

Impact of Employee Engagement in Hotels

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement in the hospitality sector has a direct reflection on service quality and guest satisfaction. Employee recognition programs, professional development, and team-building initiatives all contribute to a more positive workplace culture, increased productivity, job satisfaction, and employee retention. Employees who are more engaged demonstrate greater commitment, providing personalized service, anticipating guests' needs, and resolving issues in creative ways — all essential in an industry that thrives on human interaction. Challenges such as irregular work schedules, emotional work, and physical fatigue can erode engagement in the absence of robust organizational support. Based on quantitative analysis of 84 hotel staff from 3-star to 5-star hotels, the study assessed seven dimensions of engagement. Outcomes indicated high satisfaction with collaboration (mean=1.73) but noted communication deficits (mean=2.05). Contrasting generational differences surfaced, with younger workers expecting development opportunities and older workers valuing job stability. The research suggests personalized engagement solutions, integrating leadership building, constant feedback, and well-being initiatives to ensure long-term engagement and competitive edge.

Keywords: Employee engagement, hotel sector, recognition programs, career development, job satisfaction, motivation, organizational culture, hospitality management, service quality, workforce retention.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:

- To analyze the role of employee engagement activities in productivity
- To assess the impact of employee engagement activities in workplace culture

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement is a vital force behind organizational success in the competitive business environment of today, particularly in the hospitality sector, where guest satisfaction is tied to human interaction (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Engaged workers infuse energy, creativity, and passion into their work as problem-solvers and organizational ambassadors. They are committed, deliver better customer experiences, and facilitate teamwork (Kahn, 1990). Conversely, disengagement can lead to service problems, absenteeism, and turnover, all harmful to business performance.

Within the hospitality industry, staff contribute significantly to guest experiences. Simple acts like a welcoming smile or need anticipation can have a profound effect on guest satisfaction and loyalty (Baum & Devine, 2007). Yet hotel workers experience special challenges of long working hours, emotional labor, and high stress levels during peak seasons, with the risk of burnout if not supported by the organization (Grandey, 2003).

Leadership is essential in the development of engagement. Transformational leaders who motivate and encourage their employees create loyalty and trust (Bass, 1990). Effectively open communication, through which employees are listened to and respected, is also crucial (Gursoy et al., 2019). Career development opportunities are also important, offering the employee avenues for advancement through training and mentoring (Robinson et al., 2004; Lashley, 2008). Formal and informal recognition and rewards further enhance morale and motivation (Saks, 2006).

Workplace culture has a significant impact on engagement. Inclusive, positive, and respectful cultures encourage collaboration, while toxic cultures destroy employee morale (Schneider et al., 2003; Baum, 2015). Furthermore, contemporary employees want work-life balance and flexibility. Hotels that promote well-being through flexible scheduling and mental health programs have improved retention and engagement (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Guchait et al., 2015).

Notwithstanding the challenges, consistent participation leads to increased productivity, better service quality, and better financial results (Gallup, 2017). Engagement is sustained by continuous effort, on-going feedback, and flexible strategies that respond to changing workforce expectations (Towers Watson, 2012). This study has implications for leading hospitality managers to create successful engagement strategies that overcome the challenges, boost employee motivation, and eventually enhance guest satisfaction and business performance.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employee engagement has become a vital factor for business success, particularly in the hospitality industry, as guest satisfaction is highly intertwined with employee conduct and service excellence. This literature review explores definitions, importance, drivers, challenges, and implications of employee engagement within the hotel sector according to available scholarly studies.

2.1 Defining Employee Engagement

Kahn (1990) brought about employee engagement as the mobilizing of employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional energies to work roles with a resulting increase in performance and satisfaction. Schaufeli et al. (2002) described it as a state of vigor, dedication, and absorption contributing to active and committed behavior. Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) discovered that engaged employees have a positive effect on customer satisfaction and profitability and therefore engagement is critical in customer-facing industries.

