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An Analysis of Maintenance Management Culture and condition of Facilities of Taraba Hotel, Jalingo, Taraba State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study was carried out to assess maintenance management culture and condition of facilities in Taraba Hotel. The hotel is classified as a one star hotel located in Jalingo, the state capital. The hotel was established in 1992. Multi data collection method was used in the study including questionnaire, interview and observation. A total of 27 respondents were selected as the sample size for the study by stratifying them into segments of top, middle and junior staff, and then 50 percent respondents were selected from each segment. This resulted in 5 staff from top management (50% of 10), 9 staff from middle management (50% of 18) and 13 staff from junior rank staff (50% of 25). Random blindfold selection of names from folded papers was used to select each of the respondents from each segment. Based on result from the study, it was concluded that the maintenance culture of the hotel was generally poor and facilities were in bad condition due to lack of regular maintenance. The study recommended more proactive maintenance strategies for the hotel, like preventive and routine maintenance and a maintenance overhaul of current facilities in the hotel to prevent further breakdown.

Key words: Maintenance Management, Taraba Hotel, Maintenance Culture, Hotel Facilities.

1.0 Introduction

The importance of maintenance management in the hotel- part of the accommodation component of tourism has been well highlighted but despite this, the industry is still characterized by the personal ownership and management structure. There is a division in a hotel where one party owns the physical assets of the hotel (the owner), and an independent second party manages the hotel (the operator) (Guilding, 2003). Because of this operator 's need to maintain brand image which can also be a source of owner/operator conflict, as brand image maintenance may compete with profit maximisation. Maintenance has been given a very low priority in most organizations. Such a lack of concern results in under-resourcing of maintenance which further affects building performance. Moreover, maintenance performance has been criticized in literature as being inefficient, unsatisfactory, and slow responsiveness for many reasons which include.

Insufficient proactive maintenance strategies and as a result much of the manpower is wasted in performing the corrective maintenance.

Maintenance personnel are too focused on technical responsibilities than managerial, social, legal, financial, and inter-departmental communication issues.

Maintenance performance is generally hard to measure, as it should not only consider quantifiable parameters but also the quality of the performed maintenance and its organization.

The lack of building maintenance objectives, which are not properly coordinated and not matching with organizational directions. Operators need to maintain brand image which may clash with owners' revenue targets.

Hospitality facilities requires higher maintenance and renovation cost than residential and industrial buildings, as they are more dynamic, complex, in construction and installation.

Lack of complete record keeping of hotels maintenance activities.

Rare research on maintenance for hotel facilities.

There is no unique maintenance strategy suitable for all types of buildings due to different characteristics, such as design, purposes, construction forms, uses, building services ...etc.

Poor Maintenance Culture as a problem of maintenance management practices faces Africa as a whole. The problem with Africa is not its architecture but its poor maintenance practice. The challenge is to start promoting a 'maintenance culture' for all the people, such as to encourage people to love and care for the environment.

The maintenance of buildings and its systems are often neglected during the design and planning stage in project construction.

Other factors including lack of proper maintenance plans, inadequate funds, lack of knowledge about the maintenance strategies, inadequate maintenance performance standard, and an absence of commitment from top management further exacerbate the problems of building maintenance.

All these factors puts increasing pressure on hotel managers and planners to consider the impact of improper maintenance and develop more effective practices to avoid hazards in the buildings

or workplaces. An excellent practice of maintenance management is greatly needed to increase the life cycle of the property and to minimize unexpected breakdowns or deterioration effects, and vice versa. Therefore, the practices of the maintenance management have to be continuously reviewed and analysed in order to ascertain a high quality service (Zawawi, 2010)

Furthermore, many hospitality writers have explained many different reasons, which make maintenance essential for hotel operations. These reasons according to Hassanien & Looseket, (2002); Chipkin, (1997) cited in Hassanien, (2003), include:

- (a) to carry on with the competition,
- (b) to keep or increase market share by pleasing the current or impending customers;
- (c) to develop the operational competence of the hotel that will lead to an increase in both productivity and long term savings in operational expenses;
- (d) to retain corporate image and standards;
- (e) to promote the hotel to a higher class (e.g. from 4 star to 5 star);
- (f) to conform with the new trends and technology in the market (e.g. the green movement);
- (g) to handle governmental requirements like Disability Act, health and safety regulations in different countries);
- (h) to make progress from natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes.

