

Work Environment Job-Related Factors and Individual Factors as Drivers of Employee Engagement in the Selected Department of Tourism (DOT) Accredited Hotels and Resorts in Region XII, Philippines

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Abstract – This study pursued to determine the factors that drive employee engagement in the selected department of Tourism Accredited Hotels and Resorts in Region XII. Due to a limited number of regular employees, the universal sampling technique was used. There is a total of 464 respondents from 17 hotels and resorts of Region XII. A validated self-made survey questionnaire was used with a validation score of 4.14 which is indicated as very good based on the point equivalent scale. The pre-test was also completed with Cronbach's alpha of 95.1%. The research employed a descriptive-correlational method. The test of normality, autocorrelation, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity was conducted to ensure that the multiple regressions can be done on the data. Over-all the study revealed that work environment-job related factors and individual factors are significantly correlated with employee engagement. It was found out that employees of DOT Accredited Hotels and Resorts of Region XII have the very high-level motivation, skills and expertise, work attitude and high level of work-life balance. It was also found out that employees are actively engaged with their work. However, the hotels and resorts star rating did not moderate the work-environment job-related factors and individual factors to employee engagement. With this, the hotel and resort accreditation star ratings do not affect the level of employee engagement.

Keywords – Employee Engagement, Hotels, Resorts, Region XII Philippines, Work Environment, Job-Related Factors, Individual Factors, Department of Tourism, Human Resource

INTRODUCTION

Companies experienced different challenges with their employees. According to Forbes [1], technology took over 90% of the top human jobs used to do. However, there are things technology cannot replace. Morgan [2] says humans provided feelings with customers' needs. Management also faces challenges in organizational commitment [3],[4], productivity[5], turnover [6] and organizational citizenship behavior [7]. With these challenges, employee engagement might solve the said problems. Further, when the mission, vision, and goals of the organization are aligned with employees' interest, the employee becomes emotionally committed at work. Employee engagement helps the company lower employee turnover and improves employee performance and productivity (Corbin, 2017)[8]. In 1990, William A. Khan[9] introduced employee engagement with his

article entitled "Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work". However, it was found out that proving rewards and incentives are not a guarantee for employee engagement. Gallup, a research company that conducts employee engagement surveys says that 87% of the employees worldwide are not engaged and only 13% are actively engaged [8]. Surveys will have no use if an organization only emphasizes engagement without considering how to improve engagement.

Further, a survey conducted by Aon in 2017, says that employee engagement rose by six points to 71% compared to the nine-point drop of 2016. Among the strategic Asia Pacific economies, the Philippines ranked higher than China (69%), Thailand (64%), Malaysia (63%), Australia (60%), and Singapore (59%) (Business World, 2018)[10]. Conversely, despite the high score of employee engagement in the

Philippines, a worker quitting his job towards the end of the year becomes a common dilemma. Employees tend to leave the company after getting their bonuses and do not come back after the holiday break [6].

Given the pressing problem of high employee turnover, employee engagement can help minimize this problem [11]. Employees worked in hotels and resorts since the opportunity to be hired is higher. However, keeping employees in the hospitality industry is difficult because of the fact that it is labor-intensive and the work schedule is tiresome especially with the graveyard shift [12]. In Region XII, there are only a few companies invested in equipping their managers to help individual employees discover what they do well and have a set up for success with the right coaching, support, and guidance for the individual and organizational development. This is because most of the companies in the region are family-owned that belong to small-medium enterprises in which profitability is more important than people.

Based on the Department of Tourism (DOT) Region XII record, there are 31 hotels and 11 resorts registered with the agency as of 2017. These hotels and resorts are regulated and governed by the Department of Tourism (DOT), a government agency that is in charge and promoting a major socio-economic activity to generate foreign currency and employment and spread the benefits of tourism to both the private and public sectors. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there is an annualized employee turnover rate of 73.8% in the hotel industry which is more than 6% every month [13]. Turn over effects operation since if someone leaves, they need to hire a new employee and the need for training takestime [14].

