CASE STUDY

Impact of Reward and Recognition on Employee Engagement: A Case Study of Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi

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Abstract

Today, the business environment is becoming very complex because of competition and technological advancement. It is very difficult for the organization to survive in the market without having better quality of the product and services basically in hospitality industry. The quality of the services largely depends upon the employees working in organization. Therefore it is necessary for the organization to have workforce who can deliver better services to the customers. The primary objective of this paper is to study the employee engagement in Taj Group of Hotels and to test empirically the impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi. 219 employees/respondents from Taj Group of Hotels were included in the study. Reliability of data was measured through Cronbach alpha and factor analysis was also run. Simple linear regression was applied to test the hypothesis which reported positive and significant impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels under study. After empirically testing, some suggestions were given by researchers to improve employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi and generally for hotel industry in India.

Keywords: *Customer Satisfaction, Employee engagement, Hospitality Industry, Reward and Recognition, Taj Group of Hotels.*

Introduction

Employee engagement is relatively a new term which has stimulated much debate among HR consulting practitioners in the corporate world (Bhatla, 2011). The term employee engagement was firstly used by the Gallup consulting firm, later it has been used by the academia. Kahn (1990) was the first academic researcher to use the term employee engagement and defines that employee engagement is the level of dedication and involvement of the employees towards their organization. The globalization and swiftness of changes accentuate the importance of human resources within the organizations (Hamid & Muzaffar, 2015). Each and every organization across the globe wants to make the best utilization of its human resources in order to achieve the competitive advantage in the market (Heaney, 2010). In the view of Saks (2006) employee engagement is the extent to which an employee is attentive during his/her job. Robinson, Perryman, and Hayday (2004) define engagement as "a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values". Vazirani (2007) elucidates that employee engagement is a barometer which determines the connectivity of the employees with their organization. Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, and Truss (2008) says that an engaged employee is almost three times more sincere toward their job in comparison to those employees who are actively disengaged. Therefore the organization should focus the aspect of employee engagement in order to improve organizational performance (Basbous, 2011; Sundaray, 2011). Today employee engagement is considered as an effective HR policy in the corporate world. Rashid, Asad, and Ashraf (2011) have reported that employee engagement is a technique which can be used by the organization to handle uncertainty of the business environment. Many organizations and consulting firms consider employee engagement as similar to other important work-related constructs like job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour (Kumar & Swetha, 2011).

Ncube and Jerie, (2012) elucidate that employee engagement plays an effective role in improving organizational performance. Therefore the HR managers should develop satisfaction among the employees so as to make engage the

employees towards their work. By making the employees involved in the organizational work, the HR managers will have to motivate them to contribute in goals and objectives of the organization (Saradha and Patrick, 2011). Engaged employees care deeply about the organization and want to contribute to its success (Swarnalatha & Sureshkrishna, 2013). In the present business environment, organizations across the globe are increasing level of engagement of their employees so as to improve productivity, profitability, turnover and safety of the organization (Mani, 2011). Anand (2011) has reported that employee engagement plays a crucial role in the hotel because it affects everything from retention and productivity to profitability and safety. He further describes that engaged employees provides quality services, they are more customer-focused and having less intention to leave the organization.

Taj Group: An Introduction

Taj Group is of the Asia's largest and oldest hotels chain having 128 hotels in India and 16 international hotels abroad. It is one of the most preferred brand employers in hotel industry of India. Taj Group has made its entry in Indian hospitality industry in 1903 when the first Taj Hotel, called Taj Mahal Palace and Tower was opened in Mumbai (www.tajhotels.com). Employees of Taj Group of Hotels are highly engaged as compare to other hotel chains in India. Each and every employee of Taj Hotel is considered as member of Taj family and employees are emotionally attached with the organization. The working environment in Taj Group is quite favourable which helps the employees to perform their job most effectively and efficiently.