Furthermore, Henley, (2004) highlighted that maintenance is significant in hotels because room quality reflected the price paid for it. The writers were of the view that when room rates are raised it should be based on quality because guest must be able to perceive the quality increase. In providing quality evaluation, hotels have been awarded "stars", more stars means higher quality hotels. On yearly basis the writers observed that "star" rating increase or decreases in hotels. Managers losing star should then know that the hotel is below current "star" status. Potential customers also have the means to picking up this signals and messages indicating lower quality beginning to lose ground when it comes to maintenance of amenities required to retain theirs.

As such hotel managers should not fear increases in capital allocation when it comes to upgrading of the amenities of their hotels because the increased investment will bring increase revenue. The writers stated that there is much competition in this industry, so hotel management planning should be focused towards upgrading “star” rating through maintenance of hotels facilities. (Henley, 2004)

2.0 Material and Method

This study uses Multi-method data collection. The study objectives revealed that this research study is primarily a descriptive analytical study with qualitative and quantitative approaches. This research also has an exploratory aspect which included interviews with top management of the hotel. Furthermore, this study used deductive approach, since it develops a theory and then designs an analytical research approach to achieve this. It moves from the more general to the specific (this call a top-down approach). Therefore, a descriptive study of this nature will include the measurements, classification, analysis, comparison and interpretation of the data that would be collected. Data was collected through the use of structured questionnaires, observation and a document analysis

The study population includes all the staff segment of Taraba hotel. Accordingly, a list of staff sourced from the hotel revealed that there were three segments of staff in the hotel, these includes ; 10 top management staff, 18 medle management staff and 25 junior staff, making a total of 53 persons as the total population. A simple percentage approach of selecting sample size from small population was used. Accordingly, 50 percent of staff was selected from each of the staff segment of the hotel. This result in the following; 5 staff from top management, 9 staff from middle management staff and 13 from junior staff, making a total of 27 respondents representing the sample size for this study. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to select those that were administered with questionnaires.

2.1 Method

Two types of data was used for this study, the primary (Field Survey) and secondry daty (Desk survey).

The field survey involves the collection of empirical data. Fieldwork can be associated with three practical approaches; the survey approach, the case study approach and the problem-solving approach (action research) (Sakaramen U, Bougie R, 2013).To achieve research objectives, a written survey questionnaire was chosen as the primary method of quantitative data collection to

investigate maintenance management practices through assessing the importance level of practices and barriers. The researcher used surveys because according to Robson (2002), surveys are used for relatively large number of respondents within a limited time frame. This appears to be the most convenient way to obtain highest participation as people would be able to fill in the questionnaire during free time. Questionnaire survey enhances consistency of observations and improves replication due to its inherent standardized measurement and sampling techniques (Naoum SG, 2007). The need for generalization in the findings across the hotel buildings influenced the choice of questionnaire survey.

The desk survey (literature review) forms an essential aspect of the research since it sets the pace for the development of field survey instruments using questionnaires, and interview. Secondary sources of information were identified and collected in books, articles, and professional periodicals, journals and databases on the subject of the study (Rechard C, et al., 2000)

The questionnaire was the main survey instrument of this study. It was developed based on the scale development procedures outlined by Hinkin for developing reliable and valid measurement instruments in any hospitality industry field research setting. Hinkin have provided a seven step process guide for scale development and analysis in the hopes that hospitality researchers will utilize a systematic approach to item and scale creation (Patton M Q, 2002)

The data collected from the respondents were sorted and edited for analysis. The questionnaires were organized and classified according to the patterns given by the respondents and the responses from the questionnaires was organised in line with the research questions.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics was used in the analysis of the data. Descriptive statistics included frequencies and their percentages. The analysed data was summarised and findings reported as a description of the total population of the study. In this descriptive analysis, data retrieved was presented in the form of frequencies, mean, graphs (line graphs and bar charts) and percentages were used to highlight the respondent's perception on the research topic. Data was recorded with Microsoft Excel and analysed by the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

3.0 Result and Discussion

3.1 Distribution of Respondents

Figure 1 below displayed how respondents for this study were distributed across the different segment of the organization. Accordingly, it can be gathered that 18.5 percent of the respondents were made up of top management, 33.3 percent were middle management cadre, like line and departmental heads, while the remaining 48.1 percent of the staff were of the junior staff category.

