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UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE ATTRITION IN STAR-CATEGORY HOTELS IN COIMBATORE: A THEMATIC EXPLORATION OF SELECTED DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION

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ABSTRACT

Employee turnover remains a major issue in the hospitality industry, especially in star-category hotels where outstanding service depends on a stable, skilled, and motivated workforce. This study examines employee turnover in star-category hotels in Coimbatore by adopting a qualitative approach based on secondary data sources. By reviewing existing literature, industry reports, academic journals, and studies on the hospitality workforce, the research investigates key factors that affect employee retention. These factors include employee well-being and mental health, employee engagement, diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, and opportunities for upskilling and reskilling. The study attempts to understand how these human resource practices improve employee satisfaction, organisational commitment, and workforce stability in the hospitality sector. Through thematic analysis of secondary sources, the research highlights the increasing importance of employee-focused workplace strategies in addressing turnover issues. The paper indicates the organisations that promote a supportive work environment, inclusive culture, meaningful engagement, and continuous professional development are more likely to reduce turnover and improve employee retention. The study adds to the existing knowledge of hospitality human resource management and offer insights for hotel management to create sustainable retention strategies in a competitive labour market.

KEYWORDS: Employee Attrition, Employee Retention, Star Category Hotels, Hospitality Workforce, Employee Well-being, Employee Engagement, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), Upskilling and Reskilling, Human Resource Practices, Organisational Commitment.

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality industry is one among the most labour-intensive sectors in the global economy. Service quality and customer satisfaction directly reflect how committed, professional, and well-performing the staff are. For star-category hotels in particular, the environment is intensely competitive; to deliver the exceptional service for customers, a stable, motivated and skilled workforce is crucial. However, hotel organisations around the world have found that employee

attrition is a major hurdle. When turnover is high, it does more than drive up the cost of recruitment and training – it can undermine operational efficiency and service levels, with a knock-on effect on overall performance.

This more apparent than in India, and in cities like Coimbatore, where the hospitality scene is developing fast. For HR practitioners and hotel managers here, getting to the bottom of why employees leave is of growing importance. The city has seen its share of growth due to tourism, industry and educational institutions, and while the proliferation of star hotels has opened up jobs, it has also made the battle for good talent fiercer. The staff may resign for various reasons: the stress of the job, poor work-life balance, a sense of disengagement or simply because their expectations have changed. To put together retention strategies that work, one has to examine what is driving them away.

Human resource management has been putting a spotlight on certain workplace dimensions in recent times. Well-being and mental health are top of the ladder. In an industry defined by long hours, odd shifts and the demands of high-performance customer service, the psychological toll on an employee can be considerable. Those organisations that make a point of supporting their people's wellness will see more job satisfaction and less desire to quit. An engaged worker is more productive and loyal. If they feel they are part of the organisation and are properly recognised, a bond is formed. Without that, the risk dissatisfaction and employees looking elsewhere. It is a dynamic that is very much at play in hospitality. The value of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) helps maintain a steady workforce. Organisations know that the equal opportunity and respect for person from different backgrounds is necessary to build a positive culture. In a service business, an inclusive atmosphere goes a long way in making an employee feel where they belongs and is treated fairly. Change is constant in this line of work. With the digital transformation and customers' demands, upskilling is no longer optional. Hotels that invest money in their employee's learning and career development are the one that will retain the employee. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attrition in the star hotels of Coimbatore. The secondary analysis from academic papers and industry reports to organisational data. The aim is to identify the key drivers of retention be it well-being, engagement, DEI or reskilling and, in so doing, offer some practical insights into hotel management on how to deal with these modern workforce issues ensuring the longevity of their operations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employee attrition has emerged as a significant concern in the hospitality industry due to its direct impact on service quality, operational efficiency, and organisational performance. In the hotel industry, various factors have been identified as contributing to employee attrition, including inadequate compensation, limited career growth opportunities, job stress, and unsatisfactory working conditions. Employee turnover is often the result of a combination of organisational and personal factors that influence job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Immaneni et al., 2019). Similarly, Gowri et al. (n.d.) examined human resource practices adopted by star hotels in the Coimbatore region and found that effective HR practices such as employee welfare measures, performance appraisal systems, training programs, and recognition mechanisms play a crucial role in improving employee retention. The study highlighted that employees are more likely to remain with organisations that invest in their professional development and well-being. Supporting this perspective, Muralidharan et al. (2024) investigated employee engagement and workforce turnover in the hospitality industry in Coimbatore and concluded that higher levels of employee engagement significantly reduce turnover intentions. Their findings revealed that engaged employees demonstrate stronger organisational commitment, increased job satisfaction, and a greater willingness to contribute to organisational success.