2.2 Significance of Employee Engagement in Hospitality

Hospitality, characterized by frequent customer interaction, necessitates employees who are engaged and demonstrate passion and discretionary effort. The Service-Profit Chain model (Heskett et al., 1994) depicts the effect of employee engagement on generating great service, leading to customers' loyalty and business development. Baum and Devine (2007) further underlined that engaged hospitality staff improve guest satisfaction through additional efforts beyond standard procedures to create lasting memories.

2.3 Major Drivers of Employee Engagement

1. Leadership: Transformational leadership is essential for engagement, according to Bass (1990). Leaders who communicate effectively, facilitate teams, and acknowledge efforts create trust and encourage commitment. Gursoy, Boylu, and Avcı (2019) reaffirmed that transparent communication by leaders strengthens employee engagement.

2. Workplace Culture: Positive, inclusive, and collaborative culture has a significant influence on

engagement (Schneider et al., 2003). Baum (2015) emphasizes that respectful and supportive cultures facilitate collaboration and long-term motivation.

3. Career Progression: Well-defined routes for career advancement are essential. Robinson et al. (2004) described how training and mentoring schemes lead to staff development and long-term commitment, reinforced by Lashley's (2008) research on ongoing learning.

4. Rewards and Recognition: Substantive and routine recognition improves morale (Saks, 2006). Karatepe and Olugbade (2009) explained that monetary and non-monetary rewards confirm positive behavior and enhance participation.

5. Work-Life Balance: Hospitality's demanding nature of work requires policies facilitating work-life balance (Guchait et al., 2015). Flexible schedules and mental health programs aid in retaining and motivating employees.

Challenges in Sustaining Engagement

Davidson et al. (2010) listed high turnover as a cause of sustained disengagement. Grandey (2003) addressed emotional labor, which will cause burnout if not regulated. Baum (2015) cited slow career development as a disengagement factor, whereas Towers Watson (2012) referred to uneven management practices discrediting efforts to engage.

Impact of Engagement on Business Performance

Gallup (2017) documents that engaged teams are 17% more productive and 21% more profitable. Kuslivan et al. (2010) noted that employees who are engaged innovate and improve guest experiences. Successful engagement practices lead to better service quality, increased occupancy, and improved financial performance.

Best Practices for Building Engagement

Leadership development, regular recognition programs, formal career development plans, and well-being programs are suggested (Guchait et al., 2015; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009). Technology aids engagement as well, with real-time feedback and virtual team building.

Engagement is central to hospitality success, leading to productivity, guest satisfaction, and profitability. Future studies need to investigate technological effects, generation-based engagement styles, and organizational resilience in building long-term engagement.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research examines the influence of employee engagement in the hotel sector, with an emphasis on the influence of engagement factors on job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational performance. The research utilized a quantitative approach with data gathered through Google Forms from employees of hotels in various departments.

3.1 Research Design:

A descriptive research design was utilized to analyze the link between employee engagement and hotel operations. The primary drivers of engagement were leadership, workplace culture, training, inclusivity, career growth, recognition, and work-life balance.

3.2 Data Collection:

A 5-point Likert scale structured questionnaire was used to measure perceptions by employees of job satisfaction, motivation, career growth, communication, inclusivity, and workplace culture. A pilot test was done to ensure relevance and clarity.

3.3 Sampling and Respondents:

Questionnaire was sent to employees of Front Office, Food & Beverage, Kitchen, Housekeeping, and Administration departments. From 120 targeted employees, 84 responses (70% response rate) were received, including frontline, supervisory, and managerial levels from 3-star to 5-star hotels.

3.4 Data Analysis:

Data was cleaned for completeness and analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode) were computed, and visual tools such as pie charts, bar graphs, and histograms were employed to detect trends and areas of improvement.

3.5 Ethical Considerations:

Voluntary participation with informed consent, confidentiality ensured, and data safely stored for research purposes only.

DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

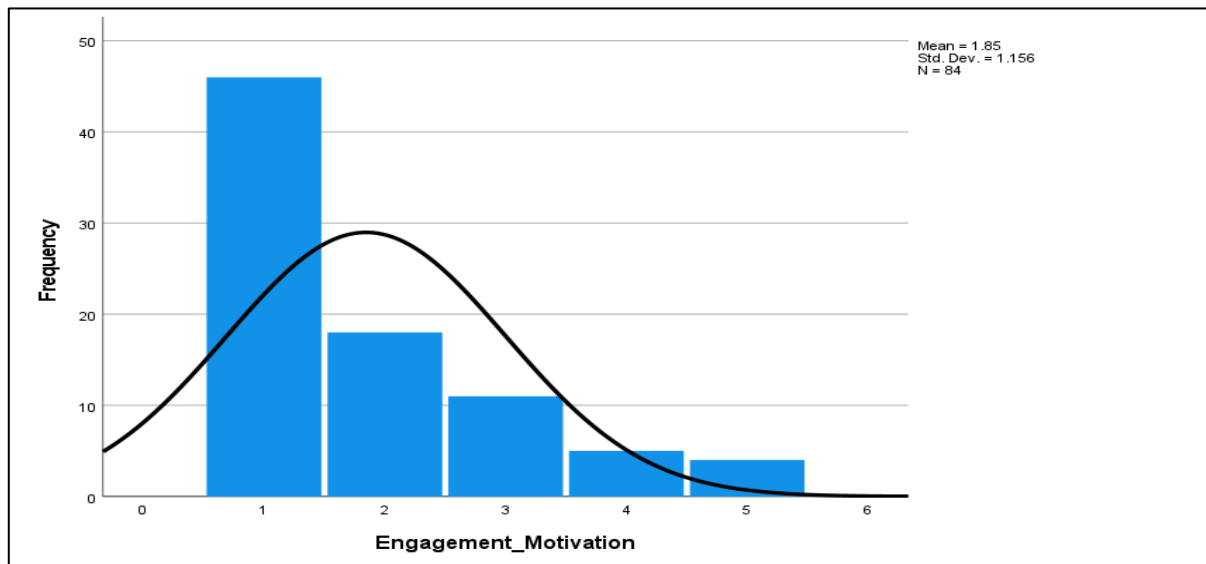


Figure 1

In Figure 1, the histogram shows a distribution of the Engagement Motivation scores of 84 participants in a sample. The vertical scale indicates the number of responses, and the horizontal scale indicates the values of scores from 0 to 6. The average score was 1.85 (SD = 1.156), meaning that participants were at a moderate to low level of engagement and motivation. Distribution is skewed to the right, with the scores clustering at the lower range (0–2), indicating most subjects had reported low levels of engagement or motivation, whereas fewer subjects had higher scores (3–6). A standard deviation of 1.156 indicates moderate spread around the mean. There are no extreme outliers, but the skewness suggests that the data might not be normally distributed, and there is a need to examine factors affecting engagement and motivation in this sample further.

