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An Analysis of Management Perception on Hotel Maintenance Practices: A Case Study of Taraba Hotel, Jalingo, Taraba State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study was carried out to assess how Taraba Hotel Management perceived the practice of hotel maintenance. Taraba 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. Result and findings from the study revealed that 29.6 percent of the staff perceived the concept to be very necessary, 51.9 percent believed that the concept and practice is not too necessary while 18.5 percent believed that the concept and practice was not necessary at all. It was concluded that the maintenance culture of the hotel based on their perception 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, Management Perception, Taraba Hotel, Maintenance Culture, Hotel Facilities.

1.0 Introduction

Maintenance is “the effort in connection with different technical and administrative action to keep a physical asset, or restore it to a condition where it can perform a required function (British Standard Institute, 1993 cited in Chan, 2001). Lind & Muyingo (2009) also stated the meaning of maintenance as “restoring to or retain to a state in which an item can perform an initially specified function and all actions aimed towards this are maintenance activities”

Maintenance is also seen as an investment because resources are spent today to do maintenance in order to reduce cost or get higher benefits in the future as compared to if the resources are not spent. However despite this opinion maintenance is generally separated from „true“ investment because it is matter of restoring an old function or keeping up an old function (Lind and Muyingo 2009).

These definitions stated above according to Lind & Muyingo (2009) is related to the old historical standards, currently rational decision making on maintenance is forward looking and therefore this old definition cannot matter but is reviewed to incorporate „meta- strategies“. A decision maker for maintenance should think in terms of how to keep informed, how to take decision, and consideration of the fact that the future is uncertain, therefore no need for future planning. Furthermore from longer perspective the writers“ were of the view that the question is whether an object should be kept in, improved or declared unwanted.

As such from a forward looking perspective, the concept of maintenance favours minor changes and where it is possible to know in advance what is rational to do. It is also suitable for an industry characterised with more rapid changes on its specific building structure. This was confirmed by Hassanien, (2007) assertion that hotels need minor renovations because this industry is influenced by technological and societal changes.

1.1 Classification of Maintenance Management

In conducting a literature survey on maintenance management, Garg and Deshmukh (2006) did the following categorization on maintenance management:

- i. Maintenance optimization models using programming and other software tools both qualitatively and quantitatively covering four areas involving description of technical system, its function and importance; identifying possible weakening consequences for a system; the description of the available information about the system and its objective function which helps in finding the best balance
- ii. Maintenance techniques comprising preventive, corrective, condition based, predictive and outsourcing techniques among others;
- iii. Maintenance scheduling for maintenance personnel, repair rate assessment and wear out condition of equipment as well as scheduling for immediate and emergency job which are challenging areas in maintenance.
- iv. Maintenance information systems which uses opportunity created by information technology and which have now become essential component of any maintenance in organizations

- v. Maintenance performance measurements used to assess effectiveness of equipments and other repair strategies. An effective performance measurement system is essential for effective functioning of any organization as whatever gets measured has a higher probability of its completion.
- vi. Maintenance policies which deals with maintenance concepts and new ideas to improve management decisions. (Garg and Deshmukh, 2006)

Maintenance management has also been categorized by many writers into three maintenance procedures being corrective maintenance (unplanned) approach which is a failure-driven maintenance referring to running equipment until unexpected event breakdown of equipment or malfunctioning. Preventive maintenance (planned) which entails time-based maintenance requiring regular task of maintenance irrespective of the condition of the item and thirdly condition-based maintenance which also entails periodic inspection of equipment to check it and replace it when a faulty condition is observed before breakdown (Richard et al 2000); (Lind & Muyingo 2009).

Well structured maintenance schedules in different hotels in different countries have yielded excellent results for hotel operators, which must be learnt. Maintenance is the key for providing better built environment for customers and business owners. Maintenance of the hospitality building is significant as its effectiveness will directly affect the quality of services, which have direct and significant effect on satisfying customers' wants and expectations. Proper maintenance management is essential for hotel operations for many reasons including (Borsenik, Stutts, 1997; Lai, 2013) to maintain the capital invested, enhance its value and sustain reasonable investment return; increase safety and security of hotel guests and employees by ensuring the building, services and facilities are safe and fit for use; ensure the availability/reliability of all the assets and services required by the customers; keep or increase market share by satisfying the current or impending guests; conform with the new trends and technology in the market (e.g. the green movement); conserve corporate image, appearance, historical and architectural values; increase the operational stability and efficiency of the facilities and systems; ensure energy expenditure (improving energy efficiency); mitigate the consequences of a natural disaster such as hurricanes and earthquakes; meet governmental requirements like Disability Act, health and safety regulations; carry on with the competition, ensure operation readiness of all equipment required for emergency use at all time and increase the life cycle of the property and achieve minimum breakdowns or deteriorations

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. Acoordingly, 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 reprenting 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.

