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Assessment of problems associated with kitchen management in some selected hospitality institutions in Lafia metropolis: Implications for sustainability of the businesses for family survival

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Abstract

This study examines the problems associated with kitchen management in some selected hospitality institutions in Lafia Metropolis. Purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of the study area. Data obtained through administration of structured questionnaires were subjected to simple statistical analysis of frequency distribution and percentages. Results showed that majority (77.3%) of the kitchen staff were men. About 51.8% of the respondents were of between 21-30 years and most (77.3%) of the respondents had formal education. The main (63.3%) group of the respondents are single and (78.2%) has put in more than eight (8) years. The result further revealed that (77%) of the respondents agreed that there is enough equipment to meet up with kitchen menu operation. It was also found out that the management carried out maintenance monthly. The study therefore recommended that experts from outside should be engaged to maintain the equipment, and there should be enough equipment in sections to improve on the management to the kitchen in the study area and state of the art storage facilities should be made available so food can be bought in bulk. This will enable food that are normally out of season to be available.

Keywords: Kitchen equipment, kitchen management and hospitality institutions, planning and storage

Introduction

Kitchen management is the way and manner equipment and materials could be used in order to achieve maximum objectives for which they are meant. According to Chukudum. A (2002) ^[2] kitchen management requires input of money, time, personnel effort and energy (human and mechanical). David *et al.* (2004) ^[4] sees kitchen as a room or part of a room used for food preparation including cooking and sometimes for eating and entertaining guest. According to David *et al.* (2004) ^[4] the function of kitchen includes food preparation, food storage, washing up, laundry, eating and entertainment. Cracknell *et al.* (2000) ^[3] stated that the first step in kitchen organization is to establish the scope, size and nature of the operation. As stated by Ronald *et al.* (2000) ^[5] kitchen organization requires that a head chef breaks down the overall task into its components, grouping these in an orderly sequence of self-contained section, precise guidelines can be laid down to cover all types of kitchen, but he following are the most adhered, issuing of materials for processing, the production of a work schedule, preparation of meals, organization of the support services, workshop and cleaning of kitchen equipment and maintenance and time management. According to Ronald *et al.* (2000) ^[5] the existence of different sections in a kitchen will depend upon its activities and operations. Hence, effective kitchen management denotes all the decision making and activities involved in making meals ready for consumption. Roy Brigg (2000) ^[6] stated that raw materials enter the cooking section from the main preparation areas (vegetables, meat, fish and dry goods), this section is designed with the view to continuing the flow movement through to the server, hence roasting oven for example, are best sited close to the meat preparation area, the steamer adjacent to the vegetable preparation area. Anita Tull (2000) ^[1] stated that when planning it is good ideal to think about the natural work between the primary activities area. According to Ronald *et al.* (2004) if the equipment is care for in the proper way, it is more likely to give service and last longer.

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In any organization the for training shows itself in many ways i.e. when the volume of work is increasing, when operation are highly complex and skillful misunderstanding, complains and bad attitudes are increasing, accuracy or quality seems to be slipping and when there is decrease in production numbers. Therefore, the aim of this study was to identify the problems associated with kitchen management in some selected hospitality institutions in Lafia Metropolis.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Lafia Metropolis capital of Nasarawa State. The local government is one of the thirteen (13) local government areas in the state. It has an estimated population of 1,09749 (2006). It lies between latitude 7° and 9° north of the equator, longitude 7° and 10° Greenwich Meridian with an average rainfall distribution of between 131.73 mm and 145 mm. The temperature ranges between 60°F and 80°F.

Sampling Techniques and Sampling Size

The study adopted purposive sampling technique in the selection of six (6) out of the existing seventeen (17) hospitality institutions in Lafia Metropolis. The six (6) hospitality institutions selected were based on their level of patronage and facilities. Three (3) hospitality institutions were randomly selected two areas each based on the concentration of the institutions to whom the questionnaires were administered. A total of one hundred and ten (110) questionnaires were used for the study.

Data Analysis

Data collected were subjected to simple statistical analysis of frequency, distribution and percentages to measure the extent of the effect of problems associated with kitchen management in some selected hospitality institutions in Lafia Metropolis.

Results and Discussion

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The result as shown Table 1, shows the Demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study area on the problems associated with kitchen management in some selected hospitality institutions in Lafia Metropolis.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents:

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Marital Status		
Single	70	63.6
Married	40	36.4
Total	110	100
Age		
15-20	15	13.6
21-30	57	51.8
31-40	38	34.6
Total	110	100
Educational Level		
Primary	-	-
Secondary	25	22.7
ND/HND/Degree	85	77.3
Total	110	100
Years of Experience		
4-8	24	21.8
9-15	86	78.2
Total	110	100
Sex		
Male	85	77.3
Female	25	22.7
Total	110	100

The result revealed that majority (63.6) of the respondents were single. This means that unmarried people are more involved in the management of kitchen in the hospitality institutions. This findings agrees with the assertion of that singles are more involved in hospitality institutions because of the nature of the environment and business. On age class involvement in the management of kitchen in the hospitality institution, age 21-30 constituted the highest (51.8%) of the respondents. This is an indication that the management of kitchen requires long hours of work which the men and singles women can do. This is a fact since a lot of physical strengths is required in the management of kitchen which this age group posses. The result also revealed that the educational status of the respondents in which majority (77.3) had higher degree. This is an indication that inasmuch as kitchen management requires physical strength, it also requires a lot of mental work i.e., intelligence.

