

Employee Engagement in JW Marriott International

Research Project Proposal

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

By examining an organization's resources and competencies, one may determine the distinctiveness of its features and rationalize differences in performance across companies in the similar industry (Barney and Arian, 2001). Therefore, if an organization's human resources are valued, unique, and difficult to imitate, they may lead to higher performance and become a driver of sustainable competitive advantage (Barney and Wright, 1998).

Human resource has always one of the most fundamental elements of any organization (Haslinda, 2009). Employee engagement is one of the key aspects of the human resource of an organization. High degrees of engagement encourage employees to stay with the company, develop consumer loyalty, and boost organizational performance and shareholder value (Budriene, & Diskiene, 2020).

Hospitality industry is mostly a service oriented industry that depends vastly on the quality of the human resource. Therefore, employee engagement is one of the most crucial success factors for this industry.

1.2. Background of the industry and the company

In the second half of the twentieth century, the hospitality business, particularly the hotel sector, was among the most significant and rapidly expanding sectors of the global economy (McKercher & Tung, 2015). In 2019, the hospitality industry provided £59.3 billion in Gross Value Added to the UK economy, accounting for around 3.0% of total GDP. In the three months leading up to September 2020, the hospitality sector employed 2.38 million people in the UK, accounting for 6.9% of total employment. As of 1 January 2020, there were 223,045 hospitality enterprises in the UK, accounting for 3.7 percent of all businesses. Employers accounted for 137,225 of these, or 10% of the total in the UK (Georgina and Niamh, 2021).

JW Marriott is a well-known brand of Marriott International, the world's biggest hotel company. Marriott International is a renowned hotel company that offers a wide range of services, including hotel management, franchising, hotel licensor-ship, property ownership, and more. It has about 3700 properties in 73 countries with 18 different brands. The organization is renowned as one of the greatest destinations for work and has won multiple honors for its achievements. The hotel's culture is based on its idea of "People First."

Customers are prioritized above associates because they feel that happy associates lead to happy customers. Their excellent customer service stems from the company's initial mission statement: "good food and good service at a fair price." The hotel company has helped to define the current hospitality business by constantly innovating in all aspects of operations. Every element of the hotel's operation, performance, procedures, and rules is held to the highest standards of conduct (JW Marriott, 2020).

1.3. Statement of problem

The COVID-19 has had a considerable negative impact on the hotel and restaurant business. The hotel industry's revenues have been severely impacted by a lack of demand, trading restrictions, and other government measures. As a result, redundancy and employee retention have become major issues in the company. Furthermore, the pandemic has had a greater influence on the employment prospects of people of all ages. In the United Kingdom, the hotel industry is facing a manpower crisis, with job opportunities at an all-time peak. According to new statistics issued by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the hotel industry's vacancy rate is twice as high UK economy as a whole, although the sector gaining 122,000 new jobs between March and June this year (Audrey Ferrie, 2021). One explanation for this is that people in other industries may be able to obtain higher-paying employment with shorter work hours. Furthermore, many specialists are unwilling to return to work following a furlough due to concerns about their job stability, length, and compensation. All of these issues are forcing the businesses in hospitality industry to reconsider their employee engagement.

1.4. Importance of retaining an engaged workforce

Employees' active participation in workplace, as well as the whole range of physical, cognitive, and emotional aspects that goes along with it, encompassing three factors: job involvement, organizational recognition, and sense of value of the work itself (Cha, 2007). The level of employee engagement is impacted by several factors at various level. Employee engagement is determined on a job level by task features, role features, and work relationship. At organizational level, it is impacted by group and inter-group relationships, managerial style and procedure, and organizational cultures. Physical energy, emotional energy, insecurity, and work-life balance all impact it on an individual level (Kahn, 1990).

Prioritizing the following factors may enable a business to enhance its employee engagement and retention:

1. Career development opportunities by providing adequate level of employee development via training, skills and learning, can result in making employees more engaged with respect to the job and the organization (Andrewa and Saudah 2012).
2. A talent management approach that includes career planning, managerial support, and incentive can lead to a high employee engagement and lower turnover rates (Bhatnagar, 2007).
3. In the context of entrepreneurial businesses, leadership must be visionary, forward-thinking, and include people in their goal in effort to boost employee engagement (Jyotsna, 2008).
4. To increase employee engagement, employees should have the impression that their company's values are clear and unmistakable (Mona, 2013).
5. Employees who work in an environment where respect is valued are more engaged. Involvements that cross over into everyday practice work as motivators, making employees feel appreciated and thereby increasing engagement (Robert and Niru, 2009).
6. Employee engagement levels are reflected in the reputation of the organization as seen by the employees. Employee engagement is also influenced by organizational citizenship behavior.
7. Employees feel empowered when they perceive their boss to have an empowering style, which offers motivation and a sense of belonging to the firm, resulting in increased engagement (Albrecht and Manuela, 2011).
8. Employees who have a strong sense of procedural fairness are more likely to reciprocate with higher levels of organizational involvement (Alan, 2006).
9. Performance appraisals, payment schemes and provision of health and safety has a beneficial influence on employee engagement, which in turn has a favorable impact on workplace optimism, which leads to improved individual performance.
10. Family friendliness, talent recognition, nature of job itself, organization politics and the personality factors of the employees also have influence in the level of engagement (Chandani, et al., 2016).
11. Employee engagement has a positive impact on productivity, performance, and absenteeism, as well as reducing conflicts, staff turnover, and improving employee skill and knowledge (Jindal & Shaikh, 2018).

The retention of engaged employees is crucial due to the two types of outcomes that can be derived:

- Individual outcomes: Motivation, commitment, satisfaction, loyal, secured job and higher performance.
- Organizational outcomes: Higher profits and productivity, improved quality, satisfied/loyal customers, increased retention and revenue growth.

1.5. Research objectives

- a. Understand the current condition of employee engagement in the chosen company.
- b. Understand ways to improve employee engagement.
- c. Suggest ways to retain employees and sustain their engagement during crisis.

Chapter 2: Methodologies and Discussion

2.1. Research type

The researcher will conduct the research based on inductive method. The researcher will begin by gathering relevant data on the subject of interest. The researcher will attempt to acquire a better understanding of the findings after accumulating a large amount of data. The researcher next will search the data for patterns and try to come up with theories to explain them and suggest solutions (Woiceshyn & Daellenbach, 2018).

2.2. Research approach and method

The research will be a pragmatic one, as the researcher will focus on the problems and formulate solutions, once the current conditions are recognized (Rossman & Wilson, 1985). Three methodologies will be used to perform the research, case study, and survey in order to satisfy the report's objectives.

A mixed method approach would be used in this study since it provides for a more in-depth analysis of the research problem. The researcher gathers and interprets evidence, incorporates findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative tools in this study (Doyle, et al., 2009).

The research aims to use a cross-sectional approach to the topic. A cross-sectional study is a sort of observational study that allows for simultaneous quantitative and qualitative research.

The researchers will capture information about their study subjects without changing the study setting. It will enable researchers to compare a large number of factors at once (Wang & Cheng, 2020).

2.3. Data collection method

The underlying data for the study will come from a research poll that will be performed among the employees of JW Marriott. The questionnaire has been designed with close end questions with Likert scales. Furthermore, the sample that will be participating will be build with existing employees at JW Marriott Grosvenor House London, which will represent the employee engagement of all the other JW Marriott all around the world, as this international chain is well known to maintain a similar conditions in all of its other hotels. Secondary data for the research report will be gathered through online surveys of academic papers, research reports, annual reports of various firms, survey reports , and publications, among other sources.

2.4.1. Employee Engagement

Employee engagement at JW Marriott will be analyzed using research questionnaire survey on the employees at the hotel. Furthermore, theoretical aspects of employee engagement and methods to improve it, even in crises, will be analyzed using secondary research survey using internet.

2.4.2. Benefits of Engagement

Benefits of engagement at JW Marriott will be gained by undertaking secondary research survey, as the researcher will study the official documents of JW Marriott to understand how the employee engagement is contributing in the success of this hotel. Furthermore, other archival resources will be studied using internet survey.

2.4.3. Employee Retention

Employee retention, its importance, methods to strengthen this aspect of an organization, and other relevant information will be studied using secondary research survey using internet.

2.5. Questionnaire

Questions about work in your hotel.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am interested in my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can make good use of my strengths and abilities at work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My workload is reasonable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied with the shift system (working hours) and over time working system in my hotel.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My job provides me a sense of accomplishment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have authority to decide how to satisfied customers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not feel my work is monotonous.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Questions about your work relationships.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have a good relationship with my colleagues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communications between departments are good.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My supervisor admires and supports me when my work is in some way outstanding.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My supervisor has ability to help me, and I trust him/her.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Questions about compensation, benefits, and rewards in your hotel.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The connection between pay and performance is fair and reasonable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My salary is reasonable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied with my salary.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Compared to other hotels, salary of my hotel is more attractive.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In my department, the system of rewards and punishments is reasonable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have more opportunities for promotion, If I work hard.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied with my working meals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff benefits of my hotel is attractive.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Questions about working environment in your hotel.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am satisfied with my working environment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The team spirit in my department is good.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My hotel thinks highly of staff safety.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Questions about your job satisfaction in general.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Management in my hotel is high quality.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The hotel welcomes our give suggestions to improve hotel management.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am willing to recommend our hotel as an ideal company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Our hotel has a positive future.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied to work in my hotel in general.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Do you have any recommendations to your hotel management and this survey?