The DOT accredited hotels and resorts that are expected to provide excellent service to the guests. With this, it is important to know what makes these employees engaged. With engaged employees, DOT accredited hotels and resorts can meet the needs of its guests by providing excellent service for employees working in the establishment who are mostly tenured, well trained, and efficient in meeting the organization's goal. Consequently, the researcher is inclined to be certain of the need to conduct this research undertaking, since no data on employee engagement among DOT accredited hotels and resorts in Region XII was found.

The result of the study can serve as a channel for the human resource department of the hotels and

resorts industry to eventually provide a check and balance to the current programs. To address the employees' concerns with regards to promotion opportunity, compensation, relationship with other employees and the basic working conditions.

The hotels and resorts owners will also be given knowledge of how important it is to get employees loyalty and commitment. With this being known to the needs of the employees and keeping them engaged can also help minimize turnover.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is directed to determine the significant relationship between work environment job-related factors and individual factors to employee engagement in terms of say, stay and strive in Region XII, Philippines. Specifically, this study addressed to determine the demographic profile of regular employees in the hotels and resorts industry.

Furthermore, this study looked into the level of work environment job-related factors as drivers of employee engagement as well as the level of individual factors that drives employee engagement.

METHODS

This study used descriptive-correlation research which used a validated self-made questionnaire. With a validity average score of 4.14 and a reliability test of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 95.1 %.The universal sampling method was used from the regular employees of all departments in the DOT accredited hotels and resorts in Region XII, Philippines. The 464 respondents were taken from the 17 DOT accredited hotels and resorts.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The factors used to predict employee engagement was based on the employee engagement model of Duggirala&Kambhatla [15]. The work environment job-related factors depict the variables of organizational culture, psychological safety, relationship with co-workers, promotion opportunity and compensation. Individual factors depict the variables motivation, skills and expertise, work attitude and work-life balance. The Aon Hewitt's engagement model[16] was used to determine the level of employee engagement in terms of Say, Stay and Strive. Employees who display such facet are considered engaged in their work. Assistance from the Human Resource Department was done to ensure the

effective and efficient collection of data from the respondents.

Ethical Consideration of the Study

To guarantee the safety and rights of the participants so as the researcher, this study made sure that before conducting the research, the ethical principle was considered. Obtaining consent to the DOT accredited hotels and resorts was done. To safeguard and respect the answers of the participant, the anonymity of respondents and voluntary participation was observed.

Data Analysis

The demographic profile of the respondents was described using frequencies and percentages. The level of work environment job-related factors and the level of individual factors were computed using the measure of central tendency. The relationship between work environment job-related factors to employee engagement and the relationship between individual factors to employee engagement was also interpreted using the stepwise multiple regression with Pearson correlation. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to determine if the moderating variable affects the independent and dependent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Respondents Area of Distribution

Area of Accredited Hotels and Resorts in Region XII	Number of Respondents	Percentage Distribution
General Santos City	235	50.64%
Koronadal City	132	28.44%
Lake Sebu, South Cotabato	65	14.00%
Sarangani Province	17	3.66%
Banga, South Cotabato	15	3.23%
Total	464	100

The lists of accredited hotels and resorts in the region are based on the 2017 DOT Lists. The bulk of the respondents came from General Santos City since there are more accredited hotels and resorts in the area. Banga, South Cotabato has the least number of respondents since it only has one accredited resort in the area.

Table 2. Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
Below 25	123	26.3
25-35	236	50.8
36-45	86	18.5
46-55	18	3.8
56 and above	1	.2
Total	464	100

With the nature of the job in the hotels and resorts, positions are more on the entry-level and more suited to younger employees. On the other hand, the elder the employees, they are only a few of them since at this age more are on the management level due to its experience and are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and abilities according to Wessels, Saayman, & Kruger[17].

Table 3. Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	238	50.9
Female	226	48.7
Total	464	100

Working in hotels and resorts is labor-intensive and demands activity that more physical and it would be inappropriate for a female to do the-boy and night watch porter according to Biswas & Cassell[18], and female employees are hired in positions which requires soft skills (Li & Leung, 2001)[19].

