each hotel investigated, there were problems relating to multiskilling training per se. Multiskilling is invaluable in the hotel industry since it is a very cost-effective method to assist businesses to face the many employment challenges that are posed in the current global industry. Multiskilling does away with departmental boundaries and promotes and fosters a spirit of teamwork, which leads to better levels of service quality provision. The research provides a set of guidelines about the benefits of multiskilling training of hospitality industry employees. Multiskilling is likely to be the most cost-effective tool to aid hotels to come to grips with the issues of insufficiently qualified and unskilled employees. It is suggested that multiskilling can make employees more flexible and efficient and able to cope with the variety of functions relating to hotel operations. Employees are empowered with additional skills and capabilities which allow them to cope within what is often a volatile environment. It will also to an extent, serve as a shield given the inordinately high employee turnover rates that are exhibited in the industry. This exploratory study has identified that most 4-star and 5-star hotels in Gauteng and some of those in other countries involved in he study, have adopted multiskilling for their employees. Hotels will undoubtedly benefit from multiskilling as service quality provision, organizational productivity and efficiency, and especially retention of employees are more likely as a result of it. The maximum effect of multiskilling is improved service quality provision and this is critical since better levels of service quality usually lead to greater profits. Critically, organizational performance in this essential service sector is greatly enhanced. Multiskilling training when used as a cost-reduction strategy, has the potential to facilitate and lead all employees to enhanced productivity and efficiency (Kelliher, et al., 2000; Pan, Nickson, & Baum, 2005).

Appropriate employee training in multiskilling initiatives are the critical factors which promote the provision of service quality consequently, hotels that multi-skill employees should provide training which focuses on employees' professional attitudes and behaviours in the workplace, especially relating to guests (see figure 2). In this way, a strategic competitive advantage is obtainable as guests will experience the differences, advantages and benefits of opting to stay at a particular hotel. Multiskilling offers hotels a major benefit, in that it empowers employees to handle what are often unpredictable service situations. This is especially true for front-line managers who supervise employees in daily operations. Organizational productivity is generally improved and staff-turnover is reduced due to multiskilling as it is likely to increase job satisfaction and offers some direction in a employee’s career path. Thus employee training and skill development in a number of departments is critical for hotels’ wishing to enhance service quality, reduce the cost of labour, and increase general productivity. Multiskilling, if carried out effectively will empower employees and motivate them to offer superior quality service provision. More importantly, it will reduce absenteeism and minimize employee turnover. Line managers play a vital role in delivering and developing a service-oriented culture in their area of operation and beyond, on a day-to-day basis.
When designing a multiskilling programme, hotel managers in the southern African region should draw on the varied experiences of other hoteliers and this will increase the potential for success. Where possible, modules should be developed which are in line with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and which are in line with the CATHSSETA needs. This will make any training transferable to other employers and also encourage employees to be more positive about undergoing multiskilling training.

This research which was essentially a mixed methods approach, has hopefully provided some data against which similar and more detailed quantitative studies can be compared for a more meaningful analysis of multiskilling in the hospitality industry. Further studies could involve the interviewing of all employees and even guests and would undoubtedly enhance our knowledge on the issues at hand. The findings of this research will be reported to industry so as to stimulate the development of the practice of effective and sustainable multiskilling training.

REFERENCES


Davids, Z., & Fredericks, G., H. (2004). Aspects of multiskilling contributing to service quality provision within academic libraries, University of Western Cape, USA.


**APPENDIX 1**

**14. Questions for Hotel Managers to consider relating to Multiskilling Training**

1. What are the main human resource issues that plague your hotel ?
2. Why is there a problem?
3. What strategy can you adopt to minimize the risk associated with the problem/s you face?
4. What should you focus on in managing your employees training?
5. Is your current multiskilling training truly effective?
6. What can you do in training to create and sustain a strategic competitive advantage?
7. Do you have the right employees in each department?
8. Are there policies in place for the multiskilling of employees?
9. Do employees have attainable career paths?
10. Are you abusing or empowering employees?
11. Are you recruiting suitable employees?
12. Do you offer orientation programmes for new employees?
13. Are training plans in place which include training needs, goals, and objectives?
14. Do you request staff to attend or force them to attend multiskilling training?
15. Do you evaluate the acquired knowledge and skills that multiskilling provides and is it part of your performance appraisal for employees?
16. Do all employees’ competences depend on skills acquired during training?
17. Does quality of service depend on the competencies developed in multiskilling training?
18. Do newly appointed graduates from Universities of Technology and other higher education institutions have the requisite skills for your business?
19. Do you actively assist Higher Education providers to provide students for industry with the required skills by taking part in advisory panels on curriculum design?
20. Are graduates adequately skilled?
21. Do you plan and conduct regular multiskilling training programmes?
22. Do you pay a fair wage for the job?
23. Is multiskilling training for front-line managers only?
24. Do you believe that multiskilling training should increase organizational productivity in the hotel industry?
25. Is multiskilling training needed but seen as a threat as it is associated with increased promotion in an industry with limited upward mobility?
26. Will multiskilling training lead to increased organizational efficiency?
27. Do you think that only upmarket hotels should emphasize multiskills competence?
28. Is your service aligned with the expected guest and industry standards?
29. Do you provide incentives to employees who undergo multiskilling training?
30. Do you effectively identify employees’ strengths and weaknesses?
31. Have you ever tested employee attitudes towards the notion of multiskilling?
32. If you have a high employee turnover rate, why is this so according to exit interviews, assuming that the latter are in place?
APPENDIX 2

