

Operations Management of Hotels in Legazpi City

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Abstract:- This study determined the operational management of hotels located in Legazpi City. The research aimed to address the following objectives: 1. Different areas of hotel operations in Legazpi City; 2. Levels of operations management of hotels in Legazpi City in terms of customer relations, branding, revenue and budget management, and hotel technologies; 3. Significant difference in the level of operations management between Department of Tourism (DOT)-accredited and non-accredited hotels; 4. Areas of improvement in hotel operations in Legazpi City; and 5. The tourism and recreational plan may be proposed to address the areas of improvement? A descriptive survey method, along with a comparative research design, was used to analyze the levels of operations management in four key areas - customer relations, branding, revenue and budget management, and hotel technologies - between DOT-accredited and non-DOT accredited hotels in Legazpi City. This method was deemed suitable because of the study's descriptive nature and much well-suited to the research objectives. The study tested the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the levels of operations management between DOT (Department of Tourism) accredited hotels and non-DOT accredited hotels in Legazpi City at a 0.05 level of significance using the F-test.

I. INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry is a rapidly growing sector that provides accommodation for both business and leisure travelers worldwide. It encompasses a variety of establishments, such as hotels, motels, inns, and bed and breakfasts, making it an important part of the global economy. The hospitality industry also plays a significant role in tourism development, creating job opportunities and generating revenue for governments. The hotel industry's significance is evident not only globally but also in individual countries and regions. For example, in the Philippines, the hotel industry is the largest and fastest-growing industry, particularly in Legazpi City, which is renowned for its magnificent Mayon Volcano that attracts tourists. Hotel management involves taking responsibility for the hotel and providing leadership to the staff to ensure that the hotel services and guests' expectations are met.

The successful operation of a hotel business is all about putting heads in beds and providing a good experience.

Section 21 of Republic Act No. 9593, also known as "The Tourism Act of 2009," states that:

The Department, in coordination with concerned agencies and private stakeholders, shall establish standards and regulations for tourist accommodations, including but not limited to hotels, resorts, apartment hotels, tourist inns, motels, pension houses, and homestays, to ensure that these establishments are safe, clean, and comfortable and provide quality service and facilities to their guests.¹

The above legal provision highlights the government's commitment to upholding hospitality standards and recognizing the importance of the hotel industry in the country. This section stresses the national policy for tourism as an engine of investment, employment, growth, and national development.

By strengthening the Department of Tourism and its attached agencies, the government ensures that they have the necessary resources to implement policies and programs that will enhance the quality of service in the hotel industry and promote the country's tourism industry. Overall, this provision underscores the government's recognition of the importance of the hotel industry in the country's overall development and its commitment to upholding hospitality standards. In line with promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism development, the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Legazpi City has passed Ordinance No. 15-0017- 2019, also known as the Legazpi City Tourism Code of 2019.² This ordinance mandates that the tourism sector in Legazpi City meets national and global tourism standards to ensure competitiveness and meet tourists' needs and expectations.

The ordinance provides guidelines for the management and regulation of the tourism industry, including promoting environmentally responsible tourism practices and protecting cultural heritage sites. A tourism council is also established to formulate policies, plans, and programs to promote and develop the tourism industry in the city. By adhering to the Legazpi City Tourism Code of 2019, the city's tourism industry is expected to contribute to its economic growth and

provide livelihood opportunities for its residents. Moreover, the collaborative approach to sustainable and inclusive tourism development ensures that the benefits of tourism are distributed equitably among stakeholders, including local communities, businesses, and tourists.

The researcher, with almost 16 years of experience as a hotelier, strongly believes that proper hotel operations can significantly boost tourism in Legazpi City. Such a boost in tourism can also create a ripple effect in other sectors, such as transportation, food, and retail, leading to the overall economic development of Legazpi City and improving the quality of life for its residents. Furthermore, the researcher selected this topic with the intention of providing practical and theoretical insights to aspiring hotel professionals, encouraging them to pursue careers in the hospitality industry. In addition, those interested in establishing or operating hotels can benefit from this research as a valuable guide and reference for their endeavors.

