

Effects of Organizational Work Conditions on Employee Job Satisfaction in the Hotel Industry in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Employees are considered as the most valuable resource and asset to an organization. Qualified and motivated employees create and deliver value out of other organizational resources. Dynamic and progressive organizations endeavour to attract and retain the right people for the right jobs at the right time through creating and sustaining their motivation in changing circumstances. Employee job satisfaction is essential to customer satisfaction and organization productivity in competitive environment. Employees value work conditions as essential ingredients to their satisfaction; requiring regular surveys to determine and improve on variables that are critical to improving job satisfaction. The purpose of the study was to assess the effects of organizational work conditions on employee job satisfaction in the hotel industry in Kenya. The study adopted a decripto-explanatory study design, covering a stratified sample of 84 drawn from 170 employees of hotels in Nakuru, Kenya. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data; analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The study achieved a response rate of 80.85%. There was high employee job satisfaction with working conditions which had a strong and positive correlation with employee job satisfaction with correlation coefficient of 0.839. Satisfaction with remuneration was rated at 81%, with a strong and positive correlation with employee job satisfaction with coefficient of 0.854. Satisfaction with promotion system was rated at 79%, and was positively correlated with employee job satisfaction at 0.448. The overall employee job satisfaction in the hotel industry was mean-rated at 3.368 out of a total score of 5. The three independent variables accounted for 80% of variations in employee job satisfaction and were thus critical in employee job satisfaction. To improve on employee job satisfaction, the hotel management should provide training and development opportunities for staff to enhance their working skills; regularly review working conditions and other terms of service; specifically promotion system in tandem with industry trends to make it more competitive.

Key Terms: Organizational work conditions, descripto-explanatory, remuneration, promotion, employee job satisfaction.

Background

People constitute the greatest and most valuable asset to any organization. Qualified and motivated people create and deliver value out of other organizational resources (e.g. financial, physical and technology). Any progressive organization must therefore not only attract the right staff; it must create and sustain their motivation to work in continuously changing circumstances. Satisfied employees form source of competitive advantage. Job satisfaction has been a matter of concern and attention in any field of business. The rapid development and expansion of the hotel industry has also generated a lot of internal management problems; low level of employee job satisfaction with low service quality. Major factors affecting employee satisfaction in hotels include; long working hours, work pressure, the low level of treatment, bad working environment, less promotion opportunities, work unfairness and low salary level among others.

In Kenya, the hotel industry is one of the major industries that play an important role the country's socio-economic development. Whereas the performance of hotels is hinged on provision of quality service to customers, the challenge is to create motivated employees who can facilitate that endeavour. Therefore, job satisfaction plays a key role in the hotel industry (Dalton, 2003). Satisfied employee can provide good service for customers, thus increasing their loyalty to the hotel; as the customer is the most important key to organizational performance in the hotel industry. The hotel industry depends on employees to achieve their goals, implying that managers must consider employee job satisfaction because employee job satisfaction is related to service quality and work performance. Therefore, hotels must attract, develop, motivate and retain satisfied employees. This requires managers' deeper understanding regarding the employee needs, aspirations, attitudes and concerns. Heartfield (2012) argues that in order to create an environment for employee satisfaction, it is vitally important to know which factors most affect their satisfaction.

Research Problem

The work environment is a major determinant in employee engagement or disengagement. A study by Roelofsen (2002) indicates that improving the working environment reduces complaints and absenteeism while increasing productivity. There is adequate empirical evidence linking workplace conditions to job satisfaction (Wells, 2000). In recent years, employees comfort on the job, determined by workplace conditions and environment has been recognized as an important factor for measuring their productivity. The current economic development witnessed in Kenya has triggered rapid development of the hotel industry. The rapid expansion has also generated a lot of internal management problems with consequent effects on employee job satisfaction. Employee job satisfaction affects the quality of service in the hotel industry with a consequent effect on the degree of customer satisfaction. Therefore, efforts to improve employee job satisfaction can create satisfied employees with a positive effect on customer satisfaction. The hotel industry in Kenya experiences a number of employee related challenges including high rate of absenteeism, low morale and turnover among others; all reminiscent of low employee satisfaction levels. Studies on employee job satisfaction are particularly useful. Organizations must know how to manage a diverse group of workers because as this will aid in recruitment and retention of talented employees and ensure high levels of job satisfaction. Heartfield (2012) is of the opinion that in order to create an environment for employee satisfaction, it is vitally important to know which key factors affect employee satisfaction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of organizational work conditions on employee job satisfaction in the hotel industry in Kenya. The study focused on working conditions, remuneration and promotion as the major elements that affect employee job satisfaction.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descripto-explanatory research design; a combination of both descriptive and explanatory research designs. The design allowed detailed description and analysis of the variables under study; describing and presenting their characteristics and explaining their relationships without manipulation as supported by Saunders *et al.* (2009). The study covered a stratified sample of 84 out of a target population of 170 employees in seven hotels within Nakuru County, Kenya. The study covered all categories of employees; cleaners, cooks, waiters, clerks, supervisors and managers. A semi-structured, self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Before administration, the questionnaire was pilot-tested and subjected to reliability tests using Cronbach Alpha; resulting in a reliability coefficient of 0.8003 which was above the recommended minimum of 0.7 (Santos & Reynolds, 1999). Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics namely frequencies, percentages and mean, to explain the variable characteristics while inferential statistics including correlation and regression analysis were used to determine the variable relationships. The research hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Moment of Correlation. The study also conducted ANOVA tests to determine whether the postulated model worked while regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which the model explained the variable relationships.

