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## Employee Engagement in Hotels: Comparison between a Four Star and a Five Star Hotel in Kolkata

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### ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is the point to which an employee is intellectually and emotionally attached to work and organization. It also reveals the values, commitment and the level of identification an employee has towards the organization. In hotels, employee turnover is high as employees take their jobs as stepping stone for permanent positions. It is therefore important to have an effective method to retain the employees as it effects the quality of the service which is dependent on employees. The paper aims to find the employee engagement across two hotels a five star and a four star hotel in Kolkata and comparing the reasons for high or low employee engagement. Fifty employees working in different levels and different departments were studied at each hotel. It was found that the degree of employee engagement was high in the five star hotel as compared to the four star hotel. The personal characteristics of employee have effect on the perceived employee engagement in the study units.

### Introduction

Defining employee engagement had been a difficult task, the main apprehension being amassing information about employee engagement and the absence of a general definition and measurement of employee engagement (Melcrum, 2005). Several times questions have been raised about engagement being a unique concept or whether it is a rebranding of an existing construct (Macey & Schneider, 2008). The term 'Employee Engagement' was first coined by (Kahn, 1990), "as harnessing of organization members' themselves to their work

roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances". (Rothbard, 2001) extended the Kahn's concept of personal engagement to work engagement as a resource-based motivational construct. In the beginning of this century, consulting groups like Gallup, Hewitt Associates, and Development Dimensions International, have considerable interest in bringing the concept of employee engagement for the organizations. (Ugwu, et al., 2014) stated that employee engagement as an attitude obtained with the satisfied work by the vigor, absorption, and dedication mainly expressed as a function of a job and also personal resources. Employee engagement is the degree to which an employee is cognitively and emotionally attached to his work and organization. From the above definitions, employee engagement is said to be a positive emotions, affection and dedication shown towards the organization by an employee. It also reflects the level of identification and commitment an employee has towards the organization and its values.

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## Employee Engagement and its Impact

The building blocks of any organization are the employees. Organizations across the globe is now more concerned about employees and are changing to the belief of 'Employee First' which is now replacing the 'Customer First' (Nayar, 2010). An engaged employee is said to be emotionally attached to an organization who is passionate about work, and concerned about the organization success (Sejits & Crim, 2006). The precursors of employee engagement includes rewards, recognition, job characteristics which is a part of observed organizational and the supervisor support (Hakanen, et al., 2006; Saks, 2006; Xanthopoulou, et al., 2007). (Bakker & Leiter, 2010) Stated that employees display extra performance with a positive work engagement. An engaged employee is an employee, who is aware of the business context and works with fellow colleagues on a daily basis to improve the overall performance of the organization. Engagement is a two-way relationship between employer and employee which helps in benefitting both organisation and individuals (Robinson, et al., 2004). (Caplan, 2013) Suggests that engaged employees are individuals in an organization, who feel that they are respected and treated fairly with opportunities for development and they contribute to overall success and the organisational goals. In an organization the employees not engaged are like human body without a soul. An engaged employee will perform outstandingly thereby achieving newer heights of excellence (Harter, et al., 2002).

(Slatten & Mehmetoglu, 2011) Observed the factors affecting the engagement of hospitality frontline employees. Their research concluded that strategic attention, autonomy on job, and the role benefit have a significant influence to employee engagement which is related to innovative behavior. United States Department of Labour estimates that a due to employee turnover the cost of replacing an employee is one third of the annual salary of a new hired employee (Lockyer, 2007). There is a large amount of employee turnover in hotel industry where the employees are leaving a hotel for another (Hinkin & Tracey, 2010) which leads to reduction in quality of service in hospitality industry (Lockyer, 2007; Walsh & Taylor, 2007). The condition of high rate of employee attrition is reported in India too (Singh & Singh, 2017). Hotel industry is labour dependent with about 40% total cost spent on wages and salaries and hence the need of an engaged workforce. The review of literature suggests some of the factors effecting engagement are leadership (Wallace, 2009; Hassan & Ahmed, 2011), pay and benefits (Towers Perrin, 2003), communication (Watson Wyatt Worldwide, 2007; Keegan, 2015), information about performance (Seijts, Mar/Apr, 2006; Adhikari, 2009) recognition at work (Blessing White, 2011; Kelleher, 2014), empowerment (Robinson, 2006; Lawler & Worley, 2006), and length of service (Robinson, et al., 2004; Hewitt Associates, 2004) towards an organization. The personal characteristics of employees such as age (Blessing White, 2011; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Simpson, 2009), gender (Modern Survey, 2015), marital status (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), and education (Lockyer, 2007) have significant impact on engagement. The

objective of the study is to measure the employee engagement among hotel employees in a five star and a four star hotel in Kolkata and also to evaluate the effect of employee personal characteristics on their level of engagement in the study units.

