



The c Bus Driver Performance (Application to Four Star Cairo Hotels)

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Abstract :

The study examines ,through a specially designed questionnaire and interviews with four star Cairo hotels shuttle bus drivers up to date performance, set against expected prevalent international standards. Results indicate that Egyptian shuttle bus drivers are ,on the whole, incompetent professionally and way below the appropriate standard socially and in personal appearance and demeanor. Four star Cairo hotels need to renovate their training techniques aimed at updating and upgrading hotel shuttle bus drivers performance on the bases of three parameters:

- (1) Upgrading drivers personal skills
- (2) Enhancing communication with tourists
- (3) Handling the bus itself

Key Words: Bus Driver , Cairo Hotels , Personal skills ,

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Introduction :

Tourism nowadays is considered a locomotive of development in many developed and developing countries. Therefore, many countries try their best to cater for tourism and increase their share of world tourism flux. Egypt is one of those countries , as tourism forms about 40% of its exported services. Also tourism secures about 19.3% of its revenue of hard foreign currency and 11.3% of its total local income whether directly or indirectly , 7% of which is direct income . Egypt has achieved 18% tourism growth in 2008, as compared with 3.8% world growth.

Tourism income in Egypt reached 10.9 milliard US dollar in 2008 as compared with 9.5 milliard US dollars in 2007 at a percentage reaching 15.9% according to statistics of the Central Branch of General Mobilization and Statistics and the Department of Passports, Immigration and Nationality of the Ministry of the Interior , we find that 12.8 million tourists have visited Egypt in 2008 compared with 11.1 million tourists in 2007 with an increase reaching 15.3 % . Tourists nights increased with a percentage of 15.9 % reaching 129.2 million tourist nights in 2008 compared with 111 million tourist nights in 2007(Annual Tourism Report 2008)

According to statistics of the ministry of tourism we find that 64% of incoming tourism to Egypt originate from ten countries considered the most important in exporting tourists to Egypt: Russia, Germany, United kingdom, Italy , Poland, France , Ocarina, Libya, Saudi Arabia , and the U.S. A .The number of hotel rooms in 2008 has increased to reach 211 thousand hotel rooms. At presently 158 thousand hotel rooms are under construction. That huge number of hotel rooms must meet with a corresponding number of trained manpower labor who possess the professional and managerial skills needed to cope with tourists according to international standards(Scott Hickman & Paul Hill 2007).

Hence, the importance of this study which throws light on a rather neglected segment of the hospitality industry man power ,namely , hotel shuttle bus drivers and the skills they should have to transfer tourists to and from hotels safely and comfortably (Jon R.Abele 2006,Lary Capetto &Jon Abele2002,Larry



Capetto2002). The study is applied to four star Cairo hotels where hotel shuttle bus drivers rarely receive any attention from hotel managers in matters of upgrading or developing their training. Most hotel managers are either not convinced of the use of paying attention to train hotel and shuttle bus drivers or, they claim , there is no fund for their training and no available trainers to do the job .

Problem Identification

A hotel shuttle bus driver is one of the first hotel industry faces a tourist meets when arriving to the country and the last faces he sees before departing . Therefore , the shuttle bus driver must enjoy certain qualities : mental , moral, hygienic, and technical before he is recruited to work at a hotel . A hotel may have a high record of cleanliness , and organization at all departments . yet , one rude or shabby looking bus driver may leave an unforgettable impression on a tourist who , otherwise, would be considered a satisfied customer . Shuttle bus service must be reconsidered with aim of upgrading and re- training drivers to meet international levels available in the hospitality industry world market .

Aims of the Study :

1. High lighting the importance of the role played by a hotel shuttle bus driver in greeting , and transferring tourists from and to points of arrival and departure within a framework of comfort and security .
2. Assessment of hotel shuttle bus drivers performance to identify the points of weakness, personally and professionally.
3. Suggesting solutions to improve methods of development hotel shuttle bus drivers skills.