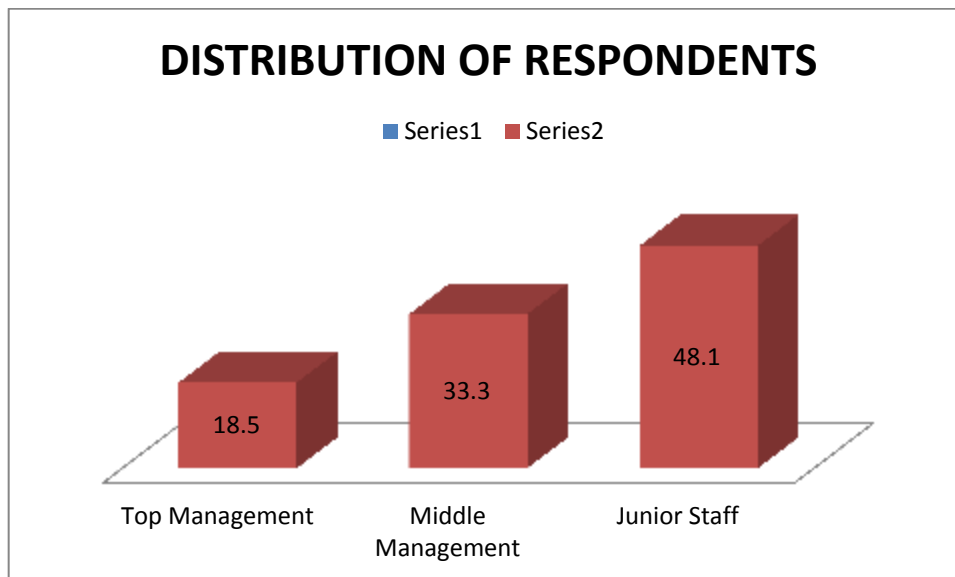


Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents

(Source: Field survey, 2019)

3.2 Sex of Respondents

Data on 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.

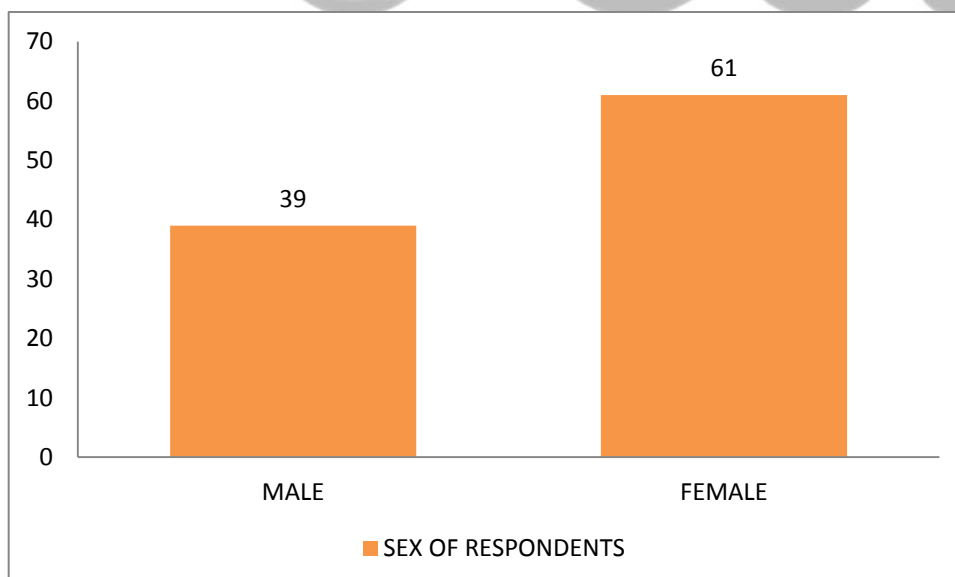


Figure 2, Sex of Respondents

(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 26 percent 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.