Employee Engagement in Taj Group of Hotels

Employee engagement is necessary for the smooth functioning of the organization basically in service industry because without employee engagement better services cannot be delivered to the customers. If the employees working in hotel industry are engaged towards their job, they will provide better hospitality to the guests. Taj Group is one of the oldest hotel chain in India having 128 hotels at different locations in India as well as 16 international hotels abroad. The Taj Group provides grand hotel stay and world class facilities to the customers (www.tajhotels.com). The employees of Taj Group are highly satisfied and engaged in comparison to other hotels chain in India. The HR policies of Taj Group are strong enough to attract the talented employees to connect with Taj Group. Such strong HR policies one cannot find in any other organization. According to Koshal (2012) Taj Group has strong recruitment policies, effective training programmes, emphasis on practical aspect than theoretical and suitable working environment. These HR policies make the employees engaged towards the job and reduce the problem of turnover intention. Due to effective HR policies and procedures, the Taj Group of Hotels is having most productive and engaged workforce in the world.

Statement of Problems

Interest in the current study revolved due to lack of practical and theoretical research on employee engagement. In the current business environment, the organizations are focussing towards employee engagement as a promising strategy to increase organizational efficiency. Due to its increasing importance, there is need of empirical research on employee engagement particularly hotel industry of India.

Review of Literature

Swarnalatha and Sureshkrishna, (2013) have explained that employee engagement is the extent to which employees think, feel and act in ways that represent high levels of involvement to their organization. An engaged employee is motivated to contribute his/her knowledge, skills and abilities to help his/her organization succeed. Engaged employees cares about organization and want to contribute his/her work in the success of the organization. They further describe that the employee engagement and job satisfaction play an important role in the development of the morale of employees. It is the responsibility of the human resource managers to build satisfaction among the employees and make them engaged in their work.

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Oliver and Rothmann, (2007) have observed that engagement of the employees is a position in which the employee dedicates his or her best possible performance at work and is confident of his or her effectiveness. There is an effect of psychological condition on the work engagement, availability and safety on work engagement. While Vazirani (2007) has discussed that employee engagement is concern with the involvement and motivation of the employees towards the organization. A well motivated employee will perform his/her duty in a good manner and completes his job timely. He further describes that employee engagement is the positive attitude and loyalty held by the employees for the benefits of the organization. Organization should also care the employees so that the employees should engage in their job for long period of time.

In their study Hamid and Sadiqe, (2013) have explained that employee engagement is very essential for maximum utilization of its man power resources. The organization which fails in engaging their employee cannot run for longer period of time. Sadiqe (2014) in a study on employee engagement in hospitality industry has explained that engaged employees cares about products and services of the organization and provides better hospitality to the guests.

Robinson (2006) throws light on how to engage the employees. Employee engagement can take place through the development of good organizational environment where positive emotions such as involvement of the employee and their morale are encouraged, that results improved organizational performance, lower employee turnover and better health. Gopalakrishnan (2009) has discussed about how to improve employee engagement within the organization. There has been disquieting development in recent times all over the world. Good employee policies exist only in the manuals. However, management has the capability to engage with the workforce and also to implement the policies humanely in under pressure.

Mortimer (2010) has explained that there are various factors that encourage employee engagement and motivate the employees towards their job like leadership quality, employers support, rewards and job security. The employer of the organization wants the employees who will do their work through loyalty. A positive and effective working environment increases the satisfaction of the employees and makes them engage towards the organizational work. Thomas (2009) elucidated that the intrinsic rewards are relatively healthy and sustainable source of motivation for the employees of the organization. The workers with high level of reward experience more positive feeling and fewer negative ones on the job. He further explained that this type of motivation plays an effective contribution in the employee engagement. Saks (2006) has thrown light that employee engagement with the organization is directly related with the resources they receive from their organization. Compensation and other meaningful employment decisions are the key factors of engagement of the employees. According to Perrin (2003) employee engagement is a never ending process that enriches work experience. The pay and benefits which are provided to the employees is not about to make them happy but for attracting and retaining the talented employees. In their study Rasheed, Khan, and Ramzan (2013) have highlighted that employee engagement is now considered as an important driver of organizational performance. Therefore the organization should provide more monetary and non-monetary incentives to the employees in order to enhance the employee engagement. Anwar (2014) has argued that since the hospitality industry relies on employees to deliver quality service in order to obtain higher revenues, then attracting and retaining the best talent through better compensation practices would benefit employers and compensation will motivate and engage to the employees towards the job.