Figure 1. Hotel organizational structure incorporating multiskilling

APPENDIX 3

EXPLORATORY RESEARCH SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
Multiskilling in the hospitality industry

Dear Sir/Madam

This is a questionnaire for an exploratory study on multiskilling in hotels, which considers various aspects of the employee training especially multiskilling.

Definition of multiskilling: This is obtaining additional task-related skills and knowledge, which empower you to carry out a broader range of tasks and functions within your organization.

You are not in any way obligated to do this survey however your participation will be greatly appreciated.

You responses will remain anonymous and you will in no way be compromised. Kindly complete the questionnaire as truthfully as possible. Thank you for your understanding and time and effort.

Please download, complete then scan the completed document and email back to the sender.
1. Gender: Male_______ Female_______ (place an X where appropriate)
2. Age: 18-25, 26-45, 46-64, >65 (circle which applies to you)
3. Have you had prior hospitality education: (e.g. at school, college, FET, University, other.) Please specify,
4. Previous hotel working experience: 0-2 year, 2-6 years, 7-10 years, >10 years (circle which applies to you)
5. How long have you been employed in this hotel? Less than 1 year, More than 1 year, more than 5 years, more than 10 years (circle which applies to you)
6. Your current position: __________________ (e.g. front desk manager, chef, housekeeper)
7. Did you have company training when you were first employed? Yes No (circle which applies to you)
   If yes, what was the duration? __________
   If no, you can skip question 8.
8. What was the nature of the training you received?
9. How was the first training you attended? Important, Necessary, Just routine, Not really important Why?
10. How often do you undergo training held in the hotel? Just once in the beginning when work started, Once a year, Twice a year, Once a month Daily basis (circle which applies to you) and for how long? or...
11. Have you been multi-skilled in any way? Yes No (circle which applies to you)
12. If yes, elaborate:________________________________________________________________________________
13. Is the training in the hotel mandatory or optional (circle which applies to you)
14. Do you have to apply for the trainings? Yes No (circle which applies to you)
15. Where was the training held? __________________________________________________________
16. Who conducted the training (You may select multiple choices by underlining them)? Lecturer hired from outside, Senior Manager, Supervisor, Trainers, line manager, Other,
17. Are you satisfied with the multiskilling training in the hotel? Very satisfied, It’s okay, Neutral, Not satisfied at all, other,
18. How can the multiskilling training be improved if at all?
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
19. What is your personal opinion concerning multiskilling
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
20. Which skills would you like to be taught that you are deficient in? (list up to three)
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
Thank you very much for your co-operation!
Table 1. Levels of satisfaction with multiskilling in the workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item:</th>
<th>Response %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am very satisfied with multiskilling training</td>
<td>12.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiskilling training is okay</td>
<td>40.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response (neutral)</td>
<td>15.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not satisfied with multiskilling training</td>
<td>19.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other eg. Intend to leave anyway</td>
<td>11.78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. How can multiskilling be improved?

| Multiskilling training must be made longer | 52.44%  |
| The trainer is not adept at imparting knowledge although he/she has the skills they should thus be trained to train | 47.98%  |
| Employees should be asked if they wish to obtain skills in other department areas of operation and not be forced to attend | 18.55%  |
| There is too much theory in the training | 37.23%  |
| Employees in higher level positions get more training than me | 18.80%  |
| Management has high expectations of training | 33.28%  |
| There should be repeat training to help employees master skills | 41.09%  |
| Management needs to communicate more with employees on skills needs | 22.45%  |
| I believe I already have the skill so the multiskilling training is a waste of time | 08.66%  |
| It can help managers to better evaluate my performance and I can be promoted | 19.06%  |
| The training reduces the likelihood of accidents | 09.78%  |
| The training has improved my ability to offer quality customer service | 16.46%  |
| Multiskilling helps the organisation more than me | 30.85%  |
| It is not important at all to me - I am just being ‘used’ by the company | 35.90%  |
| IT skills are what I need the most | 18.88%  |
| I need more customer service skills | 31.50%  |
| I need language skills in English | 20.17%  |