

The Factors that Affecting Employee Performance in Indian Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

The hospitality sector is a highly labour-intensive field. A highly efficient workforce is needed to ensure the success of any company in this field. However, this is one of those fields that always deal with a labour shortage and high turnover. Based on the literature review, it can be said that the main reasons behind this could be a lack of satisfying remuneration, growth opportunities, training, and skill. This paper reviewed the Indian hospitality sector and found that lack of job security, unsatisfying remuneration package and skill gaps are some of those factors that are majorly affecting the performance of employees.

Keywords— Hospitality Industry, Covid-19, Labour Shortage, Job Security, Skill Gaps, Job Loss, Indian Hospitality Sector.

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is a distinct part of the service industry; it covers a wide range of services including food and beverage services, lodging, theme parks, event planning, tourism, restaurants, bars, hotels and so on. The primary goal of the hospitality industry is to provide enjoyable and outstanding experiences to customers. The hospitality industry is extremely labour-intensive in nature, the success of this industry heavily depends on the performances of the employees. For this reason, the hospitality industry is one of the largest sources of employment in the world. At the same time, different types of skills are required for a candidate to enter the hospitality industry as the field is diverse in nature (e.g. transportation, accommodation, events etc.). Besides, many candidates feel unsatisfied in this field due to the low status of the job (not in all cases), unstable employment, low pay, long working periods and lack of time for socialisation. Therefore, the shortage of trained and skilled labour is also a serious problem in this field

(Aynalem et al., 2016). Besides, the onset of Covid-19 has also affected this industry negatively due to the implementation of social distancing norms and travel bans. This article will evaluate those factors that are affecting the performances of employees associated with the hospitality industry. In the end, it will focus on proposing alternative pathways that the hospitality industry should rely on.

Need of the Study

India is the second-largest creator of employment opportunities when it comes to the hospitality industry (25 million jobs) (Aynalem et al., 2016). However, various factors are there that are affecting the overall performance of the hospitality industry in India; for example, global uncertainty, financial crisis, environmental challenges, and so on. According to a report published by Business Standard, the hotel industry in India lost 1.3 trillion rupees in FY 2021 ([Business Standard, 2021](#)). According to India Today, the hotel industry in India is suffering a lot from various factors; tourists'

expectations are increasing due to the availability of online reviews, their preferences regarding food and beverages changing, and technology is being used in the hospitality business more than before. On the other hand, there is a huge shortage of retainable and skilled employees to cope with these changes (India Today, 2020). Therefore, it is essential to study the factors that are affecting employees' performance in the Indian hospitality sector so that appropriate strategies can be adopted in future to alter the situation.

Objectives

The *aim* of this study is to identify the factors that are affecting the performance of the workforce associated with the hospitality industry in India.

The *objectives* of this study are

- To analyse the overall condition of the hospitality industry in India.
- To discuss the issues that are negatively influencing employee performance in the hospitality industry.
- To identify appropriate strategies that can improve employee performance.

The *question* of this research project is

What are the major factors that are affecting employees' performance in the hospitality industry?

Literature Review

Size and Growth Rate of Hospitality Industry

The global hospitality industry is huge, in 2020 the size of this industry was \$3486.77billion and it is expected that it will become a \$5297.78billion industry by the year 2025 (growth rate 6%). The Asia Pacific is the largest region when it comes to the hospitality business (45% market share). The economic stability of different nations plays a crucial role in ensuring the success of this industry; thus, the global outbreak of coronavirus pandemic affected this industry massively (The Business Research Company, 2020). The Indian hospitality industry will reach the value of INR1,21,.87billion by 2023 and its growth rate

is 13%. The major players in this industry are Bharat Hotels Limited, ITC Hotels, Lemon Tree Hotels Limited, Hyatt Hotels and Resorts, etc (marketresearch.com, 2019).

Factors that negatively affect employee performances

According to Dwesini, (2019), employee turnover and a labour shortage are some of the extremely notable issues in the hospitality industry. Staff turnover threatens the overall performance of the company and its profitability. They identified some reasons that are responsible for such high turnover; those are low wage, lack of employee engagement, lack of growth opportunities, long working hours and poor employee relationship management. Employees in the hospitality sector perceive their remuneration to be extremely low against the workload they deal with. Long working hours is a major stress generator and it also makes it difficult for employees to strike a balance between their private, social and professional lives. Besides, organisations with low financial performance experience greater turnover rates as employees in such cases become anxious about future layoff decisions.