Those that are in charge of managing the kitchen in the hospitality institutions must be professionals in the area. The findings also revealed that majority (86%) have experience ranging from 9-15years. This is expected since experience plays very vital role in the management of materials. The multiplier effects the kitchen equipment will be managed properly and the quality of food will compare favorably with international standard. This agreed with Cracknel (2000) [3] that years of experience matters a lot in the hospitality institutions for quality delivery of services. Table 1 also indicates that (77.3%) of the respondents are male. This is true because of the long hours needed to work in the night and managing the kitchen in the hospitality institutions requires continuous process that needs no break up in operations.

Table 2: Are there are enough equipment to meet up with kitchen menu operation.

Equipment	Frequency	Percentage
There are enough equipment.	85	77%
There are no enough equipment.	25	23%
Total	110	100

Table 2 revealed that majority (77%) of the respondents agreed that there enough equipment to meet up with the kitchen menu operation. This attests to the importance of equipment in meeting up with menu operation. Roy Briggs (2000) [6] reported that enough kitchen equipment is very important to meet up with food preparation.

Table 3: How often the maintain and service kitchen equipment.

When is Maintenance Service done	Frequency	Percentage
Yearly	25	22
Quarterly	17	16
Monthly	68	62
Total	110	100

From Table 3, 62% of the respondents in the selected hospitality institutions agreed that the kitchen equipment are maintained and service monthly. The multiplier effect is that there will be less break down of equipment and the staff in the kitchen will be able with menu operatione. g cooking, laundry. Goyal (2005) [8] upheld that for proper usage without damage and breakdown the equipment needs to be regularly maintained to reduce fatigue on the part of the machine and save cost on the part of the management.

Table 4: Who are those that carry out the maintenance and service work in the kitchen.

Who carryout maintenance/ service work.	Frequency	Percentage
Hotel Maintenance Officer	76	69
Qualify Contractor	34	31
Kitchen Staff	-	-
Total	110	100

Table 4 shows those that carryout the maintenance and service work in the kitchen. Majority (69%) of the respondents agreed that the hotel maintenance officers carryout maintenance and service work in the kitchen. This means that there will be less unattended breakdown of kitchen equipment. This compares favorably with the findings of Author Croft (2004) that proper and regular maintenance by staff except if necessary to call for outsiders which at times delays production process.

Table 5: Does the kitchen have different section for preparing food?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	40	36
No	70	64
Total	110	100

The results in table 5 revealed that majority (60%) of the respondents agreed that the kitchen has no different sections while 40% of the respondents agreed that the kitchen has different sections. This shows that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that there are no different sections in the kitchen. This will increase the damaging of both kitchen utensils and equipment thereby reducing the efficiency and productivity as well as food quality.

Table 6: What are the categories of staff in the kitchen?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Skilled Labourer	11	10
Unskilled Labourer	85	77
Casual Labourer	14	13
Total	110	100

The table further revealed that majority (77%) of the respondents are unskilled laborers, while 11 respondents agreed that 19% are skilled labourers, and 14 respondents agreed that 13% are casual labourers. From the results, it means that the food will be inefficiently cooked, quality of food prepared will be very poor and food nutrients standardization will be a major problem.

Table 7: The kitchen staff subjected to any form of training on the job?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	31
No	75	69
Total	110	100

The table shows that 25 respondents, representing 75% are of the opinion that the staff are not subjected to any form of training on the job. This is an indication that their knowledge and productivity on the job will drastically go down, since they are not exposed to any modern method of operation in the kitchen. Steve *et al.* (2008) is of the view that management must sent their staff to training to improve their knowledge on the job.

Table 8: Is there any incentives given to encourage the kitchen staff?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	23
No	84	77
Total	110	100

The table shows that 84 respondents, representing 76% disagreed that incentives are given to encourage staff while 26 respondents, representing 24% agreed that incentives are given to staff to encourage them. This is an indication that the staff are not being encouraged to put in their best. The multiplier effect is that there will be no improvement in productivity, efficiency, quality of food, good manner and proper handling of utensils and equipment.

Table 9: Does the management visit the kitchen often to check if there are problems?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	86	78
No	24	22
Total	110	100

The table further revealed that 86 respondents, representing 77% agreed that the management do visit the kitchen while 14 respondents, representing 23% do not agree that the management visit the kitchen. This is an indication that the management do visit the kitchen to check if there are problem and this will deliberately help to check excesses, stealing, pilfering, quarrelling, mishandling of kitchen utensil and equipment and improves efficiency and quality of food. Cracknel (2000) [3].

Table 10: Does the management have ideal facilities for storing food.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	24	21
No	86	79
Total	110	100

The table shows that 24 respondents, representing 22% ascertain that the hotels do not have ideal storage facilities for cooked and raw food while 86 respondents, representing 77% disagreed that the hotels ideal storage facilities. Since majority disagreed it means that perishable food can not be purchased in large quantity. This is not in support of Roy Briggs (2000) [6] that ideal storage facilities are needed so that food can be purchased in bulk to reduce the stress of daily purchase which is more economical and also gives variety even when the food is out of season.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From the study it can be concluded that for effective kitchen management in hospitality institutions, training of kitchen staff, regular maintenance of kitchen equipment, regular supervision of what goes in the kitchen should be a paramount duty to forestall any unethical conduct in the kitchen. From the study it is recommended that since effective kitchen management is very important in the hospitality institutions, the following have to be carried out:

1. Staff in the kitchen should be trained regularly.
2. Kitchen equipment should be service and maintained as when necessary.
3. There should be regularly supervision of what goes on in the kitchen.

4. Incentives should be given to deserving kitchen staff as a form of motivation to do more and for others to put in their best.
5. Management should endeavor to engage qualified staff for good service delivering.

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