Job Satisfaction and Related Environmental Factors in Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

Job satisfaction among employees is a field of great interest, since it is considered a very important concept for every business. The purpose of this article is to measure the overall job satisfaction of employees at Aquamare Beach Hotel. Furthermore, the author tries to determine the relationship between job satisfaction and the environmental background of the hotel, which consists of work-related characteristics and personal/demographic variables.

Keywords

Job Satisfaction, Employees, Working Environment, Tourism Industry

I. Introduction

Job satisfaction is a significant determinant of organizational performance and is strongly connected with the viability of a business. Managers consider employee satisfaction as a core element of their business success and therefore they give a great importance on the issue. This is because employees, who are satisfied, are more likely to be committed to their organizations. These workers are also more likely to take pride in organizational membership, believe in the goals and values of the organization and therefore, exhibit higher levels of performance and productivity (Steinhaus and Perry, 1996). Robbins (2010) also adds that satisfied and committed employees have lower levels of turnover, absenteeism and withdrawal behaviours.

Many organizations believe that employee compensation is the main factor in employee satisfaction. Consequently, employers attempt to "earn" employee satisfaction by increasing salaries and benefits. Money though, by itself is not the best predictor of job satisfaction. It is important to satisfy the basic needs of the employee, however beyond a certain point it is no longer a predictor of job satisfaction. From the management point of view, creating and sustaining employee satisfaction needs a greater and much more vital and essential effort, rather than money.

There are many factors that can influence a person's level of job satisfaction; these factors include the level of pay and benefits, the perceived fairness of the promotion system within a company, the quality of the working conditions, leadership and social relationships, and the job itself (the variety of tasks involved, the interest and challenge the job generates, and the clarity of the job description and requirements). (Masood, Gulfam and Hayat, 2010). Job gratification and organisational performance are strongly correlated with the environmental background of a business. Job contentment can be a severe predictor of how much pressure and stress someone can handle while on the job. If employees are enjoying their job, they are more likely to be more effective in handling the daily stressors they experience. When employees are more satisfied with their job, they are more likely to work harder, complain less, show up on time and treat customers and co-workers with respect (Redmond, 2001, p.8).

Increasing job satisfaction among employees as well as reducing employee disaffection and subsequent turnover has been of great interest to hospitality academics and practitioners involved with tourism industry (Ghiselli, LaLopa, and Bai, 2001). Many

organisations are spending an extensive amount of resources into programs on measuring and enhancing employees' job satisfaction. The most obvious hypothesis concerning these functions has to do with the increase of employee satisfaction through several environmental factors that are unavoidably correlated with job satisfaction. By addressing the issue of job satisfaction, an employer can increase the bottom line, while at the same time increasing staff morale and productivity.

II. Literature Review

A. The Importance of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a large and complex concept which can mean different things to different people. It covers a broad area of scientific research and therefore plenty of definitions have been given for the specific term. We can simply define job satisfaction as the positive emotional reactions and attitudes individuals have towards their job.

Locke (1969, p.316) defines job satisfaction as "the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values". Churchill, Ford and Walker (1974, p.255) define job satisfaction as "all characteristics of the job itself and the work environment which employees find rewarding, fulfilling, and satisfying, or frustrating and unsatisfying". According to Schneider and Snyder (1975), job satisfaction is a personal evaluation of conditions present in the job, or outcomes that arise as a result of having a job. A different definition is given by Robbins (2010, p.63) who states that, "the term job satisfaction describes a positive feeling about a job, resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics". A person with a high level of job satisfaction holds a positive attitude about the job, while a person who is dissatisfied with his/ her job holds negative attitudes about the job.

In general, job satisfaction has to do with an individual's perceptions and evaluation of his job, and this perception is influenced by the person's unique circumstances such as needs, values and expectations. People will therefore evaluate their jobs on the basis of factors, which they regard as being important to them (Sempane, Rieger and Roodt, 2002).