Hypotheses of the Study :

- Well trained hotel shuttle bus drivers are a good assets to a hotel for they know how to treat tourists politely , with courtesy and affability and therefore win tourists satisfaction which leads to a return visit to the same hotel and thus leads to increase of hotel income.



Drawing the attention of a hotel management to the importance of the role played by shuttle bus drivers will lead to the upgrading of drivers technical skills in motoring which results in securing the lives of both tourists and drivers as well as keep the bus in perfect working condition.

Research Materials and Methodology :

1. Desk sources draw on references, periodicals, reports and published Researches .
2. Field study depends on interviewing and visits to four star Cairo hotels. A specially designed questionnaire comprising eight questions each has been distributed to get information and statistics that were analyzed (William) to reach conclusions and recommendations.

Sample of the Study

The population of the study consists of 16 hotel shuttle bus drivers representing four hotels out of sixteen Cairo Four Star Hotels .

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire format consists of eight questions addressed to hotel shuttle bus drivers.. Questions were objective multiple choice.

Field Research Technique

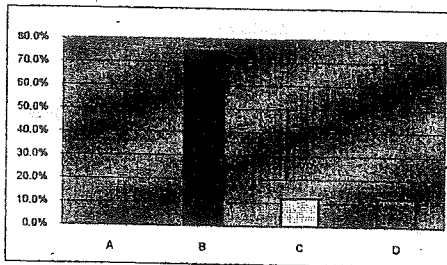
This study has been conducted through interviews with hotel shuttle bus drivers in Cairo four star hotel to get responses on the questionnaire . Responses were collected through a profile sheet , and then analyzed responses which will be represented in the form of statements to be used as indicator useful in categorizing the results to reach realistic recommendations .

Results and Discussion

The results concerning answering question number one indicate that shuttle bus drivers who transfer tourists do not use the daily bus check list for external car body damage or safety of light glass or clarity of the bus license number or



tire air pressure or indicators of motor heat or condition of battery or kilometerage .Results also show that the bus driver does not check motor fluid level or brakes fluid level or gear fluid level on a daily basis and that 87.5 % of the sample only check water level in the radiator and water bag for front glass wipers. As for the personal safety of tourists , there was no medical first bag or fire extinguishers suitable for the size of the bus or the number of tourists on board .Neither blanket nor first aid box. Only 12.5 % of the sample check the A/C condition or plastic fans in the bus tableaux.



- A. Maintain Excellent defensive driving
- B. Maintain Excellent defensive driving
- C. Maintain excellent Safety parking
- D. Maintain shuttle bus accident report
- E. Maintain shuttle bus speed

Figure (1) Provides Hotel Shuttle Bus Driver with Excellent driving Operation

The results in figure (1) show that drivers do not normally practice safe driving which is defined as mental and physical fitness which keep a driver fully alert and awake and attentive to the car condition and conditions of the road and traffic motion and movement of pedestrians in a way that can makes him predict emergent situations and face them in time . The aim is to avoid traffic accidents and continue the bus journey safely to its destination and avoid making an accident or being involved in one .

The results show that 75 % of drivers are skilled in parking buses and that 12.5% are familiar with handling traffic accidents concerning exchanging names and license numbers and addresses and insurance data. A ratio of 12.5% of drivers follow speed limits on the roads which is 60 kilometer per hour



inside cities and 90 kilometer per hour on desert roads according to Egyptian traffic regulations and this agrees with that mentioned by (Doa Samir 2005, Hendawy Salem, Osama Mohamed and Abd El Monem Gaber 2005)