The researcher conducted a thorough analysis of the areas for improvement faced by the hotel industry in Legazpi City and propose practical solutions to improve its overall performance and competitiveness. The study comprehensively examined the present state of hotel operation and management in Legazpi City, exploring the areas of improvement of hotel operations that the industry presents. Ultimately, the researcher hopes to instill a sense of passion and dedication among the current and future hotel professionals in Legazpi City towards providing exceptional service and fostering a positive impact on the local economy.

This study determined the operations management of hotels in Legazpi City. It specifically answered the following questions:

- What are the different areas of hotel operations in Legazpi City?
- What is the level of the operations management of hotels in Legazpi City along:
 - Customer Relations;
 - Branding;
 - Revenue and budget management; and
 - Hotel technologies?
- Is there a significant difference on the level of operations management.
- Between accredited and non-accredited hotels of Department of Tourism (DOT)? City?
- What are the areas of improvement on hotel operations in Legazpi
- What tourism and recreational plan may be proposed to address the areas of improvement.

❖ *Operational Framework*

The operational framework of this study is anchored on four interrelated theories in hotel operations management: Operations Management Theory, Hotel Theory, Frederick Taylor's Theory, and Henri Fayol's Theory. These theories

provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the different aspects of operations management that are relevant in the hotel industry. Guided by a review of foreign and local literature, as well as other development studies by various authors, the researcher developed a conceptual framework to identify and analyze the various aspects of operations management in hotels in Legazpi City. The study utilized a systems approach that consisted of three components: input, process, and output. The input component involved identifying the key areas of operations management in hotels, including customer relations, branding, revenue and budget management, and hotel technologies. The process component involved four stages: preparation of the research instrument, data gathering, tabulation, and analysis and interpretation of data collected. The output data consisted of the development of an action plan that could address the areas of improvement on hotels, such as customer relations, branding revenue and budget management and hotel technologies. The feedback obtained from this output measures and strategies that can be implemented to enhance guest services offered by the operations management.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

The hotel industry is the largest contributor of employment worldwide. Individuals can apply according to their skills, background, and expertise. Those who enjoy communicating and providing service to strangers are most suited to the hotel industry. Each hotel has a unique setup based on its target market and location, but they all offer one product which is the guest rooms. Hotel accommodation provides a place away from home for many people to try new products, explore places, and experience culture.

Working in the hospitality industry, particularly in a hotel, is a customer- focused industry. According to Ghosh (2020)²⁷, 21st-century hotel guests have high expectations of the services they receive and demand that those expectations be met. Customer satisfaction is therefore important for hospitality organizations to thrive amidst competition and to earn long-term returns on their investments. As a result, the industry's "the customer is always right" philosophy places employees in lower positions concerning their customers. At the same time, hospitality services are characterized by the interaction between customers and employees, meaning customers use and assess the services in the presence of hotel employees.

The study conducted by Ghosh regarding customer service in the hotel industry is similar to the present study as it also highlights the important role played by customer service in the operations of hotels. Both the present study and Ghosh's study recognize the significance of customer satisfaction in the hotel industry, particularly in providing excellent customer service to meet the high expectations of modern hotel guests. Both studies acknowledge that customer satisfaction is essential for the long-term success of hotels in a competitive

market. However, while Ghosh's study focuses on the interaction between customers and employees, the present study explores how hotels in Legazpi City implement customer service practices to enhance guest satisfaction. Making Ghosh's study in the literature review is essential to provide a broader understanding of the importance of customer service in the hotel industry and how it affects customer satisfaction. It emphasizes the need for hotels to prioritize customer satisfaction by providing excellent service to meet customers' expectations. By including Ghosh's study, the present study can provide a more comprehensive analysis of how hotels in Legazpi City can improve their customer service practices to enhance guest satisfaction and gain a competitive advantage in the industry.

According to Banoufatemeh (2015)²⁸, the hotel sector is a fundamental component of the tourism industry that contributes to the gross domestic product (GDP) of developed countries, leading to higher national income, employment, balance of payments, and foreign exchange rates. Additionally, customer satisfaction plays a critical role in ensuring customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth advertising. While Banoufatemeh's research focuses on the economic contributions of the hotel industry, the present study centers on the operations and management of hotels in Legazpi City. Both studies recognize the importance of the hotel sector in the tourism industry and its economic contributions to developed countries. Additionally, both studies acknowledge the critical role played by customer satisfaction in ensuring customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth advertising. However, Banoufatemeh's research focuses on the economic contributions of the hotel industry, while the present study centers on the operations and management of hotels in Legazpi City.

