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Systematic Review on Employee Behaviour to Retain Customer Loyalty in Hotel Industry

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ABSTRACT

Employee behaviour plays a significant role in retaining customer loyalty in the hotel industry. Since hospitality is a service-oriented sector, employees directly influence customers' experiences, satisfaction, and perceptions of service quality. Their behaviour, including politeness, professionalism, responsiveness, communication skills, empathy, and problem-solving abilities, contributes to building positive relationships with guests. Customers are more likely to revisit hotels and recommend them to others when they receive friendly, personalised, and consistent services. Employee behaviour also helps establish trust, strengthen customer relationships, and create a positive hotel image. On the other hand, rude behaviour, poor communication, negligence, and delayed responses can negatively affect customer satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, hotels must focus on employee training, motivation, performance management, and employee satisfaction to ensure excellent customer service.

Keywords: *Employee Behaviour, Retain Customer, Loyalty, Hotel Industry.*

INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry is one of the most important sectors of the hospitality and tourism industry. It plays a significant role in economic development by providing accommodation, food and beverage services, entertainment, and other facilities to domestic and international travellers. With increasing competition, changing customer expectations, and the growth of online booking platforms, hotels are continually focusing on improving service quality and maintaining long-term customer relationships. In this competitive environment, customer loyalty has become an essential factor for the success and sustainability of hotel businesses. Retaining existing customers is important because loyal customers are more likely to revisit the hotel, recommend its services to others, and contribute to positive word-of-mouth promotion.

Employee behaviour is one of the most influential factors affecting customer loyalty in the hotel industry. Unlike manufacturing organisations, hotels provide intangible services in which employees directly interact with customers throughout their stay. From the reservation process and reception services to housekeeping, restaurant operations, room service, and check-out procedures, employees

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play an important role in shaping the overall guest experience. Their attitudes, communication skills, appearance, professional conduct, and willingness to assist customers influence how guests perceive the hotel and its services.

Positive employee behaviour creates a welcoming and comfortable environment for customers. Employees who demonstrate politeness, friendliness, patience, empathy, honesty, and professionalism can make guests feel valued and respected. For example, a receptionist who warmly welcomes guests, a housekeeping employee who responds quickly to requests, or a restaurant employee who provides attentive service can create a memorable experience. Such positive interactions increase customer satisfaction and encourage guests to develop an emotional connection with the hotel. This connection can ultimately lead to repeat visits and long-term loyalty.

Furthermore, employee responsiveness and problem-solving abilities are particularly important in maintaining customer loyalty. In the hotel industry, unexpected situations such as booking errors, room maintenance issues, delayed services, or food-related complaints may occur. The way employees handle these situations can significantly influence customer perceptions. Employees who listen carefully, understand customer concerns, apologise when necessary, and provide timely solutions can turn negative experiences into positive ones. Effective complaint handling demonstrates that the hotel values its customers and is committed to their satisfaction.

Employee behaviour is also influenced by organisational factors such as training, motivation, leadership, working conditions, salary, job satisfaction, and organisational culture. Hotels that invest in employee development and provide a supportive working environment are more likely to have motivated employees who deliver better customer service. Regular training programmes can improve communication skills, cultural awareness, emotional intelligence, teamwork, and service efficiency. Similarly, employee recognition and rewards can encourage staff members to maintain professional standards and demonstrate positive behaviour towards guests.

In addition, personalisation has become increasingly important in the modern hotel industry. Customers appreciate employees who understand their preferences, remember their requirements, and provide services according to their individual needs. Personalised interactions help create a sense of belonging and make customers feel special. This approach is particularly valuable in developing customer relationships and differentiating one hotel from its competitors.

However, negative employee behaviour, including rudeness, lack of cooperation, poor communication, carelessness, and unprofessional attitudes, can damage the hotel's reputation and reduce customer loyalty. Therefore, hotel management must continuously monitor employee performance and establish effective human resource management practices. The objective of the study is to systematic review on employee behaviour to retain customer loyalty in hotel industry.

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jyoti, Rashid, M. C., & Bali, N. (2024). Customer loyalty and happiness are essential to the service industry's success in today's cutthroat market. This study looks at how staff members' professionalism, politeness, and problem-solving abilities affect patron pleasure and how they

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contribute to the development of enduring loyalty in the hotel industry. The study uses a mixed-methods approach and includes quantitative data gathered from 391 staff members and patrons of low-cost hotels in the Delhi NCR area. The results show a strong positive relationship between customer happiness and employee professionalism, politeness, and problem-solving skills, which eventually boosts customer loyalty. In order to improve customer satisfaction and foster enduring loyalty, the study emphasises the significance of investing in employee training and development, especially in these crucial areas.

