

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The food and beverage industry has played an important role in Macau society. With the ever-increasing competitive atmosphere and economic development in the region, customers have gradually raised their expectations in food & beverage (F&B) service. Thus, well-trained, skilful and experienced F&B practitioners will be highly demanded to deliver high quality service to customers who have various expectations. To ensure the quality of service that a restaurant should deliver, training and development (T&D) must gain more prominence among F&B companies. Training and developing employees to meet the standards of excellent performance could lead to individual skill improvement and the realization of organizational goals and objectives.

This study aims to identify the T&D needs of the F&B industry and the programs currently provided to address these needs. It employs a qualitative, inductive and multiple case study approach. In-depth interview method is used with a set of semi-structured questions addressed to employers and employees in the F&B business. A total of 23 luxury, first class and second class restaurants were randomly selected for the interview.

The proposition of this study is that the training and development needs of the F&B industry in Macau are principally anchored on task-related issues, and secondarily on organizational and personal related matters.

Five major conclusions are derived from this research which validated the research objectives and proposition: (1) The industry is paying more attention to task-related training and development needs rather than needs at the organizational or individual level. (2) The dominant T&D programs currently provided to employees in the F&B industry in Macau are related to customer service and communication skills. (3) "Observation" is used by the three classes of restaurants to discover T&D needs. (4) On-the-job training is

the mainstream training method utilized by the three classes. (5) Perceptions on several issues in this study vary with the restaurant class. This differentiates one class from the other.

Finally, the accommodation of T&D needs in all its aspects is recommended. Second class restaurants, in particular, should put more effort on establishing organization-related T&D programs. Also, the industry needs to be aware of the T&D constraints. The setting up of basic competency requirements and standards is suggested to guide trainers in developing T&D programs. Outsourcing training, i.e., sending employees to vocational training institutions when qualified trainers are not available in the company should also be considered.