Prabhu et al. (2024) explored the role of training and development in selected star hotels in Coimbatore and observed that continuous learning opportunities enhance employee performance, motivation, and career advancement prospects. The study suggested that organisations that prioritise training and skill development are more successful in retaining talented employees. Saravanaraj et

al. (2012) examined human resource issues affecting employee retention and identified workplace stress, inadequate rewards, poor communication, and limited growth opportunities as major factors influencing employee turnover. The findings indicate that organisations must address these challenges to create a supportive work environment and improve employee satisfaction. Employee attrition is influenced by multiple organisational and individual factors, including employee engagement, human resource practices, training and development opportunities, workplace environment, and career progression. The literature further suggests that adopting employee-centric strategies focused on well-being, engagement, and continuous learning can significantly reduce attrition rates and enhance workforce stability in star-category hotels. Limited research has examined these factors collectively within the context of star-category hotels in Coimbatore, highlighting a significant research gap that the present study seeks to address.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, this study adopted a secondary research approach to examine the issue of employee attrition among star-category hotels in Coimbatore. The work concentrates on several key areas: upskilling and reskilling, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts, as well as the engagement, well-being and mental health of staff. The data from an array of secondary sources such as peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, conference papers, government and hotel association reports, and other dependable online databases. In order to ensure our conclusions are in step with the present-day realities of the hospitality sector.

A systematic look at this body of work was undertaken to pinpoint the drivers of attrition in these hotels. The information has been classified into four overarching themes for analysis: DEI, employee engagement, well-being and mental health, and the upskilling of the future workforce. By way of thematic analysis, the commonalities and relationships that emerge across different studies.

The objective is to gain insight into how such organisational practices bear on an employee's satisfaction and commitment, or their inclination to leave. The comparisons made between the Indian hotel scene, particularly the one in Coimbatore as it grows and the broader global industry. Reliability and validity were paramount; there have been selective in using only authoritative sources and have cross-checked the information to guard against bias. This secondary analysis is a clear picture of employee attrition along with some sound recommendations for hotel management on how to retain their employees and ensure a sustainable workforce.

FINDINGS

❖ Employee Well-being and Mental Health

According to the secondary literature, attrition in the hospitality sector is heavily influenced by the mental health and well-being of staff. Star-category hotels are no exception; the demanding places to work with their long hours, weekend obligations, shift patterns and the constant need to be on hand for customers. It is not uncommon for such an environment to take its toll, leaving employees physically run down, emotionally stressed and struggling to find a work-life balance. Research shows that when burnout sets in and organisational support is wanting, staff will look for other options. This is a pressing issue in Coimbatore's expanding hospitality market, especially for those on the front lines. Our findings point to a lack of attention to mental health as a major factor in voluntary turnover and a waning of commitment to the company.

❖ Employee Engagement

The clear link between how engaged an employee is and whether he or she stays on. People who are involved in what the organisation does and feel they are recognised for it are naturally more loyal and satisfied. Past studies have found that many hotel workers see little chance to have a say in decisions and don't feel their efforts are properly acknowledged. That breeds a certain apathy and severs the emotional tie to the employer. In star hotels where service quality is paramount, low engagement can be costly as it drives up dissatisfaction and pushes people to go elsewhere. The engagement to be one of the key determinants of attrition in this industry.

❖ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives

A review of the literature makes it plain that DEI practices are central to the workplace experience. An organisation that is fair and respectful of an individual's background, age or gender is more likely to keep its people. On the flip side, any hint of favouritism or a feeling that career paths are blocked can damage morale and prompt an employee to leave. The varied operations of a star hotel mean you will have a diverse workforce, but without structured DEI in place, retaining that talent becomes harder. The results show that a deficiency in these areas can make it difficult to build the kind of long-term commitment you want from your staff.

❖ **Upskilling and Reskilling for the Future Workforce**

Secondary sources confirm that retention is tied to career development. Today's employees want to see an investment in their professional future via training and advancement. With technology and customer expectations in the hospitality field always on the move, the need for adaptation is required. But if an organisation doesn't offer the right programs, staff will conclude there is no room to grow here and will seek it out in another job. For star-category hotels, a failure to provide adequate upskilling is reflected in higher attrition figures.