People bring mental and physical abilities and time to their jobs. Many try to make a difference in their lives and in the lives of others through working. The reason for wanting a job is often considerably more than just a pay check. Jobs can be looked at as the means used to achieve personal goals. When a job meets or exceeds an individual's expectation, the individual often experiences positive emotions (Daneshfard and Elsadat, 2012). These positive emotions represent job satisfaction. Job satisfaction in turn is a major contributor to life satisfaction, a personal goal that many find worth pursuing. Rain, Lane and Steiner (1991), mention that job satisfaction is correlated to life satisfaction which means that people who satisfied with life will tend to be satisfied with the job and people who satisfied with job will tend to be satisfied with their life. If a job is highly motivating to an individual, then he/she is likely to be highly satisfied with the work, perform with a high degree of quality, have a low rate of absenteeism, and will

be less likely to leave the organization. This belief is shared by Daulatram (2003) who agrees that if the job does not motivate the individual, then it could be expected that the individual would experience a lower level of satisfaction with the work, perform at a low quality level, have a high rate of absenteeism, and will be more likely to leave the organization.

Regarding service industry, such as tourism industry, employee satisfaction is a major determinant of guest satisfaction. Arnett, Laverie and McLane (2002) found that employee satisfaction is linked to positive employee behavior such as having a customer orientation. Satisfied employees tend to provide higher level of external service quality and the service experience to the customers results to the customer satisfaction.

Job satisfaction and its importance has been the subject of research at least since the Hawthorne studies of the 1920s (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939). Many human-relations researchers and practitioners supported that the importance of job satisfaction lies not in its relationship with performance, but with its stabilizing effects (reducing tardiness, absenteeism, and turnover) and through its effects on cohesion (increasing organizational citizenship behaviors and organizational commitment). (Luthans, 1992) Additionally, assessment of job satisfaction might identify various levels of satisfaction among organizational departments and, therefore, be helpful in pinning down areas in need of improvement. Moreover, employee satisfaction is a necessary antecedent of an engaged employee, which is measured by the employee's degree of motivation and sense of inspiration, personal involvement and supportiveness. (Childers, 2005)

Reviewing the above, employee satisfaction is crucial to any business for the success in the workplace. This is especially true for service organizations such hotels, which rely on their employees to provide high quality services to the customers. In hotel industry, employees are considered the most important asset and they play a vital role in the development of hotels. To be successful in a competitive market, it is important that Hotel Managers know how their employees feel at work and what they want (Lam, Zhang & Baum, 2001). In this concept, periodic researches and studies are essential to determine their feelings and attitudes and to capture the level of their job satisfaction.

B. Theoretical Approaches of Job Satisfaction

Two theoretical approaches of job satisfaction can be identified in literature review. The Content Theories and the Process Theories of job satisfaction. Content theories focus on motivation and they deal with identifying people's needs and their relative strengths and the goals they perceive in order to satisfy these needs. Main content theories include Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs, Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory and Herzberg's (1959) Motivator-Hygiene theory.

Process theorists assume that job satisfaction can be explained by investigating the people's rational thought processes or cognitive processing abilities. In contrast with content theories, process theories try to identify the psychological and behavioral processes that motivate a person to act in a particular way. Vroom's expectancy theory (1964) represents the second theoretical approach.

III. Statement of the Problem and Hypothesis Development

The importance of job satisfaction in performance and retention of employees led the manager of Aquamare Beach Hotel to the decision of evaluating employees' satisfaction in the hotel. In this aspect, a survey research will be conducted where the overall

job satisfaction of the employees will be measured in the first place. Additionally, the survey will assess the influence of selected environmental factors on general job satisfaction of employees. An effort was made to examine whether various work-related characteristics (Leadership and Planning, Corporate Culture, Communications, Career Development, Employee's Role, Recognition and Rewards, Teamwork and Cooperation, Working Conditions, Supervision, Training, Pay and Benefits) integrate with job satisfaction and whether personal/demographic variables are related with satisfaction at work. The main objective is to evaluate in a measurable way the employees' job satisfaction, to examine the relationship of specific environmental factors with job satisfaction and to develop an action plan including suggestions and recommendations for improvement.

- There will be a positive correlation between job satisfaction and work-related characteristics at Aquamare Beach Hotel.
- There will be a positive correlation between job satisfaction and employee age at Aquamare Beach Hotel.
- There will be no correlation between job satisfaction and employee gender at Aquamare Beach Hotel.
- There will be either a positive or negative correlation between job satisfaction and educational level of the employees at Aguamare Beach Hotel.
- There will be a positive correlation between job satisfaction and tenure of employees at Aquamare Beach Hotel

The work-related characteristics that were considered as most important are: Leadership and Planning, Corporate Culture, Communications, Career Development, Employee's Role, Recognition and Rewards, Teamwork and Cooperation, Working Conditions, Supervision, Training Program, Pay and Benefits. (Appendix 1)

IV. Methodology

Research was conducted in the form of questionnaires given to the employees consisted of 55 questions associated with work-related factors and personal/demographic elements. The study generated an 88.2% response rate from current employees of the hotel. The results findings show a relative high level of job satisfaction among the employees in combination with a positive correlation between work-related elements and job satisfaction.

