



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



The Standard Operating Procedures and Employee Performance of the Department of Tourism Accredited Hotels in Legazpi City

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Abstract

In the fast-evolving global hospitality industry, service consistency and operational efficiency are vital to sustaining competitiveness and guest satisfaction. Hotels function not only as lodging facilities but also as cultural ambassadors, reflecting local identity and organizational competence. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have become indispensable tools for ensuring service quality, reducing operational errors, and embedding safety and health practices that protect both guests and employees. Beyond procedural uniformity, SOPs enable effective monitoring, training, and continuous improvement, transforming them from simple checklists into instruments for building staff competence, morale, and accountability. International frameworks such as ISO 9001:2015 and Total Quality Management (TQM) emphasize documented procedures as essential for customer focus, sustainability, and compliance, while Philippine legislation—including the Tourism Act of 2009, the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Law of 2018, and the Food Safety Act of 2013—anchors SOPs in legal mandates that safeguard workers' rights and guest safety.

Legazpi City, a premier tourism hub in the Bicol Region, provides a compelling context for examining SOPs in hospitality. With its growing accommodation sector, international airport connectivity, and ambitious Smart and Sustainable Legazpi Roadmap, the city faces rising guest expectations and regulatory demands. This study investigates the relationship between SOPs and employee performance in Department of Tourism-accredited hotels in Legazpi, focusing on procedure design, communication, training, and supervisory enforcement. By integrating employee insights on operational challenges with guest perspectives on service consistency and safety, the research highlights how SOPs influence quality of work, professional conduct, and competitive advantage. Findings aim to inform evidence-based recommendations for strengthening SOPs, enhancing staff training, and improving supervisory oversight, thereby supporting Legazpi's vision of sustainable, resilient, and world-class tourism.

Keywords: Global Hospitality; Quasi-Experimental; Operational Challenges

1. Introduction

The hospitality industry thrives on consistency, efficiency, and guest satisfaction, making Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) indispensable to hotel operations. SOPs serve as structured, step-by-step guides that standardize tasks, ensuring service quality does not rely solely on individual discretion. They promote efficiency, reduce operational errors, and maintain continuity during peak demand while embedding safety and health practices that protect both guests and employees. International frameworks such as ISO 9001:2015 and Total Quality Management (TQM) emphasize documented procedures as essential for customer focus, sustainability, and compliance. In the Philippines, legislation such as the Tourism Act of 2009, the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Law of 2018, and the Food Safety Act of 2013 further anchor SOPs in legal mandates, requiring hotels to translate regulatory obligations into daily operational practices. Thus, SOPs are not merely internal conveniences but critical mechanisms for legal compliance,

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worker protection, and guest safety, ensuring that hotels remain competitive while upholding public health and occupational standards.

Legazpi City, a premier tourism hub in the Bicol Region, offers a dynamic setting to examine the role of SOPs in hospitality. With its “City of Fun and Adventure” branding and Smart and Sustainable Legazpi Roadmap 2026–2030, the city aims to position itself as a climate-resilient destination for meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions (MICE). The expansion of accommodation facilities, ranging from established hotels like The Oriental Legazpi to newer properties such as Proxy by The Oriental and Lotus Blu, reflects the city’s growing tourism demand. Infrastructure developments, including the Bicol International Airport and the planned Legazpi International Cruise Ship Terminal, have diversified visitor profiles and heightened expectations for service quality and safety. However, early observations revealed uneven employee performance in some accredited hotels, linked to gaps in training, inconsistent supervision, and impractical procedures, particularly in infection control and safety tasks. These challenges highlight the need for targeted research on how SOPs influence employee behavior, motivation, and performance in a rapidly growing tourism city. Legazpi’s recovery after the pandemic further underscores the importance of resilient operational systems that balance guest satisfaction with employee welfare and regulatory compliance.

This study examined the relationship between SOPs and employee performance in Department of Tourism-accredited hotels in Legazpi City, focusing on procedure design, communication, training, and supervisory enforcement. It assessed how these factors shaped employee behavior, motivation, and performance outcomes such as quality of work, interpersonal competence, professional conduct, and competitive advantage. Special attention was given to safety and health components of SOPs, evaluating whether measures adequately addressed hygiene, infection prevention, emergency preparedness, and occupational safety. The research bridged internal operational review with external stakeholder perspectives by integrating employee insights on procedural clarity, training adequacy, and supervisory support with guest feedback on service consistency and visible safety practices. Findings emphasized that SOPs, when effectively designed and enforced, enhance staff competence, morale, and accountability while reinforcing guest trust and satisfaction. Conversely, inadequate training, resource constraints, and weak supervisory oversight compromise compliance and diminish service quality. By connecting internal processes with guest experiences, the study provides actionable recommendations for strengthening SOPs, improving staff training, and enhancing supervisory mechanisms. Ultimately, the research supports Legazpi’s vision of sustainable and resilient tourism by demonstrating how SOPs can serve as vital instruments for operational excellence, employee welfare, and guest safety.

2. Methods Used

The study adopted a quantitative descriptive-survey method to investigate how Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) influence employee performance in Department of Tourism-accredited hotels in Legazpi City. This approach allowed the researcher to objectively measure performance levels across core hotel departments—Front Office, Food & Beverage, and Housekeeping—using structured questionnaires for both employees and guests.

2.1. Materials Used

The materials used included two validated survey instruments. The employee questionnaire assessed SOP implementation, performance dimensions, and operational challenges, while the guest questionnaire focused on service consistency and perceived staff competence. Validation was conducted by industry experts to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with hospitality standards.

3. Discussion

In the discussion, findings highlighted that SOPs positively shaped employee behavior and guest satisfaction. However, gaps in training, supervisory oversight, and resource allocation limited full compliance. Guests confirmed service consistency but noted areas needing improvement, particularly in hygiene and safety practices.

4. Results

The results showed substantial SOP implementation, with employee performance rated from satisfactory to very satisfactory. Statistical analysis revealed significant differences across departments, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions. Overall, SOPs enhanced service quality and accountability, but continuous refinement and stronger enforcement are essential to achieve exemplary standards in Legazpi’s hospitality sector.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) play a pivotal role in shaping employee performance and guest satisfaction in Department of Tourism-accredited hotels in Legazpi City. The findings demonstrated that SOPs, when properly designed, communicated, and enforced, enhance service consistency, accountability, and operational efficiency across core hotel departments. Employees reported that SOPs provided clear guidance on job duties, safety practices, and service standards, while guests validated these procedures through their perceptions of reliable and professional service. However, challenges such as inadequate training, limited resources, and weak supervisory oversight were identified as barriers to achieving exemplary compliance. These gaps highlight the need for continuous refinement of SOPs, stronger enforcement mechanisms, and targeted interventions to address safety, hygiene, and employee development. Ultimately, the study affirms that SOPs are not merely procedural tools but strategic instruments that safeguard employee welfare, strengthen organizational credibility, and ensure sustainable competitiveness in Legazpi's growing hospitality sector.

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