A report based on Tanzania claims that this country ranks 4th when it comes to natural resources. Still, the hospitality sector in this country is facing serious troubles due to a shortage of skilled labour. The adoption of the latest technologies in making this problem worse for this industry. However, change is inevitable as consumers these days are increasingly becoming comfortable with tech-based operations and digital services (Kazandzhieva et al., 2017).

Jamgade, and Joshi, (2020) in their report suggests that Covid-19 hit the hospitality industry hard which left enormous physio and psychological impacts on the employees. The revenue of the hospitality industry was down by 50% and 70% of jobs were furloughed or lost due to covid-19 in 2020. Such monetary vulnerabilities in the industry can lead employees to problems like anxiety and depression disorder. According to Bakker, and Demerouti, (2018), employees that feel exhausted and anxious at workplaces are more

prone to making mistakes; it leaves negative impacts on the overall performance of the employee.

AlBattat, and Som, (2013), investigated the hospitality sector of Malaysia and found that dissatisfactions (work stress, workload, inadequate remuneration etc.) related working environment also negatively affect employees' commitment to the organisation. Less committed employees contribute less to the progress of their respective companies. Therefore, as per the authors, ensuring employees' job satisfaction is the obligation of any organisation.

Factors that positively affect employee performances

Mahapa, M., (2013), have identified knowledge management as an important and positive factor when it comes to the performance of hospitality sector employees. According to them, the generation of new ideas and job satisfaction are some of the outcomes of effective knowledge management initiatives (training and development). A survey conducted by them shows that 40% of non-managerial staff in the hospitality industry think that knowledge management initiatives are the only effective way of identifying knowledge gaps. However, according to the authors, employees of the hospitality sector are not very interested in sharing their knowledge with a colleague as they feel their knowledge helps them stand out and sharing knowledge will reduce their importance.

Baharin and Hanafi, (2018) identified Talent Management as one of the most important ways of improving employee performance and retention rate in the hospitality sector depending on the Social Exchange Theory (SET). As per this theory, employees feel more willing to stay in a company and perform better to serve the interest of the company when they see that the company identifies their talent and invest in them.

According to Chaudhry et al., (2013), interpersonal relationships among employees is a factor that can significantly influence employee performance in this industry. Effective conflict handling and the positive

roles of unions in collective bargaining are some of the employee relationship-related factors that positively affect performance. The participative leadership strategy, where all employees have the right to contribute equally and voice their opinions strongly, also affects employee performance positively. However, the authors also said that the factor of employee relationship has no positive impact on performance when the aspect of motivation is missing from the picture.

Based on Herzberg's two-factor theory, Holston-Okae, and Mushi, (2018) argue that, while lessening factors (bad working environment, workplace conflicts, inadequate remuneration etc.) that lead to dissatisfaction can only prevent poor performance. However, in order to improve performance, motivating employees is the only solution. Motivation factors (recognition, responsibilities, positive feedback, promotion etc.) fulfil employees' self-actualisation (desire to improve and achieve ultimate successes possible for a person) needs and makes their job attitude more positive.

Research Methodology

Research Approach

This article aims to investigate the factors that are affecting the performances of hospitality sector employees in India. Based on the literature review it can be said, a wide range of factors are there that are affecting this industry and its employees. Multiple factors and perspectives need to be taken into consideration. Therefore, the pragmatism research philosophy will be followed to collect data. This philosophy considers the research question to be the deciding factor in the investigation process and focuses on gathering actionable knowledge (Kelly, and Cordeiro, 2020). In order to carry out this research, abductive reasoning will be relied on. This form of reasoning tries to make sense of ambiguous and surprising phenomena and the goals fill the gaps between common beliefs (Żelechowska et al., 2020). This method works properly with the pragmatism philosophy.