Karsnia (2009) has reported that employee engagement is a critical business driver that has the capacity to impact on organization overall success. Effective employee engagement results employee retention, productivity and loyalty towards the organization. In the view of Wilson (2009) the term employee engagement is more than simple job satisfaction and high retention rate. An engaged employee is that who is full energetic, emotionally connected with the organization in achieving the goal. To have engaged workforce in the human services field is very important because engaged workers help organization by providing many benefits such as increased efficiency, higher levels of customer satisfaction, higher productivity and lower turnover rates.

Southard (2009) has discussed that each and every organization requires engaged employees who are energetic and enthusiastic and willing to work more than the expectations of the employer. He further describes that when the employee is engaged and motivated, can works more frequently that results in increased production

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and development of the organization. An engaged employee increases profitability with more satisfied customers that continuously improves the organizational performance.

Research Gap

From the literature survey, it is observed that majority of researches have been conducted on importance and influence of employee engagement on organizations. Some of the researches have empirically tested employee engagement in hotel industry. But in context of Indian hotel industry, there seems to dearth of literature about employee engagement. Therefore there is need to study the term employee engagement in context of hotel industry of India. Thus this study has made an attempt to empirically test the impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi.

Objectives of Study

The study empirically investigates the impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi. The primary objectives of the study are:

1. To study employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels generally.
2. To assess the impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi.
3. To suggest ways to improve employee engagement particularly at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi and generally for hotel industry in India.

Conceptual Model of the Study

Independent Variable   **Dependent Variable**

| Reward and Recognition | → | Employee Engagement |
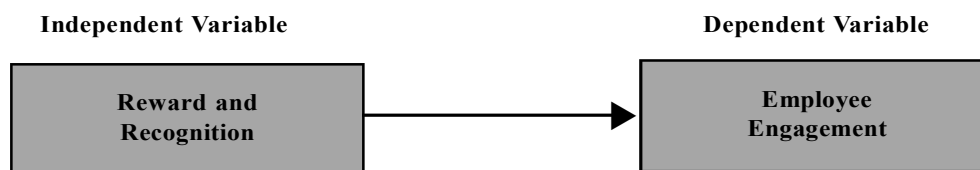
Hypotheses of the Study

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, following hypotheses is formulated.

$H_0 1$: There is no significant impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi.

$H_a 1$: There is a significant impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi.

Research Methodology

The present study is mainly survey in nature and data has been collected through self developed questionnaire and interview method. Questionnaire was based on Likert five point scale. Data has been collected from all the major departments of hotels of Taj Group. Convenient sampling technique was used in collecting data. Total 268 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of Taj Group of Hotels, out of that 235 questionnaires were returned. Some of the questionnaires were incomplete and finally 219 questionnaires were taken into final study. Secondary data covers the conceptual part of the study and main source of secondary data are annual reports of Taj Group of Hotels, official websites of Taj Group of Hotel, research papers, articles, magazines, newsletters etc.

Reliability of the Data

Reliability refers to the ability of the data to produce same result consistently (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). According to Hair, Black, Tatham, and Anderson (2006) reliability is the repeatability of results, if the

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studies are done second time it produces the same results. Reliability of the data was calculated by using Cronbach alpha. It is measurement of internal consistency among the items. The value of Cronbach alpha is shown in the table 1;

Table 1: Overall Reliability of the Items

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.916	12

Table 2: Assessment of Reliability: Variable Wise

Variables	Code	Cronbach's Alpha(á)
Reward and Recognition	RR	.888
Employee Engagement	EE	.868

The above table 1 shows the overall reliability of the items. The overall score of Cronbach alpha is .916 which is more than the acceptable range i.e. 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978; George & Mallery, 2003). Table 2 shows the reliability of individual variables. Each variable has Cronbach alpha value more than 0.7 viz .888 and .868. Hence it is clear indication that data is reliable for further analysis.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is an important tool that is used to reduce a large set of measured variables in terms of relatively few categories or factors with a minimum loss of information. In this study, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy of the data, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and Principal component analysis were tested by the researchers. Table 3 shows the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy of the data and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.876
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2019.452
	Df	66
	Sig.	.000

Kaiser (1974) has identified that value greater than 0.5 are acceptable (values below this should lead to either collection of more data or rethink which variables to include). Furthermore, values between 0.5 and 0.7 are mediocre, values between 0.7 and 0.8 are good, values between 0.8 and 0.9 are great and values above 0.9 are superb.

