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Leadership Styles of Resort Hotel Managers and Employee Work Engagement: Evidence from Resort Hotels in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The research problem of the study is the relationship between the leadership styles used by the managers of the resort hotels and the work engagement of the employees in the chosen resort hotels in Bulacan, Philippines. The study follows transformational and transactional leadership theory that embraces a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. The survey data were gathered in 130 employees working in 13 hotels accredited by the Department of Tourism by using the validated questionnaire on five leadership styles (authoritarian, participative, delegative, transactional, and transformational) and three work engagement dimensions (vigor, dedication, and absorption). Patterns and relationships between the variables were analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The results have shown that the most common managerial style is authoritarian and that the employees have a moderately positive rate of work engagement. Regression findings, however, do not have significant predictions of leadership style on the employee work engagement. The results indicate that the contextual and organizational factors can have rather a significant influence on employee engagement in resort hotels than the leadership style itself. The research not only provides an empirical evidence in a developing-country resort setting, but also presents a practical message to hospitality managers who aim at increasing the levels of employee engagement by adopting a combined leadership and human resource approach.

INTRODUCTION

The competitiveness and sustainability of hospitality organizations revolve around human resources. The service quality, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction in the resort hotels can only be maintained through employee engagement in service delivery because employee-guest interaction is a vital part of service delivery. Engaged staff can be more active, dedicated and ready to go beyond what the formal job requirements entail, thus engagement is a strategic issue among hospitality managers.

The positive and fulfilling work related state, which is sometimes described as work engagement, is one that is full of vigor, commitment, and absorption. The existing literature in hospitality and tourism management has linked work engagement to the lower turnover intent, better service delivery and increased organizational commitment. Leadership behavior has often been noted as one of the organizational factors that positively affect engagement, since the leaders determine the motivation, empowerment, and environment of employees.

The two types of leadership theory that have been widely used in the study of hospitality include transformational and transactional. Transformational leadership gives emphasis to the vision, inspiration and personal consideration as opposed to transactional leadership that gives emphasis on the structured interactions, incentives and corrective measures. The managers can also use authoritarian, participative, or delegative leadership styles in order to meet the situational demands in operational

settings like resort hotels.

Although the research on hospitality leadership is increasing, there is a paucity of empirical research studies that determine the relationships between various leadership styles and employees engagement in the resort hotels in the developing countries. To fill this gap, the current paper will discuss the leadership approaches of the resort hotels in Bulacan, Philippines, and how they affect the work engagement of employees. In line with applied and managerial orientation of Tourism and Hospitality Management, the hypotheses to be tested by the study are as under: H1: Authoritarianism style of leadership has a strong impact on employee work engagement. H2: The style of participative leadership has a significant impact on employee engagement in work. H3: Delegative style of leadership has a significant impact on employee engagement in their work. H4: Work engagement of employees is greatly determined by the style of leadership used (transactional). H5: The employee work engagement is greatly influenced by the transformational leadership style.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to test the correlation between leadership styles and employee engagement on work in hotel resorts.

Participants and Sampling

Respondents were 130 employees of 13 tourism-accredited resort hotels in the Province of Bulacan in

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the Philippines. The sample was purposely sampled on the basis of the accreditation status of hotels and respondents were sampled randomly, with ten employees each representing a resort. The sample size was calculated under the Raosoft sample size calculator and the confidence level was taken as 95% with the margin of error as 5%.

Research Instrument

The survey questionnaire was in the form of a survey designed in three sections namely the demographic profile, the leadership style assessment and the work engagement measurement. The leadership styles were authoritarian, participative, delegative, transactional and transformational dimensions and work engagement measured through indicators of vigor, dedication as well as absorption.

During reliability testing, the value of Cronach alpha of the leadership scale was 0.992 and the work engagement scale was 0.920, which is excellent internal consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

Once the approvals were obtained, the researcher administered the questionnaires personally to the respondents that were selected. The objectives of the study were explained to the participants who were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity on the basis of the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the acquired data was conducted with the help of descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (regression analysis). The measuring of responses was based on the seven point Likert scale with strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most of the respondents were married (65.4) and female (66.2). Regarding the tenure, 51.5 percent had two-five years of work experience, and 45.5 percent had less than one year of work experience, which shows that the workforce has had a moderate exposure to the industry. Authoritarian leadership was the most common managerial style perceived (66.2%), with participative (16.9%), delegative (7.7%), transactional (5.4%), and transformational leadership rated third, fourth, fifth, and sixth respectively. Moderately positive scores were obtained regarding overall leadership aspects, a composite mean of 5.22.

The employee work engagement recorded a composite mean of 4.66, showing a rather positive state of engagement. Interviewees indicated that their perseverance and dedication to work were high, whereas the degree of energy and enthusiasm was quite moderate. The results of regression analysis showed that the leadership style did not have a significant influence on employee work engagement ($p = 0.23 > 0.05$). This has

led to the retention of all the null hypotheses.

Discussion

The aim of this research was to investigate the connection between leadership styles and employee engagement in work in the resort hotels within Bulacan, Philippines. The results show that the most perceived style of management is authoritarian, with the level of employee engagement being moderate positive. But the style of leadership was not significantly related to employee work engagement.

Authoritarian leadership is common in the practices of management practiced in hospitality organizations, which are in hierarchical and collectivist cultural settings. The resort hotels are generally focused on efficiency of operations, standardization and adherence to service procedures, which can motivate managers to engage in directive leadership styles. As much as such leadership can improve control and coordination, previous hospitality research indicates that overreliance on such authoritarian practices can stamp out employee autonomy and psychological empowerment.

The lack of significant correlation between the leadership style and engagement implies that the impact of involvement on employee engagement in a resort hotel environment could be determined by a wider framework of organizational and context factors. The job demands resources framework indicates that interaction is encouraged when job demands are counterbalanced by job resources like fair pay, favorable working conditions, employment security, and chances of advancing careers. Resort hotels might be characterized by seasonal workforce, variation in workloads, and pressure on the customer; such elements may work together to be more influential on engagement than leadership behavior.

Regarding hospitality management, the findings indicate that there is a necessity to engage in integrated strategies. Although leadership development is still relevant, the managers of the resort hotels should also work on enhancing the work design, the employee support systems, and the organization culture. The congruence between leadership practices and human resource policy could be more efficient in terms of maintaining employee engagement, as compared to individual leadership style.

CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed how leadership styles of the managers of resort hotels affect the work engagement of employees in the chosen resort hotels in Bulacan, Philippines. Despite authoritarian leadership becoming the prevailing style of management and moderately positive levels of engagement reported by the employees, the style of leadership did not have a significant influence on the work engagement of employees. The results indicate that the use of organizational and job-related conditions, rather than the behaviour of the leader, can dictate the level of engagement in environments of resort hotels.

The research has added to the literature in the field of

hospitality and tourism management in that it presents empirical evidence based on a transition economy setting in a developing nation in a resort hotel. In practice, the results suggest that resort hotel administrators should align the leadership development programs with overall human resource and organizational approaches to improve the employee engagement.

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