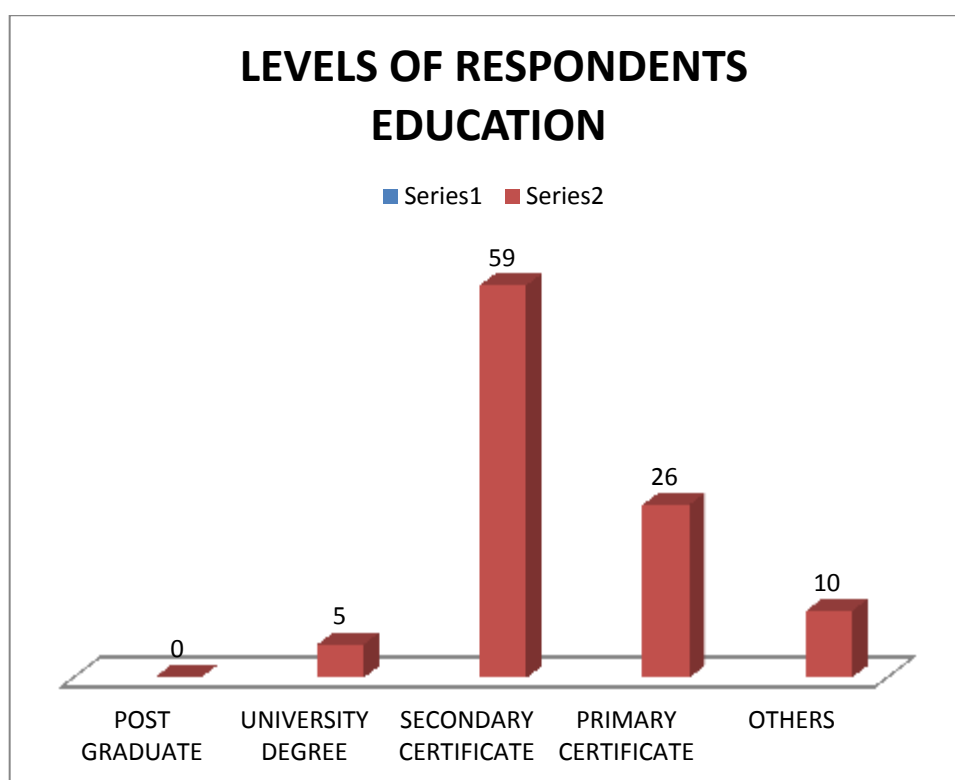


Figure 3 Level of Respondents Education

(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 – 40 years, 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.

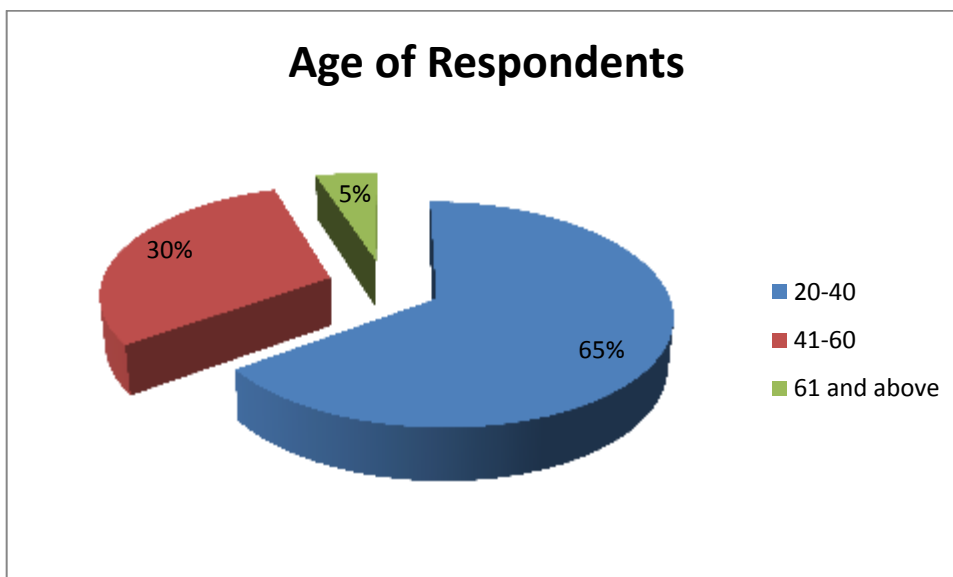


Figure 4 Age of Respondents

(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.