Gunawardana, R.L., Gamlath, J.R. & Herath, D. (2024). This study looks into the connection between client loyalty and employee competency in Sri Lanka's hospitality sector. This study fills a significant knowledge gap about how knowledgeable and competent service staff affect long-term customer loyalty and guest happiness. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from the 384 respondents using simple random sampling. Staff knowledge, staff skills, staff attitudes, staff friendliness, and staff responsiveness are the five independent factors that were found in the literature. Positive correlations and significant associations with customer loyalty were shown by all five factors. The results show that in Sri Lanka's hospitality sector, employee competency is essential for fostering client loyalty. According to the recommendations, hoteliers may build enduring relationships with their customers and contribute to long-term economic success by emphasising employee development and fostering a service-oriented culture. This study offers insightful information that academics and business professionals may use to further investigate and reinforce the vital connection between customer loyalty and service quality in the ever-changing Sri Lankan market.

Wu, T.J. et al. (2023). To give the often-demanding nature of the hospitality sector during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is especially critical to comprehend the emotions and enthusiasm of hotel workers. This study creates a multiple mediation model based on the job demands-resources model and the conservation of resources theory to examine how frontline hotel employees with various work passions select emotional labour strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic and how these decisions affect their service quality. Using data from 206 front-line staff members at five-star hotels in China, a two-stage survey investigated how job passion affects emotional labour, which in turn affects emotional expression and service quality. The findings demonstrated that during the COVID-19 epidemic, emotional labour partially mediates the association between work passion and emotional expression, which in turn mediates the relationship between emotional labour and service quality. This study's theoretical and practical ramifications are examined.

Nguyen, H.T.T. & Nguyen, T.X. (2023). Businesses must accelerate digital transformation and compete to improve customer experience in the post-pandemic recovery green economy track, particularly in the hotel and tourist sector. Enhancing the guest experience is essential, as is comprehending the feelings and requirements of guests after their use of hotel services. For this reason, companies are depending more and more on online consumer reviews on reservation websites to learn what their customers want. Hotel managers may exceed client expectations and enhance overall service quality by knowing their wants and experiences. A particular model, technique, or instrument is required to investigate client emotions, even though hotel managers find

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online review analysis useful due to its applicability in business operations. A strategy for analysing online reviews of Vietnamese hotel services is proposed in this study. Using a data set of 20,551 reviews gathered from TripAdvisor, the study combines natural language rules with inferential statistics to investigate customers' opinions about Vietnamese hotel services in general and specific areas of hotel services. The main conclusions show that, with a satisfaction score of 78%, guests are most satisfied with the "place" element of hotels, while the "room" service aspect has the lowest satisfaction rate at 61.3%. According to these findings, hotel managers in Vietnam should give top priority to comprehending the feelings and opinions of their patrons in order to enhance service quality in areas where customer satisfaction is lower.

Lam, R. et al. (2022). In luxury hotels that serve to target global segments, frontline service staff play a critical role in creating unique, personalised experiences for high-value, discriminating customers. In order to deliver outstanding cross-cultural service experiences, emotional labour and cultural intelligence are essential, but they also place extra demands on front-line employees. The purpose of the study was to look at the relationships between different aspects of emotional labour, cultural intelligence (CQ), and job satisfaction among employees. Job happiness is influenced by intrinsic emotions, emotional dissonance, motivating skills, and skills. Senior hotel executives were also requested to examine the survey's findings in more detail. The main conclusions of the survey were (re)contextualized using this method, and managers used the results to guide their evaluations of work satisfaction, emotional labour, and cultural intelligence. Human resource management activities in upscale hotels were discussed both generally and specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sukhragchaa, A. et al. (2021). To conduct interviews with Mongolian employees of high-end hotels regarding their emotional intelligence and emotional labour, determine whether the components of emotional intelligence varied based on the variables, and investigate and define correlations between such variables as emotional intelligence, emotional labour, and job satisfaction. Employees at upscale hotels have been found to be emotionally intelligent.

