

The Impact of Staff Training on Enhancing Customer Service in the Restaurant Industry: A Study of Birendra Birendranagar, Surkhet

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Abstract

Customer service is a central driver of success in the restaurant industry, especially in growing urban areas where competition and guest expectations are rising. Staff training has emerged as a critical factor influencing how consistently and effectively service is delivered. This study examines how different components of staff training i.e., training resources, employee perceptions of training, and training methods, shape customer service performance in restaurants operating in Birendranagar, Surkhet. A quantitative research design was used to explore the relationship between training practices and customer service outcomes. Data were collected from restaurant employees and customers using a structured questionnaire that captured key aspects of training and service performance. SPSS statistical tool were performed to identify patterns and measure the predictive influence of training-related variables. Findings indicate that the availability of training resources and employees' positive perceptions of training strongly support higher levels of customer service. Although various training methods were in use across restaurants, their direct influence on service performance was less pronounced compared to resource availability and employee attitudes. Overall, the study highlights that well-supported and meaningful training contributes substantially to enhanced service encounters. The research emphasizes the need for restaurants to invest in clear, structured, and resource-rich training systems. When employees view training as valuable and are provided with adequate tools to learn, customer service improves noticeably. Strengthening training frameworks can therefore play an important role in elevating service quality and ensuring sustainable growth in the restaurant sector of emerging urban areas.

Keywords: Staff Training, Customer Service, Restaurant Industry, Training Resources, Employee Perception; Service Quality, Hospitality Management

Introduction

The restaurant industry has undergone rapid expansion and transformation in recent years, driven by heightened customer expectations, increasing market competition, and evolving service standards (Choi et al., 2020). In emerging urban centers such as Birendranagar, Surkhet, these shifts have placed growing pressure on restaurant operators to deliver consistent and high-quality service experiences. As service encounters remain central to customer satisfaction and business sustainability, the competency of frontline employees has become a decisive factor in organizational success (Zeithaml et al., 2018). Against this backdrop, staff training has gained prominence as a strategic investment that enhances employees' skills, confidence, and ability to respond effectively to customer needs (Lashley, 2018). Despite this importance,

many Nepalese restaurants continue to operate with minimal or informal training structures, resulting in variability in service delivery and limited customer retention (Poudel, 2022).

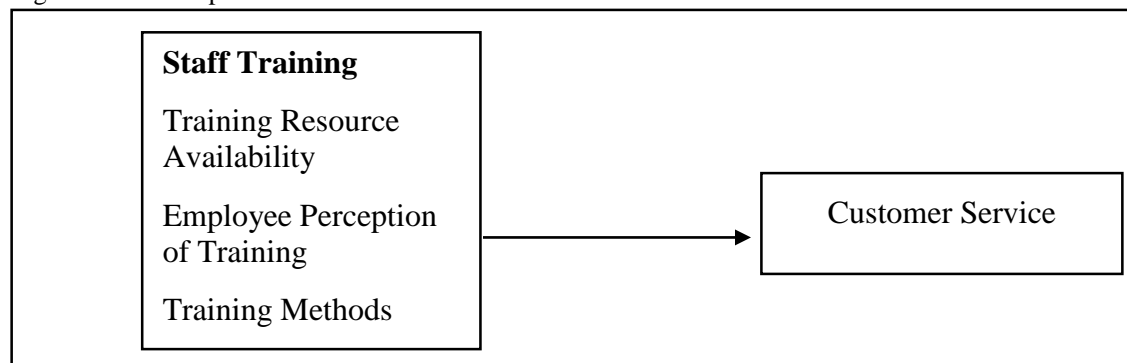
Quality service in restaurants encompasses a wide array of behaviors from greeting customers and taking orders accurately to resolving complaints and ensuring a positive dining atmosphere. In the context of Birendranagar, where the hospitality sector is expanding alongside urban development, the lack of structured training programs has created operational challenges that hinder service consistency. Prior studies in Nepal have indicated that restaurants often struggle with insufficient training resources, limited managerial attention to development programs, and high employee turnover (Giri & Joshi, 2024). These issues highlight the need for systematic training frameworks capable of equipping staff with the competencies required to meet rising customer expectations.