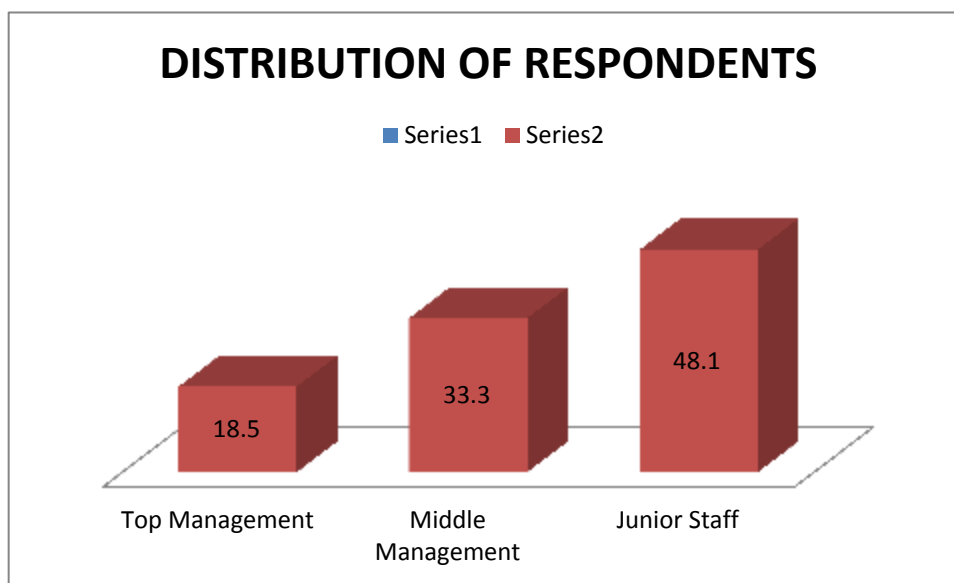


Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents

(Source: Field survey, 2019)

3.2 Sex of Respondents

Data in figure 2 displayed the sex of the respondents involved in the study. According, it can also be gathered that 39 percent of the respondents were of the male gender while 61 percent were of the female gender.

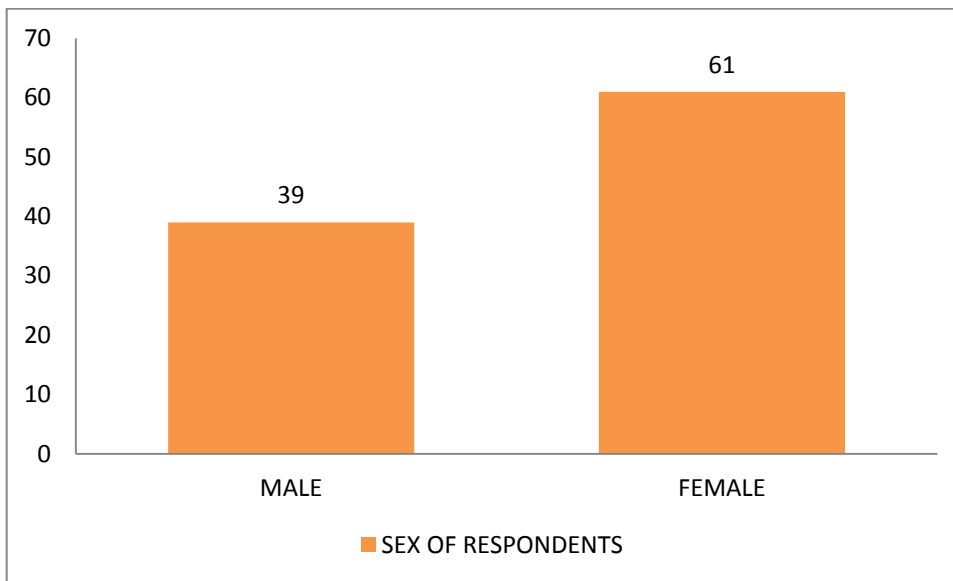


Figure 2, Sex of Respondents

(Source: Field survey, 2019)

3.3 Level of Respondents Education.

Furthermore, from table 3 below, data on respondents level of education are displayed and it shows that none of the respondents had a post-graduate degree, 5 percent of the respondents had at least a university degree, 59 percent of them are holders of secondary school certificate, another 26percent of them had only primary school certificate and 10 percent were under those with any other certificate or education that were not classified among the above mentioned.

