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## **Impact of Customer Loyalty on Employee Engagement in Hotel Industry Based in Vadodara, Gujarat**

*Pooja Ketankumar Taware<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Satishkumar Bodla<sup>2</sup>*

MASTER IN SOCIAL WORK, HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, Faculty of Social Work, Parul University, 2020-2022

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### **ABSTRACT**

A range of antecedents, including staff behaviour, can influence a customer's entire experience of engagement with a company, and can affect a variety of constructs, including a customer's desire to remain loyal to a firm. Similarly, the customer's loyalty, behaviour toward his service, and encouragement influence the employee's behaviour, motivation, and engagement with his work. The study adds to the body of knowledge on employee engagement and customer experience by developing a descriptive testing design with a statistical and theoretical model that incorporates the construct of customer loyalty as an influencing variable on employee engagement in the hotel industry in Vadodara, Gujarat. Employee engagement is defined as an employee's degree of commitment as expressed via characteristics such as enthusiasm.

The creation of interventions to remedy the gaps in the employee-customer interaction could be aided by a better knowledge of the factors that influence employee engagement and the impact of customer experience on customer loyalty. The main takeaway from this research is that customer loyalty and employee engagement, as a construct, should not be overlooked, as the addition of a customer experience to the loyalty construct may improve and complement the prediction of employee performance and service, not only in the hotel or hospitality industry, but also in the service providing business to business environment.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Employee engagement refers to a person's enthusiasm for and dedication to his or her job. It's worth looking into employee involvement in customer loyalty in the service-based economy, since employees' performance can have a big impact on service quality. As a result, survey-based research will be used in this study to determine staff engagement in terms of customer loyalty.

The evident scenario is that hotel services and facilities are no longer considered luxury items and have become an essential component of everyday living. The demand for hospitality services over traditional services has increased dramatically in recent decades, resulting in fierce market competition. (Khalifa, 2018; Abd-Elaziz et al., 2015).

It is tough for hoteliers to service consumers and separate themselves from competition when their demands, requirements, and choices grow by the day (Hewedi, n.d.; Sudigdo et al., 2019). As a result, in the competitive service industry, building and acquiring competitive advantages are necessary as vital factors (Mohamud et al., 2017).

In most modern organisations, technology adoption is more than just using ICT to fill out some forms and records; it is also a tool that performs the process of identifying, collecting, analysing, measuring, preparing, interpreting, and communicating information needed by management to plan (Ameen & Ahmad, 2011, 2013b, 2014; Ameen et al., 2019). It is used to evaluate and regulate an organization's resources, as well as to ensure their proper usage and accountability (Ameen and Ahmad, 2013b, 2012, 2011) Increasing customer loyalty by providing unique features to customers has been a popular and commonly used strategy for gaining a competitive edge (Khalifa, 2018). Increasing market share through low-cost techniques such as discounting has serious consequences and a detrimental influence on financial performance these days (Alonso-Almeida and Bremser, 2013; Qoura and Khalifa, 2016; Schwenk and Shrader, 1993; Waddock and Graves, 1997).

As a result, service quality, rather than pricing, has become the most important aspect in distinguishing itself from its key competitors and gaining loyalty (Hwang and Chang, 2003; Kandampully et al., 2011a; Wu and Liang, 2009). Because of the overall advancement of technology (Alkutbi et al., 2019; Khalifa and Mewad, 2017), amenities, facilities, economic situations, and globalisation, the hospitality industry has been encountering the uprising trends of competitors and competitive environment, the determinant or critical factor that can be assessed or judged with other hotels has become so complicated and more relied on the service quality or delivery of service of hotels has become so complicated and more relied on the service quality or delivery of (Khalifa and Fawzy, 2017; Morsy et al., 2016). As a result, SQ is a critical component for hotels to increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, and financial success (Khalifa, 2018). Due to the importance of client loyalty, hotels are attempting to strengthen it through retention programmes like as loyalty cards, loyalty incentives, and bonuses (Abd-Elaziz et al., 2015; Husin et al., 2013; Sudigdo et al., 2019).