☐ Nope.

☐ Yes.

Chapter 3: Evaluation and Conclusion

3.1. Significance of method proposed

Inductive reasoning starts with specific observations of the world and progresses to more abstract generalizations and concepts. As a researcher advances through his research using an inductive technique, commencing with a topic, the researcher tends to create empirical generalisations and find early links. At the commencement of the investigation, no explanations can be identified, and the researcher is unsure of the quality and character of the study results until the study is concluded. Inductive method is usually more useful for qualitative data collection and analysis. For such reasons, this method has been chosen for the project, as the subject is qualitative in nature, the research will be more of a qualitative than quantitative in nature, the findings and the suggestions that will be generated are still unidentified (Neuman, 2003).

It has also been agreed that the planned research would use a pragmatic methodology, as it recognizes that there might be individual or numerous realities that can be investigated empirically. Pragmatism is a research paradigm that focuses on addressing practical issues in the actual world. It arose as a method of investigation for more pragmatic researchers (Kaushik and Christine, 2019). It is adequate for the proposed research, as the research would look for explanations and solutions to increase employee engagement.

The most major advantage of case studies is that they allow for a comprehensive evaluation. In contrast to a single vision of an individual obtained via a survey answer or an interview, case studies capture a variety of viewpoints. This allows for a better grasp of the issue at hand while also reducing the possibility of prejudice by blurring the agenda of a single individual. However, one typical critique of the case study is that the results cannot be applied to other situations. In contrast to case study research, studies have indicated that participants are more candid with the research team when they are certain that their identification will not be revealed. Case studies might take a long time to complete. Organizing many interviews, waiting for data, and even organizing focus groups can all take a long time (Lauren, 2017). However, as the proposed research will look into the employee engagement at JW Marriott, the method will be case study based. This will be suitable as the permission will be easily granted and time taken will be reduced, as the international hotel is already prepared to assist. Furthermore, the biasness will be reduced by adopting such method.

Survey will be conducted to gather raw data by means of primary research. Questionnaires will be used. Although the subject and findings will be more of qualitative in nature, a number of questions will need to be answered by the employees. Primary research allows a social researcher to collect data that is relevant and suited to the study subject at hand. However, particularly in big survey research, it may be a time-consuming and costly procedure. In primary research, the ideas of reliability and validity have long been regarded essential (Robson, 2001). Also, by evaluating a sample of a population, a survey seeks to make judgments about that group. This is in opposition to a census, which tries to collect data from the whole population (Groves et al, 2009). Questionnaire-based studies, on the other hand, have been criticized for a variety of reasons, and researchers contemplating them should be conscious of the possible drawbacks. Furthermore, questionnaires have been chastised for being shallow and presenting a 'thin' picture of the phenomena being studied (Dörnyei, 2007). As a result, the questionnaire design and sample must be done properly (Young, 2015).

Furthermore, archival research will be conducted by means of secondary research. Primary sources kept in an archive, a Special Collections library, or another repository are used in archival research. Manuscripts, papers, records, artifacts, sound and video recordings and other resources can all be used as archival sources. This will enable the proposed research to understand the theoretical aspects of the subjects, then, formulate solutions and have a more realistic view of the theme (Pearce-Moses, 2005). Secondary research will enable the research to gain its pace, as it is less time-consuming and inexpensive. However, secondary data is publically available and past generated, which can increase biasness. Therefore the researcher needs to be aware of the quality of data being used.

3.2. Conclusion

It may be argued that the value of employee involvement in the workplace cannot be overstated. Employee engagement underlines how crucial employee communication is to a company's success.

Employees, more than any factor, should be recognized as the most powerful contribution to an organization's competitiveness. Organizations and workers have a symbiotic relationship in which they rely on one another to meet their requirements and achieve their goals. Thus, it

is crucial to study the condition of this aspect of businesses in hospitality industry and understand to improve it, especially during crises.

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