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Housekeeping at Hotel Alba

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Description

The aim of the study was to survey the quality of cleaning at Hotel Alba and how it could be improved. The research methods were both quantitative and qualitative. A quantitative questionnaire about the quality of cleaning was implemented as part of the study. The questionnaire was implemented between 8.4. - 25.4.2015 in a printed forms. The Reception handed out the questionnaires. They were also returned there. The questions dealt with the quality of the cleaning and the cleaning staff.

In addition, as a qualitative part of the study, hotel manager Katri Paakkari and housekeeping manager Päivi Ropponen were interviewed about the housekeeping challenges at Hotel Alba. One long-time worker responded to separate questions concerning job satisfaction. After that, some observations were made of the cleaners at work.

The number of the responses received was six. It is a low number, and it was necessary to conduct extra research. Questionnaire was implemented face-to-face by picking randomly selected customers on hotel premises. This time the number of the participants was 27 with the total of 33.

The customers were mainly happy with the quality but biggest disagreement concerned the cleaning of the bathrooms. Some extra attention needs to be paid to the removal of dust. 7 out of 33 mentioned the dust. The housekeeping manager knew that the dust problem had existed for some time now. Customer service orientation gives challenges to the daily life of the housekeepers according to Katri Paakkari.

Miscellanous

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Työn nimi **Kerroshuolto Hotelli Albassa**
Tutkinto-ohjelma Degree Programme in Facility Management
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Tiivistelmä

Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli selvittää siivouksen tämänhetkistä laatua Hotelli Albassa ja kuinka parantaa sitä. Tutkimuskeinona käytettiin sekä kvalitatiivista että kvantitatiivista menetelmää. Osana opinnäytetyötä toteutettiin kysely kvantitatiivisin menetelmin siivouksen laadusta. Kysely toteutettiin 8.-25.4.2015 välisenä aikana tulostettujen lomakkeiden avulla. Vastaanotto jakoi lomakkeita, ja sinne ne myös palautettiin. Kyselyssä kysymykset koskivat siivoustyön laatua ja siivoushenkilökuntaa.

Lisäksi työn kvalitatiivisessa osassa haastateltiin lyhyesti hotellinjohtaja Katri Paakkaria ja kerrosesimies Päivi Ropposta. He kertoivat omat näkemyksensä siitä, mitkä osa-alueet vaativat huomiota Hotelli Alban kerroshuollossa. Yksi pitkäaikainen työntekijä hotellin kerroshuollosta vastasi erillisen kyselylomakkeen kysymyksiin. Aiheena tässä kyselyssä oli työtyytyväisyys. Lisäksi työn ohessa tehtiin visuaalisia havaintoja tarkkailemalla.

Kyselyyn vastauksia tuli yhteensä 6 kappaletta. Vastausten määrä oli alhainen, joten ilmeni tarvetta lisätutkimukselle. Kysely toteutettiin kasvotusten valitsemalla satunnaisia asiakkaita hotellin tiloista. Tällä keinolla vastaajia tuli 27 enemmän eli osanottajia oli yhteensä 33 kappaletta.

Asiakkaat olivat pääosin tyytyväisiä siivouksen laatuun, mutta suurin hajonta oli kylpyhuoneiden siivouksen arvioinneissa. Lisäksi 7 ihmistä mainitsi pölystä, johon tulisi kiinnittää huomiota. Kerrosesimies mainitsi nimenomaan pölyn ongelmaksi. Asiakaspalveluhenkisyys on kerroshuoltajien haasteena hotellinjohtajan mukaan.

Avainsanat (asiasanat) Palvelu, laatu, siivouspalvelun laatu, laatukartoitus
Muut tiedot

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1 Introduction

During the last years, the trend in travelling has been to get experiences. Unique service is the answer, and this makes the customers feel that they are ready to pay for service and they will come back again. The challenge for a service provider is to continuously develop because this is how they have fresh experiences and unique services also in the future. (Borg, Kivi & Partti 2002, 13.)

The thesis was conducted in cooperation with Hotel Alba and it is about cleaning quality. As part of the thesis a questionnaire for the customers was designed, which had questions about quality of cleaning and housekeepers. The idea behind the questionnaire was to find out issues that respondents were not happy with and what issues need improvement. By answering the open-ended question, the customers were able to give feedback more freely.

The purpose was to explore how satisfied the guests of Hotel Alba are with the housekeepers' job. Via the questionnaire, it was easy to get the information about the issues that customers are already satisfied with. The biggest aim of the questionnaire was to develop cleaning quality after the answers have been analyzed.

The well-being of employees affects the quality of work, and this is why there was implemented a questionnaire of well-being. The person interviewed was one of the two full-time cleaners. In the future, it would be good to get the opinions of all to get more reliable results.

There are six parts in the thesis. Part one is introduction. In part two, the word hotel is defined. The Finlandia Hotel chain and Hotel Alba as part of it are opened up. Housekeeping and management are introduced as well. Expenses are covered in part two even though the focus was not in it. The key figures are included in the second part. In the third part, service quality and total quality management are introduced. The measurement methods and principles of visual check are included in the third part. The methodology, reliability and validity make up the fourth part and the

research is introduced in the fifth part. The last part, the sixth, includes the conclusions.

The theoretical basis for the thesis was formed by reading literature on the topic. Books and the Internet were the main sources in this part. After the theoretical framework was determined, the questionnaire was developed. It was chosen to be the best option and way to get proper data from people whose opinions matter the most. The research questions were as follows:

- How do customers see the technical quality of cleaning?
- How do customers see the functional quality of cleaning?
- What are the development suggestions?

2 Hotels

The meaning of the hotel has always been to be an accommodation place for someone who needs it. By standards, the hotel is the accommodation business with high requirements and it has restaurant and other services connected to it. Nowadays also congresses and meetings are held in hotels. The hotels can be divided by level, size, location or target group. In Finland, there is no official star classification as in all other European countries. The stars are there to measure room size and services that are offered. (Rautiainen & Siiskonen 2007, 23.)

The accommodation services include front office, back office and housekeeping. The front office makes customer feeling welcomed. The front office means also customer service, cash management, reporting and statistics. The back office is mainly about making reservations. It includes call transmission and financial management. (Asunta, Brännare-Sorsa, Kairamo & Matero 1997, 99-101.)

Accommodation can be divided in two categories.

- Hotels and motels
- All other forms of accommodation

The biggest sector of accommodation covers hotels and motels. It consists of business hotels, tourist hotels, beach resort hotels and mountain resort hotels. The motel is abbreviation of "automatic hotel". Often motels are operated by limited amount of staff and they have limited amount of services. (Mannan, B.A. 2008, 264.)

2.1 Finlandia Hotels and Hotel Alba

Hotel Alba is a Finlandia Hotel, and there are nearly 30 of these hotels in Finland. (Appendix 6). Finlandia hotels have group and leisure packages which are connected to sports and culture. Hotel Alba is located near to Jyväsjärvi Lake. Jyväskylä centre is only one kilometer away. The hotel has 126 rooms in two floors, restaurant and two meeting rooms plus sauna which is in connection with the other of the meeting facilities. Figure 1 demonstrates the location of all Finlandia hotels.

Figure 1. Finlandia Hotels

(www.finlandiahotels.fi)

During summer time terrace with lake view is functioning. Hotel Alba is open around the year 24 hours a day. During holidays it is closed. The cleaners aim to keep premises as clean and comfortable as possible. Turnover of customers, weekly, challenges cleaners. The basic cleanings are being done during most quiet times.

