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## Influence of Senior Employees on Improved Performance in Selected 3-5 Star Hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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### Abstract

The incorporation of a senior workforce in the hospitality industry, particularly in 3-5 star hotels, plays a crucial role in product quality and service excellence, according to extensive research and industry opinion. This research thesis specifically aimed to determine the impact of these senior employees on the improved performance of select 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The research utilized a descriptive survey research design, with a sample size of 218 drawn from 3-5 star-rated hotels. Stratified random sampling was used to select the hotels, chefs, waiters, and restaurant supervisors, while purposive sampling was used to select HR and FO managers. The study utilized structured and unstructured questionnaires, as well as interview schedules, to collect data, and both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the data. The study aimed to determine the specific roles played by senior employees in improving performance in 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The results showed that the majority of the employees agreed that leadership, training, and mentorship were essential roles played by senior employees in improving hotel performance. The study also found that employees who worked for many years in the hotel industry gained adequate knowledge that was useful in guiding junior employees. The correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between the roles played by senior employees and improved performance ( $r=0.746$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The study recommends that senior employees in 3–5-star hotels in Nairobi City County should be motivated to continually work with junior employees to build capacity. The hotels should recognize the important role that senior employees play in improving hotel performance, specifically in leadership, training, and mentorship. The hotels should take into account the distinct needs and expectations of both younger and older employees. The hotels to create a work environment that promotes collaboration and mutual respect among employees of different age groups. Furthermore, the study suggests conducting similar research in other sectors to gain a broader understanding of how senior employees can influence overall performance.

**Keywords:** Senior employees, performance, 3–5-star hotels, Nairobi City County, Kenya.

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## **1.0 Background to the Study**

The hotel industry is a very competitive business in which customers place great emphasis on staff efficiency, reliability and timely service delivery. Globalization being in full speed and people continually traveling all over the globe, the hotel industry faces a great challenge in accommodating the diverse cultural influences (Chiang, 2010). The vision of such businesses is to deliver quality high-class services through intensive engagement of the human resource to successfully thrive and achieve their mission. According to Deery and Jago, (2009), top business management have the capacity to build high-performance cultures through their efforts to create a conducive business environment that is devoted to quality and their active involvement in promoting quality through the engagement of the workforce and developing lasting relationships with customers. The numbers of years of service which translates to the amount of experience gathered in the field of service provision in hotels emerges to be a major concern in this field. Several studies have suggested that the age of employees is positively associated with job satisfaction, while others studies use length of service, or tenure, as a predictor of job satisfaction levels. (Huang & Rundle-Thiele, 2014) notes that in other forums, issues of age have been looked at in line with aspects of diversity, whereby, the more diverse the workforce, the more the likelihood that success would be guaranteed.

Bohdanowicz and Zientara (2011) observe that in the hotel industry in the UK and the Middle East, HR managers prioritize minimizing employee turnover. While there is no established framework for understanding the employee turnover process in hotels, Khan, Mahmood, Ayoub, and Hussain (2011) suggest that a broad range of factors can help interpret the causes of employee turnover. Therefore, it is crucial for HR managers in the hotel industry to understand these factors to maintain a skilled and motivated workforce. AlBattat and Som (2013) highlight the significance of retaining experienced employees who have accumulated knowledge and skills throughout their years of service. Acknowledging the value of these employees and their expertise is crucial for organizations aiming to enhance their competitive advantage. By prioritizing the retention of experienced staff members, companies can benefit from their valuable contributions and ensure continuity in the workforce.

The values and differences between generations of employees in the hotel industry have been a subject of interest for several authors. Ottenbacher, Gnoth, and Jones (2006) focused on these aspects and identified the most appreciated values across all generations, which included way of life, success, and relationship to superiors. However, they found variations in values such as altruism, intellectual stimulation, safety, independence, and economic return among different generations. The baby boom generation, born after World War Two, placed the highest importance on altruism and intellectual stimulation compared to other generations. Generation X prioritized values of independence and safety, while generation Y considered economic assessment to be more important. Similarly, Solnet and Hood (2013) conducted research primarily focusing on generation Y within the hotel industry. They discovered that representatives of this generation excel at making social contacts, which has the potential to benefit the hotel industry. This finding suggests that the social skills of generation Y employees can contribute positively to customer service and guest satisfaction. Furthermore, Goh and Lee (2017) examined generation Z as the

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research subject. Their findings affirmed the positive attitude of this generation towards the hospitality industry. Generation Z perceives the industry as an exciting sector that involves working with people and offers opportunities for travel. This positive perception of the industry can be advantageous in attracting and retaining talent from generation Z.