Yang (2019)²⁹, also postulated that hotels are increasingly showing concern for social responsibility by paying attention to environmental, economic, and social values. By implementing practices that align with these values, hotels can enhance their appeal and improve the quality of the guest experience. To achieve this, hotels are employing innovative methods to enhance customer service and satisfaction. Sustainable competitive advantage is gained through the introduction of new features that add value to the guest experience. Many companies in the hotel industry are now focusing on environmental practices such as energy conservation and waste reduction to address guest concerns about environmental impacts.

The use of eco-friendly materials is also becoming more prevalent in this sector. Although Yang's study focuses on the social responsibility of hotels, it shares similarities with the present study which focuses on the operations and management of hotels in Legazpi City. Both Yang's study and the present study recognize the importance of enhancing the guest experience through innovative methods and practices.

Both studies also acknowledge the significance of sustainability in the hotel industry, particularly in relation to environmental concerns. Yang's study explores how hotels are implementing sustainable practices to align with social values and enhance their appeal, while the present study examines how hotels in Legazpi City are using innovative methods to improve customer service and satisfaction.

According to Cruz (2017)³², Philippine Travel and Tourism has a significant impact on the country's gross domestic product, investment, and employment opportunities. The location of hotels, often in or near business districts, travel destinations, and airports, like those in Legazpi City, is a sign of economic development. Therefore, the performance of the hotel industry is important. In a highly competitive environment, hotels must continuously formulate marketing strategies, strengthen their operations, and upgrade the quality of their services to remain sustainable. For hotels to survive, they must perform efficiently and minimize wastage of resources to maintain low operating expenses. The hospitality and tourism industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the Philippines due to tourists from all around the world, making a significant contribution to the country's economy.

The study of Cruz is similar to the present study as both focused on the hotel industry. Moreover, most hotels in Legazpi City are located in the city, airport, and business districts. One of the tourist attractions in Legazpi City is the Mayon Volcano, which was declared one of the 7 Wonders of the World by UNESCO. However, while Cruz's study focuses on the overall impact of the hotel industry on the Philippine economy, the present study focuses specifically on the operations and management practices of hotels in Legazpi City. By analyzing these practices, the present study aims to provide insights into how hotels in Legazpi City can improve their customer service practices to enhance guest satisfaction and gain a competitive advantage.

Integrating Cruz's study in this body of literature provides a broader understanding of the importance of the hotel industry in the Philippines and how it contributes to the country's economy. It highlights the need for hotels to continuously formulate marketing strategies, strengthen their operations, and upgrade the quality of their services to remain sustainable in a highly competitive environment. By including Cruz's study, the present study can provide a more comprehensive analysis of the challenges faced by hotels in Legazpi City and how they can overcome them to improve their overall performance. Empalmado (2021)³³, conducted a study entitled "Industrial Valuation of Hotels' Operation in Pagadian City, Philippines." The defining aspect of the hotel industry, according to the study, is customer satisfaction, which is important for every business. However, the hospitality industry relies entirely on customer satisfaction since it is based on providing luxury services. Unlike other businesses, very few hospitality businesses provide a basic

service that people need, like food or clothing. Another defining aspect of this industry is its reliance on disposable income and leisure time. According to the study, hotel employees are aware that there is only one boss, and that is "the Guest." One complaint can lead to the shutdown of the whole business at times. In the Hospitality industry, the Guest is the boss, and they are always right.

The investigation conducted by Empalmado bears resemblance to the present study in its emphasis on hotel operations and the important role of customer satisfaction. Nevertheless, the dissimilarity between the two inquiries lies solely in the study's locale. Compared to the present study, the study conducted by Empalmado study only focused on the operations of hotels in Pagadian City, Philippines, whereas the present study examines the operations and management of hotels in Legazpi City, Philippines, with a specific emphasis on branding, hotel technologies, and budget and revenue in addition to customer relations. While both studies emphasize the importance of customer satisfaction, the present study encompasses a more comprehensive investigation into the hotel industry's various operational aspects.

