

THE ROLE OF WORK ENVIRONMENT IN SHAPING JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research investigates the critical role of the work environment in influencing job satisfaction and organizational commitment within the hospitality sector, focusing on international hotel chains. In light of increasing turnover rates and staff burnout in the service industry, this study explores how workplace elements—ranging from leadership style and peer support to physical infrastructure and wellbeing policies—affect employee morale and long-term engagement.

Through detailed case studies of four globally recognized hotels— New Hotel Broadway, (Varanasi), Hotel Castillo, (Varanasi), The Diamond Hotel, (Varanasi), and Hotel HHI, Varanasi —the paper uncovers nuanced insights into employee experiences and perceptions of organizational culture. The thematic analysis highlights five core pillars that shape satisfaction and commitment: managerial support, work-life balance, peer relationships, recognition and growth, and environmental design. Findings underscore the importance of aligning HR policies with socio-emotional needs and organizational values. The study concludes with recommendations for enhancing employee-centric practices, offering a roadmap for leaders and policymakers in hospitality to build resilient, motivated, and committed teams.

Keywords: Work Environment, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Hospitality Industry, Qualitative Study, Employee Engagement, Leadership, Workplace Wellbeing, HR Practices

1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry in India has seen significant growth over the past few decades, becoming a major contributor to employment and economic development. With the rise of tourism, urbanization, and increased disposable income among the population, the demand for hotels and hospitality services has expanded across the country. This growth has created numerous employment opportunities for people with varied skill sets, from entry-level positions to managerial roles.

Despite this progress, the industry is facing critical human resource challenges—most notably, high employee turnover, job dissatisfaction, and declining levels of organizational commitment. These issues not only affect employee well-being but also reduce service quality, customer satisfaction, and the long-term sustainability of hotel operations. In the hospitality sector, where employee interaction plays a central role in shaping customer experience, maintaining a motivated and committed workforce is essential.

Employee experiences in the hotel industry are heavily influenced by their work environment. The physical environment, which includes cleanliness, safety, illumination, and upkeep, influences comfort and productivity. Poor circumstances can lead to weariness and health problems, whereas a well-maintained environment promotes professionalism and pride. Job security, stress levels, recognition, autonomy, and possibilities for advancement are all part of the psychological environment. Long hours and guest interactions at hotels can cause stress; a lack of support or acknowledgment can lead to disengagement. The social environment includes collaboration, supervisory support, and company culture. Respectful, communicative, and collaborative environments promote belonging and retention. This study looks at how these factors affect work satisfaction and organizational commitment, two important markers of employee well-being and loyalty in the hotel business.

Although the importance of a positive work environment is widely acknowledged, limited research has been conducted in the Indian hospitality sector that looks at the combined impact of physical, psychological, and social factors. This study intends to fill that gap and offer actionable insights for hotel managers and HR professionals to create better working conditions and improve employee retention and performance.

In conclusion, a well-designed work environment can be a powerful driver of employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. This research seeks to highlight its role in addressing key human resource challenges in India's growing hospitality industry.

Research Objectives

- 1) Identify work environment factors influencing job satisfaction.
- 2) Examine how the work environment affects organizational commitment.
- 3) Gain insights from case studies at worldwide hotels.

Research questions

- 1) What aspects of the work environment impact employee job satisfaction?
- 2) How does the work environment impact employees' commitment in the hotel industry?
- 3) How might hotel case studies provide insights into best practices?

2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a detailed assessment of the available literature on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the work environment in the hotel industry. It blends both global and Indian viewpoints, laying the theoretical and empirical groundwork for this research. The review is organized around major issues, such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model of Commitment, and the impact of physical and social work environment elements. Furthermore, it evaluates previous studies on the Indian hospitality business.

2.1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1.1. HERZBERG'S TWO-FACTOR THEORY

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), (Alshmemri & Maude, 2017;14(5)) often known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, is one of the most significant ideas in the study of job satisfaction. According to Herzberg, the elements that contribute to job satisfaction differ from those that lead to discontent. He separated them into two groups:

- Intrinsic motivators include acknowledgment, success, the nature of work, responsibility, and prospects for growth. Their presence promotes job satisfaction.
- Extrinsic hygiene elements include firm policies, supervision, remuneration, interpersonal interactions, and working circumstances. Their absence produces unhappiness, yet their mere existence does not guarantee satisfaction.