Results and Analysis

The study achieved a response rate of 80.95%. Among those who responded, 56% were females while 44% were males, implying that majority of the employees in the hotel industry in Kenya are females. Majority of the employees (56%) were college graduates while 44% were high school graduates.

Working Conditions and Employee Job Satisfaction

Objective one sought to determine the influence of working conditions on employee job satisfaction covering aspects such as clarity of goals and objectives, working relations, workplace environment, quality and performance management. According to the study findings, most of the respondents (71%) confirmed that their hotels had clear goals and objectives with a mean score of 4.221 out of 5. The goals and objectives of the hotel are well communicated and understood by all employees as supported by 80% of the respondents. On working relations, employees respected and supported each other as supported by 97% of the respondents and a mean score of 4.176 out of 5. Employees were involved in decision making process (mean score, 3.926). It also emerged from 95% of the respondents that supervisors were very supportive in their work. The study also revealed that every employee was treated equally and with respect.

The results are consisted with those of surveys conducted by Society for Human Resource Management (2011) which revealed that employees value relationships with their supervisors more than benefits and compensation. Supervisors are always keen to develop a positive relationship with their subordinates to enable them learn their employees' strengths and weaknesses, making it easier for them to use the benefits of their employees' talents for the good of the organization. In the same study, it also emerged that building allies across the organization helps employees accomplish their work and organizational goals; making the workplace more enjoyable, thus increasing job satisfaction. The study revealed that employees did not experience any type of harassment in their hotels as supported by 89% of the respondents. The respondents

(88%) also confirmed that their hotels had good working relations. In general the hotels had good working relations with the support of 88%.

An assessment of workplace environment involved a set of statement which the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with them. The findings in Table 1 show that the atmosphere in the hotel industry was cheerful and pleasant as noted by 88% of the respondents.

Table 1: Workplace Environment

Statement/ item	Rating										
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somehow Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean
	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	
The atmosphere in the hotel is cheerful and pleasant	6	8.8	3	4.4	12	17.6	26	38.2	21	30.9	3.779
Decorations and arrangement of facilities are bright and cheerful	5	7.4	0	0	9	13.2	19	27.9	35	51.5	4.162
The hotel provides good & safe work condition	2	2.9	2	2.9	18	26.5	20	29.4	26	38.2	3.971
The hotel manager always helps employees when in need	1	1.5	1	1.5	17	25	26	38.2	23	33.8	4.015
My office / working space is adequate	5	7.4	5	7.4	8	11.8	21	30.9	29	42.6	3.941
I am provided with adequate furniture and furnishings	7	10.3	6	8.8	14	20.6	19	27.9	22	32.4	3.632

There was general satisfaction with all aspects of working environment as demonstrated by high mean scores; all above 3.6 out of a total score of 5. The results are in line with Baron and Greenberg (2003) who contend that workers would rather desire working conditions that will result in greater physical comfort and convenience. The absence of such working conditions amongst other things can impact negatively on the workers' mental and physical well being. Arnold and Feldman (1986) further argue that employees may use poor working conditions as an excuse to get back at management because they may feel that management does not appreciate or acknowledge their efforts or work done. The implication of such arguments is that organizations should always endeavour to create and improve working conditions to avoid such misunderstanding amongst employees in an effort to improve their job satisfaction over time as supported by Dulen (1998).

The study also assessed the quality of services offered in the hotels. According to the results (Table 2) the hotels had a strong focus on provision of quality service to customers as supported, high employees involvement in giving suggestions on how to improve service quality, allowance to freely interact with customers to understand their requirements; all with mean scores of over 3.8 out of a total 5, implying that service quality in the hotels was very high.

