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Effects of Intrinsic Motivation on Hotel Employees' Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the motivational effects that affect job satisfaction among operational hoteliers. The rapid growth of the hospitality industry, mainly the hotel sector, has made employee commitment one of the rising issues in the hotel industry. This research examines the relative effects of intrinsic motivation factors on job satisfaction among hotel employees to understand the lead factor of employee commitment. The sample of the study was 384 hotel employees working in four stars and five stars rating hotels in Malaysia. The methods of data analysis used are descriptive and multiple regression. The results show that Job Security, Achievement, Job Responsibility, and Work Itself significantly affect job satisfaction. The findings of the research are discussed from the viewpoint of hotel employees.

Keywords: Intrinsic Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Hotel Employees, Regression Analysis

Introduction

Today, the study of organizational behavior and human resource management practice is highly concerned with employees' attitudes toward job satisfaction (Tett and Meyer, 1993). This interest originates from the assumption that content workers are more productive than discontent ones. An employee with a high level of job satisfaction has a good attitude toward his position, whereas an employee with a low level has a negative attitude toward his position (Robbins, 2001). The definition of job satisfaction is "a pleasant or positive emotional state coming from an evaluation of one's work or professional experience" (Locke, 1976). Workers perform their duties in designated regions and evaluate the surroundings based on their values. When an individual's experience in the workplace aligns with his or her values, the person shows job satisfaction (Davis, 2013).

The hotel industry in Malaysia has a high potential to emerge due to its contribution to increasing the country's foreign exchange. Not only is it beneficial to the country in terms of its profitability, but it also produces more job opportunities for society (Khan, 2013). In order to strengthen the sustainability of the hotel industry, hotel managers should prioritize employee commitment (Ahmad & Zainol, 2011). Moreover, hotel managers should play a vital part in maintaining a quality workforce to deliver excellent services and attain high client satisfaction.

Consequently, employees are the foundation of the industry. The yearly personnel turnover rate in the hotel industry increased from 66.7 percent in 2014 to 72.1 percent in 2016, according to figures from the (Malaysia Association of Hotels, 2018).

According to an early study by Burke et al (2008), the major causes of this severe problem are a difficult work environment, unequal work-life balance, and unfair compensation. It is mostly due to the contrast with other businesses, as the nature of the work needs extended hours and year-round employment (Yih & Htaik, 2011). In addition, when employees feel undervalued for the inspiration provided to them, they tend to abandon their jobs or switch industries (Yih & Htaik, 2011). Frank's (2015) research also reveals that hotel staff is likely to leave their jobs due to a lack of emotional motivation.

Motivation can be classified into two distinct categories: intrinsic and extrinsic (Mahaney & Lederer, 2006). Extrinsic motivation is focused primarily on monetary incentives, such as pay and bonus. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation focuses more on emotional support, such as job recognition and the working environment (Mahaney & Lederer, 2006). Previous research by Raza and Akhtar (2015) indicates that people are content with their jobs when they receive adequate emotional support from management. According to their research, four components of intrinsic motivation have been identified: job stability, achievement, job responsibility, and the task itself. However, their study is generally focused on a few industries. This study examines the relationship between intrinsic motivation and work satisfaction among employees, specifically in the Malaysian hotel industry.

Literature Review

One of the key elements that can be considered as the vital deciding mechanism towards job satisfaction is intrinsic motivation (Heathfield, 2012). In line with the above statement, it is supported by the theory of (Herzberg, 1966). Based on Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1966), the most influential elements on job satisfaction are Achievement, Recognition, Work Itself, Responsibility, Promotion, and Growth. According to Raza & Akhtar's (2015) research, Job Security, Achievement, Job Responsibility, and Work Itself are the four most influential factors of intrinsic motivation on job satisfaction; hence they were utilized in the present study.

The first element, job security, reflects employees' loyalty to their jobs in both behavioral and psychological aspects (Arnold & Feld-man, 1982). According to Arnold and Feld-man's (1982) research, loyalty and dedication towards the company stem from the employees' job stability. Job security may be the primary reason people are less inclined to quit. Previous studies have also demonstrated that job security might impact employee work satisfaction (Smith et al., 1969). The second aspect is an achievement. Feelings of accomplishment are also one of the essential aspects of intrinsic motivation that can affect the job happiness of employees (Raza & Akhtar, 2015). Besides, the study reveals that employees are likely to leave the firm if they do not receive an adequate sense of accomplishment. However, a sense of accomplishment can also motivate employees to increase their dedication, leading to greater job satisfaction and loyalty to their firm (Raza & Akhtar, 2015). The following feature of job responsibilities encourages people to remain with the organization (Raza & Akhtar, 2015). Job satisfaction will be increased through elements such as providing a variety of tasks and involving employees in decision-making and problem-solving. Lastly, in the context of the 'work itself' part, it is backed by Lam et al (2001), who stated that job satisfaction plays a crucial role for employees.

The employees' creativity can be stimulated by a favorable, demanding environment and a wide range of tasks. Therefore, in order to ensure that the employees can perform successfully at work, the organization should establish a favorable work environment. Additionally, the workplace can inspire pride in the personnel (Lam et al., 2001).