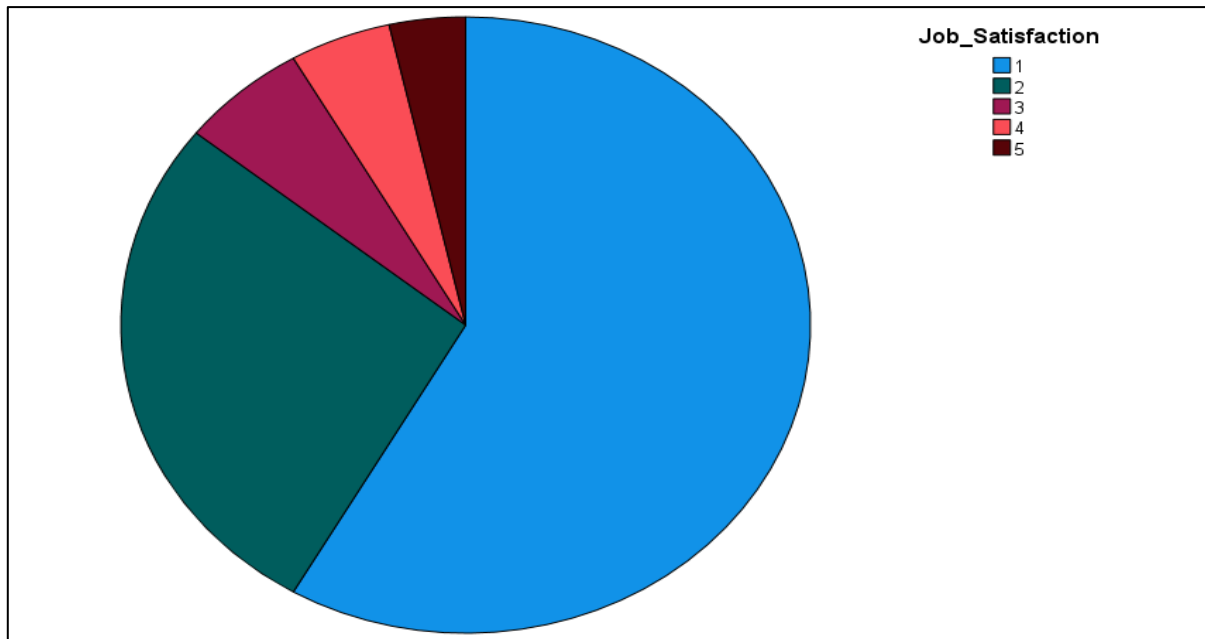


Figure 2

In Figure 2, the pie chart illustrates employee job satisfaction (Job_Satisfaction) survey results in five Likert-scale categories (1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree). Although actual percentage values are not provided, the five segments shown illustrate the proportion of employee sentiment, with greater wedges corresponding to more common responses and lesser wedges for less common responses. The shape of the chart hints at inconsistency of satisfaction levels with the likelihood for strong positive outcomes (categories 1-2) if any of those wedges show greatest size, for neutral answers (category 3) if the middle-sized one is observed, and possibly insignificant dissatisfaction (categories 4-5) as the smallest of the wedges. This graph is a clear presentation of the relative breakdown of workforce satisfaction at a glance, although absolute interpretation would be required by using the precise percentage values of each response category to establish the strength and distribution of satisfaction levels within the organization. The existence of all five segments verifies that employee experiences differ, which is consistent for organizational satisfaction surveys.

4. CONCLUSION:

This research shows that employee engagement is critical for hotel success and has a direct impact on organizational performance and service quality. Engagement levels are reported to be high, thanks to positive leadership and work culture (Harter et al., 2002). Although the majority of employees reported satisfaction, the neutral responses present opportunities to further enhance colleague relationships and recognition schemes. By meeting challenges such as turnover and emotional labor with targeted well-being interventions (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009) and career progression, engagement can be further boosted. Finally, an investment in employee engagement provides a competitive edge that leads to staff satisfaction and business development in the ever-changing hospitality industry.

4.1 Limitations:

- **Sample Size and Scope:** Responses were received from 84 employees from multiple departments in 3-star to 5-star hotels. Though this gives us a snapshot, the results may not be completely representative of all hotels or geographical locations because the sample size is small.

- **Self-Reported Data:** The information was gathered via a survey, depending on employees' self-reports. This form of data is susceptible to bias, as respondents may give socially desirable responses or struggle to accurately recall their experiences.
- **Specific Engagement Dimensions:** There were seven significant engagement dimensions that the research tool captured. Although these dimensions are significant, other influencing factors on employee engagement may not have been investigated in this study.
- **Generalizability to Other Hospitality Sectors:** The research was conducted on hotels. The results might not be directly transferable to other industries in the hospitality sector, like restaurants, resorts, or cruise lines, which could have varying work settings and employee relationships.
- **Cross-Sectional Design:** The research gives a snapshot of employee engagement at one moment in time. It fails to capture changes in engagement over time or the long-term effect of engagement initiatives.

4.2 Future Research Directions and Emerging Trends:

While much research has been conducted on employee engagement in the hospitality sector, changing technology, remote work, and intergenerational differences open up new territory for research. Future research will need to study how digital technology and automation affect engagement and how remote or hybrid work affects motivation and performance. Knowledge of generational preferences and building resilience through crises will assist organizations in maintaining engagement. Mental health care and sustainability initiatives are also on the horizon as prime drivers of engagement. Working on these aspects will assist hospitality companies to be competitive, agile, and guest-focused in the future.

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