Research Design

Exploratory research mostly focuses on exploring the research question from various aspects; however, it does not necessarily provide any conclusive results. However, the aim of this research is to identify those various factors that are affecting employee performance in the Indian hospitality sector. Therefore, the exploratory research design will be appropriate for this study (Ponelis, 2015).

Data Collection

In order to collect relevant data that can adequately answer the research question, both secondary and primary data will be gathered. Primary data will be collected through a questionnaire survey. Primary data will be presented (numerical) in this paper as charts and described (Descriptive Statistics) so that the research question can be answered. Secondary data on the other hand will be taken from reliable sources including newspaper reports, industry reports, journal articles and government data. Secondary data will be collected only from the latest (last 5 years) published sources. Collected data will be directly related to the Indian hospitality sector. The aim of secondary data analysis will be to identify themes and patterns in collected data (Thematic Analysis).

Sample Size and Data Collection

100 staff-level employees (staff members, such as kitchen staff, waiting for staff, room service etc.) from any organisation associated with the Indian hospitality sector will be contacted through telephone or emails. Participants will be chosen depending on the Convenience Sampling Method. Convenience sampling is a simple method that allows the researcher to choose respondents that are readily available or easy to contact. This method is easy to execute and can help gather a large volume of data (Etikan et al., 2016).

Data Analysis

a. Lack of training	19
b. Inadequate remuneration, growth and benefits	26

Secondary Data

Theme 1: Job Loss During Covid-19

Job loss has been the main theme of the Indian hospitality sector in the aftermath of Covid-19. According to a report published by the Hindu, 21.5 million jobs were lost in the hospitality sector as an impact of Covid-19 (The Hindu, 2021). Another report by the Economic Times in April 2021 shows that organised sectors such as airports and hotels are about to fire at least 60% of their casual workers (The Economic Times, 2021). A report published by India Today claims that budget hotels only within the Delhi area had to cut off 35000 jobs (India Today, 2021). Therefore, the fear of job loss and anxiety caused by it must have impacted employee performances negatively in this industry.

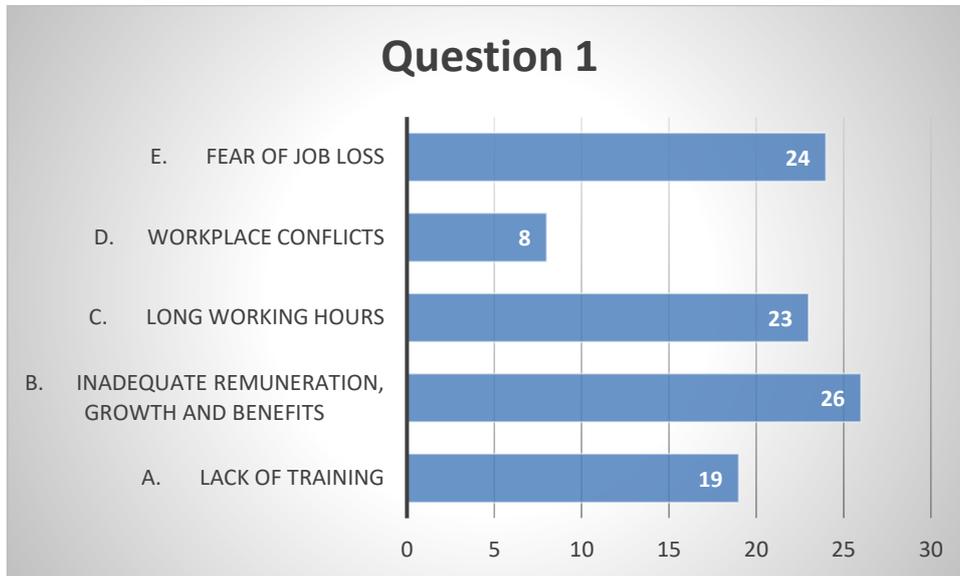
Theme 2: Skill Gaps in Indian Hospitality Sector

While analysing content it was found that skill gap is a predominant theme in the Indian hospitality sector. Major skill gaps have been noticed in disciplines such as hotel management, and food production. In the case of food production, 33% lack practical knowledge while 24% have knowledge of outdated courses only. Lack of practical knowledge (43%) and outdated courses (29%) is creating a problem for management staff as well (Ministry of Tourism, 2019) Front office managers and assistants, bell captains, bell boys, and travel desk in India lack very basic skills such as communication and active listening. Besides handling billing software, team management and understanding available service offerings are some other important skills that front office managers and assistants lack (National Skill Development Corporation, 2021).