Miao, C. et al. (2021). They must demonstrate the order in order to deliver excellent service, employees in the hospitality industry are emotional workers. Professionals with emotional intelligence (EI) should be able to provide exceptional service since they are better able to control their emotions and express the right feelings. The degree of correlation between work performance and emotional intelligence (EI) varies greatly amongst study papers. It is to sort through the conflicting results and determine whether or not EI can improve employee performance.

Humphrey, N. M. (2021). The effects of emotional labour on workers are still mostly unknown. This study assesses the relationships between emotional labour and burnout using 545 correlations from 175 important studies. Emotional labour, such as surface acting or deep acting, has both positive and negative effects on workers in meta-analyses. Furthermore, the meta-regression shows that collectivist and individualist cultures differ in the impact sizes of outcomes (such burnout and work satisfaction).

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Chehab, O. (2021). The food service managers maintain a constant level of service quality by standardizing operational components. Procedures must be followed by those doing these operations on the front lines. In order to do their jobs well, front-line employees must regulate their emotions and behaviour. In order to assess how work standardization and emotional labour affect frontline employees' emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction, this study employed the organizational role theory and the emotion regulation theory as its guiding theories. the relationships between emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and job standardization. The information was obtained from restaurants throughout Lebanon. Structural equation modelling was used to evaluate the correlations. (SEM). The workplace's standardization led to emotional labour, which has a negative impact on job satisfaction but a beneficial impact on emotional exhaustion. Additionally, job happiness, emotional tiredness, and job standardization are mediated by emotional labour. Both theory and practice pathways are affected.

Grobelna, A. (2020). The study explores and evaluates how emotional exhaustion is impacted by workload and supervisor support, and it examines the consequences for important employee and employment-related outcomes such as affective organisational commitment, intention to leave, and quality-of-service performance. (2021). Information was gathered from 162 hotel staff members in Poland using a survey questionnaire. The study's conclusions showed that workload and supervisor support have a significant impact on emotional tiredness, which significantly affects hotel employees' desire to quit and lowers service quality. Practical applications of this research include emotional management training and courses that keep hotel employees focused on delivering excellent service while avoiding emotional exhaustion.

Xin, G & Choi, J. (2020). This study explores the links between hotel employees' service attitude, service quality, customer happiness, and loyalty as well as the impact of hotel employees' service attitude on service quality. Hotel staff in Tianjin, China, were given a survey. The effects and linkages were tested using regression analysis and factor analysis. The findings indicate that customer satisfaction and service quality are significantly impacted by emotional intelligence and role clarity. In contrast to earlier research, which focused on hotel workers in Tianjin, China, job satisfaction does not. This indicates that enhancing service quality is not a determinant in job satisfaction for hotel employees in this area; rather, it is merely a result of their basic need to work. Additionally, this study shows that customer loyalty is significantly impacted by customer happiness and service quality. Only hotel staff in Tianjin, China, were included in this study. According to the study's findings, hotel management must pay closer attention to staff' emotional intelligence and role clarity in order to draw in and keep devoted patrons. This study determined the connection between customer satisfaction, loyalty, and service quality and employees' service attitudes. Understanding these connections can help management in China's emerging hotel industry.

Lee, Y.H. et al. (2019). They made use of a range of external factors, including moderator variables like emotional intelligence and better difficulties. The study examined how emotional exhaustion influences both work satisfaction and plans to leave, as well as how perceptions of customer feedback affect both. This study created and assessed a model of emotional labour using four moderating elements in order to fully understand the effects of emotional labour at service encounter

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points. A total of 577 trustworthy survey findings were produced by 579 emotional workers in the nation's service industries. According to study, emotional intelligence influences employees' surface behaviour, which impacts their emotional tiredness and job satisfaction as well as their intention to quit their current position, when they are aware of customers' emotions, both positive and negative. People who are more aware of their own emotions are more likely to recover from emotional tiredness, and they suffer more when their emotions and what they should do don't align.

Liu, X. (2017). The front-line employees of four hotels owned by a single hotel company were the subject of a questionnaire survey. It investigated the relationships between front-line hotel employees' emotional labour strategies and the factors that affect them (precursors and effects). Among hotel front-line staff, deep acting is more common than surface acting. Furthermore, there is a significant gender disparity in deep acting. Surface acting, shifting jobs, and emotional exhaustion are highly correlated. Front-line hotel employees have also voiced dissatisfaction with their positions and a desire to quit.