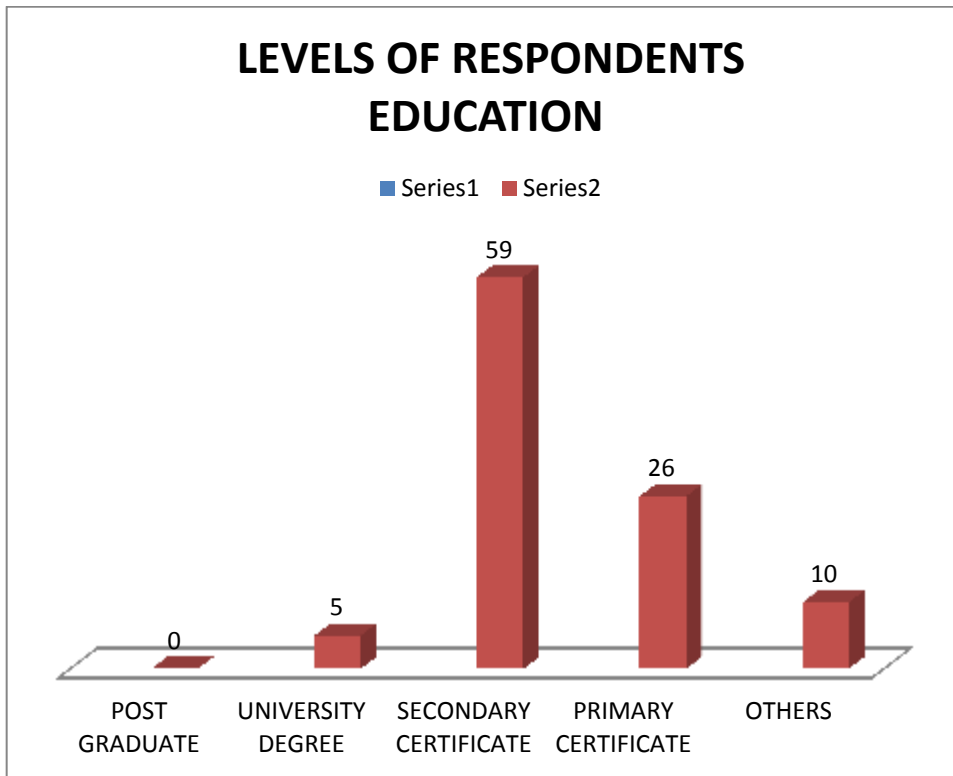


Figure 3 Level of Respondents Education

(Source: Field survey, 2019)

3.4 Age of Respondents

Figure 4 below displayed the age of the respondents for the study and revealed that 65 percent of them were between the age brackets of 20 – 40years, 30 Percent of them were between the age bracket of 51 – 60 years while 5 percent were between the age bracket of 61 and above.