Primary Data (Questionnaire Survey)

Question 1: What is the most crucial factor that negatively affects your performance while you are at your workplace?

c. Long working hours	23
d. Workplace conflicts	8
e. Fear of job loss	24
Total	100



The participants were asked to a single option that they think is the most notable factor affecting their performance negatively. It yields a mixed result. Inadequate remuneration and benefits are the most chosen option (26%)

followed by fear of job loss (24%) and long working hours (23%). Lack of training is also another important factor (19%). However, the aspect of workplace conflicts did not get much attention.

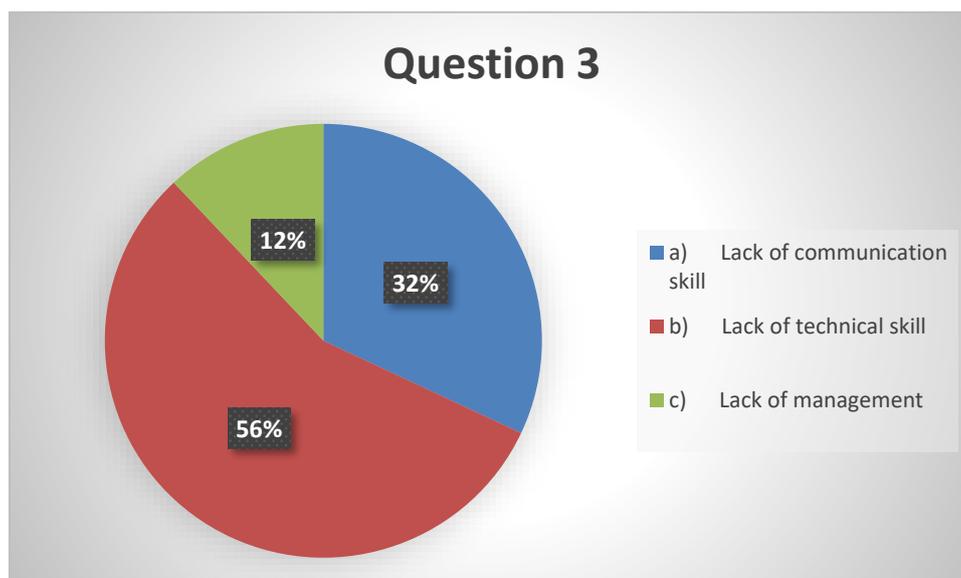
Question 2: What kind of intervention can improve your performance the best?

a) Employee motivation initiatives	32
b) Training	28
c) Participative leadership	16
d) Flexible working hours	24
Total	100



The second question aims to know what according to the participants would be the best intervention when it comes to performance improvement. The aspect of leadership received the least number of responses. People are most concerned about better motivational initiatives

a) Lack of communication skill	32
b) Lack of technical skill	56
c) Lack of management	12
Total	100



The result, in this case, is pretty clear. The maximum number of respondents (56%) believe that lack of technical knowledge is the factor that is preventing their growth. 32% of them also talked about a lack of communication skills. However, a small number of them consider management skills to be a deciding factor, or they do not feel they lack management skills.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This survey actually reflects respondents' perspectives which might differ from the actual figures. However, based on both secondary and primary data analysis, it can be concluded that the major factors that are affecting employee performance in the hospitality sector are fear of job loss, lack of adequate skill (especially technical skills) and insufficient remuneration and benefits. Therefore, hospitality sector

that include rewards, promotion etc (32%). They also asked for training (28%) and flexible working hours (24%).

Question 3: Lack of which skills according to you is the major barrier to your growth in this field?

entities are required to provide their employees with satisfying remuneration and training opportunities. It is essential that employees feel that there are plenty of growth opportunities in this field. At the same time providing them with a sense of job security is also important. Future research works should separately focus on the aspect of motivation, skill gaps and job-related insecurities in the hospitality sector to develop a better understanding.

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