In Hotel Alba, there are two full-time cleaners & housekeeping manager. Some extra cleaners are working there when more hands are needed. Normal daily working time is 7, 5 hours. The amount of rooms per one cleaner during one day is about 20. Every

day is still different because amount of other work varies and also rooms are not as dirty every day. Figures below (2-5) include the room types in Hotel Alba.
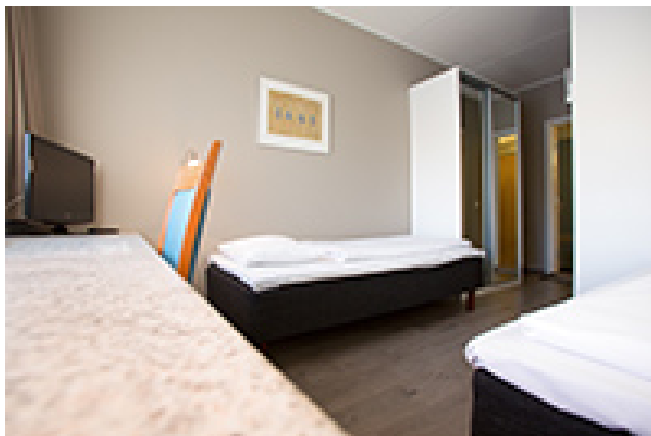

Figure 2. Junior Suite

(www.finlandiahotels.fi)

Figure 3. Superior

(www.finlandiahotels.fi)

Figure 4. Standard

(www.finlandiahotels.fi)

Figure 5. Economy

(www.finlandiahotels.fi)

2.2 Management

Management is an important part of the hotel industry. It is such an important part that it can neither make nor spoil the entire industry. A manager helps each worker to strengthen their good points and to improve the weak points. Planning is a basic function of management. A process is a continuing mental process. The goal of planning is to think ahead and select goals. Organizing is the second step of management. The main function of this particular process is to establish a relationship between all other functions of management. The term actuating means "getting work done with people". The manager should increase employees' productivity by effective supervision and intelligent guidance. (Hill, R. 2009, 9-17.)

Forecasting comes hand in hand with planning. The future is uncertain but still, it is possible to provide some useful and helpful information. Staffing comes as the fifth part in management. It starts by recruiting and selecting the suitable people. People are trained to work efficiently. Workloads can be distributed by delegation. This particular function, controlling, should not be in the form of a command but guidance. Controlling is an important function of food services. Financial

management is the center of all management functions. The manager has to ensure that the funds are being used profitably. (ibid.)

The well-being of the manager is the first step in the whole organization's well-being. If the manager is stressed it starts to affect the whole group negatively. Problems may occur and employees' job satisfaction suffers. (Järvinen 2002, 145-146.)

2.3 Housekeeping

The special feature of housekeeping is that quality is high. The challenge is the limited time for work. Cleaning needs to be efficient and perfect. This means that there cannot be a mark from previous customer when next is arriving. Cleaners feel themselves stressed because the time between previous customer's checkout and next one's check-in is sometimes short. (Taskinen 2009, 14-16.)

The job of housekeeper is to clean rooms, take care of lost property and maintenance messages, minibars and linen service. After that he is also responsible of own area's corridor and lobby premises. When cleaning hotel room and bathroom, it is important to be hygienic and move from clean to dirty. It has to be remembered that also light switches and door handles needs to be cleaned up. It is always important to use clean wipes, and not customer's dirty, used towels. (Lausjärvi & Valtiala 2006, 85.)

When cleaner cleans right, clean cleaning equipment is needed to decrease the amount of microbes. Otherwise, the dirt may wander around via dirty cleaning towels. There has to be proper amount of cleaning cloths and mops so that there is possibility to change them as often as needed. This is reason why microbes don't move straightly from place to another or by hands or clothes. Waterless cleaning is term that is used nowadays. Still, name may sound misleading. There is no intention to make the cleaning without water. Waterless cleaning is more eco-friendly and ergonomically easier. Before starting the whole cleaning process, mops and cleaning

cloths are moisten by detergent's and water's solution. Waterless cleaning is economic cleaning because use of detergent and water is low. (ibid.)

Normally, there is not that much time to clean staying room than leaving room. This of course depends on hotel. In high quality standard hotels staying room is cleaned as well as leaving room and to that has been reserved much more time. (Happy Housekeeping 2001b, 67.)

Every cleaner are supposed to develop professionality. This means one is able to point out the "necessary" work – work that is done no matter what. These are called critical points. (Lausjärvi & Valtiala 2000b, 14.)

The quality thinking of cleaning service is an important element and it consists of whole cleaning service chain's functionality and flexibility. Professional cleaner can determine quality of dirt, choose the right method and be flexible by customer's needs. Appropriately dressed customer service oriented cleaner creates quality by his own actions: the service customer has bought. The quality is total expertise, fulfilling customer's needs, professional approach, cleaning by targets, flexibility and reliability. (Ryynänen 2009, 225-226.)

According to Rautiainen & Siiskonen 2011, (69) hotel room cleaning order has certain principles.

- Window is opened
- Trash bins are emptied
- Empty vessels, magazines and newspapers are picked up
- Dirty linen and towels are picked up
- Fresh linen and towels are brought
- Beds are made
- Contact surfaces and remote control are wiped
- Dust from closets, drawers, tables, chairs and tv are wiped
- Floor is cleaned up

- Bath room is cleaned
- Mini bar is checked and filled
- Everything necessary is filled and brought to room
- Condition of room is checked
- Mini bar check and clean room is signed up via tv

Housekeeping tasks are variable. In addition to all the previously mentioned tasks, housekeeper has many more responsibilities.

1. Dealing with guests' laundry
2. Dealing with guest´s special request
3. Dealing with lost and found property
4. Receiving and issuing linen
5. Dealing with complaints
6. Transferring quests
7. Giving first aid
8. Serving beverage or food in bedrooms
9. Dealing with repairs and maintenance
10. Creating floral and decorative arrangements
11. Taking action in emergencies
12. Coordinating work with front office
13. Planning and controlling the work of the department
14. Speaking foreign languages
15. Record keeping
16. Giving training
17. Taking inventory
18. Drawing up duty rosters (Hill, R. 2009, 77.)

2.4 Challenges in housekeeping

It can vary daily how many rooms there are to clean. There can be days when there is almost nothing to clean but corridors, lobby and stairs. One just has to trust history and averages. The hotel environment affects the issue how much dirt comes in via

customers. A tarmac yard generates less dirt than a sand yard. Proper carpets in the entrance decrease mess. The seasons also have an effect. Rainy weather increases dirt in spring and autumn. Summer and winter are drier and less dirt goes in with shoes. A group of young football or ice hockey players can bring more dirt with them than seniors and by that increase the cleaning costs. There are many good things about a hotel having their own cleaners. Loyal customers get the feeling of safety because of familiar cleaner, and it is easy for reception staff to work with the same people. Knowing the house prevents problems. (Alakoski 2006, 96-100.)

Nowadays, most of the hotels have decided to outsource the whole cleaning service. Mostly, it is just because it is a cheaper option. A professional cleaning company prices their services by some particular amount, and that amount includes equipment and substances. Many times this is a better choice for hotel than their own cleaning staff. Using a cleaning company is more flexible and the number of the employees can be easily increased. (ibid.) If a cleaner has worked in the same place for a longer time, one may have negative attitudes towards some improvements or changes. (Bohm, T., Viander, M. & Rouhiainen L. 2005, 15.)