## Methodology

The study was conducted with the help of questionnaire to the employees of two hotels at Kolkata. The data was collected from the randomly selected 50 respondents in each category. The primary data was collected using a structured interview schedule. The employees were asked to rate in a 5 point Likert scale the various characteristics which impact the engagement of the employees. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and mean were used to describe the employee perceived level of engagement and inferential statistics such as Independent t-test and one way ANOVA was used to analyze the effect of personal characteristics on the employee engagement. The data collected was analyzed with help of SPSS. The various demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, education qualification, experience and star category of the hotel were considered for the study.

## Result and Discussion

Maximum respondents were in age group of 26- 30 years with 54% and 38 % in five star and four star hotels with minimum above 40 years. There was about 67% and 74% men in five star and four star hotels respectively. The study shows that about 52% are married in five star whereas only 38% are married in a four star hotel. Educational qualification with diploma and graduation was found higher amongst employees in five star hotels with 52% and 16% whereas only 34% diploma and 8% graduates were found in four star property. 30% respondents in both five and four star hotels were managers and 20% and 14% supervisors. 46% and 44% were having two or less years of experience, and 32% and 28% with two to five years' experience in five star and in four star hotels. The descriptive statistics was obtained for all the statements and mean calculated as in Table no1. A significant difference in mean was found between four star hotels and five star hotels about producing quality of work, proper training, employees in organization being helpful and treated with respect with five star hotels having higher mean. Difference in mean value were also found in statements, 'opinion and suggestions are considered in decision making process', 'good reputation as an employer', 'organizational goals provide meaningful direction', 'have opportunities to advance and take responsibility' with higher mean value in five star hotel. Difference in mean was found in 'feedback about work by managers and supervisors with proper line of communication', 'feeling energetic at work', 'proper technology and tools allow to deliver the best', 'feeling proud at work', 'recommending individuals to the organization' and 'feeling personally attached to work' have higher means in five star as compared to four star which suggest that higher engagement is found in five star hotel as compared to four star hotel.

**Table-1: Descriptive Statistic on Perceived Employee Engagement**

S. No	Statements	Mean	
		5-Star	4-Star
1	Producing quality work is a top priority within the organisation	4.64	4.02*
2	Proper training is been given on how to do a particular job	4.46	3.84*
3	Employees in the organisation are helpful when I have problem	4.74	3.98*
4	All employees are treated with respect	4.72	3.96*
5	My opinion and suggestions are considered in decision making process	4.48	3.44*
6	The organisation has a good reputation as an employer	4.76	4.10*
7	My supervisor creates a motivating and energising work place	4.58	4.08
8	The organisation goals and objectives provide meaningful direction to me	4.22	3.70*
9	I have been recognised for my work	4.40	4.00
10	I am satisfied with organisation overall benefits and salary package	3.85	3.18
11	The department /section provides the best product or service to the guest	4.40	4.18
12	Have opportunity in the organisation to advance & take greater responsibility	4.43	3.58*
13	Managers and supervisors let me know how well I am doing my job	4.54	3.84*
14	I feel enthusiastic and look forward to going to work	4.48	4.06
15	I feel exhausted at the end of the work day	2.28	1.92

16	I feel energetic at my work	4.40	3.82*
17	Proper technology, tools and resources allow me to deliver the best	4.12	3.78*
18	The work location is convenient to me	4.34	3.96*
19	My job is very challenging	3.98	3.92
20	I am proud of the work that I do	4.74	4.18*
21	I will recommend individuals to the organisation I am working	4.60	3.66*
22	Being member of the organisation is exciting for me	4.56	4.14
23	I feel personally attached to my work organization	4.40	3.78*
24	There is a proper line of communication	4.52	3.96*

There is a statistically effect on gender in the employee perception on training, organizational goals, role of managers and supervisor, feeling enthusiastic at work, and feeling proud at work. In marital status, significant difference was found in employees in organisation being helpful, opinions are considered, organizational goals provide meaningful direction, department / section provides best product or service, proper technology and tools are used , convenient work location was found to have significant impact on both four and five star hotels, personally attached to work organisation, and proper line of communication.

The result of one way ANOVA proves the effect of employees' age and education on different variables of perceived employee engagement. In education, feeling enthusiastic at work and feel energetic at work, being member of organisation, feeling personally attached to an organisation and proper line of communication had significant difference. In F ratio with age employees in organisation are helpful, employees are treated with respect, good reputation as an employer, satisfied with salary benefits and package has been influenced both four and five star properties, technology and tools deliver the best, convenient work location, and proper line of communication.