The hospitality and tourism industry, despite being the largest and fastest-growing in the world, continues to grapple with the issue of occupational stress among its employees (Walker, 2014). Huang and Rundle-Thiele (2014) conducted a study in West African coastal hospitality institutions to compare burnout rates among employees of different ages. Surprisingly, the study revealed that younger employees experienced higher rates of burnout compared to their senior counterparts. This finding suggests that younger employees may be more susceptible to stress-related disorders in the workplace. Similarly, Ottenbacher, Gnoth, and Jones (2006) conducted research in Germany and found that senior employees in the hospitality industry displayed a positive outlook towards their jobs. They exhibited dedication to providing exceptional service, possessed a passion for their work, and had a strong desire to exceed guests' expectations. As a result, senior employees may be better equipped to cope with stress-related issues in the workplace, potentially overcoming stress disorders more effectively.

Kuria, Ondigi, and Wanderi (2012), in their examination of relationship management in the hospitality industry in Kenya, expressed the view that senior employees emerge as exemplary inspirational leaders within their work environment. They exhibit persuasive qualities and effectively lead and nurture their subordinates. Furthermore, Kuria et al. (2012) identified social skills as another significant dimension, encompassing the development of others, leadership skills, influence, communication abilities, change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, teamwork, collaboration, and the ability to foster active change within their organization, among other strengths. In the context of leader-member exchange in the hospitality industry, Wang (2016) conducted a study emphasizing the importance of leaders recognizing their influence on their subordinates to establish high-quality interactive relationships that can confer a competitive advantage to the business. This implies that leaders in the hospitality industry must be aware of the impact they have on their junior employees and actively foster positive relationships to enhance overall organizational performance.

Senior employees provide mentorship by invaluable advice based on their career experiences. They provide guidance, motivation, emotional support and role modelling. Uen, Chang, McConvillee, and Tsai (2018) defined a mentor as a senior employee with more experience in a particular industry who shares their wisdom, knowledge and skills with a more junior or less experienced individual. According to (Kim, IM, Hwang 2015), lack of proper mentoring has been seen as a major problem to job longevity in the hospitality industry. The departure of talented and experienced employees has a detrimental effect on the performance of an organization as it interrupts usual activities (Rubel and Hung Kee 2015). Senior employees have an important managerial role to help in decision making as well as policy formulation. They play a vital role in the success of an establishment as they create a supportive team environment through effective communication.

According to Kiruja and Mukuru (2013) an organization's ability to achieve its set objectives is dependent on the employees performance. However, the performance of senior employees can be hindered by different factors. (Soud 2014) in his study on factors that influenced employee performance, noted lack of motivation and poor remuneration affected the senior employees ability to be committed to their job. The relationship between of the employees with their seniors was also seen to be a hindering factor in organizations where the management was not supportive. The hospitality industry being a service industry it requires contact between the employee who is the service provider and the customer (Symitsi, Stamolampros, Daskalakis 2018). According to findings by Symitsi et al, (2018) there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and performance of the establishment. Stamolampros, Korfiatis, Chalvatzis, & Buhalis, (2019) job satisfaction is critical in attracting a skilled workforce. A skilled workforce increases the efficiency in operations hence improving performance. Fida, Ahmed & Al-Balushi (2020) opined that improved performance was the fastest indicator of customer satisfaction in a service industry such as the hospitality industry. Customers whose expectations had been exceeded brought a positive aspect of improved performance.

Pandemics are examples of such phenomenon likely to affect the industry. Therefore, the decision on who is to be retained by the establishment narrows down to who is well versed with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes. Furunes and Mykletun (2015) found that a good number of hotel businesses retain senior employees up to the time of their retirement since they feel that the senior employees respect the effort and hard work they have put in for the establishment over the years. In addition, other establishments claim that senior employees are more competent and therefore the need to retain them on condition they keep up with the work pace of younger employees. Shani, Uriely, Reichel and Ginsburg, (2014), note that the significance of the senior employees in the entire hotel management is surfacing as a key element that would ensure effectiveness and efficiency of the human resource therefore propelling the researcher to carry out the research on the influence of senior employees on improved performance in selected 3–5-star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Hence, the objective of the current study was to investigate the roles played by senior employees in improving the performance of selected 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study aimed to identify the factors that hinder senior employees from delivering quality services, such as lack of motivation, poor remuneration, and unsupportive management. Additionally, the study aimed to highlight the positive aspects of senior employees, such as mentorship, effective communication, and relationship management, which contribute to the success of these hotels. By understanding the roles played by senior employees, the study sought to provide recommendations on how hotel management could enhance their contribution to improving the performance of their establishments.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

