

# **The Impact of greening practices and employee productivity in the restaurant business in Johannesburg North, South Africa**

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## **Abstract**

The research seeks to uncover and investigate whether greening practices have an impact on employee morale and work performance that is productivity in the workplace. Human factors are defined as the study that describes human behavior mentally and physically when affected by particular conditions, environments, products and services. Wastage is an environment that affect employees negatively due to various factors namely filth, smell, dirt, pests etc, and this has a direct implication to their health and how they feel about coming to work. The conditions of working in a restaurant business are very favorable because of long hours of standing, walking, carry plates, dealing with difficult customers etc and so an addition of unclean/ unhygienic surroundings is an added disadvantage. Greening standards comes in with added tasks but a more pleasant workplace and environment. The studies have proved that motivated and happy employees inevitably perform better in the workplace that is why the study aims at investigating how employees feel about greening practices and if the practices have a positive or negative impact on the employees and thus their performance on a daily basis. Restaurants contribute significant amounts to the GDP of all countries and so improvement of elements that impact the industry is imperative. Restaurants that are successfully implementing greening standards should teach and assist other restaurants to master what they have mastered. The research aims to unravel this concept and find possible solutions to solve the problems discovered in the study.

## **1. Introduction**

According to Hugo (2015) the beginning of the 'green' movement was originated by Alice Waters in 1971, where she was serving organically grown food in season states Angelo and Vladimir (2011). The green movement is a socially responsible group that recognizes the fragility of the world's finite resources, the need for conservation and the promotion of health.

According to Angelo and Vladimir (2011) each year the average restaurant uses eight hundred thousand gallons of water, five hundred thousand kilowatts of electricity and generates a hundred pounds of garbage. Approximately fourth one million consumers follow the lifestyle of health and sustainability. According to Angelo and Vladimir (2011) being environmentally responsible and carrying out good business practice means reducing consumption and serving healthy sustainable food.

Greening the business has an impact on the employees working processes and procedures and thus much care and measures should be taken when implementing these greening practices and employees are to be consulted and their views and trained in understanding the important of greening practices and how they should be implemented on a daily basis. Employees tend to practices greening strategies only when management is checking but when management is away it is not considered important and this is the dilemma at hand. If employees don't buy into the idea of practicing greening standards then it forfeits the point primarily because they are the major uses of for example energy and water and thus must understand the importance of following diligently the greening practices for the benefit of humanity and all persons in the hotel.

## **2. Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Introduction**

According to Tesone (2010) wastage in the in the 21<sup>st</sup> century restaurant business is horrific especially of food and other essential. The poverty levels in South Africa are sky high but there is great irony in the levels of food that get in the dust bins in restaurants on a daily basis. The restaurant business is a significant contributor to the gross domestic product in South Africa and throughout the globe. Restaurants elevate poverty by providing employment for millions of people throughout the world but even though it elevates poverty in that angle it is still a high contributor to wastage holistically, pollution, uncleanliness and food waste. Many restaurants are in 24 hour business for example restaurants built inside hotels, and because of such they are expected to adhere to high service levels these include service food while it is still at a particular heat degree and if that level has dropped the food is no long to standard. These standards are good for tourism grading council grades for the hotel but are detrimental to the food wastage dilemma. Restaurants are fast paced naturally by virtue of the current 21<sup>st</sup> century customer and their demands and expectation.

According to Singh (2013) the customer of nowadays expects they food served within minutes of them ordering it and in such a fast paced situation mistakes are inevitable, and with mistakes comes wastage. Mistakes are not only done by waiters by ordering the wrong dish, but also by chefs in the kitchen because of the high level of pressure exerted on them to prepare many dishes in a space of minutes. Food is sometimes over cooked, over served, improperly stored, and purchased in large amounts due to customer expectation that does not materialize etc. Employees in the restaurant business work long hours, under serve pressure and stress and yet with a smile on their faces and excellent customer service on a daily basis. Restaurants are essential for the daily survival of human beings because of the daily human need for food and quenching thirst thus restaurants can be found in many different areas and industries these include:

- Eating and drinking place
- Lodging
- Transportation
- Recreation and sports
- Business and industry
- Educational
- Health
- Retail
- Corrections food service
- Military food service
- Contractors

According to Stipanuk (2002) Restaurants play a crucial role to humanity and are also a reason why guests travel into different countries in order to taste their indigenous cuisines. Domestic and international travelling has increased significantly in the last 10 years since that travel and tourism industry began.