V. Findings and Data Analysis

Overall job satisfaction is examined by Q50 (Overall I am satisfied with my Hotel as an employer) and the results are analyzed below.

Table 1: Overall Job Satisfaction

Q50. 0	Q50. Overall I am satisfied with my Hotel as an employer.					
		Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	2 Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	2.2	
	3 Undecided/ Neutral	10	22.2	22.2	24.4	
	4 Agree	23	51.1	51.1	75.6	
	5 Strongly Agree	11	24.4	24.4	100.0	
	Total	45	100.0	100.0		

Our findings show that most of the responders (23 or 51.1%) agree followed by those who strongly agree (11 or 24.4 %) that they are satisfied with their work, while 10 of them (22.2%) tend to be neutral. What is important to be mentioned, is that only 1 (2.2%)is not satisfied with his work, while the first option of the answer

(1- Strongly Disagree) is totally absent from the answers. Age brackets of the employees are given in the following table Concerning age brackets, 2.2% (1) was below 20 years old, 26.7% (12) between 21 and 30 years old, 26.7% (12) between 31 and 40 years old, 28.9% (13) between 41 and 50 years old and 11.1% above 51 years old. 4.4% (2) of the respondents did not fill the respective question.

Table 2: Age Distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Less than 20 years	1	2.2	2.3	2.3
	21-30	12	26.7	27.9	30.2
Valid	31-40	12	26.7	27.9	58.1
vanu	41-50	13	28.9	30.2	88.4
	51 and above	5	11.1	11.6	100.0
	Total	43	95.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.4		
Total		45	100.0		

The 40% of the responders were males, while the 55.6% were females. 2 of the responders (4.4%) did not mention their gender.

Most of the employees are High School graduates (48.9%) following by College graduates (15.6%) and Elementary school and University graduates (15.6% of each category). One responder (2.2%) did not complete the respective question.

Regarding the years of service in the hotel, 8.9%% of the respondents work at the hotel less than 6 months, 6.7% work 6 months to 1 year, 20% work 1 to 2 years, 15.6% work 2 to 3 years, 15.6% work 3 to 4 years and 28.9% work for more than 4 years. Two responders did not complete the specific question.

Hotel departments were divided into 4 main categories: Administration/Accounting, Food and Beverage, Housekeeping Services and Maintenance. The remaining departments, due to limited employment were grouped into "Other" category, 11.1% (5) of the respondents are working at the administration/accounting department, 35.6% (16) at the food and beverage department, 15.6% (7) at Housekeeping Services, 4.4% (2) at maintenance department and 33.3% (15) at other departments. The majority of the employees who chose the last category (Other) shows that whether the specific question was not fully understood or those employees tried to hide their identity by doing that.

Table 3: Working Department Distribution

Work Department					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Administration/ Accounting	5	11.1	11.1	11.1
	Food and Beverage/Service	16	35.6	35.6	46.7
	Housekeeping Services	7	15.6	15.6	62.2
	Maintenance	2	4.4	4.4	66.7
	Other	15	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Working Conditions at the hotel are examined by six Questions with mean scores to range from 3.49-4.04. Responses vary from 2-5 but in most of the Questions (4 in total) from 3-5, demonstrating a satisfied level in this category. Q31 (My physical working conditions are adequate to ensure my personal health and safety) scores the highest mean (4.04) indicating that the hotel deals with the important issue of health and safety at work very effectively. In general, employees seem to agree with the established working conditions connected with deadlines, amount of work and balance of work – personal life.

VI. Conclusion

This research survey may be considered as subjective as any other research dealing with personal aspects and opinions. Similarly, questionnaire responses are colored by the feelings of the employees in a particular time. However, this was the aim of this survey: to capture the feelings of the employees about their job in a certain time.

Our findings regarding the context of overall job satisfaction in Aquamare Beach Hotel are very positive and encouraging for the management. Overall Job Satisfaction measured by Q50 (Overall I am satisfied with my Hotel as an employer) scored a mean of 3.98 with standard deviation of 0.753. Mean score is well above average (3.00) in our measurement scale (1-5), indicating that employees are generally satisfied with their work. However, after close examination of our findings connected with personal characteristics and work-related variables, it seems that there are specific factors which have to be improved. These factors are strongly related with job satisfaction and if certain actions for improvement are taken, then the overall job satisfaction of the employees will further increase.