Hotel may organize cleaning in different ways. Cleaners can be directly employed by the hotel, be working for some cleaning company, fully rented or a combination of the previously mentioned. At Hotel Alba, the cleaners are directly employed by the hotel. There are good sides to it when the cleaners are directly employed by the hotel. The same employees stay longer and they commit to their work well. The job description of the cleaning staff directly employed by the hotel may be extended. They can have other work assignments as well in the hotel or on the premises of the same company. (Bohm et. al. 2005, 14-16.)

2.5 Expenses in hotel

In hotels, every employee's work matters when it comes to customer satisfaction. Every customer should get positive experience when buying core product, and in a hotel it is accommodation. To achieve this, bed has to be cozy, but also premises

have to be clean and correct as well as textiles. On the average, the hotel room is customer's home from 1 to 3 nights at a time. Furnishing and decorating one room costs approximately something between 8000 and 12000 Euros. Need for this comes about every five years. The materials have to be good so that they stay in good shape even though they are constantly in use and cleaned up daily. The most important requirements that customers set up are cleanliness, size of the room, furnishing and how compatible decorations are. (Rautiainen & Siiskonen 2011, 54.)

The value for money has to be in condition. Usually hotel rooms are rated by the amount of beds or size. Decoration and view also affect to rating. The most typical rooms are rooms for one person (single rooms) and rooms for two persons (double rooms). In aforementioned rooms, there are two separate beds or one double bed. If the customer wants, it is possible to get a cot for the child or an extra bed. Other typical room types are triple room or a family room which usually has a sofa bed for two. (Rautiainen & Siiskonen 2007, 78-80.)

There are special rooms for the different needs of customers. These can be for example family room, allergy room, rooms with communicating door or a room for invalid person. Also rooms with balcony or special view can be seen as special rooms. The word suite can be used in occasion when there are many rooms in an apartment. There are also different types of these suite rooms, by the apartment's size and everything additional. (Rautiainen & Siiskonen 2005, 44.)

Designing hotel rooms is not easy. One room needs to be bed room, living room and so on. There are business versions of rooms in hotels, and usually these are a bit better rooms with higher quality, including bathrobe, electric kettle, coffee maker and slippers. There can be also still something more, for example writing desk, phone, wireless broadband, copier and laser printer. (ibid. 44-49.)

After customer leaves the room, the cleanliness conditions vary a big time. The need for cleaning varies depending on customer. Besides, the cleaning time per room varies by hotel's size, standards, and the amount of staff. The time used to cleaning varies depending on if it is single room, double room or a room with extra bed.

Rautiainen & Siiskonen sorted out in 2011 that cleaning room of a leaving customer costs 8 to 10 Euros during the week and other times 16 Euros. Making an extra bed costs from 2.50 to 3.50 Euros and on Sundays 4 to 5 Euros. It depends to the price if it is made from the sofa in the room or from separate extra bed from storage room. (Rautiainen & Siiskonen 2011, 73-74.)

The biggest amount of cleaning expenses comes from labor costs (85-90 %). The rest 10-15 percent comes from cleaning equipments and materials, and from work management. Cleaning the room after customer has left it, takes 15 to 25 minutes depending on is the work done alone or in pairs. (ibid.)

2.6 Key figures

According to Rautiainen & Siiskonen 2011, (74, 405-406.) The key figures are followed when cleaning hotel rooms. Essential key figures can be seen from the list.

- How many rooms cleaner cleans in one hour. The amount of cleaned rooms has to be divided by working hours that has been used. For example 250 rooms has been cleaned and cleaners have used 100 hours. Result is 2,5 rooms in one hour.

- How many rooms one cleaner cleans during one shift. The key figure is got by dividing the amount of cleaned rooms by cleaners' amount on that specific date. For example 60 rooms has been cleaned during the day and by 3 cleaners. The result is 20 clean rooms per one cleaner.

- How much time has been used in cleaning one room? This key figure is got by dividing spent cleaning hours by cleaned rooms. For example there are 47 clean rooms in 19 hours and 30 minutes, altogether 1170 minutes. The total minute amount is divided by 47, the amount of rooms, and the result is 24, 89 minutes. There has been used 25 minutes per one room.

- The efficiency of cleaning department is got by dividing rooms' turnover by cleaning department's labor costs.

- When calculating own cleaning department's working hour costs, you have to add approximately 53 % labor costs.

3 Service

There are many definitions for service. Service is a process consisting of intangible actions' series. Actions are provided as solutions to customer's problems. Normally they are provided in immediate interaction of customer, employee, physical resources and service provider. (Grönroos 2010, 77.)

Services are divided into two different categories, when it comes to marketing: Services highlighting humanity and technology, and services offered at times and constantly. High touch services that highlight humanity are dependent on people, high tech services again on automated systems and information technology. (ibid. 84-85.)

The cleaning service is part of constantly offered services' category. Service provider and client are in interaction almost daily. This means that service provider has a possibility to create profitable affair and provide services customer needs and wants. (ibid.)

3.1 Service quality

The term quality can be defined in many ways in different contexts. The cleaning service quality can be divided in four categories:

- Technical quality
- Functional quality

- Aesthetic quality
- Process quality (Huilaja 1998, 22.)

When concentrating on quality of cleaning work, important are technical and functional quality. Technical quality answers to question "what?" and functional quality to question "how?" Nowadays companies that produce cleaning services, compete by the strategies of functional quality. The customers are more demanding these days. Something negative can stay in mind for a very long time. (Siivoustyön johdon käsikirja, 97-98.)

According to Huilaja (1998, 22), technical quality of cleaning can be seen as the result of actual cleaning process. Things affecting to this quality are: how often is cleaned, technology used, service organization and professionality of staff.

Customers expect and look forward to friendly behavior and flexibility. This is called functional quality. Important is to have the positive attitude. Service speed needs to be paid attention to. The technical quality in cleaning work means produced cleanliness and its measurements or assessments visually or in an objective way. Many things affect to technical quality: different cleaning methods, equipment, substances and machines as well as motivation and professionality of staff. The quality is good when experienced quality of customer encounters expected quality. If expectations are unrealistic, experienced quality is low even though by some measurements quality has been good. (Grönroos 2000, 67-69.)

There are many ways to define quality. Basically it is about ability to fulfill customer's needs and requirements. In ISO-standard 8402, quality is defined as in following: "The quality is all characteristics and features of product or service, by which product or service fulfills goals set". The quality is in main role when it comes to producing and purchasing cleaning services. The value for money is in key position in competition with other companies. From customer point of view, quality of cleaning is constantly visible part. Customer sees right away when work is left undone. (Siivoustyön johdon käsikirja, 93.)

The quality can be approached from various angles. These focus on manufacturing, product, value, competition, customer and society. The quality can also be divided in product quality and function quality. (Silen 1998, 14-15.)

3.2 Measurement and assessment of technical quality

Technical quality briefly means that surfaces are cleaned as on the particular premises is decided. Facilities are hygienic, comfortable, safe and healthy for all the users. Here it is focused on Finland's standardization union's standard 5994, Cleaning's technical quality. It is about visual checking processes. Standardization helps both the authority and consumer. Standards are recommendations, and mainly it is not compulsory to use them. Authorities may still require that they are used (SFS 2012).