Restaurants are the easiest form of business to start but without proper experience on correct measures of maintain and running it smoothly it soon closes down too. A little capital is required to start the restaurant business as compared to other business ventures. The restaurant business appears as an easy business but it requires strong business knowledge before you get into it because its chances of survival depends on the owner's and manager's knowledge and experience of the business. Knowing how to handle the different dynamic that come with running and working in the fast paced, high staff turnover food industry and pressured environment.

## **2.2 Work design in a green restaurant**

Restaurants that practice greening practices have processes that help the employee in their work and simultaneously assisting in preserving the environment. The restaurant is designed in such a way that work follow is systematic, atmosphere is clean and wastage is kept at a bare minimum. Machines and equipment in such restaurants are eco-friendly from light bulbs to dishwashers etc dish washers that are not eco-friendly utilize 60 to 80 gallons of water per day, but those that are eco-friendly are efficient but don't waste water and energy.

Fast food outlets such as Mc Donald utilize recycling principles and greening practices. Such outlets prove the success stories of greening practices and proper ergonomics and thus fine dining restaurants that are not using greening standard should learn and imitate and implement into their own businesses

## **2.3 Categories for green restaurant certification**

According to Sloan (2009) there are seven key categories for green restaurant certification, these include

- Water efficiency
- Waste reduction and recycling
- Sustainable furnishings and building materials
- Sustainable food
- Energy
- Disposables
- Chemical and pollution reduction.

These categories are guidelines that establishments should adhere to and thus they can be awarded and named a green restaurant / food outlet.

Water and energy are natural resources that are crucial to human life hence when preserved and well managed can be a blessing to the current and future generations. Powers (1995). Recycling and proper management of waste helps companies reduce absenteeism and sickness of guests and employees.

## **3. Methodology**

The study was done using the mix method approach. (Qualitative and Quantitative research methods) interviews with academic staff in higher institutions of higher education and also survey questionnaires were distributed in order to establish the findings mentioned below.

The sample in which the research was conducted is in Johannesburg North. Hotel employees were interviewed and questionnaires were distributed and the findings are mentioned below.

## **4. Findings / Results**

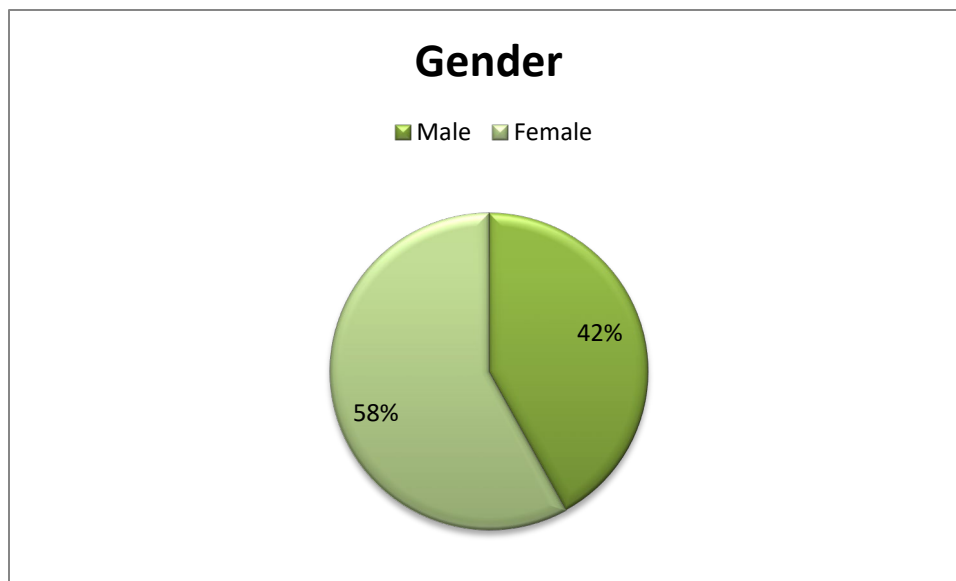
The research study was completed using survey questionnaires that were sent out throughout the northern suburb of Johannesburg. The research was focusing on Johannesburg north as its limitation. Respondents were selected using random and convenience sampling methods due to the busy schedules of employees and managers it was not possible to always find them so convenience sampling was used and 50 respondents completed the survey questionnaire. These were employees and managers in the restaurant business.