Whilst it was found that the overall job satisfaction level at the hotel is high, it was also observed that specific factors affecting job satisfaction need to be improved. Thus, some recommendations in order to develop an action plan for further improving job satisfaction are provided.

First of all, supervisors have to develop a more employee oriented leadership style and to include their subordinates to decision making process. Employee participation will enhance their loyalty and organizational commitment and will reinforce the feeling of responsibility and ownership. Furthermore, by encouraging employees to participate to this procedure, you help them to become more creative and innovative. This kind of leadership is more strongly correlated with lower turnover rates, higher productivity, lower employee stress and burnout and higher employee satisfaction. (Hetland, Sandal and Johnsen, 1996).

In connection with the above, managers should allow employees to act and operate with a degree of freedom and have the opportunity to take personal actions for the benefit of their Hotel. Understanding the background, skills and competencies of each of the hotel employee, will create such environment.

Recognizing and awarding achievements give employees a motivation to set targets and work for perfection. A well performed work or bright ideas should be recognized and therefore will increase both satisfaction and performance. Assigning significant projects and rewarding them for success, the feeling of loyalty and commitment is enhanced and they feel valued and appreciated which also results in higher level of job satisfaction. In addition, this measure motivates less productive employees to try harder in order to share the same benefits. Into this direction, by developing

and implementing a fair evaluating system, which will closely connect individual performance with organization goals and objectives will definitely assist the management to determine the kind of recognition and reward.

Training is crucial in every business. Training is an ongoing procedure and the management should focus extensively on it. Every employee in the hotel needs some type of ongoing training to maintain effective performance or to adjust to new ways of work. Training programs should be developed for this purpose. These programs should always be aligned with the business strategy of the hotel and incorporate all the necessary elements for achieving the aims and objectives of the business. However training programs should not be static. They should always be evaluated and redesigned in order to determine their effectiveness.

Compensation system at the hotel must also be linked to organizational objectives and strategies. A performance orientation compensation program where pay and incentives reflect performance differences among employees should be more effective for the hotel. Thus, employees who perform satisfactorily will receive larger compensation increases, while poor or marginal performers will fall behind. A good employer must always be willing to pay for optimal performance.

The above recommendations apply to the whole population of the hotel. Since demographics analysis was also made, additional recommendations may further increase job satisfaction, as

Allow younger employees to seize the opportunities for promotion and growth in the Hotel pyramid. Study has shown that younger are less satisfied than older ones, which may be affected from less working opportunities they face or unrealistic expectations they have. Applying even managers titles to them, such as "assistant shift manager", or "senior housekeeper" will increase their feel of involvement and commitment to the Hotel; hence become more satisfied.

The employees that work at the Hotel for more than 4 years appear to be the most dissatisfied. Hence, what they need is again to welcome, recognize, and appreciate their long contribution to the Hotel. This can be done, through awarding them to the annual ball of the employees of the Hotel, by giving them plaques, for example. Also, since they may be tired working at the same department for a long time, with a little or no advancement, management should examine ways both to move unhappy employees and/or giving them promotion.

Finally, less satisfied employees seem to be those who are elementary and high school graduates. This is probably due to the unchallenging position they hold or because they are experiencing larger gaps between expectation and realities. What is needed to be done is to enrich their job content with more responsibilities and tasks in order to feel valued and respected. More opportunities are also necessary to be given to high educated employees (university graduates), but in the bad economic era that we face nowadays it seems almost impossible to happen immediately. It may be necessary for the management to inform employees that after the economic depression, that both the sector and the country are facing, more opportunities for individual advancement at the Hotel will be given.