Table-2

## Employees Personal Characteristics and their perception on Employee Engagement

Sl.no	Statements	Gender		Marital Status		Education		Age	
		(t-statistic)		(t-statistic)		(F Ratio)		(F Ratio)	
		5 Star	4 Star	5 Star	4 Star	5 Star	4 Star	5 Star	4 Star
1.	Producing quality work is a top priority within the organisation	0.075	-0.227	0.323	1.676	2.208	1.607	-0.370	2.547
2.	Proper training is been given on how to do a particular job	-2.737*	-0.030	1.068	1.750	1.183	0.967	-0.424	2.168
3.	Employees in the organisation are helpful when I have problem	0.465	0.195	2.762*	2.272	1.585	0.988	2.263*	1.918
4.	All employees are treated with respect	0.255	0.155	1.951	0.407	0.676	1.810	0.146	2.748*
5.	My opinion and suggestions are considered in decision making process	0.265	-1.273	0.876	4.707*	0.679	1.350	1.237	1.246
6.	The organisation has a good reputation as an employer	-0.579	-0.912	2.097	1.739	1.359	1.725	-0.448	2.260*
7.	My supervisor creates a motivating and energising work place	0.564	0.602	1.532	1.018	0.840	1.402	2.901*	1.778
8.	The organisation goals and objectives provide meaningful direction to me	-3.048*	-1.632	0.450	3.405*	0.478	0.895	1.582	1.019
9.	I have been recognised for my work	-0.327	0.000	1.759	2.409	0.119	0.905	2.407*	1.640
10.	I am satisfied with organisation overall benefits and salary package	-0.663	0.833	0.991	0.311	1.055	3.019	3.720*	1.998*
11.	The department /section provides the best product or service to the guest	-1.943	0.552	3.710*	1.282	1.930	1.069	0.806	2.066
12.	Have opportunity in the organisation to advance & take greater responsibility	-1.698	-0.990	0.198	1.724	0.333	0.539	0.592	0.532
13.	Managers and supervisors let me know how well I am doing my job	-2.861*	-0.030	1.366	2.637	0.636	2.048	-0.997	2.168
14.	I feel enthusiastic and look forward to going to work	-2.697*	0.231	0.535	2.069	4.342*	0.930	-1.216	1.325
15.	I feel exhausted at the end of the work day	1.233	1.553	1.183	0.666	1.403	0.394	1.682	0.113
16.	I feel energetic at my work	1.105	-1.304	1.556	2.505*	5.570*	0.456	-1.773	0.942
17.	Proper technology, tools and resources allow me to deliver the best	-1.154	-0.545	4.793*	1.735	1.548	1.356	-0.026	1.969*
18.	The work location is convenient to me	0.935	-0.568	3.086*	2.876*	1.722	1.233	1.088	2.027*
19.	My job is very challenging	-0.386	-0.857	3.257*	1.169	0.177	1.440	0.640	1.163
20.	I am proud of the work that I do	-4.561**	0.110	3.375*	2.230	1.238	1.863	-1.461	2.009
21.	I will recommend individuals to the organisation I am working	0.285	-1.139	0.934	3.449*	1.111	0.086	0.227	-0.354
22.	Being member of the organisation is exciting for me	-1.835	0.294	0.064	2.047	2.919*	0.739	-2.230*	1.355
23.	I feel personally attached to my work organisation	-1.964	-1.704	0.298	5.234*	3.068*	0.490	-1.614	0.301
24.	There is a proper line of communication	-0.753	-0.708	2.145	2.910*	0.611	3.280*	-1.399	2.607*

\* Significant at 5%, \*\* Significant at 1%.

### Managerial Implication and Conclusion

The findings of the research are in the line with the earlier researchers (Lockyer, 2007) which suggests that higher education increases the engagement level of the employees. Poor Communication (Keegan, 2015) lead to low engagement level the same was found to be in a four star hotel as compared to a five star hotel. Research by (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) suggested that unmarried individuals were less engaged but the findings of the hotel employees do not align by it. The result shows that employees in both hotels have low level of perception on their benefits and salary packages. Managers have to work innovatively to design compensation package that attract, motivates and helps organization to retain the best employees on their payroll. The research findings have found that women in the organisation are clear with the goals and objectives of the organisation as compared to the men, which suggests that the male employees should also be briefed well about their goals and objectives for their future prospective in the organization. It is concluded that level of employee perceived engagement is higher in five star hotel than four star hotel in the study units. The personal characteristic of employee have effect on employee engagement.

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