The findings were as follows:

### **4.1 Gender**

**Table 4.1.1**

DESCRIPTIVES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER		
Male	21	42
Female	29	58
Total	50	100



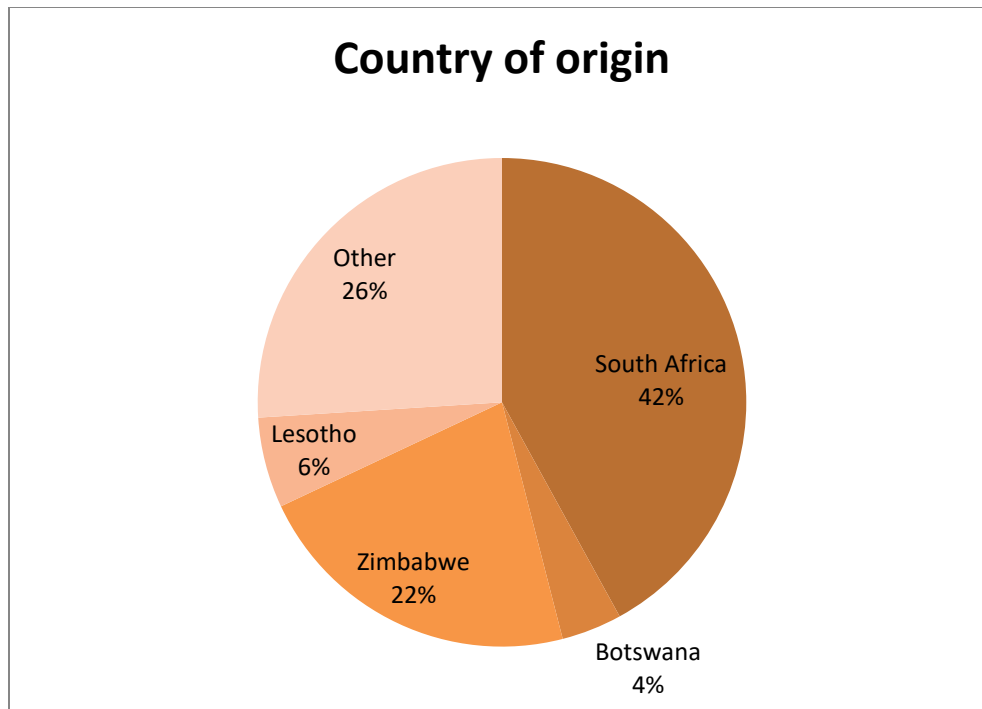
**Figure 4.1**

The research study findings indicate that 58 per cent of people working in the restaurant industry in Johannesburg North are females while only 42 per cent are male. This means the dominating gender in this sample study was female.

## 4.2 Country of origin

**Table 4.2.1**

DESCRIPTIVES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN		
South Africa	21	42
Botswana	2	4
Zimbabwe	11	22
Lesotho	3	6
Other	13	26
Total	50	100