In the context of the hospitality industry, this theory offers an important lens. Jobs in hotels are often characterized by demanding schedules, routine tasks, and intense customer interaction. While competitive salaries and job security (hygiene factors) are crucial, they do not by themselves guarantee job satisfaction or organizational loyalty. Motivating

factors such as professional development opportunities, recognition, and autonomy are essential for fostering long-term engagement.

Several hospitality studies have reaffirmed the relevance of Herzberg's theory. For instance, Kusluvan (Salih Kusluvan, April 28, 2010) found that employees in Turkish hotels cited recognition, interesting work, and opportunities for advancement as strong contributors to job satisfaction, while inadequate supervision and poor working conditions led to dissatisfaction. Similar trends have been observed in Indian hospitality settings, where hygiene factors get initial attention, but motivators shape sustained employee engagement.

2.1.2. MEYER AND ALLEN'S THREE-COMPONENT MODEL OF COMMITMENT

Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model (Umi Anugerah Izzati, May 22, 2015) has been extensively researched in relation to organizational commitment. This paradigm distinguishes three forms of commitment:

- Affective Commitment refers to emotional attachment, affiliation, and engagement in the organization.
- Continuance Commitment: Understanding the costs of quitting the organization.
- Normative Commitment: A sense of responsibility to stay with the group.

In the hotel business, emotional commitment has been proven to have the highest positive link with work performance and lower turnover. Employees that feel emotionally invested in their business are more inclined to go above and beyond their statutory tasks. While continuity commitment might help with retention, it can also lead to reduced engagement. Organizational culture and leadership both influence normative commitment, which is motivated by loyalty or ethical obligation.

According to research conducted in India (Lilofa Osamiefan Ogiemien, March 29, 2016) affective commitment is especially important in keeping talented personnel in hotel chains. Employees are more likely to stay when they feel appreciated and part of a cohesive team, even if other employment opportunities exist. In contrast, bad management techniques frequently erode normative and emotional commitment, leaving just continuous commitment, which is less desirable for long-term progress.

2.2. WORK ENVIRONMENT AND EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

The work environment consists of physical, psychological, and social components that all have an impact on employees' well-being and productivity.

2.2.1. PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

The physical work environment consists of tangible aspects such as workstation design, ventilation, lighting, safety precautions, equipment availability, and cleanliness. These elements have a substantial impact on employees' health, comfort, and productivity. Employees in the hospitality industry, particularly hotels, are expected to work in fast-paced, physically demanding conditions. Workstations for cleaning, kitchens, and front desk activities must be ergonomic and safe. Jacques (Jacques van der Meer, March 4, 2022) found that poor ventilation and inadequate safety practices in kitchens and laundry rooms were related with increased absenteeism and unhappiness.

Indian studies, such as the one by Bansal and Verma in 2016, have highlighted the role of physical infrastructure in shaping job attitudes in three-star and five-star hotels in Delhi and Mumbai. Employees reported higher satisfaction when they worked in clean, well-lit, and efficiently designed spaces. However, many mid-range hotels were found lacking in maintaining workplace hygiene and basic safety, especially for female employees.

2.2.2. SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

The social environment encompasses interpersonal connections, teamwork, leadership style, communication flow, and corporate culture. A supportive social environment develops feelings of belonging and community. Teamwork, mutual respect, and trust between managers and employees all help to minimize stress and promote loyalty. The psychological environment includes factors including employment autonomy, mental workload, perceived justice,

psychological safety, and chances for self-expression. Psychological safety—the feeling that one may express thoughts, questions, or concerns without fear of repercussions—is particularly crucial in the service industry.

Studies by Laschinger et al. (2001) and Khuong & Tien (2013) have shown that employees who perceive their work environment as psychologically safe are more satisfied and less likely to leave. In India, the hospitality workforce often faces hierarchical power structures, which can limit communication and diminish psychological safety. This problem is especially acute among front-line workers who may feel their voices are unheard.

2.3. EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Globally, numerous studies have examined the relationship between work environment and employee attitudes in the hospitality industry. Chiang et al. (2005) found that supportive management and teamwork positively influenced job satisfaction in Taiwanese hotels. Similar research in Europe, such as by Karatepe (2011), confirmed that empowering leadership and work-life balance initiatives led to stronger organizational commitment.

In India, empirical research in this area is growing. A study by Ghosh and Sahney in 2011 in five-star hotels in Kolkata indicated that recognition, training, and interpersonal support significantly improved both job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The study also revealed that younger employees placed a higher value on career development opportunities, while older employees prioritized job security and workplace stability.