Understanding the elements that influence and determine client loyalty is crucial and critical since it may lead to a variety of benefits and advantages, including lower operational and promotional costs, more profit, and good recommendations (Abou-Shouk and Khalifa, 2017; Qoura and Khalifa, 2016). Taking everything into account, client loyalty may be viewed as a critical topic for the hotel industry's long-term existence and viability (Abou-Shouk

and Khalifa, 2017; Khalifa and Abou-Shouk, 2014).

The Indian hotel industry is promising to rise as one of the key sector driving growth in the services sector of Indian industries. The future of the hotel industry has always been linked to the future of the tourism industry in India. Hotel industry has recorded the highest growth by the inflow of foreign tourists as well as increased tourist movement within the country and it has become one of the leading players in the global. In India the prospects of the hotel industry drives with the change in the spending pattern and perception of the individual towards the hotel. The foreign tourists as well as the local visitors are now a days becomes more demanding due to the increase in the income level and status. Way back before 30 years there were no such requirements about the hotel. But as the time changes, there are frequent changes in the perception of the individual customers towards hotel. Hence due to the frequent changes in the demand of the customers, the hotel industry also shown the progress in the innovative in their area. As said earlier, in way back, customers of hotels generally prefer for the snacks, lunch dining or stay as tourist. But now days, peoples are shown the interest in hotels as a span for freshness, relaxation of the physic, official work etc.

Indian Hotel Industry holds a special place in the international world of hospitality. India is culturally the country which would be very well having the most diverse places in the world. In India Hospitality is a long running tradition. Whether it might be the majestic Himalayas and the stark deserts of Rajasthan, or the beautiful beaches and lush tropical forests, to idyllic villages and bustling cities, Indian land offers unique opportunities for every individual preference. Indian Hotel Industry has the best staff for hotels unlike employees in East Asian hotels who are charming and gracious, Indian staff is also grooming themselves to take initiative and discretion of decisions on the spot. Most are better educated and speak better English than their East Asian counterparts.

Today the accommodation options throughout India have become extremely diverse and unique from home stays and tribal huts to stunning heritage mansions and maharaja palaces. It could be from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Gujarat to Assam; there are different cultures, languages, life styles, and cuisines. This variety has reflected and increased by the many forms of accommodations, ranging from the simplicity of local guest houses to the government bungalows to the opulent luxury of royal palaces and five star deluxe hotel suites. In recent years the Indian government has taken several steps to boost travel & tourism which have benefited the hotel industry in the country. Indian Hotel Industry has been booming business and has also given a boast to tourism business in the country. Radisson Hotels India, Taj Group of Hotels, Park Group of Hotels, Accor Group of Hotels, Hayatt and ITC Hotels are some of the known hotels in the hotel industry that are famous for unique amenities and superb accommodation arrangements.

Vadodara, a rapidly developing industrial city, where the past is still alive in its traditional handicrafts, its culture and legends. A city of impressive contrasts, the ethos is reflected in the hotels of Vadodara with a fascinating harmony of traditional architecture and modern comforts. Its is known as the cultural capital of Gujarat. The hotel business is quite fast due to the best opportunities served by the industrial belt and the connecting city of western India. The tourists, commuters or the non localites prefer to stay and wishes to rest during their off shift in the hotels situated in the city. Being the center of the trading route it happens that people are attracted towards the city for business, trading, education, employment and leisure. The city gives stay in all segments i.e. Luxury, economy, budgeted, leisure, heritage and many more. Not only the city is near to the industrial area but also its near to the world's tallest statue "Statue of Unity", many heritage sites and cultural places which results to attract more people. Many international and national hotel brands has developed their hotel in the city for the business and to serve the standard of services to the guests with the trained staff. Thus, Vadodara city serves the best hotels.