Existing research widely acknowledges that staff training positively influences customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and employee performance. International studies demonstrate that targeted training programs improve communication skills, service accuracy, and problem-solving abilities (Jones et al., 2019; Miller & Brown, 2022). In the Nepalese context, research also confirms that continuous, well-structured training enhances customer experiences and supports long-term business growth (Acharya & Bhandari, 2024; Neupane & Thapa, 2024). However, a notable gap persists: few studies specifically explore how these training components interact to affect customer service outcomes within mid-range restaurants in emerging cities like Birendranagar. The present investigation addresses this gap by conducting a localized, empirical assessment of training practices and their measurable impact on service delivery.

This study is informed primarily by Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), which posits that investments in employee knowledge and skills yield measurable improvements in organizational performance. In restaurant settings, such investments manifest as enhanced service delivery and heightened customer satisfaction (Wang & Chen, 2020). Supplementing this, the Service Profit Chain Theory (Heskett et al., 1994) provides a holistic perspective by linking employee capability and satisfaction to service quality, customer loyalty, and overall profitability. Together, these theories establish a conceptual model in which staff training functions as a catalyst that strengthens employee competency, improves service encounters, and ultimately elevates business outcomes.

Grounded in the above context and theoretical considerations, this study aims to examine how staff training influences customer service in the restaurant industry of Birendranagar, Surkhet. The theoretical framework of the research is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework



Based on the literature and the conceptual framework, the study addresses key research issues such as the adequacy of training resources, variation in training methods, and employee perceptions of training effectiveness. Correspondingly, the investigation tests the following hypotheses.

Training Resource Availability and Customer Service

Training effectiveness depends not only on program design but also on the availability of adequate learning resources. Materials such as manuals, digital modules, demonstration tools, and practice environments enhance knowledge retention and practical application (Noe, 2010). Studies in hospitality settings indicate that employees who have access to sufficient training resources develop stronger service competencies and demonstrate higher confidence when dealing with customers (Hudson & Hudson, 2013). In resource-constrained environments, however, training outcomes often decline because staff lack the tools needed to practice or reinforce skills (Bhattarai & Dhungana, 2024). Nepal-based research further highlights that restaurants with better training infrastructure tend to achieve more consistent service standards and higher customer satisfaction (Giri & Joshi, 2024). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that greater training resource availability contributes significantly to customer service quality.

H₁: Training resource availability significantly influences customer service.

Employee Perception of Training and Customer Service

Employee perception of training plays a crucial psychological role in determining training outcomes. According to motivational theories of learning, individuals who view training as relevant, supportive, or beneficial are more likely to engage deeply, apply skills on the job, and improve their service behaviors (Noe, 2010). Empirical research in the hospitality sector shows that positive attitudes toward training enhance employees' service motivation, emotional engagement, and willingness to go beyond routine tasks (Gurung & Shrestha, 2023). Positive perceptions also increase employees' self-efficacy, the belief that they can successfully perform service tasks, which is strongly linked to customer satisfaction in restaurants (Dhakal & Bista, 2023). Consequently, employees' favorable perceptions of training are expected to strengthen service quality.

H₂: Employee perception of training significantly affects customer service.

Training Methods and Customer Service

Different training methods vary in their effectiveness depending on the learning context and the type of skills required. Modern hospitality training incorporates simulations, on-the-job instruction, micro learning modules, and cross-training to strengthen both technical and interpersonal skills (O'Connor & Murphy, 2023; Patel & Jones, 2022). Research shows that experiential and interactive methods, such as role-playing and scenario-based exercises, significantly enhance employees' service performance because they mimic real customer encounters (Garcia et al., 2021). In contrast, traditional lecture-based training often fails to produce strong behavioral changes. Nepalese studies similarly indicate that practical and customer-focused training methods lead to higher service accuracy and improved dining experiences (Thapa & Dhakal, 2023). Therefore, the type and quality of training methods are expected to influence customer service outcomes.

H₃: Training methods have a measurable association with customer service.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative methodological approach to examine the relationship between staff training and customer service quality in restaurants operating within Birendranagar, Surkhet. A survey

design was selected because it allows researchers to gather standardized responses from a large number of participants efficiently, making it particularly suitable for studies seeking to measure associations among training practices, employee perceptions, and service outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The design also aligns with the study's objective of identifying statistical relationships between multiple variables, a common requirement in hospitality research where service behaviors must be quantified to support managerial decision-making.