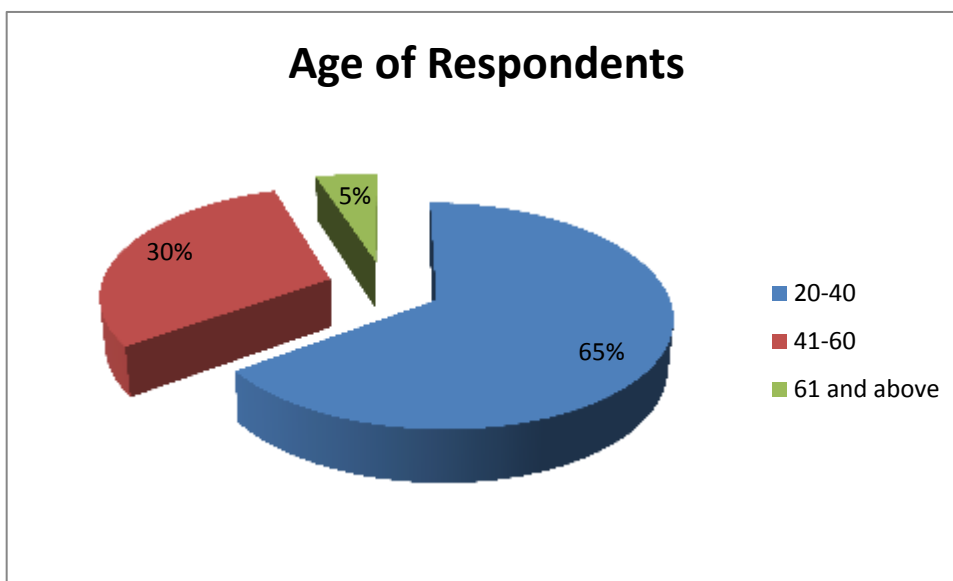


Figure 4 Age of Respondents

(Source: Field survey, 2019)

3.5 Years of Respondents Work Experience

Figure 5 below present data on respondent’s years of working experience in the organization. Accordingly, it was revealed that 60 percent of the respondents only work for a period of 0 – 5 years, 22 percent of them have been working in the organization between 6-10 years period, 10 percent have worked for 11 – 15 years while 8 percent have been working in the organization for the period of 16 years and above.

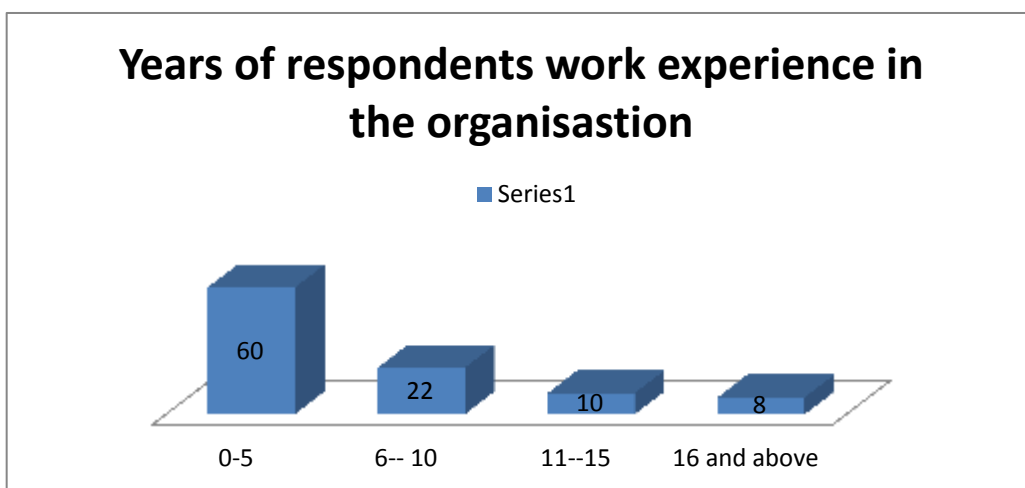


Figure 5 Years of Respondents Work Experience

(Source: Field survey, 2019)

3.6 Maintenance Culture of The Hotel

A rating of maintenance culture of the study area was perform using self-adopted rating standard base on author’s observation. Accordingly data on table 1 below shows that there was a zero (0) scores for a rating of very high maintenace culture which was remarked as poor, a rating of high maintenace culture received 5 scores and was still remarked as poor, a rating of moderate maintenace culture with a scores of 15, remarked as fair while a rating of low received a score of 60 which was remarked as poor with a rating of very low receiving a score of 20 and remarked as poor also.

Table 1, Maintenance culture of the hotel

S/N	Rating	Scores	Remarks
1	Very high	0	Poor
2	High	5	Poor
3	Moderate	15	Fair
4	Low	60	Poor
5	Very low	20	Poor
6	Total	100	

(Source : Field survey, 2019)