It is notable that a responsible and trustable workforce is necessary so as to give assurance on product quality and service excellence within the industry. Volumes of research, as well as opinion, have been published regarding the need for incorporation and retention of senior workforce within

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the hospitality industry (Peters & Waterman, 2012). Customer experience is highly dependent on quality of work performed by employees translating to the performance and image of the hotel. High professionalism and good work ethics is key for the employees who are expected to deliver services to customers. Customer service quality can be assessed through reliability, trust and empathy as the main factors. Maylett and Wride (2017) opined that employees represent the hotel brand, hence customers are continuously in search for hotels with qualified staff. Senior employees who have worked for a hotel longer know customers better, their motives, attitudes, wishes, challenges and any other unique factor that encourages them to stay loyal to the hotel. Absence of competent employees does not guarantee good service quality which translates to good performance. Many expound on what needs to be done so as to retain this category of workforce or explain how to achieve this end. The main concept behind the influence of the senior employees is their significant contribution to the performance of the hotels. While most studies have focused on the aspects of retention and the policy guidelines on the same, it is important to determine the major contributions of the senior employees, with specific focus on the 3-5 star hotels (Flynn, Schröder & Chan, 2017).

In their findings, Wadongo, Odhuno, Kambona and Othuon, (2013), noted that major focus has not been made on the influence of the senior workforce on the entire hotel industry in Kenya. In reference to the data on the employees turn over obtained from various major hotels in Kenya, there is a very big disparity on the enrolment rates with regard to the age of employees; younger employees given higher preferences to the senior employees. According to Khan, Mahmood, Ayoub & Hussain, (2011), inappropriate leadership and especially the inability of the management to handle grievances fairly can impact negatively on staff morale. The labor pool for the hospitality industry is often untrained and unskilled workers. Many employees are young, students, or using hospitality jobs as a fallback or as a stepping stone to other careers. Some institutions have embarked on retaining their senior employees to help fill these gaps whenever they occur. Kunze, Boehm & Bruch, (2013), argues that the senior employees are always very settled and are unlikely to jump from one institution to another.

In the context of selected 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya, there is a lack of research on the specific advantages and active involvement of the senior workforce in the day-to-day operations. Recognizing this research gap, the current study aims to investigate the roles played by senior employees in improving performance within these hotels. By focusing on the unique contributions and impact of the senior workforce, the study seeks to shed light on the ways in which their involvement can positively influence overall performance outcomes in the hospitality industry in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Through this research, a better understanding of the specific advantages and benefits of engaging senior employees in key operational roles can be gained, providing valuable insights for hotel management and contributing to the overall enhancement of performance in the selected hotels.

## **1.2 Research Objective**

To determine the roles played by the senior employees on improved performance in selected 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