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## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Significance of Study**

The significance of the study on impact of employee engagement on customers loyalty in hotel industry of Vadodara by the new researcher has increased due to rapidly changing business, technology and work culture in around city due to an increasingly skilled workforce and very competitive global marketing.

Employee engagement is very much essential to upgrade business of the firm and to motivate of employees in this scenario, for the development of self as well as the organization.

Thus, study on impact of employee engagement on customers loyalty in hotel industry of Vadodara is extremely important as it reveals and identifies the drivers of customer loyal and drivers of employee engagement and the areas where the organization can improve for the betterment of the organization as well as the industry.

- **Scope of Study**

The purpose of this study is to find out the influential factors of customer's loyalty and their effect on employee engagement in the hotel industries of Vadodara.

The hotel industry have so much of business growth and downfall because of the movement of the business. Hence the employees will have to satisfy the client's / guest's expectation and they are constantly under pressure in completing the work and handling services and competing the other hotels.

And all these depends on the motivation they gets from the loyal customers and their support. So this study will help to find the drivers and factors influencing customers loyalty and employee engagement and its effectiveness among employees and its impact on their performance, so that they can rectify it.

- **Objective of study**

1. To study various drivers of employee engagement.
2. To study various drivers of organisation for customer loyalty.
3. To study factors influencing the customer loyalty.
4. To study factors influencing employee engagement.

- **Limitation of Study**

The topic was such that it required vast and thorough study necessitating complete enumeration of the organization and analysis of several issues that considerable time which was a major limiting factor. Collecting information from people during the pandemic attack of Covid 19 corona virus was very critical. Through connecting them on virtual platform and borrowing some time to fill the questionnaire through google forms and getting permissions from various hotels of Vadodara to ask their staff to fill up the questionnaire from their hectic and tight schedule. Besides this, the issue of confidentiality was a tough obstacle to conquer. But finally persuasion won and the study was completed with a degree of comprehensiveness. Thus, the accurate data is not available. The employees sometimes might also tell lies about the information they don't have.

- **Research Design**

The research design used for the study is *descriptive* design. Descriptive research, also known as statistical research, describes data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon being studied. The description is used for frequencies, averages and other statistical calculations. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs, as it exists at present. In short descriptive research deals with everything that can be counted and studied.

- **Sampling Design**

Sample design used in this study is convenient sampling. Convenience sampling (sometimes known as grab or opportunity sampling) is a type of non probability sampling which involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population which is close to hand. That is, a sample population selected because it is readily available and convenient.

- **Sampling Size**

A sample size of 92 was taken, which consisted of employees of each hotels of Vadodara (3stars - 5stars) who were executives, assistant managers, managers and above.

- **Data collection tool**

### The Questionnaire

The questionnaire in the form of google forms consisted of 32 questions which were in closed ended questions.

- **Source of data**

### Primary

1. **Questionnaire-** a questionnaire was designed and administered to the human resource professionals and employees drawn from various levels and various departments in the organization.

### Secondary

1. Past studies and researches, news papers, manuals, company reports, house journal records etc.
2. Latest books and magazines on HRM and HRD.

- **Statistical tools used**

Statistical tools that are used in this study are percentage analysis.

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## FINDINGS

1. Out of 91 respondents majority 69% have not mentioned their name while the rest 24% have mentioned their name.
2. Out of 91 respondents, above half of the respondents 62% are male while the rest 37% are female.
3. Out of 91 respondents, nearly one third of the respondents were working in Grand Mercure Vadodara Surya palace while the very less number

of respondents responded from Taj Vivanta hotel.