Table 4. Years in Service

Years of Service	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 year (6 months above)	99	21.3
1-3 years and 11 months	203	43.8
4 -6 years and 11 months	111	23.9
7-9 years and 11 months	33	7.1
10 years above	18	3.9
Total	464	100

As shown in Table 4, 43.8% of the employees worked for 1 year to 3 years Sand 11 months. Respondents with 4 years to 6 years and 11 months in service is 23.9%. Employees who were regular but served 11 months and below is 21.3%, 7.1% of the respondents is 7 years to 9 years and 11 months. Least among the respondents were employees with 10 years in service and above with 3.9%. Employee length of service was considered to retain loyal and talented employees (Ezeuduji&Mbane, 2017)[20].

Table 5 Employees Level of Work Environment Job-Related Factors

Factors	Mean	Level
Organizational Culture	3.36	Very High
Psychological Safety	3.27	Very High
Relationship with Coworkers	3.22	High
Promotion Opportunity	3.23	High
Compensation	3.25	High

Among the five factors, organizational culture has the highest mean of 3.36 which means that organizational culture was highly observed in the accredited DOT hotels and resorts in Region XII. A well-established organizational culture creates an ability to increase employee job satisfaction, ability to solve the problem and total performance. Providing employees a guide to ethical standards, organizational culture imparted to each employee lead to individual engagement [21].

Relationships with coworkers appeared to have the lowest mean of 3.22 which means that selected hotels and resorts in Region XII have a high level of influence on employee engagement. According to Kim, Lee & Carlson [22], once the employee values the relationship with their bosses, there is a low chance of an employee to change jobs.

Table 6 Employees Level of Individual Factors

Factors	Mean	Level
Motivation	3.29	Very High
Skills and Experience	3.33	Very High
Work Attitude	3.42	Very High
Work-Life Balance	3.20	High

It is revealed that work attitude had the highest mean of 3.42 which indicates that employees of DOT accredited hotels and resorts in Region XII had a positive work attitude towards their work. According to Ahmed [23], employees who possess positive attitude relieve workplace stress. Employees are able to solve workplace problems easily, increases productivity and creates enjoyment at work. This is also related to toBoehlke [24] study where employees with the right attitude also influence co-worker to do the same.

The work-life balance had the lowest mean of 3.20. Though a high level of influence on employee engagement was observed this means that among the factors work-life balance was the least observed. With the 24 hours operation and three work shifts, work-life balance is important as it creates a negative impact if

the organization failed to address work-family conflicts [25].

Table 7 Level of Employee Engagement per Indicator

Indicator	Mean	Level
Say	3.31	Actively Engaged
Stay	3.28	Actively Engaged
Strive	3.45	Actively Engaged

The majority of the employees were found to be *actively engaged* and that they are proud to be part of the company. This is supported by Robertson-Smith and Markwick [26], he says that when employees are engaged, they have a sense of attachment to the company. Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker [27] also mentioned that one aspect to consider engaged employees is when they are dedicated, perform the tasks with enthusiasm, inspiration, and pride as indicated in statement number three “*I would recommend the company as a great place to work*” of indicator Say. With statement number two of indicator Say “*I feel optimistic about my job*”, this is also supported by the statement of Aon Hewitt [16], that engaged employees feel positive about the job.

Study of Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova [28] also supports the statement number one “*I take my job seriously to avoid mistakes*” and three “*I do my best to achieve the expectations set by my organization*” of indicator Strive, that when an employee is already engaged he has the sense of energy to connect with work activities effectively and can deal well with the demands of the job. Which is also further supported by Robinson, Perryman, &Hayday[29], that employee is reliable and go beyond expectation.

A stepwise multiple regression analysis (MRA) was used to determine factors that drive employee engagement in terms of say, stay and strive.

Table 8 presents the significant variables that drive employee engagement. Using MRA, the factors that would drive employee engagement at work in terms of SAY are work attitude, work-life balance, skills and expertise, and organizational culture. Possessing the right attitude at work contributes productivity at work and is reflected in the relationship with other people [24] and providing a duty timing schedule improves employees' work-life balance [30].