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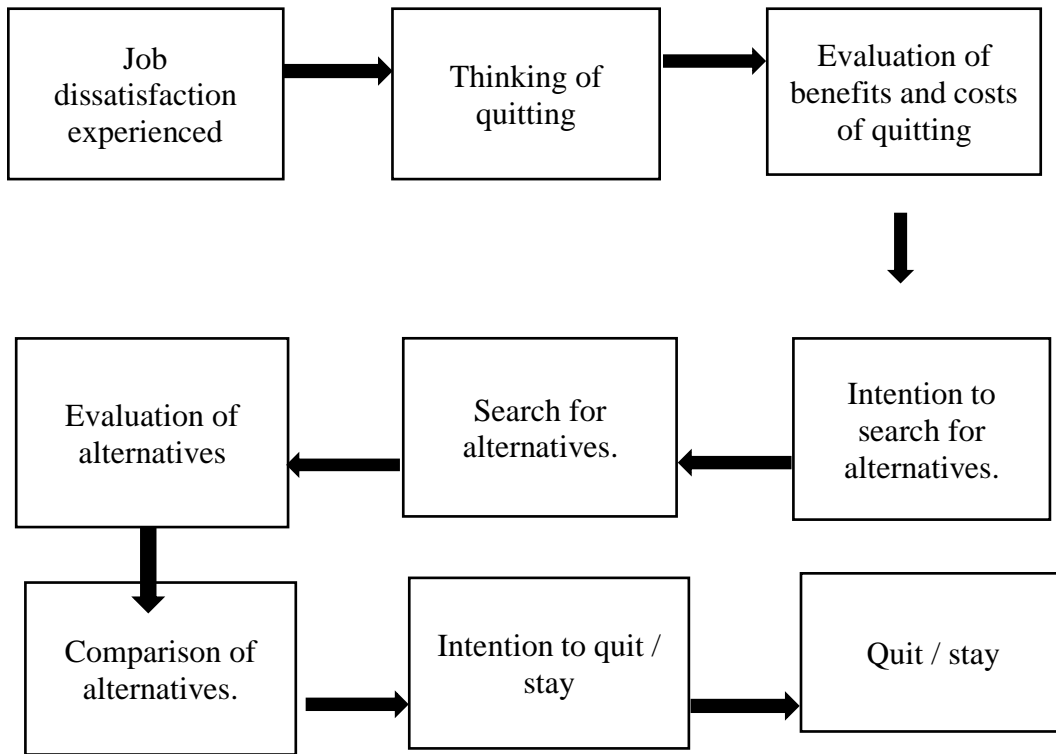
### **1.3 Hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the roles played by senior employees and improved performance in selected 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by the employee decision process model adapted from Mobley (1977). The model Mobley (1977) presents a theoretical process of 10- stages that an employee goes through when either quitting or changing jobs. According to Mobley (1977), an employee begins to evaluate an existing job and the environment in which the work is done. It is believed that, work environment plays a pivotal role on an employee's decision to continue working in an organization or to quit. Job dissatisfaction follows in deciding to quit. The employee may however evaluate the utility of searching for the new job. The search for an alternative job takes place and employee evaluates all the jobs that are available for him or her. Comparison is further done with the present and the best alternative jobs that are found. A final decision is reached by either remaining in the current job or quitting as the last stage. Mobley's Model (1977) presents the idea that there are two types of turnover that are associated with employees leaving an organization. The first type is recognized as avoidance turnover (Britt & Jex, 2008). With avoidance turnover this is when employees leave an organization because of dissatisfaction with their job and during their decision process to leave, the organization could have stepped in and prevented them from leaving (Britt & Jex, 2008). The first step an organization could take toward preventing employees from leaving is by monitoring employee satisfaction levels. Since an employee's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their job is the first part of this model, this would be what organizations should address first if they have a turnover rate problem. The key for organizations is to keep satisfaction levels high among their employees so they don't decide to leave. This perspective would provide the basis for maximizing output of the elderly employees within the hotel industry. The other form of turnover this model demonstrates is referred to as unavoidable turnover. This is situations that cause the employee to leave and the organization can do nothing to prevent the employee from leaving. This could be situations such as a spouse being transferred to a new location or a family member getting sick so the employee has to leave their job to go take care of them. There are many situations that occur where an employee has to leave their current job and it is out of the organization's control to keep them from doing so (Britt & Jex, 2008). This is one of the major scenarios that greatly affect the output of the elderly employees. This study closely looked at the turnover scenario within the selected hotels and the extent at which this would affect job performance and the contribution of the elderly employees within the hotels.

**Mobley’s Model of the Turnover Process**

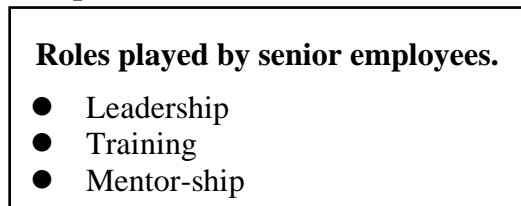


**Figure 1: Mobley’s model of Turn over process; Mobley, (1977).**

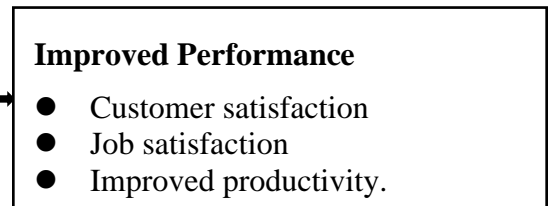
**1.5 Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework is a model of presentation which shows the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables in the study graphically or diagrammatically (Orodho, 2002).

**Independent variable**



**Dependent variable**



**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework**

Source: Adapted fro Lashley, (2009)

The conceptual framework establishes the relationship between the independent variable, which is the roles played by senior employees, and the dependent variable, which is improved performance.