Fortuna (2021)³⁴, posits that finance plays a vital role in the survival of a hotel business. Financial planning, which encompasses not only raising funds but also effectively utilizing them, is important for achieving success. To facilitate effective financial planning and control, businesses should adopt a budget, which involves the systematic allocation of resources to attain the company's goals. To achieve this, organizations should implement budgeting practices that align with the principles and elements of the budget process. Effective integration of the budget process with other activities, such as planning and management functions, leads to better financial and program decisions that ultimately improve operations. The present study highlight the importance of budgeting practices in the financial performance of business organizations, specifically in the hotel industry. The study of Fortuna, shares a similarity with the present study as both emphasize the importance of financial planning and control for the success of businesses in the hotel industry. Both studies acknowledge that effective allocation of financial resources is essential to achieve the company's goals and improve operations. However, the difference lies in the specific focus of each study. Fortuna's study specifically delves into the budgeting practices that businesses should adopt, while the present study focuses on various aspects of operations management, including branding, hotel technologies, and budget and revenue management.

The inclusion of Fortuna's findings in the present study's assessment of operations management levels of hotels in Legazpi City is important as it highlights the significant role of effective financial planning and control in achieving success and improving operations, which is consistent with the findings of Fortuna's study that emphasizes the importance of budgeting practices in the financial performance of businesses

in the hotel industry.

Furthermore, working in the hotel industry is a dream for many students taking up Hospitality Management courses. According to Castro (2017)³⁵, the Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management is one of the most in-demand courses nowadays due to the increasing number of industries in tourism, accommodation, and restaurants. Because of the high demand in the hospitality industry, graduates can easily find jobs, with the majority of them working in the Philippines. However, job opportunities outside the country often require ample work experience. Moreover, attitudes of hospitality and tourism graduates towards being employed in the industry are expected to be influenced by their training experiences, mostly through practicum and work-related learning.

Both the study mentioned by Castro and the present study share a common focus on the hospitality industry. While Castro's study focused on students and graduates in the Hospitality Management course, the present study focuses on the operations and management of hotels. Despite these differences, both studies shed light on important aspects of the hospitality industry, with the present study providing valuable insights into hotel operations and management in the specific context of Legazpi City.

Zabala (2015)³⁶, emphasizes the importance of hotel management's leadership in implementing innovative strategies and providing human resource training to stay competitive in the hospitality industry. This resonates with the present study, which focuses on the operations management of hotels in Legazpi City. Although Zabala's study centers on strategies for promoting hotels, and the present study delves into the different departments of hotel operations, both studies acknowledge the critical role of management in ensuring the success of hotels.

Zabala highlights the significance of guest experience in determining a hotel's marketing mix, which aligns with the present study's emphasis on customer relations as the top priority for hotel operations in Legazpi City. Zabala's study shares similarities with the present study in their recognition of the importance of hotel management in ensuring the success of hotels in the hospitality industry. Both studies acknowledge the need for innovative strategies and human resource training to stay competitive. However, the difference lies in the specific focus of each study, with Zabala emphasizing on strategies for promoting hotels while the present study focuses on various aspects of operations management, including customer relations, branding, hotel technologies, and budget and revenue management. By including Zabala's insights, the present study can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the important factors that contribute to the success of hotels and help identify areas for improvement in operations management.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study utilized the descriptive survey method. According to Thyer (2010)¹, descriptive survey method of research methodology describes and summarizes the characteristics of a particular population or phenomenon under study. This method is commonly used in social sciences, particularly in situations where data on people's attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and experiences are required. The study aimed to investigate the various departments involved in hotel operations and assess their significance in relation to guest satisfaction across four identified variables: customer relations, branding, budget and revenue, and hotel technologies. This method was deemed suitable because of its descriptive nature, which was well-suited to the research objective.

IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ Findings

The important findings of the study are:

- The different areas of hotel operations in Legazpi City, as identified by the respondents who participated in the survey, are customer relations, hotel technologies, branding, and revenue and budget management. The areas of customer relations received the highest frequency of responses, with all 73 respondents from Legazpi hotels selecting it, making it the top-ranked area. The area of hotel technologies came in second, with 49 responses or 67.12%. branding was ranked third with 34 responses or 46.47%, while Revenue and budget management received the least ranking, with only 32 responses or 43.84%. It is important to note that the respondents were from both accredited and non- accredited hotels in Legazpi City;
- Hotels in Legazpi City, regardless of their accreditation status, obtained a Very high rating in the four categories of operations management, which are customer relations, branding, revenue and budget management, and hotel technologies. The weighted mean ratings for customer relations, branding, revenue and budget management, and hotel technologies were 4.89, 4.47, 4.54, and 4.37, respectively, with all domains receiving a Very high adjectival rating. The overall level of operations management in hotels in Legazpi City garnered a weighted mean rating of 4.57, with a Very high adjectival rating;
- Based on the computed F-values, there is a significant difference in the area of branding between accredited and non-accredited hotels in Legazpi City, with a computed F-value of 58.6667 exceeding the tabular value of F (5.3176), while no significant differences were found in customer relations, revenue and budget management, and hotel technologies, as the computed F-values for these areas were below the tabular value of F (5.3176), leading to the non-acceptance of the null hypothesis.

- The areas of improvement for hotel operations in Legazpi City are customer relations, branding, revenue and budget management, and hotel technologies. The highest priority for improvement in customer relations is updating technology trends to enhance guest relations. In branding, connecting to the purpose and values is a top priority for accredited hotels, while building relationship capital needs improvement for both types of hotels. Understanding the market and dynamic pricing is important for revenue and budget management, and revenue management strategies need improvement. Finally, enabling efficient interactions between customer service technology systems and hotel employees is vital for hotel technologies, and streamlining processes should be a priority. Addressing these areas can lead to improved customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and overall performance; and
- To address areas of improvement in Legazpi City hotels, an tourism and recreational plan has been proposed, consisting of four categories: customer relations, branding, revenue and budget management, and hotel technologies. The plan includes increasing social media presence, offering promotions and discounts to returning guests, conducting market surveys, and providing training programs for employees. The estimated budgets range from fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) to one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00), and the implementation timelines range from 1 week to 1 month.

➤ Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn:

- The hotels situated in Legazpi City commonly identify the following four departments of hotel operations: Customer Relations, Hotel Technologies, Branding, and Revenue and Budget Management. Customer Relations received the highest ranking among these departments.
- The overall rating for hotels in Legazpi City was Very High, with all four categories of operations management, namely customer relations, hotel technologies, branding, and revenue and budget management, receiving the same rating.
- The null hypothesis is not accepted, indicating a significant difference in the area of branding, while no significant differences were found in customer relations, revenue and budget management, and hotel technologies, regarding the level of operations management between accredited and non-accredited hotels in Legazpi City.
- The areas of improvement for hotel operations in Legazpi City include updating technology trends in customer relations, connecting to purpose and values in branding, understanding the market and dynamic pricing in revenue and budget management, and enabling efficient interactions between customer service technology systems and hotel employees in hotel technologies.

- A tourism and recreational plan have been proposed to address the areas of improvement, including increasing social media presence, offering promotions and discounts to returning guests, conducting market surveys, and providing training programs for employees.

➤ *Recommendations*

The following recommendations are proposed by the researcher:

- Hotels in Legazpi City may prioritize improving their customer relations department, as it received the highest ranking among the four categories of operations management;
- Hotel management may focus on updating technology trends in *customer relations*, connecting to purpose and values in branding, understanding the market and dynamic pricing in *revenue and budget management*, and enabling efficient interactions between customer service technology systems and hotel employees in *hotel technologies*;
- Monitoring the level of operations management in accredited and non- accredited hotels, and extending support to those in need of improvement be continued by the Department of Tourism (DOT), Legazpi City.
- The Hotel Operations tourism and recreational plan may be implemented by the hotels in Legazpi City to address the areas of improvement.
- A similar study in other regions or cities in the Philippines to compare and contrast the level of operations management in different areas may be conducted by researchers or organizations involved in the tourism industry in the Philippines.

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