Job satisfaction can be defined as the psychological and environmental conditions that result in employees' enjoyment of their work (Hoppock, 1935). In a broader sense, job satisfaction is employees' motivation for their jobs (Locke, 1976). According to the research conducted by Heathfield (2012), job satisfaction can promote employee retention and boost staff motivation. Thus, it may be claimed that the company's success also depends on the happiness of its personnel. Researchers conduct extensive research on the elements that influence job satisfaction as a result. Intrinsic motivation is one of the primary factors that can be regarded as a crucial determinant of job satisfaction (Heathfield, 2012). In light of the relevant literature review and evidence from prior research, the following research hypothesis was developed for this study

H₁: There is a significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction

Methodology

The population of this study involved four- and five-stars hotel in Malaysia. The sample size used in the study amounted to 384. This sample size fits with the investigations following the table of population and sample size (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). According to World Population Review, 2019, Kuala Lumpur's population is 7,780,30. Fifty reputable hotels in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor were chosen for this study. The decision to focus only on four-star and five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor is because of the population density of the hotels within this area (Malaysia Association of Hotels, 2018). Besides, higher-star-rated hotels have more proper implementation of intrinsic rewards than lower-star-rated hotels (Chien et al., 2020). Fifty sets of questionnaires were distributed to each of the Human Resources Departments of the respective hotels. A total of 384 employees responded, returned, and then used for analysis. The questionnaire's items are derived from Raza and Akhtar's (2015) study. A total of eight items were used to measure intrinsic motivation, while six items were used to measure the dependent variable, job satisfaction. A five-point Likert scale was used. Instruments were tested for reliability, and the Cronbach alpha value for all factors ranged from 0.700 to 0.809 for intrinsic motivation and 0.861 for satisfaction indicating good validity and reliability. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, where descriptive and regression were used to analyze the relationship between the variables.

Findings

Descriptive Analysis

Based on Table 1, the highest mean value for hotel employees' intrinsic motivation was 4.21 which respondents generally agreed on 'I am confident that I will work for this hotel until the retirement age' and for satisfaction is on 'I have a clear understanding of my job responsibilities and what is expected from me' (M=4.38). According to hotel employees, the least agreeable element for intrinsic motivation is 'I often get a credit from management for doing a good job' (M=3.96), and for satisfaction is 'I am satisfied with the sense of achievement I get from my job' (M=4.03).

Table 1
Mean Score

Items	N	Mean	Std Deviation
I have a strong intention to work for this hotel for a long period of time.	384	4.13	1.041
I am confident that I will work for this hotel until the retirement age.	384	4.21	.908
I have freedom to use my own judgement in my work.	384	4.12	1.027
I feel responsible for the work I do on my job.	384	4.06	1.016
I have a great feeling of accomplishment in my job.	384	4.13	1.041
I often get a credit from management for doing a good job.	384	3.96	.999
I am comfortable with the challenges I faced on my job.	384	4.08	1.009
I am able to use my creativity in performing my job.	384	4.01	.956
I enjoy my work most days.	384	4.24	.887
The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job.	384	4.27	.822
I am satisfied with the job security given by the management.	384	4.16	.892
I have clear understanding of my job responsibilities and what is expected from me.	384	4.38	.788
I am satisfied with the sense of achievement I get from my job	384	4.03	1.005
I have a very good working environment to do my job	384	4.04	1.006

Regression Analysis

A single-step multiple regression was conducted to see whether a significant relationship exists between intrinsic motivation and hotel employees' job satisfaction. The eight items in independent factors and six items in the dependent variable were collapsed and entered into the equation. The outcomes in table 2 demonstrated a significant relationship between hotel employees' intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. The intrinsic motivation elements influencing hotel employees in Malaysia explained 72.7% (R-square =.727, F=1024.681, p<0.001) of the employees' job satisfaction variance. The finding shows that the underlying motivation determines job satisfaction. The finding in the table shows that the underlying motivation has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Thus, the hypothesis is manifestly supported.

Table 2

Multiple Regression Analysis

Steps and Variables	Model 1 / Std. β
Outcome: Job satisfaction	
Predictor: Intrinsic Motivation	.853***
R	.853
R ²	.727
Adj. R ²	.727
F-change	1024.681***

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Discussion and Conclusion

Regression was utilized to explore the association between intrinsic motivation and employee satisfaction to achieve this study's purpose. Thus, hierarchical multiple regression was used to analyze the association between the independent variable (intrinsic motivation) and the dependent variable (work satisfaction). The present study demonstrates a correlation between an employee's inner morale and job satisfaction. The researcher hypothesizes that the underlying incentive will influence the employee's level of happiness. In this circumstance, it may also be claimed that employees who are dissatisfied with the incentive have a greater inclination to experience frustration and ultimately quit their jobs. This result was also supported by a prior (Heathfield investigation, 2012). It is stated that the intrinsic system is vital for determining the job happiness of employees, and this is because every employee seeks a greater salary to ensure a healthy standard of living and life pleasure (Heathfield, 2012).

This analysis yields useful information that is essential for future research, particularly in similar places with similar conditions. As far as academic perspectives are concerned, this study will bring fresh insights for future research, as it reveals that hotel operational staff in Malaysia place their intrinsic self at the top of their priority list to remain employed by hotels. Regarding practical considerations, the organization or top management should apply this approach to the importance of intrinsic motivation. They may view intrinsic motivation as a strategy for keeping employees and reducing turnover. As a result, the hotel business in Malaysia will grow as staff devotion increases.

The elements of intrinsic motivation explored in this study should be regarded as the primary factor influencing the engagement of Malaysian hotel employees. The result of this study indicates that there is a good connection between the inner morale and work satisfaction of the employee and that four (4) and five (5) star hotels can retain their workers despite the demanding working conditions in the hotel sector by utilizing the power of inner motivation. As a result, has not yet been determined. It is suggested that future research determine if the outcome of this analysis is applicable to all hotel star rankings.

This study will bring new facts and expertise for academic and industry views as a conclusion. Through the proper application of the intrinsic motivation method in the hotel industry, the problem of high worker turnover will be mitigated, as employees will be able to work and be dedicated to their work even in a very demanding work environment if they are satisfied with their intrinsic motivation.

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