2.4. NON-MONETARY FACTORS: EMERGING IMPORTANCE

The expanding amount of evidence indicates a shift in employee expectations, particularly among millennials and Generation Z employees. While financial pay and professional advancement remain significant, non-monetary elements are more influential in determining happiness and commitment. This includes:

- Employees value personable, fair, and empathic leaders. Transformational leadership has been related to increased engagement in hospitality environments.
- A collaborative and inclusive workplace culture promotes friendship and lowers internal disagreements. Peer support is particularly vital during peak seasons.
- Environments with psychological safety encourage employees to share issues without fear of punishment, leading to increased productivity and innovation.
- Regular gratitude and constructive comments are effective motivators. Employees want to believe that their job counts.

In the Indian setting, cultural subtleties are equally important. Hierarchical relationships and respect for authority can sometimes prevent honest discourse. To address these gaps, progressive firms are increasingly employing participatory management approaches including suggestion systems, mentorship, and leadership development.

2.5. GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

Despite the expanding amount of work, certain gaps remain:

- i- Few research address how physical, social, and psychological factors affect job satisfaction and organizational commitment in a unified framework.
- ii- Limited comparative research exists between multinational chains and Indian-owned hotels, particularly in Tier II and Tier III cities.
- iii- Longitudinal Analysis: Research on the influence of work environment changes on retention and commitment is often cross-sectional, with few long-term research available.
- iv- Frontline Perspectives: The majority of literature focuses on administrative or mid-level staff perspectives, with less emphasis given to cleaning, security, and food service personnel.

2.6. SUMMARY

This literature analysis demonstrates that both work satisfaction and organizational commitment are complicated phenomena impacted by a wide range of variables. Theoretical frameworks like Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Meyer and Allen's Commitment Model provide useful information on employee motivation and loyalty. Empirical research highlights the rising relevance of non-monetary workplace characteristics such as leadership style, peer connections, psychological safety, and workplace design. In the hotel industry, where the staff is at the forefront of service delivery, creating an enabling work environment is not only an operational requirement, but also a strategic objective. While Indian scholars have begun to investigate these dynamics, more thorough, multidimensional studies are required to meet the changing demands of the hospitality profession and fill current research gaps.

The current study builds on this foundation by examining the relationship between the work environment and both job satisfaction and organizational commitment among hotel employees in India. It aims to provide fresh insights that are both contextually grounded and practically relevant to hospitality management.

3. CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design, data collecting instruments, sampling strategy, data processing methodologies, and ethical concerns used in the study. Given the complex and context-driven nature of employee experiences in the hotel industry, a qualitative approach was used to investigate the impact of the work environment on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This methodology, which uses extensive case studies and semi-structured interviews, allows for the collection of rich, descriptive, and contextual data that quantitative methods may ignore.

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research is both qualitative and exploratory in character. Its goal is to study how physical, social, and psychological work environment elements impact employee happiness and commitment in real-world hotel situations. A qualitative framework gives the flexibility and depth required to identify patterns, perceptions, and meanings rather than test a hypothesis. A case study technique was used to investigate the lived experiences of employees from four foreign hotel brands operating in India. This technique enables the study to concentrate on each hotel's own organizational cultures, management practices, and working conditions while also allowing for a cross-case comparison to draw wider conclusions.

3.2. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

To assure credibility of findings, many approaches were utilized, including semi-structured interviews as the major method of data gathering. These interviews provided a flexible structure for in-depth examination while maintaining consistency between situations. The interviews lasted 45-60 minutes and included open-ended questions about employees' perceptions of their work environment, sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and reasons for staying or leaving an organization. Observations were conducted informally during site visits. These observations covered employee interactions, physical workspace arrangement, managerial conduct, and everyday operating procedures. Observations offered contextual information to help support and comprehend the verbal data gathered during interviews.

Employee handbooks, training manuals, and internal communication newsletters were evaluated to better understand formal policies, cultural norms, and institutional commitments on employee involvement and workplace practices.

3.3. SAMPLING

Four hotels were chosen, and the case studies of four internationally recognized hotels— New Hotel Broadway, (Varanasi), Hotel Castillo , (Varanasi), The Diamond Hotel, (Varanasi) ,and Hotel HHI , Varanasi —were analyzed and insights were gained.