4. Out of 91 respondents, nearly 40% of the respondents have 0-5 years of association with the particular firm while 13%, 15% and 32% of the respondents have 10-15 years, more than 15 years and 5-10 years of association with the particular hotel or firm.
5. Out of 91 respondents, nearly half of the respondents 49% have less than 25 years of age while 26%, 14%, 10% of the respondents are between age 25-35 years, 35-45 years and more than 45 years age respectively.
6. Out of 91 respondents, one third of the total respondents 31% are from Sales while the least of the respondents 4% are from security department. While 23%, 21% 14% and 7% are from Event operations, Restaurant, Front office and Housekeeping department respectively.
7. Out of 91 respondents, nearly one third of the total respondents 33% are on executive while rest are on assistant manager 24% and manager level 20%. The least respondents are from senior 12% and associate level 11%.
8. Out of 91 respondents, Majority agrees 63% , 29% strongly agrees and believes that what they do as a hospitality worker is important and proud to work in service industry while 9% were neutral.
9. Out of 91 respondents, nearly half of the total respondents 57% agrees and 25% strongly agrees to know what is expected from them at job while 16% are neutral and 1% disagrees.
10. Out of 91 respondents, nearly half of the total respondents 55% agrees and 25% strongly agrees to be feel respected at work while 16% are neutral and 3% disagrees.
11. Out of 91 respondents, Majority of the total respondents 71% agrees and 9% strongly agrees to have the materials/ resources available needed to do job right at work while 15% are neutral and 4% disagrees to have needful resources.
12. Out of 91 respondents, Majority of the total respondents 69% agrees and 46% strongly agrees to that Supervisor or someone at work cares about him as a person while 10% are neutral and 2% disagrees and strongly disagrees.
13. Out of 91 respondents, nearly half of the total respondents 47% feels that their opinions are been counted. 16% and 11% agrees and strongly agrees respectively to it while 21% and 4% disagrees and strongly disagrees to it.
14. Out of 91 respondents, Majority of the total respondents 69% agrees and 18% strongly agrees to that Supervisor or someone at work gives feedback on work while 11% are neutral and 2% disagrees.
15. Out of 91 respondents, nearly half of the total respondents 49% agrees and 10% strongly agrees and feels to have enough opportunities at job to grow and develop while 37% of the respondents fills neutral and 3% disagrees to it.
16. Out of 91 respondents, Majority of the total respondents 69% agrees and 18% strongly agrees and feels that there is someone at work that encourages his development while 11% are neutral and 2% disagrees.
17. Out of 91 respondents, 42% of the respondents have neutrally received recognition or praise for doing good work in the recent days while 14% and 13% of the respondents have agreed and strongly agreed on it. 22% and 9% of the respondents have not received any sort of recognition or praise in the recent days.
18. Out of 91 respondents, majority of the respondents 74% agrees, 7% strongly agrees and believes that they are evaluated based on the quality of his work while 18% of the respondents are neutral and 2% disagrees to it.
19. Out of 91 respondents, above half of the total respondents 58% agrees and 29% strongly agrees that they can make meaningful decisions at work while 10% remains neutral and 3% of respondents disagrees to it.
20. Out of 91 respondents, majority of the total respondents 79% work promptly with customer/guests while 18% and 3% work promptly often and sometimes respectively.
21. Out of 91 respondents, 65% and 27% to the total respondents feel full of energy in solving customers/guests problem or giving them services all the time and often respectively while 8% of the respondents feels that sometimes.
22. Out of 91 respondents, 70% and 24% to the total respondents feel strong and vigorous (powerful, spirited, active) in front of customers/ guests all the time and often respectively while 5% of the respondents feels that sometimes.
23. Out of 91 respondents, 64% of the respondents never feel like not going at work when their are many guests at the hotel while 32% of them feels that rarely and 4% of them feels that sometimes.
24. Out of 91 respondents, majority of the respondents 82% often likely to continue their duty for long shifts during peak seasons while 15% of the respondents do that all the time and 2% of the respondents do that rarely.
25. Out of 91 respondents, majority of the respondents 91% all the time feel happy when customer/guests praises for the service or work while 7% often praise them.
26. Out of 91 respondents, majority of the respondent 81% are known by the customer and have good relations with them all the time while 13%, 4%, 1% of the respondent often, sometimes and rarely known to customer and have good relations with them.
27. Out of 91 respondents, nearly half of the respondents 57% feels that the customer /Guests visits hotel all the time after good service while 25% and 15% feels customer often and sometimes visits hotel after good service respectively.
28. Out of 91 respondents, 60% of the respondent feels that his worth and dignity is been often valued while 18% and 15% of the respondents feels all the time and sometimes his worth and dignity is valued respectively. 4% and 2% of the respondent feels that rarely and never respectively.
29. Out of 91 respondents, majority of the total respondents 70% believes that customers often do refer them to others while 10% of the respondents all the time refers and 16% of them believes they do sometimes refers to others.
30. Out of 91 respondents, 43% and 38% of the total respondents responded that customers do complaint sometimes and often to higher authority if customer/ guests are not satisfied with the service respectively. While 10% and 2% of the respondents responded they rarely or never complaints.
31. Out of 91 respondents, nearly half of the total respondents 45% responded all the time customers rewards the service while 31%, 18%, 4% and 2% often, sometimes, rarely and never rewards the service respectively.
32. Out of 91 respondents, nearly half of the total respondents often need training while 3% of the respondents does not need any training for the better performance handling customer relations. 23% and 16% of the respondents responded to sometimes and often require need training in