The SFS 5994 INSTA 800:2010 standard is consequence of the co-operation of Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish hygiene entrepreneurs and property owners. Standard SFS 5994 updates the determination and assessment system of the technical quality of cleaning, in which there are two principles: visual check and measurement tools based check. (SFS 5994 2012, 28.)

When the INSTA 800:2010 is used, one has to follow the procedures of standard 5994. A check needs to be performed at least once in every three months. It is done just after the cleaning, or before the facilities are again taken into use. In a service agreement, it has to be specified, what the check includes. An agreement includes items such as found buildings, spaces and a division into check units, thoroughness of cleaning of different surface groups, different space groups and quality profiles of surface groups and possible extra requirements concerning dirt types. (SFS 5994 2012, 28.)

3.3 Principles of visual check

A visual check is performed visually, with eyes. There are no hands or aids used in this particular check to determine the amount of dirt. There are ten standard principles:

1. In the standard SFS 5994, there are described 6 different quality levels. 0 is the lowest quality level and 5 is the highest. The quality levels visually describe the observable quality of cleaning. Levels are defined specifically for each surface group. The amount of allowed dirt is defined by the size of a check unit.

2. The check units are divided into four surface groups: furniture and fixed units, walls, floors and ceilings.

3. The quality profiles are have no more than 8 quality requirements and possible added requirements.

4. Four dirt types are defined: trashes and loose dirt, dust, stains and surface dirt (dry or wet dirt that has not been caused by damage or neglect of maintenance, and that is removable by cleaning)

5. Dirt types are divided in two categories: 1 is trashes and loose dirt, dust and stains, 2 is surface dirt

6. The resulting dirt groups are separately assessed from easily approachable (A) to hardly approachable (NA) surfaces. A is undefined by area and it is easily accessible for cleaner. NA is place where it is hard to reach or it is not easily cleanable.

7. The sizes of facilities determine the amount of dirt, and facilities are divided into 4 different categories:

●   The area is no more than 15 m2

●   The area is between 15 and 35 m2

●   The area is between 35 and 60 m2

●   The area is between 60 and 100 m2

8. The check is done right away after cleaning, or at least before the facilities are taken in use again.

9. In a check, all accumulations of dirt are recorded (from each four surface group)

10. Cleaning facilities has been accomplished successfully if the amount of dirt accumulation is not more than the amount allowed in each surface group. (SFS 5994 2012, 6-8.)

3.4 Measurement methods

It is possible to measure quality visually and via surveys. The visual method is made by looking at the quality purposefully or by taking random samples. This is the most common survey method and the one houses use as a self-monitoring method. (Korhonen 2011, 61.)

The visual cleaning assessment is mainly measured by quality assessment rounds. Rounds are made by service provider's representative only or with the client. The visual assessment is a quick way to control quality but it can be difficult to create coherent assessment scale. The other may find results good and the other satisfying. The quality measurements are reliable if measurement criteria and scale do not change. (Seppälä 2001, 101.)

Customer surveys are a challenging way to measure quality. It is possible that the surveys give too positive image of the real satisfactory. One reason is also that people are really tired and bored to responding to the surveys. If customer surveys do not result in any operations in organization, it has to be thought, why they are even implemented in the first place. (Lausjärvi 2006, 106.)

Objective measurements can be made to complement visual checks and they are made by different technical measurement tools. (Seppälä 2001, 101.) The most common measurement tools and utilities are next:

● Surface dust measuring device

- Step backup measuring device (Slippery of the floor covering)

- Gloss level measuring device (Reflection of the surface light)

- Luminometer (The amount of organic dirt)

- Hygicult-test (The amount of microbes)

- Mycometer-test (The amount of microbes)

- Uv-lamp (Surface cleanliness)

- Camera (Documenting)

- BM-dustdetector (Korhonen 2011, 61.)

In addition, there can be made different laboratory researches, to find out for example the composition of dirt, condition of surface materials and microbes, and measuring static electricity and the electric conductivity of the floors (Korhonen 2011, 61).

3.5 Total quality management

Total Quality Management means that quality can be seen in each function company makes. Goal in Total Quality Management is benefit for staff of whole society and company and increment of customer satisfaction. It starts from an idea that company's function is made with high quality. In Total Quality Management it is used superior work's first basic definition in which management is divided in case and human resources management and in addition management is supported by different quality techniques. (Hölttä & Savonen 1997, 11.)

There are seven parts in the service quality management:

1. Developing customer oriented thoughts

2. Controlling expectations and hopes of customers

3. Controlling results of customers and contact persons interactions (that what customers experience as technical quality of service)

4. Continuous and strategic based internal marketing of company are part of quality and management program. All employees and superiors should be

seen as service provider's first market because customer's experienced moment of truth is the most important way to get awesome service quality.

5. Operational environment's and its resources controlling is an issue that has to be included in every quality program because service environment and technical basis can have negative impact on customer at the time of purchase.

6. Information technology has to be well controlled. Machines, applications and programs have to be updated as they develop so that they are easily approachable for customers.

7. The last part is controlling customer's participation. This means that issues that impact negatively to the service quality are avoided. These can be for example lines and unpleasant atmosphere. (Grönroos 2001, 159-161.)

4 Methodology

In this work, the qualitative part was conducted by interviewing. An interview form with one of the full-time housekeepers was conducted. In addition, housekeeping manager Päivi Ropponen and hotel manager Katri Paakkari took part by filling in the same form as the customers did. They already knew what the questionnaire included, and this is the reason for a bit more casual approach. Some parts were chatted through and some were written down. The interviews with the hotel manager, housekeeping manager and housekeeper were conducted with the questionnaires during 08.04.2015-25.04.2015. The quantitative part was conducted using a questionnaire. Quantitative research enables the use of clear diagrams. The research questions were as follows:

- How do customers see the technical quality of cleaning?
- How do customers see the functional quality of cleaning?
- What are the development suggestions?

In Hotel Alba, Hygicult tests have been made occasionally but not nowadays. The quality impression is based on visual assessment. The purpose of the thesis was to

design and implement a questionnaire about the quality of cleaning. The aim of the questionnaire was to find out how customers see the quality of cleaning and cleaning staff. The facilities in the three-floor-building have been divided into hotel rooms, corridors, stairs, office, sauna and so on. The aim was to find out the most critical places that need change from the customer point of view and the places that need improvement immediately.

The research was three-phased. The first was maybe the hardest part: to decide what the limits are. After that, the questionnaire was left at the hotel reception, and the interviews with one of the cleaners plus with the hotel manager and housekeeping manager were made. Then it was time to analyze the answers and come up with what could be done differently and in the end, the conclusions were drawn.

In Hotel Alba, the housekeeping has been organized in the same way for a longer time. The purpose of the thesis was to clear out if there is something that can be done better. There have been occasional complaints about quality. The idea was to explore the reasons for the complaints, and the easiest and most reasonable way was to ask about that via a questionnaire. The time for the questionnaire was 08. - 25.04.2015. 50 forms were printed out. The number of answers was small, only six, which is why some extra research was made. Randomly picked customers on the Alba premises were chosen for a face-to-face interview. Results are more reliable this way when more people have been taking part. The hotel manager and housekeeping manager told what are the most critical points to their mind. Some observations were made without interaction.

The answers face to face were given easily, and this was the method that should have been used. Maybe the return box should have been there or somebody giving the forms from hand to hand. People were surprisingly helpful and there were 27 participants in two to three hours altogether. The time for answering the questions on the questionnaire was short and that was the reason for a compact questionnaire. If it would have been longer, probably no one would have answered. The number altogether was 33 of respondents.