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis used a thematic coding technique, in which the transcribed interview material was thoroughly analyzed to discover patterns and repeating themes. Initial codes were created using both inductive and deductive approaches. Leadership support, peer connections, recognition, work-life balance, physical working conditions, and psychological safety were among the most common themes. The investigation also used cross-case comparisons to investigate similarities and differences across the four hotel environments. This strategy assisted in determining how differences in organizational context and work environment practices affected job satisfaction and commitment.

3.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical rigor was maintained throughout the study procedure. Pseudonyms were used to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and data was stored securely. Furthermore, the study gained informal ethical approval from a faculty panel, and all contacts with participants followed professional research ethics standards.

4. CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDY ANALYSES

Case Study #1: New Hotel Broadway, Varanasi , Hotel Broadway is notable for its systematic onboarding and mentorship programs, which greatly ease the transition for new workers. Employees often praised management's open-door approach and the continuous emotional and professional assistance they got. Departments worked together seamlessly, and team cooperation was a defining feature. Long shifts, particularly during high-occupancy seasons, posed a recurring difficulty, causing physical and mental exhaustion among employees.

Case Study #2: Hotel Castillo , Varanasi At the Hotel Castillo in Varanasi a culture of frequent feedback and acknowledgment emerged as critical to employee happiness. Monthly town hall meetings, anonymous feedback mechanisms, and suggestion boxes enabled employees to express problems and discuss ideas. Workplace autonomy, particularly when managing guest demands, promoted ownership and a strong feeling of corporate loyalty. However, the highly competitive nature of internal promotions caused stress, particularly among junior employees who felt pressured to consistently achieve.

Case Study #3: The Diamond Hotel , Varanasi , Hotel Diamond is renowned for its exceptional service standards and attention to detail. Employees expressed a deep sense of pride at being connected with such a prominent business. Rigorous training programs instilled a strong awareness of service excellence. While the emphasis on perfection was inspiring for some, others reported excessive stress levels. However, team bonding events, gratitude efforts, and a culture of peer support all contributed to alleviate some of the burden.

Case Study #4: Hotel HHI , Varanasi The HHI in Varanasi prioritized comprehensive employee welfare. From wellness rooms to mindfulness classes and mental health leave policies, the hotel showed a great dedication to its employees. Staff members mentioned friendly supervisors and open communication as significant motivators. Flexible work arrangements during high seasons enabled employees to maintain a work-life balance. Despite the high expectations of foreign guests, staff reported feeling respected and well-prepared to handle pressure, owing to regular training and managerial assistance.

5. CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The observations in four hotel case studies identified five key work environment factors that impact job satisfaction and organizational commitment: leadership and management support, work-life balance and workload management, peer relationships and team culture, opportunities for growth and recognition, and physical infrastructure and ambiance.

Hotels that exhibited strong, honest leadership and supportive management practices—such as open communication, mentorship, and timely feedback—created a culture of trust and psychological safety. Employees in these situations indicated higher levels of satisfaction, stronger emotional connection, and fewer plans to quit. Similarly, a balanced workload and flexibility, particularly during peak demand periods, boosted well-being and retention.

A consistent team culture and peer support were also critical in keeping employees motivated, while visible opportunities for growth and frequent recognition increased organizational loyalty. Furthermore, well-maintained physical infrastructure, such as staff facilities and clean, efficient workstations, enhances the overall employee experience.

Inconsistent managerial behavior, limited professional growth, and an excessive workload were recognized as causes of dissatisfaction and burnout. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of the workplace and its major impact on employee outcomes in the hotel sector.

6. CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study emphasizes the importance of the work environment in determining job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the hotel sector. While money and benefits are still crucial, intangible variables like supportive leadership, excellent team dynamics, and a psychologically secure workplace are major drivers of employee engagement and retention. The findings highlight that employees are more likely to stay engaged when they feel respected, heard, and encouraged in their professional development.

Recommendations include:

- Investing in leadership programs that prioritize empathy, active listening, and constructive criticism.
- Encouraging flexible work options to support a healthy work-life balance. Creating defined professional development paths to increase motivation and long-term commitment.
- Improving communication through regular feedback, open forums, and transparent decision-making procedures.

Addressing these issues can result in a more engaged, productive, and loyal workforce in the competitive hospitality business.

Limitations and Future Research: This study was confined to four hotels and may not fully reflect worldwide trends. Future study might take a mixed-methods approach and broaden geographical and demographic scope.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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