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The framework identifies specific aspects of improved performance, including customer satisfaction, job satisfaction, and improved productivity. These performance indicators serve as the ultimate goals or outcomes that can be influenced by the roles played by senior employees within the organization. The framework further outlines the key roles that senior employees can play to contribute to improved performance. These roles include leadership, where senior employees can provide guidance, direction, and motivation to the rest of the workforce. Training is another role highlighted, emphasizing the importance of senior employees imparting their knowledge and skills to enhance the capabilities of other employees. Additionally, mentorship is identified as a crucial role, with senior employees serving as mentors to guide and support the development of less experienced employees. By mapping out these relationships, the conceptual framework provides a foundation for understanding how the roles played by senior employees can directly influence and contribute to improved performance in terms of customer satisfaction, job satisfaction, and overall productivity. It highlights the importance of leveraging the expertise and experience of senior employees to drive positive outcomes and success within the organization.

## **2.0 Empirical Review**

The issue of age, among other considerations has been one of the primary considerations when it comes to the determinants of the influence of senior employees in improved performance in the hotel industry. There is a need to examine how age of the employees would influence the work-family conflict and how this would impact on their contribution to the general performance of the hotel industry. The study done by Blomme, Van and Tromp, (2010), examines the work-family conflict approach to the turnover intentions of highly educated employees within the hospitality industry. The purpose was to investigate the relation between workplace flexibility, organizational support, work-family conflict and the intention to leave among highly educated male and female employees working in the hospitality industry. The research study conducted among this specific group worldwide provided a corpus of 247 respondents. The results show that work-family conflict among the employees and organizational support can explain a substantial amount of variance among highly educated employees regarding their intention to leave an organization. This study also found that for men, work-family conflict could be explained by lack of organizational support, while for women work-family conflict could be explained both by dissatisfaction with workplace flexibility and lack of organizational support. There is a need to examine how age of the employees would influence the work-family conflict and how this would impact on their contribution to the general performance of the hotel industry.

According to Lee and Lee, (2012), in their analysis of the relationships between the hospitality workforce and job-satisfaction factors according to age, gender, native language and racial-ethnicity investigates the relationships between the hospitality workforce and certain job satisfaction factors. It also addresses what aspects of a position an employee believes to be valued and important. A total of 17 attributes were collected and used from each member of 24 properties. Factor analyses were used to determine the subsets of employee job satisfaction and satisfaction with workforce diversity. According to Babakus, Yavas, Karatepe and Avci, (2014), employees who are a part of the major racial-ethnic group in the workplace tend to have a more sensitive attitude toward workforce diversity. In this study, the aspect of the age of employees is considered

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to be part of the general workforce diversity, whereby there is a variation in the ages of employees, ranging from the young, out-of school employees to the senior employees who have been in the field for a while. This study does not give analysis of how such diversity would become very beneficial to the hospitality industry in terms of skills transfer, experience, and role modeling among other benefits.

According to Work Trends (2016), there is a relationship between human capital efficiency and the financial performance of an establishment. Since every organization's goal is to achieve maximum financial performance. The study found out that there is a relationship between employees work experience and knowledge creation. Senior employees with more experience were found to perform their tasks more efficiently than their juniors who had less experience. Idah, (2017), carried out a study on the effects of employees work experience on performance within the hotel industry and opined that senior employees were more innovative and had the ability to tackle challenges better as compared to the younger employees who were less experienced and who tended to withdraw when faced with challenges. In a referenced study conducted by Ahmadi, Jalilian, Salamzedeh, Saesdpour and Daraei (2012), there was witnessed production efficiency because of the presence of senior employees who were perceived to be experienced. The senior employees were put in supervisory positions to train the junior employees hence offering them mentor-ship and training. This enabled the organizations to develop new products since they had entrusted skilled and able professionals who helped to efficiently improve productivity. However an employees experience can either build or destroy an organization since they may pass wrong training experiences to their juniors.