For the present study, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.876, which falls into the great range as identified by (Kaiser, 1974; Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999). It means factor analysis is appropriate for the present study.

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity explains whether there is any difference between correlation matrix and identity matrix. For the suitability of data there should be difference between these two. In the present study sig. value is less than .05 which indicates that there is difference between correlation matrix and identity matrix. Hence the data is appropriate for further study.

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Table 4: Result of Principal Component Analysis

No.	Statements	Initial	Extraction
1	Higher salary and pay raise on good performance	1.000	.812
2	Satisfied with the bonus/tip/reward in the organization	1.000	.710
3	Satisfaction with the regular and systematic financial policies regarding the increment and other monetary benefits	1.000	.672
4	Satisfied with promotional opportunities in the organizations	1.000	.667
5	Satisfaction with recognition on good performance	1.000	.662
6	Satisfied with the recognition from the contribution in the organization	1.000	.635
7	Feel energetic at work	1.000	.834
8	Job is inspiring	1.000	.854
9	Sense of fulfilment after completing the work	1.000	.769
10	Willing to accept all sorts of challenges at work	1.000	.708
11	Strong sense of belonging with the organization	1.000	.872
12	Concerned about the image of the organization	1.000	.854

The table 4 clearly highlights the extraction of each statements and extraction of all the attributes are more than 0.50, which falls in the acceptable range (Field, 2005). Hence the data is suitable for further analysis.

Hypothesis Testing

$H_0 1$: There is no significant impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi.

To test whether the impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi, Simple Linear Regression analysis has been used. In this hypothesis, reward and recognition have been taken as independent variable and employee engagement as a dependent variable.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Reward and Recognition v/s Employee Engagement

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Employee Engagement	3.858	.59037	219
Reward and Recognition	3.867	.73945	219

Table 5 shows that mean value of employee engagement is 3.858 and standard deviation is .59037 where as the mean value of reward and recognition is 3.867 and standard deviation is .73945.

Table 6: Model Summary of Regression Analysis between Reward and Recognition and Employee Engagement

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted RSquare	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.682[a]	.465	.462	.43292

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reward & Recognition

The above table 6 highlights the model summary of Regression analysis between reward and recognition and employee engagement. It shows the value of correlation coefficient that is R and coefficient of determination that is R^2. The value of R represents the simple Pearson's correlation. The value of coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that how much of the variation in the dependent variable (employee engagement) can be explained by the independent variable (reward and recognition).

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The table 6 shows that the value of R is .682 which indicates that there is moderate degree relationship between reward and recognition and employee engagement. While the value of R^2 is .465 which means 46.5% variation in employee engagement is explained by reward and recognition. Thus it can be said that 53.5% variation in dependent variable (employee engagement) cannot be explained by independent variable (reward and recognition). Therefore it is clear that there are some other factors which have an influence on the engagement level of employees at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi.

Table 7: Simple Linear Regression: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sign.
		β	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.753	.156		11.231	.000
	Reward and Recognition	.544	.040	.682	13.726	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

The coefficient table 7 provides details of models parameters (Beta values) and significance of these values. The unstandardized Beta coefficient gives measures of the contribution of each variable to the model.

It is clear from table 7 that the value of unstandardized Beta is .544 which represents the gradient of regression line. Therefore if the value of predictor variable (reward and recognition) is increased by one unit, there is .544 unit increased in the dependent variable (employee engagement). The value of unstandardized Beta also indicates that there is moderate and positive impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement. This impact is statistically significant because sig. value (p) is .000 which is less than .05 (95% confidence interval). Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It may conclude that there was a significant impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi.

Regression Equation of this Model is

Y (Dependent Variable) = α (intercept) + β (Independent Variable) +e

If the values from table 7 are put in the equation it will be

Employee Engagement = 1.753 + .544 (Reward and Recognition)

The regression equation shows the linear relationship between employee engagement and reward and recognition. The intercept value explains the change in dependent variable (employee engagement) when independent variable (reward and recognition) is zero. The value of â shows the change in dependent variable (employee engagement) in respect to independent variable (reward and recognition).