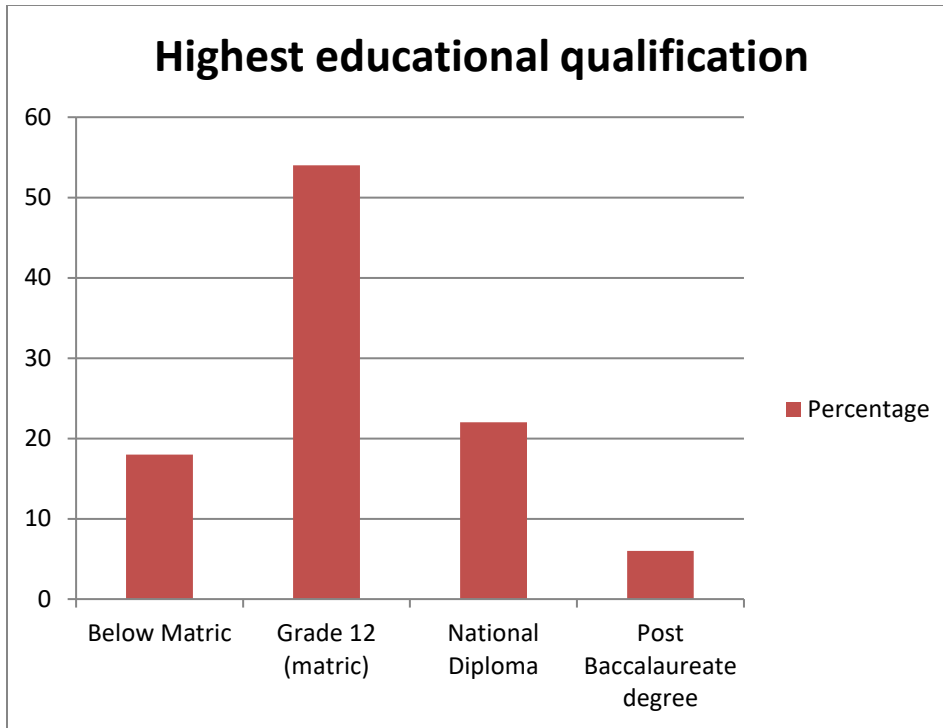
**Figure 4.2**

The graph above indicates that the country of origin of people working in in the restaurant industry in Johannesburg North are as follows: 42 per cent is South African followed by 22 per cent which is Zimbabwean, 6 per cent which is people working in higher education institutions in Pretoria east who originate from Lesotho and other and lastly 26 per cent coming from other countries.

### 4.3 Highest educational level

**Table 4.3.1**

DESCRIPTIVES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION		
Matric	27	54
Below Matric	9	18
National Diploma	11	22
Post graduate degree	3	6
Total	50	100



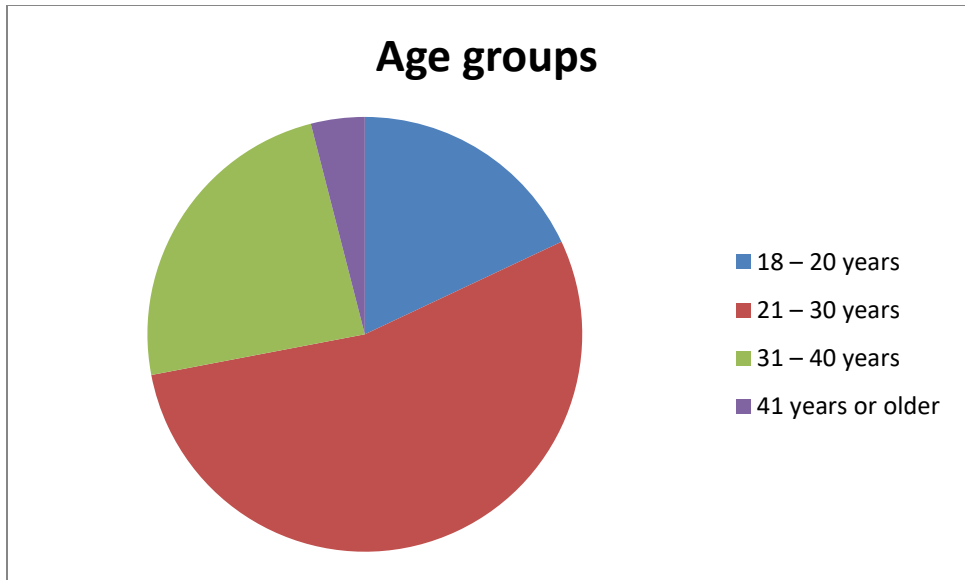
**Figure 4.3**

The graph above indicates that educational qualification of people working in the restaurant industry in Johannesburg North 54 percent have Matric level pass (Grade 12). 18 per cent have a formal National Diploma. followed by 6 per cent indicated that they have acquired higher education and training and they obtained post bachelor's degrees and 18 per cent stated they have below matric level.