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APPENDIX 1 - QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

AQUAMARE BEACH HOTEL

Please answer the following questions, by circling your answer. The following scale represents what each number stands for:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided / Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		gree		
1	2 3 4			5				
1. General management has clear aims and objectives.					2	3	4	5
2. There is adequate planning of corporate objectives.				1	2	3	4	5
3. Management does not p	olay favorites.			1	2	3	4	5
4. Management does not s	say one thing and do	another.		1		3	4	5
5. I believe that all the em			non beliefs and values.	1		3	4	5
6. Individual initiative is					2	3	4	5
7. Quality is top priority f				1	2	3	4	5
8. Hotel's Management co directions and receive fee			yees to provide	1	2	3	4	5
9. I feel I can trust what the	ne Management of the	e Hotel tells me.		1	2	3	4	5
10. There is adequate com	nmunication between	departments.		1	2	3	4	5
11. My relations with the	other staff of my dep	artment are excellent.		1	2	3	4	5
12. In my Hotel, employe	es avoid unnecessary	conflicts.		1	2	3	4	5
13. My hotel encourages	me to solve any prob	lems I face without coop	erating with others.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I have good possibiliti	ies for future career p	rogression in my hotel.		1	2	3	4	5
15. I plan to continue my	career at my Hotel.			1	2	3	4	5
16. I have opportunities to	learn and grow			1	2	3	4	5
17. I am given enough aut	thority to make decis	ions I need to make.		1	2	3	4	5
18. I feel I am contributin	g to my Hotel's miss	ion.		1	2	3	4	5
19. I have the materials and equipment to do my job well.				1	2	3	4	5
20. If I do good work I can count on making more money.				1	2	3	4	5
21. If I do good work I ca	n count on being pro	moted.		1	2	3	4	5
22. I feel I am valued at r	ny Hotel.			1	2	3	4	5
23. My Hotel gives enough recognition for work that's well done.					2	3	4	5
24. My salary is fair for m	ny responsibilities.			1	2	3	4	5
25. I feel part of a team working towards a shared goal.			1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided / Neutral	Agree		Stro	ng	ly A	gree
1	2	3	4				5	
26. I get all the support I need from my colleagues at this department						3	4	5
27. I receive co-operation from all other departments						3	4	5
28. My colleagues help me even if I don't ask them to.				1		3	4	5
29. The workload is distributed evenly to all members of the staff.				1		3	4	5
30. One person can fully complete a task without cooperation with other employees.				1		3	4	5
31. My physical working conditions are adequate to ensure my personal health and safety.				1		3	4	5
32. I am satisfied with the time given to me to complete my work.				1		3	4	5
33. The amount of work expected of me is reasonable.				1		3	4	5
34. I recommend employment at my Hotel to the people I know.				1		3	4	5
35. I can keep a reasonable balance between work and personal life.				1	2	3	4	5
36. I think there are many changes that my Hotel has to do to achieve better working conditions.					2	3	4	5

37. My supervisor deals with all employees fairly and objectively.	1 2 3 4 5
38. My supervisor treats me with respect.	1 2 3 4 5
39. My supervisor handles my work-related issues excellently.	1 2 3 4 5
40. My supervisor actively listens to my suggestions.	1 2 3 4 5
41. My supervisor is an effective manager.	1 2 3 4 5
42. My Hotel provided me as much initial training as I needed.	1 2 3 4 5
43. My Hotel provides me as much ongoing training as needed, in order to meet the requirements of my job.	1 2 3 4 5
44. I am satisfied with the salary I get from my Hotel.	1 2 3 4 5
45. I believe that the benefit package that my Hotel provides me is very good.	1 2 3 4 5
46. I think I have a sufficient amount of annual leave in my Hotel.	1 2 3 4 5
47. I believe my Hotel has a good sick leave policy.	1 2 3 4 5
48. I believe the health insurance that my Hotel offers is good.	1 2 3 4 5
49. My Hotel maintains benefits that compare well to other hotels in this area.	1 2 3 4 5
50. Overall I am satisfied with my Hotel as an employer.	1 2 3 4 5

Please answer the following questions, by putting $\sqrt{\ }$ in the box that represents you:

	presents yeu.	
51.	Sex	
	a. Male	
	b. Female	
52.	Age	
	a. Less than 20 years	
	b. 21 - 30	П
	c. 31 - 40	П
	d. 41 -50	
	e. 51 and above	П
	c. 51 una acove	
53.	Educational Background	
	a. Elementary school	
	b. High school	
	c. University	
	d. If anything else/more, please s	pecify
54.	For how long are you workin	g at the Hotel?
	a. Less than 6 months	
	b. 6 months to 1 year	
	c. 1-2 years	
	d. 2-3 years	
	e. 3-4 years	
	f. More than 4 years	
	,	
55.	Which is your department of	f work?
	a. Administration/Accounting	
	b. Food and Beverage/Service	
	c. Housekeeping services	
	d. Maintenance	
	e. Other	