The technical quality consists of cleaning staff's technical know-how and the functional quality of appearance, reachability and friendliness. The questions were designed based on the aforementioned issues. Before the implementation, the hotel manager approved the questionnaire. The scale was clear and it was from 0 to 5. 5 meant really good, 4 good, 3 satisfying, 2 bad and 1 really bad. 0 meant a customer did not know or have experiences. The first nine questions were about cleanliness itself. The last four questions were related to the cleaning staff. The six previous steps (from 0 to 5) I based on part 4.6 in thesis. One change was made to make it simpler. 0 in research is not the lowest possible but in this case it tells that customer has no experiences on that field. For example it is not possible to know how clean the meeting rooms are if one does not even go there during hotel stay. Figures from 6 to 8 were made using Word 2013.

The best known research methods are qualitative and quantitative method. Previously there was only one method in one research. Nowadays there can be combination of both and it is called mixed method approach. (Creswell 2003, 4.)

The first part in quantitative research is the research problem and it is being solved step by step. The answer comes from information. First has to be decided the needed information, where it is collected from and how it is collected. This is how the phenomenon which is the target, is being solved. (Kananen 2008, 11-12.) Qualitative research is based on non-numerical information. Text analyses, observations and interviews are the methods being used in it. Qualitative research is not aiming at objective truth unlike quantitative research. (ibid. 10-11.)

In a qualitative method, the main focus is on open-ended questions and it is about what people tell. In a quantitative method, the focus is on close-ended questions and it is about counting and measuring. (Creswell 2003, 18-19.)

Observing without participating means that researcher does not take part in the actions of the research target. The researcher makes observations as an outsider, and the aim is to learn by watching. (Grönfors 1985, 90.)

4.1 Reliability and validity

Both terms, reliability and validity, mean reliability. The validity means that right issues are measured and researched when thinking research problem. The reliability means stability of results. (Kananen 2011, 118.) The reliability means that research can be made twice or that two researchers make the same survey, but the result is the same. (Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P. & Sajavaara, P. 2004, 216-218.)

It was good for the reliability that the most long-time of the housekeepers answered to the interview and not for example summer worker. Better informing of the questionnaire by receptionists and return box would have increased the amount for returned papers. Still, the six papers, gave information for the research and were reliable.

4.2 Questionnaire

Planning a questionnaire is a process that needs a lot of careful work. A good questionnaire is logically constructed. It is possible to catch interest if the easiest questions are in the beginning. Open-ended and structured questions can be found from questionnaire. Structured questions are normally used in quantitative research and open-ended questions in qualitative research. (Heikkilä 2001, 48-49.) Semi-structured questionnaire includes both types of the questions. Structured questions need to be planned carefully because they can limit answering. (Heikkilä 2001, 50-51.)

Questionnaires were read through and all the forms that were not completed properly, were thrown away. (Heikkilä 2001, 43.) In this research, all the returned papers were filled with care and the rest of the people that were interviewed, did their task properly.

5 Results

In the questionnaire (Appendix 3), there was a possibility for customers to tell opinions by own words. The question was: "Tell shortly in which premises quality should be improved. Tell also how". 10% of randomly selected customers, who answered, had visited Hotel Alba about 10 to 20 times. This was good to point out, because they had seen the same premises more than once, and had more opinions this way. 62% were men and 38% women. The age scale was from 24 till 58.
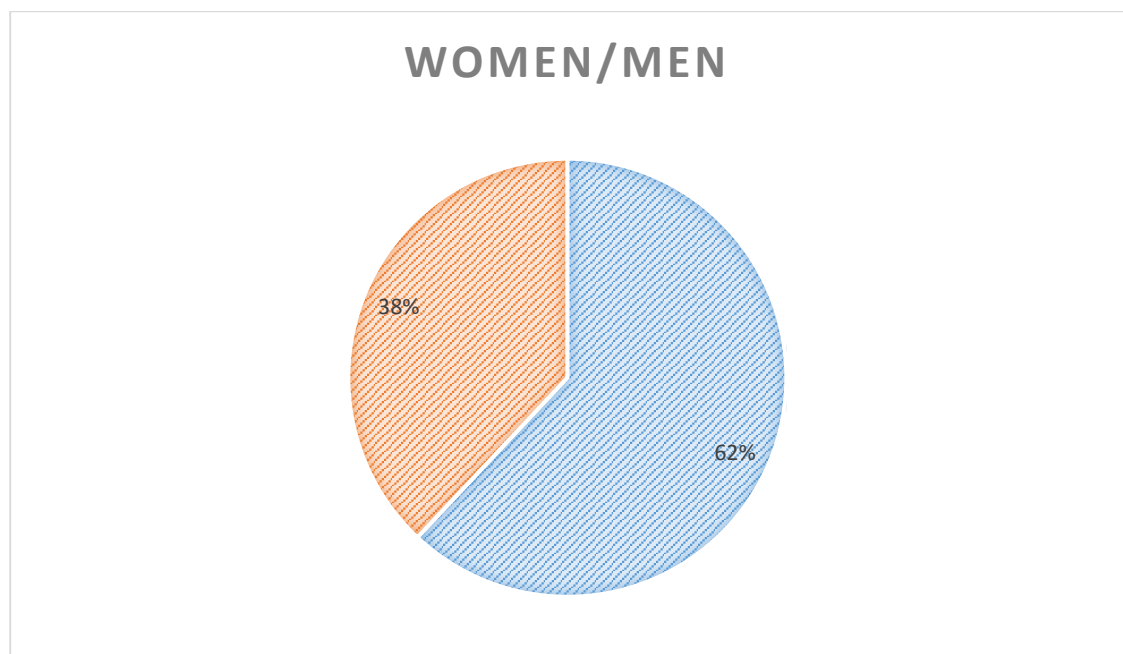
Figure 6. The gender distribution

(Liimatainen, 2016.)

The public premises like sauna, public toilets, lobby, restaurant and stairs, got quite good numbers which tells that they are normally in good condition. The meeting premises were not familiar to these people and the only given number was 5, from them who had visited the premises. The corridors got numbers from 3 to 5. The biggest division was with hotel rooms and their toilets and bathrooms. The given numbers were between 2 and 5.

Not all people told something by own words. One opinion was that room floors have sometimes been messy (dust, hair…). Nowadays they have been tidier from customer

point of view, though. One opinion to the question how to improve quality was that cleaning should be done more thoroughly with care. Cleaners' customer orientation, friendliness and appearance were scaled from 3 to 5 so on average it is quite good. One comment was: "It would be nice to say Good morning". Even during the most hectic times, customer service orientated thinking cannot be forgot. Many, 7 out of 33 people, mentioned dust. They had noticed extra dust on shelves, window seats and surfaces. Figures (7 and 8) include answers from the customer questionnaire.