Igbojekwe, P.A. (2017). The primary goal is to ascertain the degree to which management and service personnel in Nigerian hotel companies understand the importance of providing excellent services and ensuring client happiness. Additionally, we looked into the connections between these three factors, client emotional enjoyment, and service quality as well as emotional labour (surface acting, deep acting, etc.). Likert-scale standard questionnaires were created for interviews. Hotel guests, managers, and customer service representatives. The SPSS 17.0 software was used to analyse it. The Z-test, the t-test, regression, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and correlation techniques were used to evaluate the hypotheses. The information shows that SA and DA are emotionally satisfied with the services they received. The preceding mentioned factors are adverse to SA and support DA. Customer satisfaction and service quality were found to be poor and unsatisfactory at 1–3-star hotels. Different approaches are used by workers in the hotel sector at all levels. Because service personnel are not familiar with the idea, it is not given the consideration it merits as a vital part of providing high-quality services. Our results show that labour has a major impact on customer satisfaction and service. The majority of hotel staff and management at the chosen hotels are still unaware of the facts. Frontline employees' emotional needs and their contributions to long-term viability and financial success are so undervalued. The aforementioned findings have important ramifications for Nigeria's hotel sector in terms of human resources. To effectively portray the important aspects of service encounters, hotel HR operations' emotional content and context should be analysed and prepared.

CONCLUSION

Employee behaviour is a fundamental factor in retaining customer loyalty in the hotel industry. As hospitality is primarily a service-based business, the quality of interaction between employees and customers significantly influences the overall guest experience. Employees are the representatives of a hotel, and their behaviour creates an impression that can determine whether customers choose to return or select another hotel in the future. Therefore, maintaining positive employee behaviour is essential for achieving customer satisfaction, building trust, and developing long-term customer relationships.

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The study highlights that employees' attitudes, communication skills, professionalism, friendliness, empathy, responsiveness, and problem-solving abilities directly influence customers' perceptions of hotel services. When employees treat guests with respect, provide timely assistance, and demonstrate genuine interest in their needs, customers feel welcomed and valued. These positive experiences encourage customers to revisit the hotel and recommend it to their friends, family members, and colleagues. Thus, positive employee behaviour contributes not only to individual customer satisfaction but also to the hotel's reputation and business growth.

Another important finding is that customer loyalty is closely associated with the consistency of service provided by hotel employees. Customers expect reliable and efficient services during every visit. Even small interactions, such as greeting guests with a smile, responding politely to enquiries, maintaining cleanliness, and addressing complaints promptly, can have a meaningful impact on customer experiences. Hotels that maintain consistent service standards are more likely to develop customer trust and establish a loyal customer base.

The study also emphasizes the importance of employee training and development. Hotel management should organize regular training programmes to improve employees' communication skills, interpersonal relationships, cultural awareness, emotional intelligence, and customer-handling abilities. Employees should be trained to understand different customer expectations and respond appropriately to various situations. Special attention should also be given to complaint management because the ability to resolve customer problems effectively can prevent dissatisfaction and restore customer confidence.

Employee motivation and job satisfaction are equally important in maintaining positive behaviour. Employees who feel respected, supported, and appreciated by their organisation are more likely to demonstrate commitment and provide quality services. Therefore, hotel management should create a healthy working environment, offer fair compensation, recognize employee achievements, provide career development opportunities, and encourage teamwork. Effective leadership and supportive management practices can also improve employee morale and service performance.

Furthermore, hotels should adopt customer-oriented strategies to strengthen employee-customer relationships. Personalised services, active listening, understanding guest preferences, and maintaining professional communication can help create memorable experiences. Management should regularly collect customer feedback through surveys, online reviews, and direct communication to identify areas requiring improvement. Employee performance should also be evaluated through customer satisfaction indicators and service quality assessments.

In today's competitive hotel industry, retaining existing customers is just as important as attracting new customers. Positive employee behaviour can provide hotels with a competitive advantage because service experiences are difficult for competitors to replicate. Although modern technology, online booking systems, and digital services have improved hotel operations, human interaction remains an important element of hospitality. Technology may improve efficiency, but friendly, caring, and professional employees create the personal connection that encourages customer loyalty.

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In conclusion, employee behaviour is a powerful tool for retaining customer loyalty and ensuring the long-term success of hotels. Hotels should recognize that satisfied and motivated employees are more capable of creating satisfied and loyal customers. By investing in employee development, motivation, service quality, effective communication, and customer-oriented management practices, hotels can build stronger customer relationships, increase repeat visits, enhance their reputation, and achieve sustainable growth in the hospitality industry.

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