SUGGESTIONS

❖ **Put Well-being and Mental Health First**

Hotels of this calibre should be proactive about their staff's welfare. Comprehensive wellness initiatives: think flexible scheduling, stress management workshops and regular counselling or awareness sessions. If the organizations can foster an open dialogue around mental health and make sure people feel understood, the better job satisfaction and less burnout is seen.

❖ **Make Engagement a Priority**

Give the employee a voice in operational matters and show the value their input through regular feedback and appreciation. When managers are transparent and take time to acknowledge what has been done well, it cements the bond with the organisation and takes away any inclination to leave.

❖ **Be Serious About DEI**

Fairness should be written in the policies. From recruitment to promotion, the process must be unbiased and transparent. The system for redressing grievances and put on diversity training so the culture is truly inclusive. Management would do well to check in on how equality is perceived on the ground and act if needed. It goes a long way to building trust and keeping the diverse talent on board.

❖ **Open Up More Avenues for Upskilling**

Invest in the employee whether it is mentorship, cross-functional learning or leadership courses, give them the tools to meet the demands of the industry. This kind of investment in their future not only makes for a more capable workforce but also gives them a reason to stay. The analysis of the situation in Coimbatore's star hotels points to a number of factors at play when it comes to attrition from well-being and inclusivity to how much room there is for career growth. Tackling these with the right HR approach will pay off in the form of a more committed and stable workforce.

CONCLUSION

This study looks at what drives employee attrition in the star category hotels of Coimbatore and how modern human resource practices can be put to work to improve retention. The hospitality business is built on its people; without them, you cannot deliver the quality of service or customer satisfaction that is required. The keeping staff is an ongoing problem for the industry with repercussions for everything from profitability and operational efficiency to the consistency of the service and the culture of the organisation. The findings point to a multidimensional problem. Retention is not a matter of one thing but of a mix of organisational, personal and environmental factors that call for a strategic response. A key takeaway from the research is the part that well-being and mental health now play in an employee's decision to stay. Given the nature of the job in hospitality, the long hours, the shifts, the pressure to perform and the constant interaction with

customers, it is no surprise that stress and burnout are common. Found that who feel their employer has a genuine concern for their physical and mental state show more loyalty and job satisfaction. Hotels that put in place things like counselling, flexible schedules and stress management are better off when it comes to holding onto their workforce. The well-being is a strategic necessity for any organisation looking to manage its people in a sustainable way, not just an added perk.

The emotional tie between employee has to the company and its aims. The data show that where employees are made to feel valued and given a voice in decisions, turnover intentions drop. Good leadership and clear communication go a long way here. But if there is little appreciation or room to grow, they will look elsewhere. With the competition for good talent heating up, these hotels need to cultivate an environment where staff feel connected to the success of the business.

The impact of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) on whether an employee stays or goes. Today's workforce expects to be treated equitably. The study indicates that fairness in how you handle recruitment, pay and promotion is paramount. An inclusive culture that commands respect across different backgrounds will engender commitment; any hint of discrimination or favouritism will do the opposite. It is incumbent on the star hotels in Coimbatore to ensure their DEI practices are strong so that every employee feels empowered.

Change is also a factor. The industry is being reshaped by new technology and shifting customer demands, and employees want to keep their skills current. Those organisations that make an investment in upskilling and reskilling are in a stronger position to retain top talent. It gives the employee confidence and a sense of a future with the company. These learning programmes should be part of the HR strategy, not an afterthought.

While compensation matters, employee are also after psychological well-being, meaningful work and a supportive culture. A holistic approach to the employee experience is what will yield lower attrition and higher performance. The value of this research lies in its wider implications for workforce management in hospitality. As the sector adapts to the economic and social landscape, it must be understood that employees are strategic assets whose retention is tied directly to business outcomes.

By tending to their welfare, engaging them and offering them the chance to learn, hotels can build a workforce that is resilient enough for whatever comes next. To sum up, the level of attrition in Coimbatore's star hotels is the result of a complex dynamic between what the organisation does and what the employee expects. What is needed are integrated HR strategies that are proactive in supporting development and inclusivity. Such measures do more than keep staff; they underpin the competitiveness and sustainability of the hotel. It would be interesting for future work to dig into some of the newer workforce trends and test the efficacy of specific retention tactics in other parts of the industry.

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