Evaluation of cleanliness

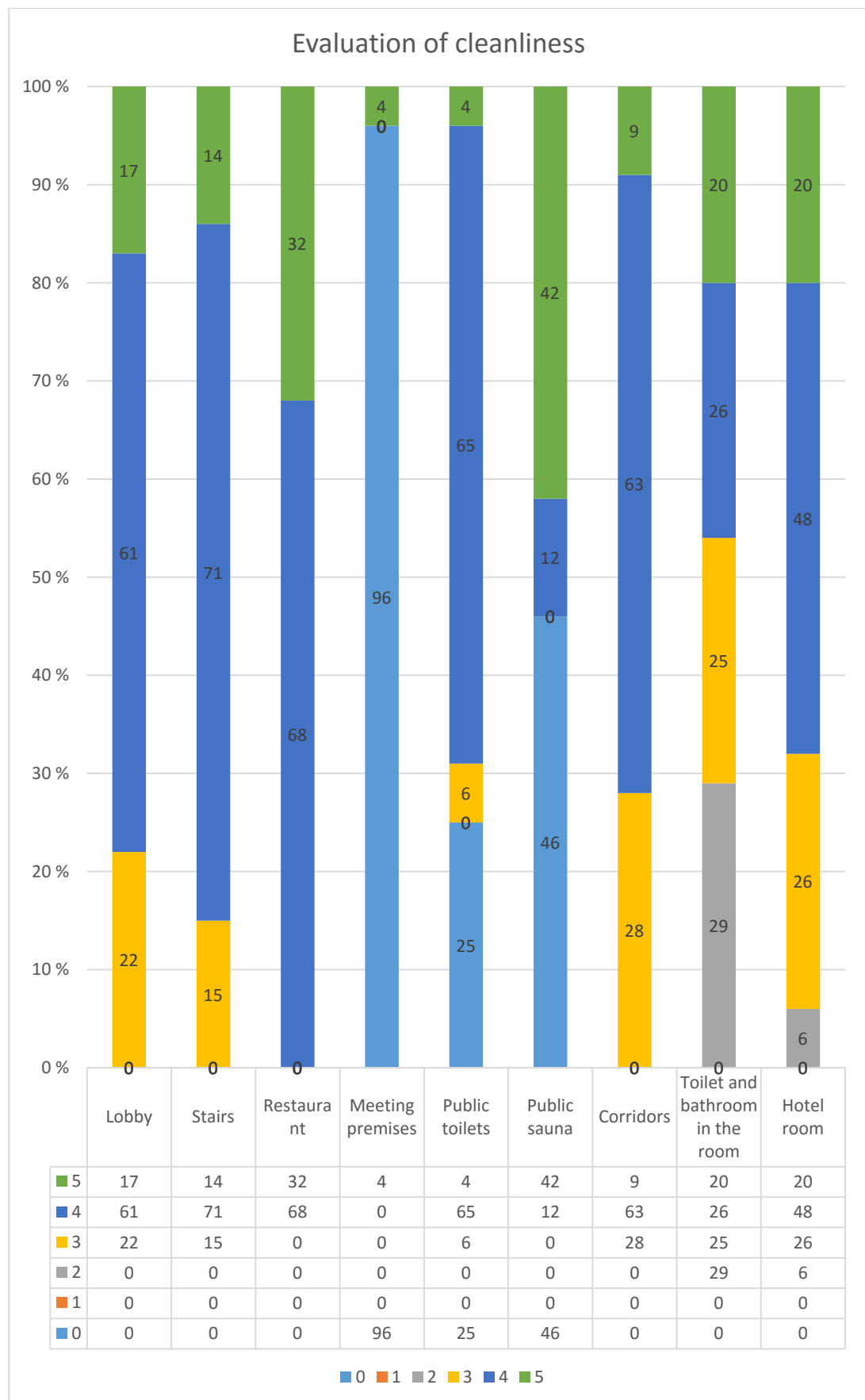|	Lobby	Stairs	Restaura nt	Meeting premises	Public toilets	Public sauna	Corridors	Toilet and bathroom in the room	Hotel room
5	17	14	32	4	4	42	9	20	20
4	61	71	68	0	65	12	63	26	48
3	22	15	0	0	6	0	28	25	26
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	6
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	96	25	46	0	0	0

Figure 7. Evaluation of cleanliness

(Liimatainen, 2016.)

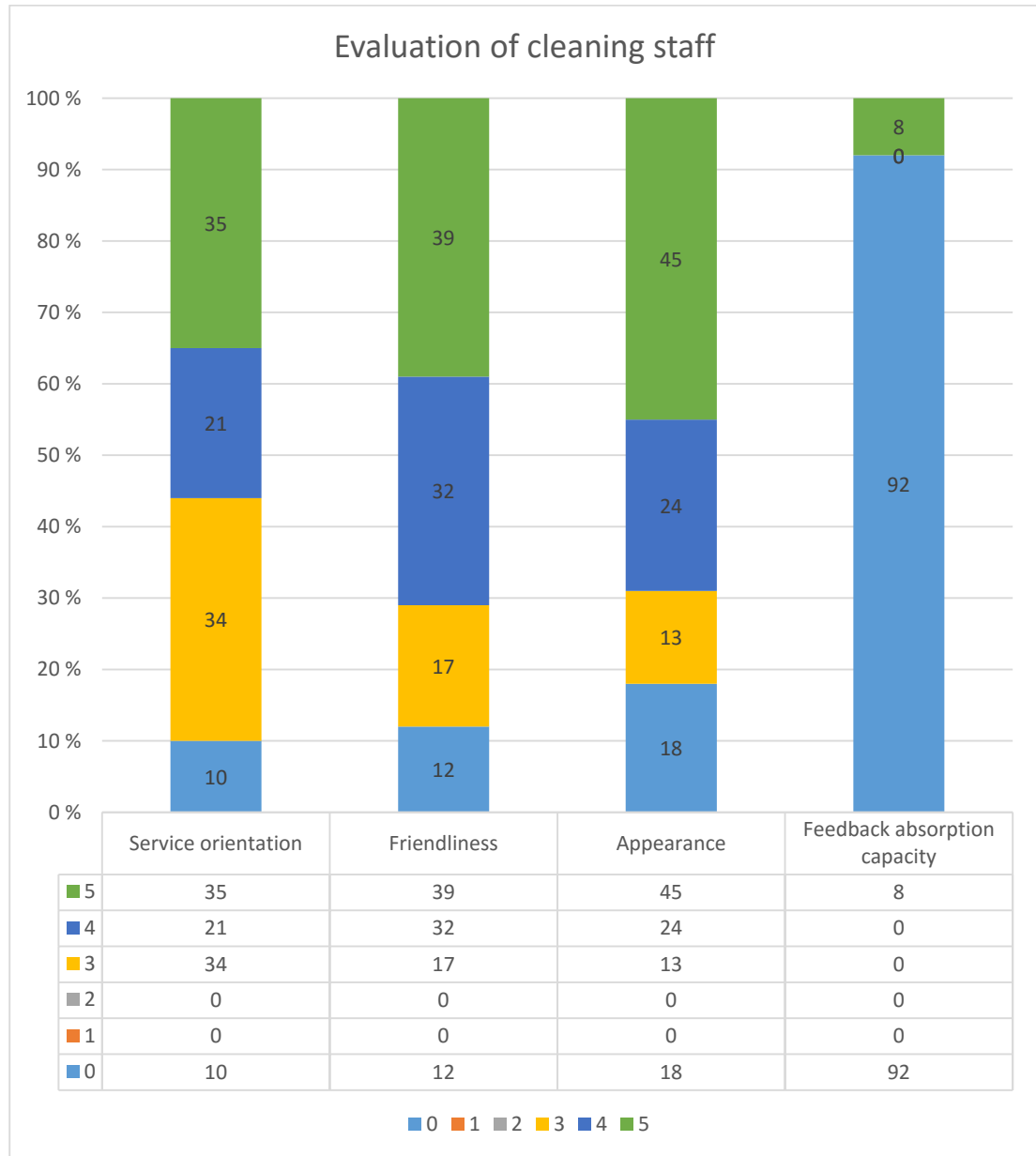0 = I don't know, 1 = Really bad, 2= Bad, 3= Satisfying, 4= Good, 5= Really good

Figure 8. Evaluation of cleaning staff

(Liimatainen, 2016.)