The investigation was carried out in Birendranagar Municipality, an emerging urban center where restaurant businesses range from small cafes to fine-dining establishments. Data collection occurred during the 2025 field period, when restaurants were operating at regular capacity and staff-customer interactions reflected routine service patterns. This setting provided an appropriate natural environment for examining training practices because workforce diversity, customer flow, and service expectations in the area closely resemble those of other growing hospitality markets in Nepal.

The study population consisted of restaurant employees and customers who had recent experience working in or dining at establishments within the municipality. Using a convenience sampling strategy, individuals who were easily accessible and willing to participate were approached. Although convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of findings, it is widely used in service-sector research due to time constraints and operational limitations in fast-paced environments (Etikan et al., 2016). A total of 161 valid responses were obtained, exceeding the minimum rule-of-thumb sample requirements for multivariate analysis, which recommend at least 10–15 participants per variable (Hair et al., 2019). The sample represented a range of demographic groups and restaurant types, ensuring adequate variability for statistical examination.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from established instruments commonly applied in hospitality and training studies (Lashley, 2018; Zeithaml et al., 2018). The tool included Likert-scale items measuring staff training, availability of training resources, employees' perception of training, training methods, and customer service performance. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group of respondents to ensure clarity and contextual relevance. Reliability was later confirmed through Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.7 for all constructs, demonstrating strong internal consistency.

Ethical protocols were followed throughout the study; participants were informed about the purpose of the research, participation was voluntary, and all responses were anonymized. Although no formal institutional ethics board approval number was required for this type of non-interventional survey, the study adhered to standard research ethics principles recommended in social science research (Bryman, 2016).

Following data collection, responses were cleaned, coded, and entered into SPSS for statistical analysis. The analysis involved multiple stages: descriptive statistics were first generated to summarize demographic characteristics and training conditions in the selected restaurants. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha assessed measurement consistency, and Pearson correlation was performed to evaluate associations among variables. Multiple regression analysis was then conducted to determine the extent to which training resources, employee perception, and training methods predicted customer service quality. The model was evaluated using R^2 , adjusted R^2 , F-statistics, and significance values at the 0.05 level, consistent with best practices in quantitative hospitality research (Field, 2018). ANOVA and t-tests were used to further validate the significance of the predictive model and the individual coefficients, ensuring a rigorous examination of each hypothesis.

Despite its strengths, the methodology has several limitations. The use of convenience sampling introduces potential sampling bias, which may reduce the generalizability of findings beyond Birendranagar. Self-reported data may also be affected by social desirability bias, particularly in customer service contexts where employees may overstate training experiences or performance. Moreover, the cross-sectional design

restricts the ability to determine causality or observe long-term effects of training initiatives. These constraints are common in hospitality field research, but acknowledging them helps ensure a balanced interpretation of the results.

Results

Table 1

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	39	24.20%
	Male	122	75.80%
Education Group	Bachelor's Degree	27	16.80%
	High School	80	49.70%
	No formal	54	33.50%
Work Experience	1-3 years	72	44.70%
	4-6 years	22	13.70%
	Less than 1 year	46	28.60%
	More than 6 years	161	100%
Restaurant type	Café	20	12.40%
	Casual Dining	40	24.80%
	Fast Food	30	18.60%
	Fine Dining	71	44.10%
Training Received	No	37	23%
	Yes	124	77%

The table 1 shows the survey of 161 respondents, indicating a male workforce dominantly represented, with 75.8% of the total sample; most respondents with a high school education (49.7%) and almost half with an experience range of 1 to 3 years (44.7%). Fine-dining establishments were the most common workplaces (44.1%), and training was imparted to about three-fourths (77%) of the respondents. Confusion arises in the last row about workers with more than 6 years of experience shown as exceeding the total sample size. It can be inferred that the data depicts a gender-biased workforce that is moderately educated and varied in terms of experience levels, primarily employed in fine dining establishments, and with access to training.

Table 2

Reliability Statistics		
Measures	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Training Resource Availability	0.975	10
Employee Perception of Training	0.977	10
Training Method	0.974	10
Customer Service	0.983	10
Overall	0.992	40

The table 2 reveals that the Cronbach's Alpha (α) values confirmed the strong internal consistency for all the constructs measured exceeding the threshold value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019). Thus, these results testify to the strength of the survey to enable further analysis.