Carraher, (2011), conducted a study aimed at identifying generational differences and similarities among hospitality employees and managers in order to develop leadership strategies and management styles that can be utilized to increase employee morale and productivity while enhancing recruitment and retention rates of highly qualified workers. Data for this study were collected through a series of in-depth focus group discussions. Findings indicated significant generational differences in world views, attitudes toward authority and perspectives on work. Findings suggested the Baby Boomers respect authority and hierarchy, while the Generation X-ers (Gen X-ers) rebel against authority. Findings also suggested while Baby Boomers live to work, Gen X-ers work to live. The Baby Boomers are willing to wait their turn for promotions and rewards, and are very loyal. On the other hand, Gen X-ers expect immediate recognition through title, praise, promotion, and pay. They also want a life outside of work—they are not likely to sacrifice theirs for the company (Nadiri, H., & Tanova, 2010). The Millennial Generation believes in collective action, with optimism of the future, and trust in centralized authority. They like teamwork, showing a strong will to get things done with a great spirit.

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

The research methodology employed in the study involved a descriptive survey research design to investigate the influence of senior employees on improved performance in the hotel industry. The study was conducted in 3-5 star-rated hotels located in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The authors used the Krejcie & Morgan formula to determine the sample size, resulting in a sample of 218

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participants. Stratified random sampling was utilized to select hotels, chefs, waiters, and restaurant supervisors, while purposive sampling was employed to select HR and FO managers. Structured and unstructured questionnaires, as well as interview schedules, were used to collect data from operational staff, HR managers, and FO managers. The questionnaires were validated, and reliability was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha method. Data analysis involved both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Ethical considerations were taken into account, such as protecting respondent anonymity and obtaining necessary permissions from relevant authorities.

#### 4.0 Findings and Discussions

The findings and discussions are presented in sections.

##### 4.1 Response Rate

This study consisted of different types of respondents, managers (F.O and HRM) whom the study used interview schedules to obtain data from, and other hotel staff (chefs, waiters and restaurant supervisors) whom the study used questionnaires to obtain data from. A high response rate of 78% was obtained hence minimizing the biasness of the statistics. Table 1 below shows the response rate of each category of respondents and their percentage response rate.

**Table 1: Response Rate.**

Category	Expected response	Actual response	Percentage response rate. (%)
HR managers	21	16	76
FO Managers	21	17	81
Chefs	50	38	76
Waiters	74	57	77
Restaurant supervisors	52	41	78
<b>Average response rate.</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>78</b>

Out of the 218 questionnaires and interview schedules that were administered, the researcher was able to collect up to 169 of the duly filled questionnaires and interview schedules. This represented 78% of the total respondents of the study. This was achieved after data cleaning was done. There was a non-response rate of 49 respondents this totaled to 22% of the non-response rate. The response rate was above the acceptable 50% response rate as recommended for statistical reporting (Mugenda, 2017) hence the study findings being considered viable and reliable for making inferences.

#### 4.2 Roles Played by the Senior Employees on Improved Performance.

The study sought to determine the various specific roles played by the senior employees within the 3-5-star hotels in Nairobi City County. To guide the respondents, the researcher highlighted a number of items. First, the study tried to establish to what extent certain factors were roles of senior employees in 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. The results obtained were as displayed on the table below using a likert scale of 1-5 where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=Neutral, 4= agree, 5=strongly agree.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Roles Played by Senior Employees in the 3-5 star Hotels**

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Leadership	1.60 %	3.80 %	9.80 %	62.80 %	21.90 %	3.99	0.79
Training	7.70 %	9.30 %	7.00 %	50.30 %	25.70 %	3.77	1.16
Mentor-ship	4.90 %	9.80 %	12.60 %	56.80 %	15.80 %	3.69	1.01

From the Table 2 above, 21.90% of the employees in selected 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi county strongly agreed that leadership was a key role played by senior employees in improving hotel performance, while 62.80% agreed, 9.80% were neutral, 3.80% disagreed, 1.60% strongly disagreed. The mean of the research item was 3.99 while the standard deviation was 0.79. This implied that majority of the employees, 84.70% agreed that leadership had a role to play in hotel's improved performance. Moreover, 25.70% of the employees in selected 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi county strongly agreed that training was a key role played by senior employees in improving hotel performance, while 50.30% agreed, 7.00% remained neutral, 9.30% disagreed, 7.70% strongly disagreed. The mean of the research item was 3.77 while the standard deviation was 1.16. This implied that majority of the employees, 76.00% agreed that training had a role to play in hotel's improved performance.