handling customers relations.

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## CONCLUSION

Employee engagement methods should be used at work so that the staff that interacts with customers is focused on attaining customer pleasure and also retaining customers through customer relationships, matching product qualities to customer needs, and being trustworthy. These efforts will also aid in the conversion of a consumer into a loyal one.

Finally, we discovered some significant data, such as a large direct effect of employee engagement on customer loyalty. In addition, we discovered that employee engagement had a considerable impact on consumer loyalty. Therefore, despite the fact that there is no significant direct influence of employee engagement on customer satisfaction or loyalty, we discovered a considerable direct impact on that relationship via employee engagement as the mediator. Furthermore, this study has several limitations, such as the fact that the number of samples is still limited; therefore, for the main study, we recommend using a bigger sample size. This study was only undertaken in a few hotels; however, for future research, it might be extended to more hotels in Vadodara to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

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## SUGGESTION

In the era of the globalization the organization and service sectors has to face new challenges in the present context and achieve its objectives. It must be dynamic, desalinated efficient especially in the employee engagement related activities and business development with building the trust and loyalty of customers by providing employees better opportunity to grow and develop through training, development placement and promotion of its personnel or value and motivating them. The huge investment in the business is time to get familiar with the customer needs and expectation to run the business at a pace. The service sector or hospitality sectors demand better operational efficiency, better management, behavioral management and maintaining relations with all customers and guests at any cost.

For enhancing the effectiveness of the business in the hospitality sector one should always take care of the employees engagement towards his work and workplace and also towards the customer needs, drivers and factors influencing customer loyalty.

There are few useful suggestion which is implemented earnestly & sincerely may hopefully add to the luster & improve the employee engagement and customer loyalty for the business in the hotels.

- Training and development programme should be based on specific needs of the organization and its employees.
- Rewards and recognition to be given to the employees on weekly basis and to be showcased to the customers and guests and a fame of the organisation .
- Decision making authority to be given to the lower level employees and buildup the self confidence.
- One should value the shifts working timings of the employees during peak seasons.
- Feedbacks to be taken from the customers on mandatory basis and should accept negative feedback as challenge and must try to retain the possitive feedback.
- Customers must be valued and remembered on the special occasions to get the loyalty.
- Team work should be done when required to resolve any issue of the customer
- Incentives and perks to be given on the extraordinary work done by the employee of any level or department.
- Career opportunities and growth to be shown and deliver to employee for better performance.
- Proper work resources must be provided to the employee to assist the customer and give them best of the service.

Every now and then the employees should be encouraged to identify their own interests area to work upon and to be guided for the career also to be provide training which would enhance employee morale and also shift the burden from the superior.

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