Table 3
Correlation

		Training Resource Availability	Employees Perception of Training	Training Method	Customer Service
Training Resource Availability	Pearson Correlation	1			
Employees Perception of Training	Pearson Correlation	.891**	1		
Training Method	Pearson Correlation	.830**	.892**	1	
Customer Service	Pearson Correlation	.855**	.820**	.722**	1

The table 3 shows the correlation analysis. The table shows that all independent variables have strong and significant relationships with customer service. Overall, the results confirm that training resources, employee perceptions, and training methods each play an important role in shaping customer service outcomes.

Table 4
Multiple Regression
Model Summary

Model Summary	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.887 ^a	.786	.781	.43830

a. Predictors: (Constant), Training Method, Staff Training, Training Resource Availability, Employees Perception of Training

b. Dependent Variable: Customer Service

Table 4 shows the model summary to investigate how training-related aspects influence customer service performance in the restaurant sector. The table gives a statistical overview of the regression analysis. The R value is 0.887 showing there is a strong positive correlation existing between the independent variables such as training method, training resource availability, and employees' perception of training, with customer service, the dependent variable. The R Square value of 0.786 suggests that 78.6% of the change in the customer service outcomes is explained by the combined effect of the predictor variables in the model. Considering the very large explanatory power that these training-related factors seem to hold, it would be reasonable to say that they hold a very important position in influencing customer service quality. The Adjusted R Square value equal to 0.781 accounts for the number of predictors in the model and the sample size, confirming the robustness and reliability of the model. The model exhibits that the arrangement of staff training programs and the provision of resources for training should much be helpful to service performance enhancement in the restaurant sector of Birendranagar, Surkhet.

Table 5
ANNOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	110.098	4	27.525	143.274	.000 ^b
Residual	29.969	156	.192		
Total	140.068	160			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Service

b. Predictors: (Constant), Training Method, Staff Training, Training Resource Availability, Employees Perception of Training

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 5 shows the ANOVA table for the regression calculation offers a viewpoint of checking for the overall significance of the regression model about training-related factors affecting customer service in a restaurant environment. An F-value of 143.274 is a high ratio of explained variance to unexplained variance, suggesting that the model is statistically significant. Further, Hair et al. (2019) with a significance value or p-value of 0.000, which is less than the usual stipulated value of 0.05, the result confirms that the combined predictors related to training significantly affect variations in customer service outcomes of restaurants in Birendranagar, Surkhet.

Table 6
Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.119	.191		.624	.534		
Training Resource Availability	.414	.110	.371	3.773	.000	.142	7.036
Employees Perception of Training	.385	.111	.357	3.480	.001	.130	7.667
Training Method	-.176	.095	-.153	-1.842	.067	.198	5.046

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Service

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 6 presents the coefficients table whereby one can observe the individual contributions of the various independent variables to the dependent variable (customer service) in this multiple regression model. The unstandardized coefficients (B values) describe the extent to which customer service scores change with every one-unit change in each predictor, assuming all others being considered remain held constant. That is to say, the availability of training resources significantly impacts positively ($B = 0.414$, $p < 0.001$), thereby suggesting H_1 accepted. Employees' perception of training ($B = 0.385$, $p = 0.001$), resulting H_2 accepted. However, training method has shown a negative coefficient value ($B = -0.176$) and is almost insignificant ($p=0.067$), resulting H_3 rejected. The collinearity statistics show Tolerance values (above 0.1) and VIFs below 10, discounting any incidence of serious multicollinearity among the independent variables. Taken together, the results show how training resource quality and availability are critical to advancing customer service in Birendranagar's restaurant industry.

Discussion

This study set out to examine how different components of staff training influence customer service in restaurants located in Birendranagar, Surkhet. The findings clearly demonstrate that training resource availability and employees' perception of training are strong predictors of customer service quality, whereas the effect of training methods, although positively correlated, was not statistically significant in the regression model. These results address the central research questions and reinforce the importance of structured, well-resourced, and well-received training programs for improving service experiences in the hospitality sector. The high explanatory power of the regression model shows that a substantial portion of customer service performance can be explained by the training-related variables included in this study.