0 = I don't know, 1 = Really bad, 2= Bad, 3= Satisfying, 4= Good, 5= Really good

5.2 Housekeeper questionnaire

In addition to customer questionnaire, housekeeper's opinions were heard by questionnaire (Appendix 5). The job satisfaction always affects to the quality of work.

One housekeeper wanted to answer to the questionnaire when volunteers were searched. The scale here was from 1 to 4. 1 means totally agree, 2 means partly agree, 3 partly disagree and 4 totally disagree. This particular cleaner has worked in the hotel for over ten years now. The answers showed that there should be more time and better equipment and methods, and information should go around effectively. The answer to the questions 1, 2 and 8 was 3 which means partial disagreement. All the other questions but question 4, got number 2 which means partial agreement. The cleaner answered to the question 4 with 1. This shows that time, equipment, methods and information movement needs attention.

5.3 Hotel manager's and housekeeping manager's opinions

The opinions of the hotel manager and housekeeper manager were heard to support the whole research. The development ideas of hotel manager and housekeeper manager were there that there could be seen are they similar than what customers had.

The cleaners mop the lobby daily after breakfast is over, in addition to room cleaning. Still sometimes it looks dirty after one hour if the hotel is full and more people are moving. This is something that should be clean all the time as it is one of the first issues customers see when they arrive to hotel. In general, Hotel Alba is assessed to be cleaner than chain hotels. According to customer feedback, Hotel Alba has got number 8 out of ten in cleanliness. The customers really like when housekeeper chats with them and is friendly as it is customer service job. Complaints are normally given if cleaner has forgot for example previous customer's socks or something or if during day cleaning dirty dishes haven't been taken away. (Katri Paakkari 2015.)

The housekeeping manager thinks that dust is always the challenge. It is important to have the final look before closing the door of the cleaned room. Sometimes something critical can be seen in this point and this is the place for first impression

customer gets while arriving. The need for renovation work is existing. (Päivi Ropponen 2015.)

5.4 Observations

The conclusions and development ideas are also made by observing. As a method to this observation wasn't used for example filming because it is not that necessary. When taping, cleaner may work differently than when working alone. This does not give the right image and does not necessarily lead to any improvement ideas.

In Alba hotel, the checks are done visually by spot checks. This way is the same than what customer also uses so principles stay same. The hotel manager and housekeeping manager do them, and give feedback to cleaners when needed. In the mornings, also cleaners check that everything is fine in the rooms that are reserved for the particular day. The checks are good to be done but there is one minus in it. The amount of cleaners is quite low but nevertheless, information does not go around effectively. If something misses or does not look tidy, cleaner improves it and that's it. All the mistakes should be written down, and after that discuss about them. Now mistakes keep repeating themselves. The housekeeper may think that work is done perfectly because one does not realize the mistakes, just because no one points them out. Still, it is more than good to have these checks and corrections but the amount of useless work could be decreased, and by that focus would be more on the important issue: the improvement of customer satisfaction.

5.4.1 Own development ideas

One thing that could be worth trying is waterless cleaning. Now when some observations were made from cleaned rooms, one thing kept repeating itself often: The floors did not shine in all of the rooms and looked untidy. The reason for that can be hurry or dirty mop. More mops and microfiber cloths could be purchased. In the mornings, cleaner could moisture them for one's own needs. This would make work easier and no more heavy buckets needs to be with cleaner anymore.

The other is the amount of wipes. The cleaners are not told for example what amount of cleaning cloths could be "good" to be used during one day and this way bacteries spread more easily. Cleaners have many ways to clean and the amount of cloths or styles to clean haven't been checked and corrected if needed.

As an observation, people may not realize how busy cleaners are. Many times people expect that day cleaning is so much more thorough than what it is really. The housekeepers make about 20 rooms for sale each day, and in addition to that day cleanings. The number of day cleaning rooms may vary from 0 to 30. The rooms are not that big, though, than what they can be in some of the hotels. The fact is that when number of day cleaning rooms is high, something needs to be done faster or leave totally undone. After these, the cleaners take care of public premises and premises of the staff and during the most hectic days, quality gets lower. If the hotel is full and all of the rooms needs to be cleaned to new customers on that day, there is need for 6 cleaners. Some days, for example during sick leaves, days can get longer when no extra hands are there to help with work amount.

The cleaners would need now even more time than before. The plastic cups have been changed to glasses, and already that takes minutes from working day. Before this change cups were easy to throw away, but now one has to take care that there is enough clean dishes from kitchen downstairs. This hasn't been taken into account when counting timetable for cleaning. In superior, junior suite and business rooms something that haven't been there that long are electric kettle, tea and coffee equipment. Just taking them tidy takes time that what was not so before.

During summer times, more customers find the hotel. Every three regular and professional cleaners have about one month summer holiday, normally in turns. Summers, as an observation, needs extra attention. Some extra workers helping do not help without proper orientation and good knowledge. The amount of workers may be good but unfortunately that does not tell the whole truth. The amount of workers is not reasonable and it is too low. More dust and dirt observations were

made, as eyes were kept open during the summer months in the year 2015. All the cleaners were stressed and not satisfied to the quality of their own work.

The working hours starts normally a bit later during summertime – even from 8 to 9 am. As an observation, this is a bit tricky issue. The customers leave some days later and it is not easy to predict. Then again, some day customer flow of coming customers starts really early. There is not always time to make rooms ready well when working hours start later. Every morning, cleaners make the daily schedules from printed versions to their own use. They count the amount of rooms, extra beds etc. and divide the work. This takes its own time. After that it is time to start the actual work.

Some observation was made and one thing is there to point out. In cleaners' social premises can be seen many written small paper pieces on the table informing employees from changes etc. Those pieces can be thrown accidentally away and some of the employees may have not seen them yet. This increases misunderstandings. There could be for example one notebook for every single thing that needs to be written down. This way employee can go back in time and check some older thing that needs to be solved.

As a conclusion, I would like to say that cleaners need enough time to do tasks properly. The customer feedback gets worse during most hectic times. The good quality does not stay good without good input. The tolerable amount of rooms needs to be counted, because quality suffers when work is done too quickly.

6 Conclusion

The customers were overall happy with the quality. The questionnaire completed face-to-face might have affected the fact that it gave more positive image. The feedback was coherent, and the respondents were not fully satisfied with the bathrooms and their cleanliness. The dust needs to get attention.

Choosing the subject was easy because the author has been working at hotel Alba for many years, first as a trainee. The thesis process taught that there should have been enough time for each section. It was a disappointment that the number of the answers was low because in 2, 5 weeks a bit higher percentage of interested customers would have been reasonable. Still, by interviewing face-to-face and by observing, some interesting ideas of how to make improvements came up. It was really satisfying to see how anxious people were about taking part in the process face to face. The questionnaire was scanty, and the few minutes needed for answering was not too much for the majority of the participants. A thesis process requires hard work, and good planning is the key to good results.