Results and Discussions

From the demographic profile of the respondents, it was found that out of 219 respondents, there were 136 male and 83 female. Male employees were dominant in every department of the hotel except front office. It was reported that 23 respondents belonged to age group under 20 years, 62 respondents were between 20-30 years, respondents of age group 31-40 years and above 40 years were 76 and 58 respectively. The respondents having professional qualification were 67, respondents having post graduation were 79. Respondents having qualification of graduation were 45, while the respondents having qualification lower than graduation were 28 only. The respondents having work experience less than 3 years were 21, 60 respondents were having work experience 3-6 years. Respondents of 7-10 years works experience were 73, whereas most experience respondents that is above 10 years work experience were 65.

By testing the impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement it was found that there was moderate degree relationship between reward and recognition and employee engagement. It was also reported

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from coefficient table that reward and recognition has significant and positive impact on employee engagement in the hotels of Taj Group, New Delhi.

The finding of the current study is consistent in line with previous research finding of Muthuveloo, Babous, Ping, and Long (2013) they found that reward and recognition had significant and positive impact on engagement level of employees. Kahn (1990) had also reported that employees vary in their level of engagement in respect of benefits which they receive from their job.

Conclusion

The aforementioned discussion may be concluded that effective HR policies make difference on many counts, it enhances internal capabilities of an organization to deal with current and future challenges face by an organization. In the present business scenario, where there is large scale competition in the market, it is important for the organization to implement effective HR policies for the survival and smooth functioning of the organization. Therefore it is the responsibility of HR managers to motivate and engage the employees towards the organization in order to gain competitive advantage in terms of improvement in organizational performance. The present study provides essential inputs to the employers of the hotels and well as the managers also to understand the importance of reward and recognition in engaging the employees. The present study was conducted at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi in order to know relationship between reward and recognition and employee engagement along with the impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement. The result of the study indicates that there was moderate degree relationship between reward and recognition and employee engagement. Reward and recognition has positive and significant impact on employee engagement at Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi. From the findings of the study it is clear that organizations can increase the engagement level of their employees by providing reward and recognition and by engaging employees towards the job, organizational performance can be improved.

Suggestions

From the analysis of data and findings of the study, there are some suggestions given by the researchers to improve employee engagement particularly Taj Group of Hotel, New Delhi and generally for hotel industry in India.

➤ There should be proper reward and recognition system in the organization.

➤ Proper recruitment and selection procedure should be followed by the hotels, this helps in selecting right and suitable applicants.

➤ Training and development programmes should be organized for newly recruited employees in order to increase knowledge and skills of the employees.

➤ There should be transparency in the working of the organization and supervisor should involve the subordinates in decision making process.

➤ The hotel should follow feedback system from customer side for further improvement in the quality of services.

➤ Employee engagement and satisfaction survey should be conducted periodically.

➤ Manager should visit in each department of the hotel weekly, to know what is going on in the organization as well as the problems faced by the employees.

➤ Organize cultural programmes for the entertainment of employees that reduces the stress of employees and creates healthy working environment within the organization.

Contribution of the Study

The study is expected to help the hotel industry owners to know the importance of employee engagement in smooth functioning of the organization. The findings of the study will help the employers as well as managers to understand the importance of reward and recognition in engaging the employees. Through

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empirical evidences, the findings of the present study will help the employers to know the impact of reward and recognition on employee engagement particularly Taj Group of Hotels New Delhi and hotel industry as a whole. Finally the findings of present study will also help the policy makers and human resource practitioners in framing the effective HR policies in their organizations for improving employee engagement.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Every study has some limitations, lack of literature on the subject matter of employee engagement in context of hotel industry of India is the limitation of the study. Findings of the study entirely depend on the accuracy of data collected through structured questionnaire. Small sample size may be a limitation of the present study, future researchers may increase the sample size in order to get more accurate results. Findings of the study are limited to Taj Group of Hotels, New Delhi and also to the current employees of hotels under study, therefore future researcher may conduct same study in different hotels of New Delhi as well as India too.

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