

Role of Inventory Management Systems in Housekeeping Operations

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Abstract: *The paper is organized as follows. The general operations of hotel housekeeping are discussed. This is followed by a review of previous studies in order to identify the factors of housekeeping, types of inventories and different inventory management techniques followed in Housekeeping department. Followed by the various inventory management techniques which are rated by the housekeepers, on their impact on housekeeping operational performance. The conclusion determines how the hotels can improve on their inventory management techniques to benefit the smooth operations of the housekeeping department.*

Keywords: Inventory management, Hotel Housekeeping Department

I. INTRODUCTION

The main objective of a Hotel establishment is to provide a clean, comfortable and a welcoming surrounding to their guests. As cleanliness cannot be compromised with any other facility or the service that the hotel provides. Hotel cleanliness and upkeep is extremely essential for guest satisfaction and repeat business. As most of the times, the guests will form an image about the hotels based on this experience. Out of the core departments of the hotel, this responsibility lies with the Hotel Housekeeping Department. Commonly known as the Backbone of the hotel, the cleanliness, upkeep and maintenance of not only the rooms, but also the public areas are the duty of Housekeeping department. Imagine the huge pile of linen and uniforms to be cleaned and the large number of amenities to be placed in a room, Inventory becomes one of the most important function of hotel housekeeping. Hence it is also necessary for the housekeeper to plan for and become organized in stock handling administration. This refers to the selection, purchase, use, and control of material for use in housekeeping operations. The Executive Housekeeper is responsible for two types of inventories, recycled and non-recycled items. Recycled inventories are for items that can be used over and over again in housekeeping operations. These include things like linen, uniforms, Cleaning equipments and guest loan items such as irons, ironing boards, hair dryers, heating pads, hot-water bottles, etc. Non-Recycled inventories includes items that are used up repeatedly during the course of routine housekeeping operations, such as most guest room amenities, cleaning supplies, and smaller cleaning equipment such as brooms, mops, cleaning cloths and so on. To ensure smooth housekeeping operations, the top management of the hotel must establish an operating par stock. A Par stock is a term which is the standard way to determine the minimum level of supplies to meet daily demands of daily hotel operation. Inventory control is the management function of classifying, ordering, receiving, storing, issuing and accounting for stock. The executive housekeeper has to classify these inventories but also should be competent in technical aspects like the selection, use, and maintenance of material items such as linen, uniform, cleaning agents, cleaning equipment, furniture, guest amenities, etc. The room rate is an indicator of the quality of such material which is used by the hotel. Thus, Inventory control enables housekeeping department to provide better services to its customers, by maintaining a smooth flow of Housekeeping supplies for its operations. It also maintains the right amount of stock of material needed for operations at all times. It also helps in checking on pilferages by strict control of stock.

This study aims to study aims to understand what contributes towards the smooth Housekeeping operations. The purpose of this study is to understand the procedure for different types of housekeeping inventories and in particular to assess the impact of inventory control techniques on the functioning of the departmental operations. The following section discusses the literature review on these aspects to develop the hypotheses. In the methods, a research design involving questionnaire development, data-collection procedure is

described. Next, data-analysis and results are presented. Finally, a discussion regarding interpretation of the study's findings, implications for researchers and practitioners, and limitations are presented.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Abuya, M. B., & Shale, N. I. (2018): The study was conducted in Kenya and aimed at establishing the role of Inventory management on the performance of the hotel industry. To conduct the study, about 400 supply chain officers in the hotels in Nairobi central Business were targeted. The study recommended from the observations that suppliers play an important role in inventory. They should be appraised and company should ensure their timely payments. The study mentioned that for an effective hospitality establishment, it is important to recruit trained and skilled and educated staff. The study also recommended that integration of ICT is crucial to enhance the cost efficiency of the organization. The intervention of technology will reduce the delivery time, enhance the quality of the product for better customer satisfaction. The hospitality industry should also train the employees about use of different techniques and technology in procurement process.

Ukabu E. N (2018): Studied ten different hotels in Owerri, Imo State for stock control techniques followed in those hotels. The data for the research was collected with the help of structured questionnaire, which was analysed by the simple statistical tools. The six objectives of the study were based on: whether the hotels follow proper purchasing procedures; proper records are maintained; different items are stored in different equipments, the stock is handled by the trained staff; FIFO method of inventory is followed are not. The hypothesis was formulated and it was tested by using chi-square test. It was found that hotels do follow most of the formulated objectives. Based on the data analysis, it was concluded that the studied hotels do follow various stock control techniques. It was hence recommended that the hotels should have proper stock control techniques to run effectively.

Jacob Mulei Nzioka and Dr. Susan Were (2017): The study was conducted with the help of 100 supply chain officers in Ministry of Education headquarters in Nairobi. The primary data was collected from 100 respondents with the help of structured questionnaire. The statistical tools used were multiple regression and bivariate correlation. There were three theories discussed in the study, which were, inventory theory, stock diffusion theory and inventory and production theory. The main aim of the study was to check the effect of Inventory management techniques on the performance of education sector in Kenya. The results revealed a positive relationship between the two variables. The results mentioned that as the stock levels were managed well, it helped the ministry to avoid stock out, by using the Economic Order quantity technique. It was recommended that, Just in Time was recommended to ensure timely material requirement for better quality products.