The number of the questionnaire forms returned was low. It was good, though, to ask the questions face-to-face. People were able to ask something if they did not understand a question. In the future, it would be reasonable to conduct thorough theme interviews.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Cover letter in English

Hi,

I'm studying Facility Management in Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences. I am doing my thesis in cooperation with Hotel Alba, about quality of cleaning and how quality and customer satisfaction could be improved.

Questionnaire takes about 5 minutes and they will be returned to reception. Forms are confidential. You will have time to answer till 25.4.

Sincerely,

Päivi Liimatainen

Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences

Appendix 2 Cover letter in Finnish

Hei,

Opiskelen Toimitilapalveluiden johtamista Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulussa. Teen opinnäytetyötä yhteistyössä Hotelli Alban kanssa siivouksen laadusta, ja siitä miten laatua ja asiakastyytyväisyyttä voisi parantaa.

Kyselyyn vastaamiseen menee aikaa n. 5 minuuttia. Kyselylomakkeet palautetaan vastaanoton henkilökunnalle. Lomakkeet käsitellään luottamuksellisesti nimettöminä. Vastausaikaa on 25.4. asti.

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Päivi Liimatainen

Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu

Questionnaire:

Background information:

Age: _____

Gender: _____

How often have you stayed in Hotel Alba? _____

Evaluation is on scale 0-5. Choose one option by circling.

Scale:

0= Difficult to say

1= Really bad

2= Bad

3= Satisfying

4= Good

5= Really good

Quality of cleaning:

1. Lobby 0 1 2 3 4 5

2. Stairs 0 1 2 3 4 5

3. Restaurant 0 1 2 3 4 5

4. Meeting rooms 0 1 2 3 4 5

5. Public toilet 0 1 2 3 4 5

6. Public sauna 0 1 2 3 4 5

7. Corridors of the hotel 0 1 2 3 4 5

8. Toilet / bathroom in hotel room 0 1 2 3 4 5

9. Hotel room 0 1 2 3 4 5

Cleaning staff´s:

1. Service orientation 0 1 2 3 4 5

2. Friendliness 0 1 2 3 4 5

3. Appearance 0 1 2 3 4 5

4. Ability to receive feedback 0 1 2 3 4 5

Tell shortly, where the quality should be improved. Tell also how it could happen.

_____

_____

_____

Thank you!

Appendix 4 Questionnaire in Finnish

Kyselylomake

Taustatiedot:

Ikä: ____

Sukupuoli: _____

Kuinka usein olet yöpynyt Hotelli Albassa? _____

Anna arviosi asteikolla 0-5. Valitse yksi vaihtoehto kysymystä kohden ympyröimällä.

Asteikko:

0= En osaa sanoa, 1= Todella huono, 2= Huono, 3= Tyydyttävä, 4= Hyvä, 5= Todella hyvä

Siisteyden arviointi:

1. Sisääntuloaula 0 1 2 3 4 5
2. Portaat 0 1 2 3 4 5
3. Ravintola 0 1 2 3 4 5
4. Kokoustilat 0 1 2 3 4 5
5. Yleiset wc-tilat 0 1 2 3 4 5
6. Yleinen sauna 0 1 2 3 4 5
7. Hotellin käytävät 0 1 2 3 4 5
8. Hotellihuoneen wc-tilat / kylpyhuone 0 1 2 3 4 5
9. Hotellihuone 0 1 2 3 4 5

Siivoushenkilökunnan:

1. Palvelualttius 0 1 2 3 4 5

2. Ystävällisyys 0 1 2 3 4 5

3. Ulkoasu 0 1 2 3 4 5

4. Palautteen vastaanottokyky 0 1 2 3 4 5

Kerro lyhyesti, missä tiloissa laatua tulisi parantaa. Kerro myös millä keinoin.

_____

_____

_____

Kiitos!

Appendix 5 Työtyytyväisyyskysely / Job satisfaction questionnaire

Taustatiedot / Background information
Nainen / Female: ❏
Mies / Male: ❏

Ikä / Age
Alle 25v. /
Under 25 years ❏
25-30v. /
25-30 years ❏
31-40v. /
31-40 years ❏
41-50v. /
41-50 years
vanhempi /
older ❏

Kuinka kauan olet työskennellyt alalla?
How long have you been working in the field?
Alle vuoden / Less than year ❏
1-5 vuotta / 1-5 years ❏
Yli 10 vuotta / Over 10 years ❏

Koulutus / Education:
peruskoulu / comprehensive school ❏
ammattikoulu / vocational school ❏
lukio / high school ❏
korkeakoulututkinto / university ❏
muu / other ❏

Mitä asioita pidät tärkeimpänä työssäsi? What are the most important issues for you at your work?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Kysymyksiä liittyen työhön / Questions of your work

1 Täysin samaa mieltä / Totally agree
2 Osittain samaa mieltä/ Partly agree
3 Osittain eri mieltä / Partly disagree
4 Täysin eri mieltä / Totally disagree

1. Minulla on aikaa tehdä työni hyvin 1 2 3 4

2. Minulla on käytössäni hyvät työvälineet ja menetelmät 1 2 3 4

3. Työpaikan ilmapiiri on mielestäni hyvä 1 2 3 4

4. Viihdyn työyhteisössäni 1 2 3 4

5. Viihdyn työssäni 1 2 3 4

6. Työmotivaationi on omasta mielestäni hyvä 1 2 3 4

7. Työtäni arvostetaan 1 2 3 4

8. Tieto työpaikalla kulkee ongelmitta 1 2 3 4

9. Esimieheni tukee minua riittävästi 1 2 3 4

10. Saan esimieheltäni tarpeeksi palautetta 1 2 3 4

1. I have enough time to do my work properly 1 2 3 4

2. I have good equipment and methods in my use 1 2 3 4

3. Atmosphere at work is good to my mind 1 2 3 4

4. I enjoy my work community 1 2 3 4

5. I enjoy my work 1 2 3 4

6. My working motivation is good 1 2 3 4

7. I feel my work is appreciated 1 2 3 4

8. Information goes around without problems 1 2 3 4

9. I get support from manager 1 2 3 4

10. I get enough feedback from manager 1 2 3 4

Vapaa sana / Free word

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Kiitos! Thank you!

Appendix 6 List of Finlandia Hotels

Espoo - Kokoushotelli Meripuisto

Harjavalta - Hotelli Hiittenharju

Helsinki - Kokoushotelli Rantapuisto

Helsinki - Park Hotel Käpylä

Imatra - Imatran Kylpylä

Joensuu - Hotelli Atrium

Jyväskylä - Hotelli Alba

Jämsä - City-Hotelli JämsänUkko

Kalajoki - Hotelli Rantakalla

Kemi - Hotelli Palomestari

Kemijärvi - Hotelli Mestarinkievari

Kitee - Hotelli Pajarinhovi

Kokkola - Hotelli Seurahuone

Kuopio - Hotelli IsoValkeinen

Kuopio - Hotelli Jahtihovi

Kurikka - Hotelli Pitkä-Jussi

Lahti - Hotelli Musta Kissa

Lieksa - Hotelli Puustelli

Loviisa - Hotel Degerby

Nivala - Hotelli Puustelli

Oulu - Airport Hotel Oulu

Savonlinna - Fontana Hotel Pietari Kylliäinen

Seinäjoki - Hotelli Fooninki

Tampere - Hotelli Victoria

Turku - Centro Hotel

Tuusula - Hotelli Krapi

Utö - Havshotel

Vaasa - Hotel Vallonia Garden

Ylivieska - Hotelli käenpesä

(www.hotellialba.fi)