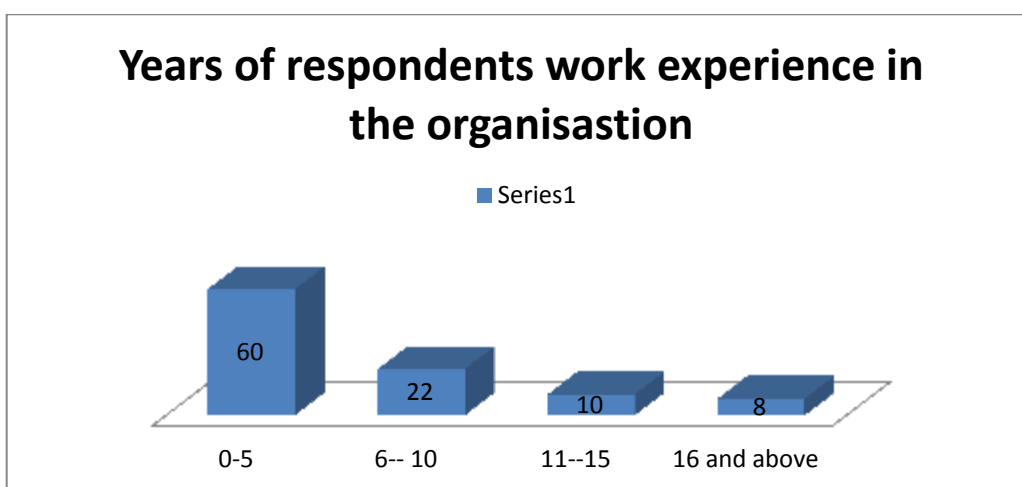


Figure 5 Years of Respondents Work Experience

(Source: Field survey, 2019)

3.6 Perception of Management on Hotel Maintenance

On how staff and management perceived the concept and practice of maintenance management, data on figure 6 revealed that 29.6 percent accepted the concept to be very necessary, 51.9 percent believed that the concept and practice is not too necessary while 18.5 percent believed that the concept and practice was not necessary at all.

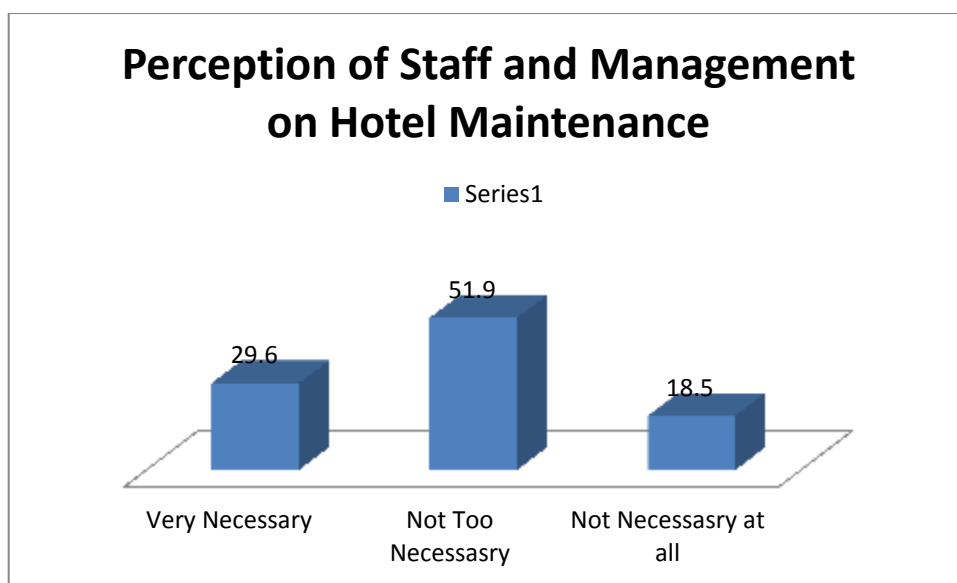


Figure 6 Perception of Staff and Management on Hotel Maintenance

(Source: Field survey, 2019)

3.7 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 above result was not a surprise as another finding revealed that 51.9 percent of the staff and management of the hotel believed that maintenance of the Hotel regularly was not very necessary as against 29.6 percent who sees the concept as very important and quite necessary for the growth of business. When management doesn't take a particular policy regarding their operation very serious, it is certainly going to have negative effects on the businesses. Such may be the case of Taraba Hotel where facilities could be allowed to breakdown before a repair is carried out. This type of perception on hotel maintenance should be discourage and a more robust routine maintenance practices culture built.

4.0 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.

5.0 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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