T.T Amachree, et al (2017): The study was conducted with Equipment manufacturing firms to check which inventory management strategies can be applied to increase the productivity of the firm. Mostly these firms lack productivity, timely customer demands, low quality product and increased cost., due to lack of robust and well-defined Inventory Management Systems. Also, as these equipment manufacturing firms have lot of inventory items, classification of these items is very essential. The research design selected for this study was surveys and ex post-facto. The primary data collection was through a questionnaire and the secondary data was collected from the computerized inventory status file of the three equipment manufacturing firms. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient and one way was used for data analysis. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) computer software via Statistical Program for Social Science (SPSS) version 17, ABC analysis and classification of materials was used for code categorization of secondary data. The results of the study indicated that Materials Requirements Planning (MRP) followed by Supply Chain Management (SCM) are the most significant Inventory Management Systems in the manufacturing firms. The study recommended that MRP and SCM should be adopted for class A inventories and classical inventory management system should be implemented for Class B and C class inventory items.

Joanna Marie Tuzon – Guarin (2017): Studied housekeeping management practices and standards of selected hotels and restaurants of Ilocos Sur, Philippines. Special emphasis was given on cleanliness, orderliness, sanitation and safety, facilities/equipment, materials control and effective maintenance and the problems encountered in the housekeeping department. Researcher used questionnaire method to collect data. The analysis was done by calculating means, frequency distribution, percentage and ranking method. The study concluded that the hotels and restaurants in Ilocos Sur are clean, safe to stay. It mentioned about the regular and timely inventory management practices followed

by the hotel to prevent the theft, and pilferages. The study also conveyed that the supplies and the required material for cleaning is consumed within the estimated Housekeeping budget.

Edwin Sitienei, Florence Memba(2016): The study was about a cement manufacturing company in Kenya and the effect of Inventory management on the company's profitability. Inventories contribute towards huge funds in any manufacturing company, like holding costs and opportunity cost. For a company's success, Inventory Management plays a vital role. For this study, data was analysed with the help of multiple regression analysis to check the relation between Inventory management and the profit of the company. However the study concluded that there exists a negative relation between inventory and profitability of the firm. The study recommended that the cement manufacturing companies should help a close watch on excessive holding stocks of goods or raw material.

David W. Heath (2016): Mentioned about a few Housekeeping practices which can help improve the productivity of the department. One of the practices was based on Time & Motion study on room attendants. The credit values for the guest room cleaned whether occupied or checkout, were adjusted so that room attendants received twice the credits for cleaning a checkout room than a stayover room. This resulted in increase of productivity levels by 11 percent. The article also mentioned that if a Housekeeping Supervisor inspects a room, cleaned by an attendant on random basis, then checking each and every room cleaned by him, may lead to increase productivity. Also, it said that the room attendants should be paid based on their quality scores.

G Raghubalan & Smritee Raghubalan (2015): In their third edition of Hotel Housekeeping Operations and Management has written chapters on importance of housekeeping department in a hotel, describing about the responsibilities of housekeeper. It mentioned one of the main responsibilities as inventory control of the material required for housekeeping operations. The edition has also a separate chapter on housekeeping inventories which gives details about the material used in housekeeping operations.

C. Elliott Mest (2014): Advancement in technology now allow hotels to speed up processes that were tedious in the past. Some of these can be use of RFID to track hotel linen. This cuts down on the time for linen inventories. Also changing the guest room linen only on the request from the guest and not on daily basis could reduce the laundry cost and also a practice towards environment sustainability. Providing turndown service gives a feeling to the guest, that the room is being serviced on daily basis.

Enemu, .O. B And Uwazuruike . J (2012) Studied and evaluated about the stock control practices in hospitality establishments in Abia State Nigeria. The research revealed that the hospitality establishments in the study area adopt inventory control measures in their operational activities which varies from ABC classification, Economic Order Quantity, Forecasting, Just-in-Time, Cycle counting, First-in-First-out (FIFO), Two-bin system, Computerized system and Safety stock in the management systems. However, the result mentioned that FIFO (First In First Out) was the most common method used for stock control. The study also revealed that the aim of stock control practices was to gain economic control, environment sustainability, and social aim.

Jenkins, Lisa(2012): In this article, the author discussed about the options of either having an In-house laundry or an outsourced laundry is better suitable for an hotel. As laundry is one of the most important functions of housekeeping, one can manage control, if a hotel has an inhouse laundry. However, on the other hand, if the linen is outsourced it provides consistency. One of the suggestions was to have an inhouse laundry for better quality linen.

S.P. Bansal, et al: A development committee of E Pathshala, under MHRD Govt. of India in paper 6, Hotel Housekeeping, module 15, Inventory control and stock taking has given in detail about the inventory control techniques used in stock taking of housekeeping department.

III. CONCLUSION

- Results of this study show that, though all hotels follow the inventory management process.
- Use of technology, timely stock taking and proper storage of inventory are the most important techniques to follow inventory.
- FIFO, EOQ, maintaining PAR stock and control on misuse of linen are the second most likely practices that the hotels follow to control their inventories.
- Regular departmental audits, spot checking, forecasting and supervision are also followed so that the inventory is managed properly.

- If the inventories are handled properly, it will definitely lead to the smooth functioning of the housekeeping department.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

- While it is apparent that the hotels are following, inventory management techniques, the Executive
- Housekeeper should establish reasonable levels for both recycled and non-recycled inventories.
- Overstocking should be avoided, as it ties up cash and calls for a larger storage area.
- There should be an effective purchasing system to consistently maintain the inventory levels set by the executive housekeeper.
- To maintain the inventory levels, the executive housekeeper needs to determine the par level for each inventory item.
- Advancement in Technology should be applicable to inventory techniques to maximize the efficiency of stock taking procedure. For eg, use of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification)

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