Table 8. Significant Variables that Drives Employee Engagement

Factors	Say		Stay		Strive	
	p-value	Beta coefficient	p-value	Beta coefficient	p-value	Beta coefficient
Work Attitude	.000	.308	.000	.210	.000	.425
Work-Life Balance	.000	.236	.000	.273	.000	.169
Skills and Expertise	.003	.158	.000	.254	.020	.194
Organizational Culture	.001	.126			.001	.139
Motivation	.007	.117	.012	.116	.000	-.102
Promotion Opportunity			.016	.093	.012	.128
R ²	.817		.813		.814	

Significance at .05

Under the work environment job-related factors, only organizational culture appeared to be significant. The organizational culture of hotels and resorts beliefs and values are in line with the employee's beliefs. The result is further supported by the study of Schermerhorn et al.,[31] that organizational culture is a powerful way to control and manages employee behaviors.

Factors that drive employee engagement in terms of STAY is explained by five variables, work attitude, work-life balance, skills and expertise, motivation and promotion opportunity. With employees being able to perform a specific task that is his/her acquired knowledge, skills and abilities had a direct influence on job performance [32] and are perceived more engaged at work and lead to better service [33]. In which when an employee knows there is an opportunity for promotion is positively correlated with job satisfaction and an intention to stay in the company [34]. However, according to Decenzo&Robbins[35], the desire for promotion also depend on the employee's working attitude. Among the respondents, 80.1% belong to the millennials. Younger employees are more desirous to move quickly upward with their careers [36]. Promotion opportunity appeared to be significant to drive employee engagement since most of the respondents are millennials and hoping for career development in the organization.

Factors like work attitude, motivation, work-life balance, organizational culture, skills and expertise, and promotion opportunity drive employee engagement in terms of Strive. However, this may imply that if there are more employees who will

strive, promotion opportunity decreases. There are 80.1% of the respondents are millennials and were found to be highly engaged. Hotels and resorts organizational culture drive employees to be engaged for it conform to employee's beliefs and values. In which the result is supported by Schermerhorn, Osborn, Uhl-Bien and Hunt[31] that culture is a powerful way to control and manage employees' behavior. Millennials are also driven by the opportunity to promoted since they are still young and full of energy.

Hotels and Resort Star Rating as Moderating Variable

To test the moderating effects of hotels and resorts star rating a Hierarchical Regression Analysis was applied. The use of HRA method to the moderating variable star rating was entered in block 1 and significant independent variables were entered in block 2.

Table 9. Model Summary

Model	Say		Stay		Strive	
	R ²	p-value	R ²	p-value	R ²	p-value
1	.817	.000	.813	.000	.814	.000
2	.817	.509	.813	.492	.814	.315

Table 9 confirmed the result that hotels and resorts star rating does not moderately affect the independent variable as the p-value of model2 where the moderating was entered exceeds .05. At the same time, model 2 indicated r2 similar to model.1

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study was conducted to analyze the look for factors that drive employee engagement in the DOT accredited hotels and resorts of Region XII. The majority of the respondents are millennials (below 25 years old- 35 years old) had been working in the company for one year to three years are single. Findings of the study showed that work environment job-related factors, organizational culture, and promotion opportunities are the factors that drive employee engagement. While under individual factors, motivation, skills and expertise, work-life balance and work attitude influence employee engagement.

Results revealed that regular employees of the DOT accredited hotels and resorts in Region XII were found to be actively engaged with their job. Consequently, employee engagement is not just a one-time process but a continuing goal which is a

challenge to Human Resource Manager or General Manager. However, the moderating variable *STAR RATING* has no moderating effect on the independent and dependent variables.

With the said conclusion, it is recommended that the employer may focus on the improvement of human resource programs that will improve employee engagement. These factors may contribute to the level of engagement of employees in the hotels and resorts. In order to motivate employees, human resource management needs to have solid compensation packages to inline with what other industry is offering.

Human resource management may also implement additional recognition to employees to boost morale and establish a training and development program. Hotels and resorts can actively participate in DOT initiated training. With this, employees can prepare themselves for any opportunities in the future and in addition to competency, employee efficiency, and effectivity.

It is also recommended that hotels and resort management can design a culture handbook in addition to the regular employee's handbook. Incorporated in the handbook is building a company towards self and compassion towards other employees. In part of this is a striking balance between career and family of the employees.

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