In relation to previous research, the results are largely consistent with existing evidence from both global and Nepalese hospitality settings. Earlier studies have emphasized that training resources and organizational support significantly improve employees' ability to deliver high-quality service (Hudson & Hudson, 2013; Noe, 2010). The strong effect of resource availability found in this study echoes findings from Giri and Joshi (2024), who reported that restaurants with adequate training materials achieved higher service consistency. Similarly, the positive influence of employee perception of training aligns with motivational and behavioral research suggesting that staff who believe training is useful are more inclined to translate their learning into better service encounters (Dhakal & Bista, 2023; Gurung & Shrestha, 2023). However, the non-significant effect of training methods diverges from studies such as Thapa and Dhakal (2023), which found that experiential training techniques improved customer satisfaction. This difference may be attributable to contextual factors in Birendranagar, where many restaurants may not be using advanced or differentiated training methods, leading to limited variation in this variable.

The results offer important theoretical and empirical insights. From the perspective of Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), the study reinforces the idea that investment in training resources enhances employee capability and contributes to better service outcomes. Likewise, the findings support the Service Profit Chain framework (Heskett et al., 1994), which highlights the linkage between employee experience and customer satisfaction. By illustrating how resource-rich and positively perceived training environments translate into improved service performance, this research contributes to the limited body of literature examining staff training specifically within the Nepalese restaurant industry. It also fills a contextual gap by providing localized evidence from an emerging urban center where formal training systems are still developing.

The practical implications of the study are substantial. Restaurant managers should prioritize ensuring the availability of adequate training resources such as updated manuals, demonstration tools, and digital training materials, as these were the strongest predictors of customer service quality. Additionally, fostering a positive training culture is essential. This includes communicating the purpose of training clearly, encouraging participation, and recognizing employees' efforts, all of which can enhance perception and engagement. Policymakers and hospitality educators could also use the findings to design more structured training programs tailored to the needs of mid-range restaurants in urban Nepal. Introducing standardized training modules, certification programs, and periodic skill assessments may further strengthen service standards across the sector.

Despite its valuable contributions, the study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The use of convenience sampling limits the extent to which results can be generalized beyond Birendranagar. Self-reported data collected from employees and customers may be influenced by recall bias or social desirability, which can affect accuracy. The cross-sectional design prevents any conclusion about long-term

effects of training initiatives or causal relationships between variables. Additionally, variations among restaurant types, such as differences in size, organizational culture, or management practices, may influence training effectiveness but were beyond the scope of the analysis.

Future research could extend this work in several directions. Longitudinal studies would help assess the long-term impact of training on service performance and employee development. Comparative studies across multiple cities or provinces in Nepal could offer broader insights into how regional differences influence training effectiveness. Researchers may also explore digital learning tools, blended training approaches, or competency-based training frameworks to identify innovative ways to strengthen service quality in resource-limited hospitality environments. Furthermore, qualitative studies involving interviews or observations could provide deeper insights into how employees experience training and apply their learning in everyday interactions.

Conclusion

This study investigated how different dimensions of staff training i.e., training resource availability, employees' perception of training, and training methods shape customer service performance in restaurants operating within Birendranagar, Surkhet. The findings provide strong evidence that well-developed training resources and positive employee perceptions significantly enhance customer service outcomes, reinforcing arguments made in earlier hospitality research. While training methods showed a positive correlation with service quality, their effect was not statistically significant in the predictive model, suggesting that the manner of delivery may be less influential than the availability of resources and the perceived value of training. Overall, the results affirm the importance of investing in structured, well-supported training systems to strengthen frontline service performance in Nepal's growing restaurant sector.

The study contributes to the existing literature by offering localized empirical evidence from an emerging urban context where formal training practices are still evolving. By demonstrating that training-related factors explain a substantial portion of the variance in customer service, the research highlights the strategic relevance of training as both a human capital investment and a driver of service excellence within the Service Profit Chain framework. These insights underscore the need for restaurant managers, hospitality educators, and policymakers to prioritize resource-rich and employee-centered training approaches to improve overall service standards. In conclusion, strengthening training systems remains essential for enhancing customer satisfaction and ensuring the long-term competitiveness of restaurants in rapidly developing regions such as Birendranagar.

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