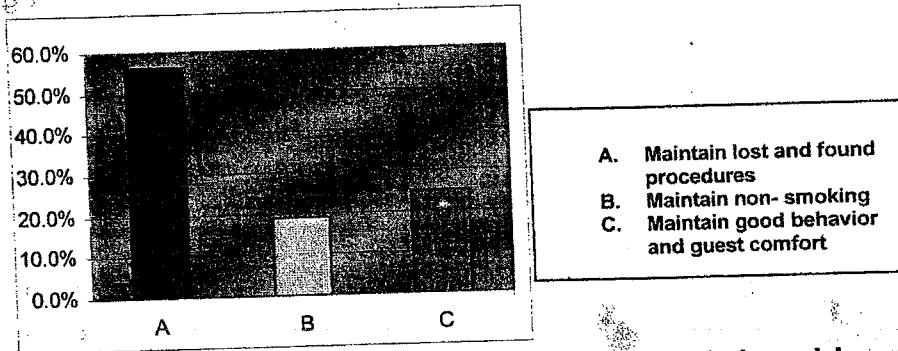


Figure (2) Provides hotel shuttle bus drivers with guest service standards

Results in figure (2) show that 56.25 % of the sample are familiar with and apply the rules of lost and found property and handling it back to its owners or to the management in case of not identifying the rightful owner. A ratio of 18.75% of the sample do not smoke during driving and post a no smoking sign in their buses. A ratio of 25% know and respond to the disabled guests when boarding or during their stay in the bus.

And this agrees with that mentioned by (Randa Khalil 2005).

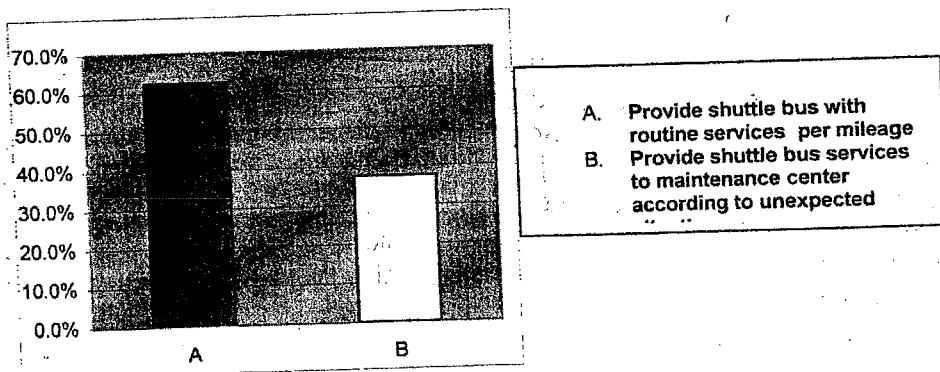




Figure (3) Provide hotel shuttle bus with bus routine and unexpected services

Results in Figure (3) indicate that 62.5% of the sample maintain a service system according to the number of the kilometers and they normally take their buses to service stations. A ratio of 37.5% go to service stations only when there is something wrong with buses.

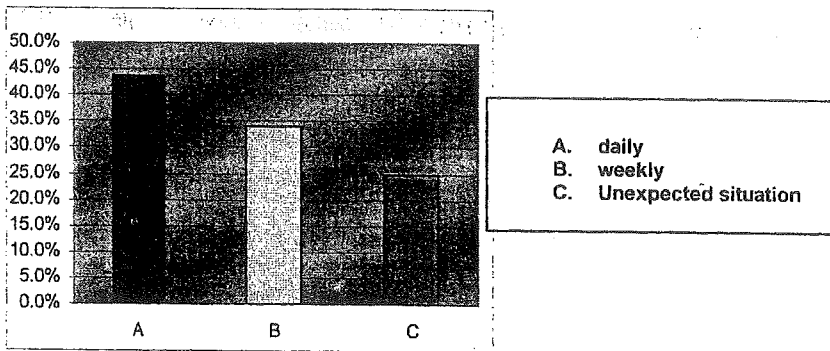


Figure (4) provides hotel shuttle bus drivers with schedule via car cleanliness

The results in figure (4) indicate that 43.75% of drivers perform bus cleanliness routinely every day. Before the bus starts its journey in the morning, guest seats, car floor, front windows and back window glass are cleaned. So is the external bus body and doors. A ratio of 31.25% of the sample perform car cleanliness weekly at a gasoline station using vacuum air cleaning inside and outside the car. The motor is flushed with kerosene water blend. The station, finally, washes the car body with pressured water and some suitable



detergents like soap. A ratio of 25% of the sample perform cleanliness at emergencies like sand storms and rain .