Table 2: Quality of service

Statement/ item	Rating										
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somehow Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean
	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	
My hotel has a strong focus on provision of quality service to customers	5	7.4	0	0	0	0	27	39.7	36	52.7	4.309
My hotel encourages employees to give suggestions on how to improve quality	10	14.7	5	7.4	3	4.4	15	22.1	35	51.5	3.88
I am allowed to freely interact with customers to understand their requirements	1	1.5	6	8.8	4	5.9	16	23.5	41	60.3	4.324

Regarding performance management practices, most hotels emphasized and promoted teamwork (92%), and emphasized fair competition in the workplace (84%). Further, 82% of the respondents noted that hotels practiced a fair and uniform evaluation system for all employees. There was clear communication and information flow at all levels as supported by 86% of the respondents. Most of the respondents (97%) clearly knew what was expected of them and that they received regular feedback on their performance (88%). There were regular training and development opportunities to help improve their capacities and recognition for outstanding performance. The study also revealed that hotels acknowledged and valued the work of their employees (87%). This was demonstrated by 75% of the respondents who confirmed having received additional rewards for a 'job well done. The results are consistent with those of many studies which indicate that acknowledging employees' performance through praise, awards and incentives is cost-effective way of increasing employee morale, productivity and competitiveness (SHRM, 2011). The aspect of management's recognition of employee job performance is often rated highly as an element of employee job satisfaction with over 80% (SHRM, 2011).

The study required respondents to rate on a scale of 1-5 their level of agreement to the contention that "In general, the hotel has created excellent working conditions"; 35% of the respondents somehow agreed, 41% agreed and 24% strongly agreed. This implies that all the respondents felt that the general working conditions in the hotel industry were conducive. The study revealed general employee job satisfaction due to conducive working conditions. The study revealed a strong positive correlation (0.839) between working

conditions and job satisfaction level with P-value of 0.000, less than the alpha of 0.01 hence establishing a high significant relationship between variables. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that “*working conditions have no significant effect on employee job satisfaction in the hotel industry in Kenya*”, was rejected.

Remuneration and Employee Job Satisfaction

Objective two sought to establish the effects of remuneration on employee job satisfaction. Various aspects of remuneration in the hotel were look at and their effects on job satisfaction evaluated. In general, the study established that there was high satisfaction with the remuneration package (salary and benefits) in hotel industry as supported by 81% of the respondents. The satisfaction level was measured through a number of statements on various aspects of remuneration in which respondents were required to indicate on a scale of 1-5, the extent to which they agreed with each of the statements.

According to the results on Table 3, 72% of the respondents were of the view that the hotels’ basic salaries were reasonable. They (72%) also acknowledged being adequately remunerated for their efforts. The study further revealed that pay and benefits were commensurate with employee skills and experience. Majority of employees (76%) felt that their salaries were fair compared to the level of responsibility. The study revealed high employee engagement as 70% of the respondents indicated that they could not seek employment in other hotels because they were adequately remunerated. Employees were also awarded bonuses when their performance was outstanding. Further, 76% of the respondents felt that their hotels’ benefit system was perfect. It also emerged from 66% of the respondents that same level of employees received the same salary and the hotels provided equal benefits for every employee as indicated by 61% of the respondents. There was generally high satisfaction with all the aspects of remuneration as demonstrated by high mean scores of more than 3.2 out of 5 (Table 3); implying that most employees in the hotel industry in Kenya are comfortable with their remuneration package.

Table 3: Remuneration aspects in the Hotel Industry

Statement/ item	Rating										
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somehow Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean
	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	
The hotel basic salary is reasonable	11	16.2	8	11.8	11	16.2	26	38.2	12	17.6	3.294
I am adequately remunerated for my efforts in the hotel	9	13.2	10	14.7	14	20.6	22	32.4	13	19.1	3.294
My pay and benefits are commensurate with my skills and experience	8	11.8	10	14.7	8	11.8	23	33.8	19	28	3.927
My salary is fair compared to other staff with the same level of	10	14.7	7	10.3	14	20.6	28	41.2	9	13.2	3.279

responsibility in other hotels											
I cannot seek employment in another hotel because what I am paid currently is adequate	17	25	4	5.9	9	13.2	24	35.3	14	20.6	3.206
I receive other benefits such as bonus when performance is good	15	22.1	1	1.5	12	17.6	28	41.2	12	17.6	3.309
The hotel benefit system is perfect	15	22.1	2	2.9	13	19.1	15	22.1	23	33.8	3.427
Same level of employees received the same salary in restaurant	12	17.6	12	17.6	5	7.4	22	32.4	17	25.0	3.29
Restaurant provide equal benefits for every employee	10	14.7	16	23.5	3	4.4	25	36.8	14	20.6	3.25