#### 4.4 Age

**Table 4.4.1**

DESCRIPTIVES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
AGE		
18 – 20 years	9	18
21 – 30 years	27	54
31 – 40 years	12	24
41 and older	2	4
Total	50	100



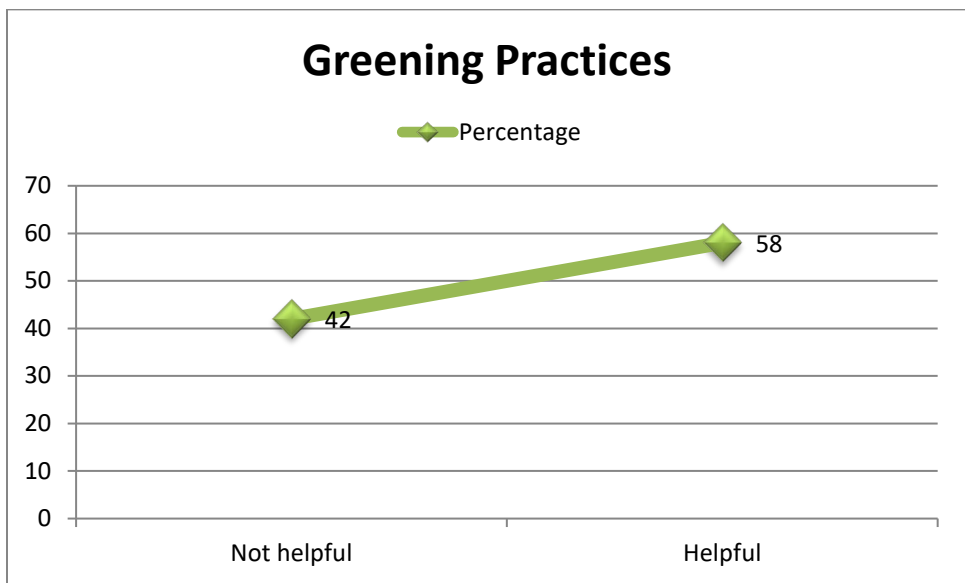
**Figure 4.4**

The graph above indicates that the age ranges of people working in the restaurant industry in Johannesburg North 18 percent are between 18 – 20 years old. 54 per cent are between 21 -30 years old. followed by 24 per cent indicated that they were between the ages 31 – 40 years old and 4 per cent stated they were between the ages 41 and older

#### 4.5 Greening practices

**Table 4.5.1**

DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GREENING PRACTICES		
Not Helpful	21	42
Helpful	29	58
Total	50	100



**Figure 4.5**

The graph above indicates the people working in the restaurant industry in Johannesburg North 58 per cent indicated that greening practices were helpful to them as employees and it had a positive impact to them and 42 per cent stated that the greening practices were not helpful and they had a negative impact to them in the work place.

## **5. Conclusion**

Employees have shown from this study that greening practices assist them in many ways in the workplace and the cleaner and hygienic the restaurant is the more they are encouraged and happy it is to be working there and thus their productivity increases. This research has proved that the more we train employees on greening standards the more they participate and are motivated to practice them on a daily basis and the more productive they become in the work place which means direct financial rewards for the employer. This is a clear positive impact that greening standards have on employee morale and work performance.

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## **7. Biographies**

**Mrs Thobile Yvonne Bhila** is a Human Resource Management Lecturer at Pearson Institute of Higher Education. She has a National Diploma in Hospitality Management (Durban University of Technology), Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration (Durban University of Technology) and a Masters in Quality and Operations Management (University of Johannesburg). She has worked in the higher education sector for more than 13 years in both public and private universities. She is currently completing PhD in Quality and Operations Management (University of Johannesburg). She is an IEOM member. She is also a member of ENACTUS UJ which is an entrepreneurship society that works closely and frequently with the local community with various community engagements and charity projects. This paper is to be published in the conference in Washington DC.