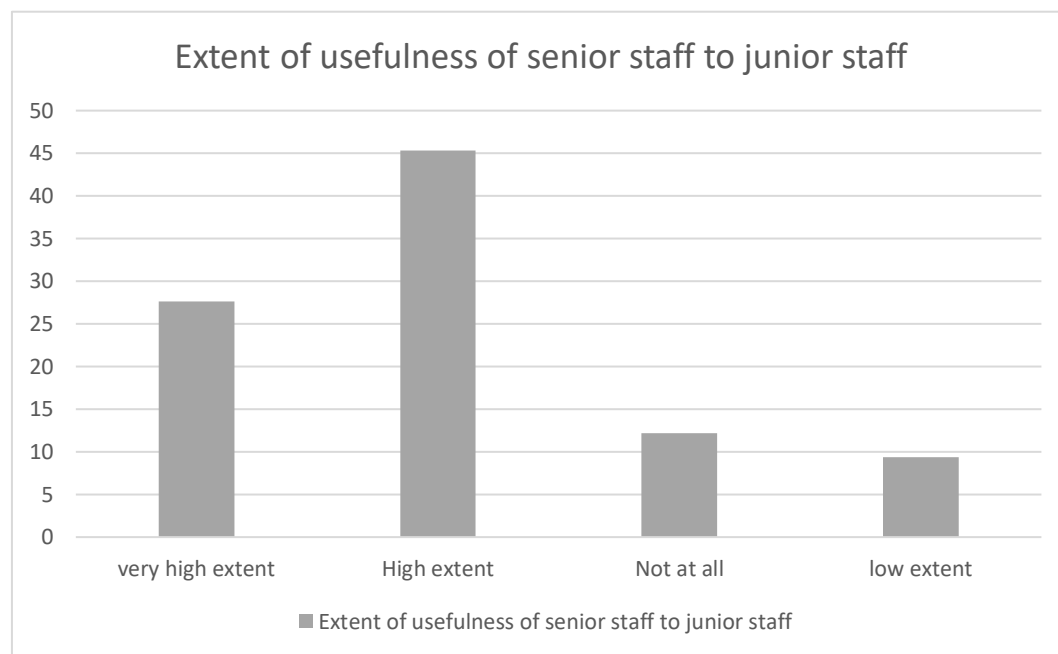
Further, the study found that 15.80% of the employees in selected 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi county strongly agreed that mentor-ship was a key role played by senior employees in improving hotel performance, while 56.80% agreed, 12.60% were neutral, 9.80% disagreed, 4.90% strongly disagreed. The mean of the research item was 3.69 while the standard deviation was 1.01. This had an indication that majority of the employees, 72.80% agreed that mentor-ship had a role to play in hotel's improved performance. In addition, other employees suggested that senior employees had a role to play in facilitating effective teamwork in the hotels. The study further sought to determine the existence of senior employees within the working environment. According to the research instrument issued, 92% of the respondents agreed to having senior employees at their work stations while 8% were not sure if there were any senior employees in their establishment.

#### **4.2.1 Discussion of Findings**

Table 2 gives the results of the respondents on the roles played by the senior employees in the selected 3-5-star hotels. The results show that most respondents felt that senior employees had vital roles in certain aspects such as leadership, training, mentor-ship, that would be necessary in performance improvement. A considerable number of respondents also indicated that these roles would affect their performances to a very great extent. These findings on leadership were consistent with the findings by Charness & Villeval, (2007), who noted that a number of factors that affected employee productivity included the style of leadership in the organization. According to their findings, if the leadership was progressive then it acted as an inspiration to the employees and the levels of employee productivity are likely to go high Mitzberg, (2013) argues that sound leadership ensures high level of productivity among the employees, according to him, good leadership is that which inspires confidence among the employees, provides the right direction among the employees and provides vision to the employees. In other words, a good leader of a company ensures that each employee meets his/her set targets and that everybody is working in line with the ultimate goal of the company. Cole (2017) suggests that the contingency approach to leadership is the best where a leader needs to strike a balance between the needs of the team, the requirement of the task, the nature of the organization climate and the pressures exerted by the situation at hand. Under this approach a leader will be flexible enough to change his behavior according to the circumstances.

The findings on training were in line with a research done by Cole (2017) who argues that training plays a dual function, namely utilization and motivation to an employee, to give an employee capacity to utilize human resources, ensures mastery of their work and the opportunity of being recognized by the management. However, Cole warns that the kind of training the employee receives must be relevant to his work and the employee must be enthusiastic to undergo the training and not see it as a punishment. The importance of employees undergoing further training is to add their value both at personal level and at the company level. In addition to that skills are developed and generally productivity of employees will be improved. The findings on mentor-ship was in line with a study done by Osei (2015) which states that without mentor-ship employees lose their inspiration. Hospitality facilities have to employ mentor-ship programs in their establishments since it is a base for new ideas and gives a company a competitive advantage. mentors empower individuals for competitive gain.