The study revealed very high (93%) employee job satisfaction level due to remuneration in the hotel industry in Kenya. Correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation (0.854) between remuneration and job satisfaction level with P-value of 0.000, less than the alpha of 0.01. This implies that remuneration had a significant effect on employee job satisfaction. Thus, the hypothesis which stated that “*remuneration does not significantly affect employee job satisfaction in the hotel industry in Kenya*” was rejected.

The results clearly indicate that employees enjoy a satisfactory remuneration system in the hotel industry in Kenya, thus contributing significantly to their job satisfaction. The results agree with those of a study by Oshagbemi (2000) amongst UK academics which established a statistically significant relationship between pay and employee job satisfaction. SHRM (2011) further contends that compensation has often remained one of the top five job satisfaction factors most important to employees; more than job security and relationship with immediate supervisor. In support of this viewpoint, Chung (1977) argues that if salaries are not market-related, this can lead to dissatisfaction and discontent on the basis that employees experience and qualifications are not consistent with the salaries they receive.

Promotion and Employee Job Satisfaction

Objective three sought to determine the influence of promotion on employee job satisfaction in the hotel industry in Kenya; through assessment of various aspects of promotion together with their effects on employee job satisfaction. The respondents agreed with the statement that “the hotel had created and practiced a fair, equitable and satisfactory promotion system” at 76%, implying that most hotels had created

and practiced a fair, equitable and satisfactory promotion system. There was high rating of various aspects of promotion as shown in Table 4; promotion rules and requirements were very clear (78%), promotion was based on employee's work performance (52%), hotels had a perfect evaluation system for promotion (81%) and that every employee had an opportunity to get promotion in the hotel (66%). However, it emerged from 62% of the respondents that promotion depended on the manager's decision, which the respondents were not happy about. The study further revealed that senior employees got advantages in promotion as compared to their junior counterparts as stated by 51% of the respondents. Although, 54% of the respondents felt that promotion in the hotels was fair to all employees, 54% indicated that it depended on one's relations with the manager. According to 84% of the respondents the job performance evaluation done by the supervisors was fair and based on clear performance standards. Generally, employees were satisfied with the hotel promotion policy (60%) and that opportunities for promotion improved their work attitudes (84%).

Table 4: Promotion and Employee Job Satisfaction

Statement/ item	Rating										
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somehow Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean
	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	
Promotion rules and requirements very clear in the hotel	7	10.3	8	11.8	19	27.9	16	23.5	18	26.5	3.441
Promotion depend on employee's work performance	14	20.6	18	26.5	12	17.6	8	11.8	16	23.5	2.912
Promotion depends the manager's decision	13	19.1	20	29.4	10	14.7	8	11.8	17	25.0	2.941
Restaurant have perfect evaluation system for promotion	3	4.4	10	14.7	25	36.8	15	22.1	15	22.1	3.427
Every employee have opportunity to get promotion in restaurant	15	22.1	8	11.8	12	17.6	17	25.0	16	23.5	3.162
senior employees get advantages in promotion	17	25.0	16	23.5	11	16.2	12	17.6	12	17.6	2.794
Promotion in the Hotel is fair to all employees	16	23.5	15	22.1	15	22.1	13	19.1	9	13.2	2.765

promotion depend on employee relations with the manager	16	23.5	15	22.1	15	22.1	13	19.1	9	13.2	3.088
Job performance evaluation done by my supervisor is fair and based on clear performance standard	4	5.9	7	10.3	12	17.6	22	32.4	23	33.8	3.177
I am satisfied with the hotel promotion policy	16	23.5	11	16.2	14	20.6	20	29.4	7	10.3	2.868
Promotion can be improve my work attitude	4	5.9	7	10.3	12	17.6	22	32.4	23	33.8	3.779

The mean scores on all promotion attributes were above average as they ranged from 2.765 to 3.779; implying that the respondents agreed with all aspects of promotion that were assessed. Based on the results, it is clear that promotion had an effect on employee job satisfaction. However, on employees' job satisfaction due to promotion, 58.8% of the respondents were dissatisfied while 41.2% were satisfied; showing high dissatisfaction level with the promotion system in the hotels. The level of promotion has a stronger impact on employee job satisfaction compared to recognition and achievement. This is on the premise that promotion to the next level results in positive changes in pay, autonomy and supervision (Arnold & Feldman, 1986). It follows thereof that lack of clear opportunities for promotion or the presence of a promotional criteria that is not acceptable amongst employees will cause employee dissatisfaction. Correlation analysis was used to establish the relationship between promotion and employee job satisfaction; revealing a positive correlation of 0.448 with a P-value of 0.000 less than the alpha of 0.01. This implies that promotion had a significant effect on employee job satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that "promotion has no significant effect on employee job satisfaction in the hotel industry in Kenya" was rejected.