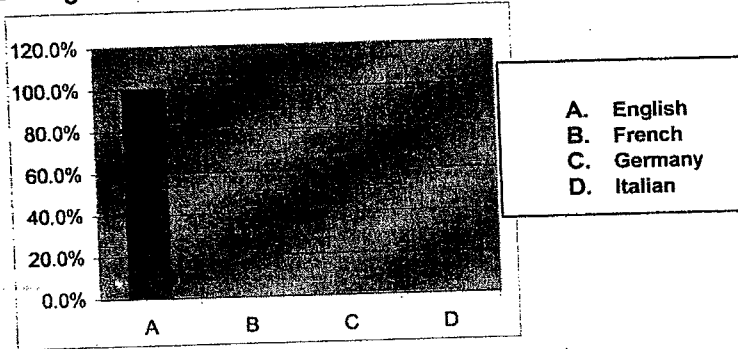


Figure (5) Provides hotel shuttle bus drivers with basic knowledge of main foreign languages .

Results in figure (5) show that 100% of the bus drivers have basic knowledge of the English language and this agrees with that mentioned by (Mohamed Khalil 2005)

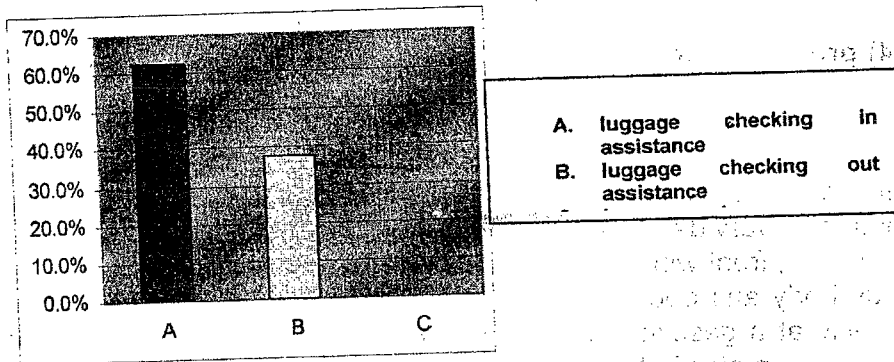


Figure (6) Provides hotel shuttle bus drivers with guests luggage assistance on checking in and out



Results in figure (6) indicates that 62.5 % of bus drivers give a hand in guests luggage when checking in and a ratio of 37.5% upon checking out , especially when there are large groups of tourists. Drivers have nothing to do with luggage in emergency situations like accidents ; fires or loss of luggage.

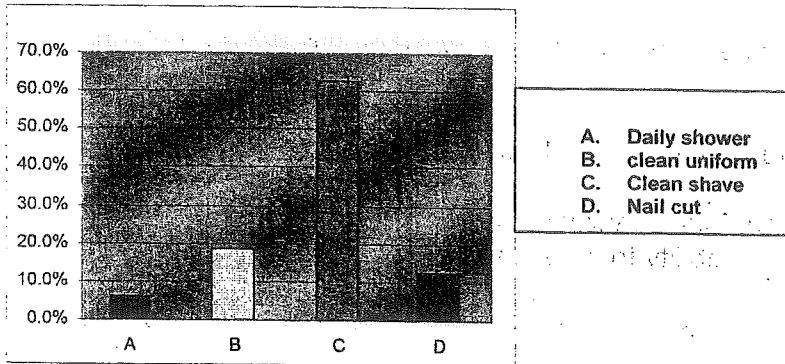


Figure (7) Provides hotel shuttle bus drivers with routine daily self-inspection appearance and hygiene

Results in figure (7) show that 6.25% of bus drivers have a daily shower, a ratio of 18.75% of the sample change uniform daily and 62.5% of drivers have a clean shave every morning while 12.5% of drivers have their finger nails cut in the pursuit of personal hygiene.

As shuttle bus drivers are the first representatives of a hotel guests see when arriving, a neat, healthy and smiling drivers gives the first and last impression a tourist carries with him at the end of the tour .