### Extent of usefulness of Senior Staff to Junior Staff.



**Figure 3: Extent of usefulness of Senior Staff to Junior Staff.**

According to Figure, 3 above, the study also tried to find out whether long period of service within the hotel industry made employees gain adequate knowledge that was useful in guiding the junior employees. 27.60% of the respondents agreed to a very high extent, while 45.30% agreed to a high extent, 12.20% did not agree at all, 9.40% agreed to a low extent, and 5.50 % agreed to a very low extent. The mean was 3.86 while the standard deviation was 1.11. This implied that majority of the respondents 72.90% agreed to a high extent that working for many years in the hotel industry made senior employees gain adequate knowledge that was useful to the junior staff members. From the interview schedule with the HR managers and FO managers, it was noted by HRO6 that, “*senior employees are more settled in their workplaces hence a low turnover*”. Further, FO5 mentioned that, “*younger employees are a source of new trends in the industry*”. Moreover HRO2 pointed that, “*younger employees want instant gratification and recognition and are not patient to trust the process*”. FO8 added that, “*senior employees are more efficient in their work as they have done it over and over again and have become machine like*”.

#### 4.2.2 Correlation Analysis

The study conducted a correlation analysis to examine the relationship between the roles played by senior employees and improved performance in selected 3-5 start hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The correlation results are presented in Table 3

**Table 3: Correlation Analysis**

		Improved performance	Roles played by senior employees
Improved performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
Roles played by senior employees	Pearson Correlation	.746**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

### 4.2.3 Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis was:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the roles played by senior employees and improved performance in selected 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

The data revealed that there was a positive relationship (0.746) between the roles played by senior employees and improved performance. The value of correlation coefficient (0.746) falls in the range of 0.50 to 1.00 which interpreted as high positive. The significance of the relationship was 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between the roles played by senior employees and improved performance. The correlation results indicated that there was a significant relationship between the roles played by senior employees and improved performance. These findings were in line with the findings by Rully Elkana and Wacana (2021) that indicated that a senior worker is the driving force in implementation of very vital roles such as being an educator, a model, a mentor and a communicator. In addition, the study noted that senior workers are seen to be very important in improving skills of others through job rotation in the work place as it helps to increase job productivity which then translates to increase in performance of the overall establishment.

### 5.0 Conclusion

The study aimed to determine the specific roles played by senior employees in 3–5-star hotels in Nairobi City County, and to establish the existence of senior employees within the working environment. The results of the survey using a Likert scale of 1-5 showed that most respondents felt that senior employees had vital roles in leadership, training, mentorship and facilitating effective teamwork. With their policy formulation and decision-making strategies, the senior employees exercise a considerable amount of managerial influences in the day to-day running of the affairs within the hotels. Senior employees are not necessarily the custodians of the hotel cultures within the hotel settings where they work. In the same manner, the study determined that fact that junior employees may not gain much cultural influence from the senior employees.

The study also found that working for many years in the hotel industry made senior employees gain adequate knowledge that was useful to junior staff members. Further, a positive correlation was found between the roles played by senior employees and improved performance in selected 3–5-star hotels in Nairobi City County, indicating that senior workers play crucial roles in educating, modeling, mentoring, and communicating with junior employees, which helps to increase job productivity and performance.

## 6.0 Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, there are several recommendations that can be made. Senior employees should be motivated to continually work with the junior employees as part of the human resource capacity building. The hotels should recognize the important role that senior employees play in improving hotel performance. Specifically, leadership, training, and mentorship should be emphasized as key roles that senior employees should play in order to enhance the productivity and effectiveness of the junior employees. Hotel management should ensure that these roles are incorporated into the training and development programs for the senior employees, and that they are given the resources and support they need to carry out these roles effectively. Moreover, the hotels should take into account the differing needs and expectations of younger and older employees. While younger employees may bring fresh perspectives and ideas to the workplace, they may also require more immediate recognition and may be less patient in waiting for career advancement. On the other hand, senior employees may be more efficient in their work, but may also require more support and flexibility in their schedules. In order to maximize the benefits of both younger and older employees, hotels should create a work environment that fosters collaboration and mutual respect between generations. Further, the study recommends that a similar study to be done on perceived influences of the senior employees on the improved performance in other sectors. This would allow for generalization of study findings on perceived influence of the senior employees on performance.

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