Overall Employee Job Satisfaction in the Hotel Industry

In a scale of 1 – 5, the respondents were asked to indicate their job satisfaction (dependent variable) levels; where 13% of the respondents rated their job satisfaction as low, 46% rated it somehow high, 32% rated it high, and 9% rated it very high. This implies that majority of hotel employees were satisfied with their jobs. This is supported by an above average mean score of 3.368 which indicates high satisfaction level.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to establish the contribution of working conditions, remuneration and promotion (independent variables) to employee job satisfaction (dependent variable) in the hotel industry in Kenya. According to the results in Table 5, working conditions, remuneration and promotion accounted for 80% (R Square, 0.797) of the variation in employee job satisfaction in the hotel industry in Kenya. The

results also indicate that an estimation of employee job satisfaction using the model can only be wrong by 0.36%.

Table 5: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.893(a)	.797	.787	.35878

Predictors: (Constant), working conditions, remuneration and promotion

ANOVA test (Table 6) revealed an F-value of 83.584 and P-value of 0.00. Since P-value is far much less than the alpha level 0.05, it implies that independent variables contributed significantly to variation in the dependent variable. The results are consistent with those of a study by Wadhwa *et al.* (2011) which revealed a positive relationship between environmental, organizational and behavioural factors and employee job satisfaction. It implies that if the employees are treated equally and fairly and they are properly supervised, their level of job satisfaction can be increased.

Table 6: ANOVA Results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.277	3	10.759	83.584	.000(a)
	Residual	8.238	64	.129		
	Total	40.515	67			

a. Predictors: (Constant), working conditions, remuneration and promotion

b. Dependent Variable: employee job satisfaction

As presented in Table 7, an increase in working conditions, remuneration and promotion by one unit would increase employee job satisfaction by 0.218, 0.459 and 0.217 respectively.

Table 7: Regression Coefficient

Model	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T-value	P-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.463	.239		1.939	.057
Working conditions	.218	.098	.306	2.215	.030
Remuneration	.459	.123	.515	3.745	.000
Promotion	.217	.057	.223	3.793	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Job satisfaction

Conclusions

Generally, the overall employee job satisfaction level in the hotels in Kenya is high as a result of conducive working conditions, satisfactory remuneration package, and a fair, equitable and satisfactory promotion system. Most hotel employees are willing to continue working in their respective hotels without looking for jobs elsewhere. The fact that most hotels had clear goals and objectives which were well communicated and understood, made employees to remain focused and work towards the achievement of the set targets. The

workplace environment in most hotels in Kenya is conducive, characterized by a cheerful and pleasant atmosphere, bright and cheerful decorations, proper arrangement of facilities and adequate working space; all having positive effect on employee job satisfaction. Hotels in Kenya have a satisfactory remuneration package (salaries and benefits) commensurate with employee skills and experience, resulting in positive effect on employee job satisfaction. Most hotels had created and practiced a fair, equitable and satisfactory promotion system characterized by a perfect evaluation system, clear promotion rules and requirements. Though, every employee had an opportunity to get promotion, it mainly depended on the manager's decision. Promotion was also positively correlated and had a significant effect on employee job satisfaction. All the three independent variables (working conditions, remuneration and promotion) were responsible for employee job satisfaction. However, remuneration had the highest effect while promotion had the least effect on employee job satisfaction.

Recommendations

The study revealed a number of aspects of organizational work conditions requiring attention in an effort to improve employee job satisfaction in the hotel industry in Kenya. One, the hotels' management should provide equal opportunities for training and development to its employees to help improve their capacities for effective service delivery and satisfaction. Although, most hotels had a fair, equitable satisfactory promotion system, there is need for the hotels' management to form committee to oversee promotion other than relying on manager's decision alone. The management in hotels should regularly review employees' salaries and benefits to ensure that they are commensurate to their skills and work experience, comparable to the general industry practices; as this would boost their morale and improve their productivity.

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