Recommendations :

A hospitality property management must leave no stone unturned to foster a system of continually developing ,updating and upgrading a hotel shuttle bus driver performance .

The driver is responsible for the comfort and security of the tourists on board his bus as well as keeping his bus in perfect working condition. Drivers training programs revolve round three parameters :

Parameter (1) : Training programs aimed at updating the drivers personal skills

- Basics of foreign languages like English, French , Germany, Italian and Spanish .
- Basics of hygiene and personal cleanliness.
- Basics of clear thinking and ability to predict and avoid trouble in motoring in dense traffic.
- Basics of how to handle tourists luggage when checking in and out and also in emergencies.

Parameter (2) : Training programs aimed at drivers direct contact with guests

- Procedures to be followed with lost and found tourists items.
- Basics of giving a hand to disabled and old tourists cheerfully and with tender care .
- Directing the old and disabled guests to their allotted seats on a bus .
- Basics of civil behavior and social communication : low voice , cheerful smile .
- Avoiding talking to the tour guide in Arabic aloud for a long time , thus distracting the attention of tourists .
- Avoiding eating or smoking while driving .
- Handling tourists comments and complains with respect and appreciation .
- Avoiding harassing tourists by discussing off limit topics like religious or politics.
- Making sure the security and safety of tourists by asking them politely to tie their seat belts and showing them exits of the bus in case of emergencies.



- Making sure the bus A/C is set at 23 Celsius in winter and 22 Celsius in summer well before tourists board the bus.
- Making sure the position of the window curtains is in order . Light radio and video volume are set at the appropriate tone .

Parameter (3): Training program aimed at the drivers dealing with the bus it self

- Training in the best application of the daily check list concerning the external bus body and the working function of all internal and external lights, especially plate number light.
- Checking tires air pressure.
- Checking fuel indicator and other indicators of the radiator heat and horn.
- Training in ideal safe driving where a driver must be alert at all times and never under the influence of alcohol , drugs or insomnia.
- Training in the best way when dealing with accident
- Keeping a rigid schedule of bus serving in authorizes service centers
- Daily and weekly cleanliness of the bus and on exceptional cases like sand storms and rain.

Conclusion :

This study produced useful findings and interesting insights regarding the effectiveness of renovating training techniques applied to enhance competence of the hotel shuttle bus drivers performance . The questionnaire and interviews results indicated that bus drivers were deficient in almost most of the skills required and expected to enable them perform their job efficiently and to the satisfaction of the hospitality industry clientele. Recurrent training by informed instructors can help update and upgrade bus drivers competence in a variety of skills pertaining to the demands of their job : results indicated the need for a three – parameter based model for remedying the substandard performance level ;

- drivers languages and personal behavior skills
- drivers direct contact with responsibilities for guests, and
- drivers professional competence



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ملخص البحث باللغة العربية

تطوير أداء قائد مركبة نقل السائحين بالفنادق

(التطبيق على فنادق الأربع نجوم بالقاهرة)

تعتبر وظيفة قائد مركبة نقل السائحين بالفنادق من الوظائف الهامة بالفنادق لأنها إحدى وظائف واجهة الفندق حيث يعتبر قائد مركبة الفندق الخاصة بنقل السائحين من أوائل الأفراد الذين يراهم ضيوف الفندق مما يجعلهم يأخذون انطباعا جيدا أو سيئا عن الفندق . ويرى هذا البحث أن معظم قائدي المركبات الخاصة بنقل السائحين بفنادق الأربع نجوم بالقاهرة دون المستوى المطلوب مما يلزمهم تصميم برامج تدريبية جيدة تركز على ثلاثة محاور و هي :

- ١- برامج تدريبية موجهة إلى تنمية المهارات الشخصية لقائد المركبة ذاته .
- ٢- برامج تدريبية موجهة لتعاملات قائد المركبة مع السائحين .
- ٣- برامج تدريبية موجهة لتعاملات قائد المركبة مع المركبة ذاتها .