3.7 Condition of Facilities in The Hotel

Another self-assessment of condition of facilities in the hotel was conducted based on field first-hand observation. Accordingly, data on the above assessment are presented in table 2 below and it revealed that electrical appliances like Fans, Bulbs, Sucket, TV etc in the hotel were assessed to be in a fair condition with about 40 percent of them not working perfectly. The Walls were assessed to be in a fair conditions too, though many section were seen to have peeled and cracked, a sign of lack of regular painted. The Bath room and toilet were assessed to be in a fair condition about, 40 percent of the W/C were not functioning properly. Furniture and Uphostrys like beds, chairs, tables etc. were asseesed to be in a poor codition, since about 70 percent of these items were not in good condition. Almost the same poor condition was assessed for Doors and Windows with about 50 percent not locking properly. The Floor and Cieling of the hotel were assessed to be of fair condition respectively though with some broken floor portin and opening ceiling sections. The Roof of the hotel was assessed to be in a fair condition though with some licking areas. The ground was assessed to be poorly maintained with over grown grasses, edges and uncovered gutters. The access roads was assessed to be in fair condtion, though cracks and pot hoels has started developing and finally, the kitchen and other equipments were asseesed to be in a poor condition with things like sink and shang not working properly.

Table 2, Condition of Facilities in the Hotel

s/n	Facilities type	Condition rating	Remarks
1	Electrical appliances (fans, bulbs, suckets, TV etc)	Fair	A larger percentage (40%) not working
2	Walls	Fair	Many sections has peeled and cracked, and not re-painted for a long time
3	Bath room and toilet	Fair	40% of the W/C not flushing
4	Funiture and uphostries (beds, chairs, tables etc)	Poor	70% not in good condition
5	Doors and windors	Poor	50% not locking properly
6	Floor	Fair	Some portion broken
7	Cieling	Fair	Some parts opening
8	Roof	Fair	Some places licking

9	Ground (gutters and gardening)	Poor	Over grown grasses, edges and uncovered gutters
10	Access road	Fair	Some cracks and pot holes developing
11	Kitchen and other equipments	Poor	Sink and shank not properly working

(Source : Field survey, 2019)

Discussion

From the data presented and analyzed so far, it was found that many of the staff (48.1%) and (33.3%) were made up of junior and middle management staff respectively as against 18.5 percent of top management staff which means that the work force of the hotel is bottom heavy, and quite under stable for a hotel of this class. Being a low class of 1 star rating, the need for juniors staff always outweigh that for senior staff in this kind of work environment. The study also found that both male and female gender was employed in the hotel, though the female workers make the larger chunk (61%) of the workforce quite typical of this kind of organization. Furthermore, the study revealed that most of the workers (59%) and (26%) had secondary and primary school certificates respectively and a lower (5%) had at least a university degree. Judging from the caliber of workers and the class of hotel, it is understandable that not much of higher education personnel will be working in this place.

The study found also that majority of the workers in the study area were between the age bracket of 20-40 years showing a young and somewhat moderately experience workforce though a good percentage (30%) were between the age bracket of 41- 60 years. It is expected that this later group of workers can provide the needed guidance to the young workers. Another important finding which is quite related to the one above was the years of working experience in the hotel, where it was found that 60 percent of the staff only works in the place for 0-5 years with 22 percent having 6-10 years experience. It is either some of the workers must have gathered experience working somewhere else before coming to this present job or they do not have much

experience.

The culture of maintenance in the hotel was also generally rated to be very low with 60 percent scores and remarked to be very poor. It shows how unserious maintenance management practices are taken in the hotel.

And finally, the facilities condition rating or assessment in the hotel revealed that most of the facilities were of poor and fair condition as many were seen to have developed serious defects of damage due to long term lack of maintenance.

5.0 Conclusion

With the above summary, the study therefore draw a conclusion that proper and effective maintenance management practices was lacking in the hotel which could be the reason for low business output from the hotel in recent years as complained by the staff of the hotel during an interview session.

6.0 Recommendations

From the findings and conclusion made from the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. That most of the factors that could determine maintenance management strategies should be taken into consideration when making such decision.
2. Management should show serious commitment to maintenance management issues by carrying out necessary maintenance evaluation as when due and provide the needed finance for facilities maintenance in the hotel.
3. Instead of corrective and emergency maintenance strategies (i.e. waiting until something when wrong or there is a fault before maintenance actions are taken), preventive and routine maintenance strategies should be adopted by the hotel.
4. There should be an orientation of the staff of the hotel on the importance of maintenance management to the hotel in particular and hospitality businesses generally. This can help change their current perception on the concept and therefore improve on the maintenance culture of the place.
5. Finally and as a matter of importance, the hotel should carry out a maintenance overhaul to fix those facilities that are faulty and prevent further breakdown of others.

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