

IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF EXECUTIVE LEVEL EMPLOYEES IN SELECTED FIVE STAR HOTELS IN COLOMBO DISTRICT IN SRI LANKA

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INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry can be identified as a major sector that Sri Lanka can earn dollars in terms of foreign exchange (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2021). According to the Department of Census and Statistics (2019), Sri Lanka earned 4.4 billion United States Dollars from tourism in 2018, with a revenue of up to 12% on the 3.9 billion United States Dollars of 2017. Five-star hotels earn a substantial percentage of income in dollars, which has the influence of creating Sri Lanka a more competitively valued destination for tourists giving in this currency. Employee engagement and employee job performance in the five-star hotel sector is a substantial factors that impact Gross Domestic Production in Sri Lanka.

Employee performance or job performance reflects the value added to an organization by a set of behaviors that contribute both directly and indirectly to organizational goals (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Job performance is a function of contextual behaviors such as counterproductive behaviors (CWB) rather than performance alone. (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000).

Employee engagement serves as a barometer for the commitment, motivation, and involvement of employees within their professional environment. A survey orchestrated by Gallup (2017) unearthed illuminating insights into the state of employee engagement in Sri Lanka. It was discerned that a mere 38% of workers exhibited engaged behaviors, indicating a fervent commitment to their occupational roles. In stark contrast, a worrying 54% conveyed feelings of disengagement, and another 8% pronounced themselves as being actively disengaged, suggesting that a significant portion of Sri Lanka's workforce might be operating below its potential (Gallup, 2017).

In an endeavor to comprehend the dynamics of teleworking software engineers, the Open University of Sri Lanka (Perera et al., 2018) pinpointed three cardinal factors influencing engagement. Paramount among these was the role of robust internal communication, reinforcing the axiom that clarity in communication is indispensable, especially for those operating remotely. Additionally, the sentiment of palpable supervisor support emerged as a pivotal determinant. Employees, when buoyed by the reassurance that their higher-ups are in their corner, tend to exhibit enhanced dedication and drive. Equally salient was the essence of teamwork; the sentiment of belonging and collaborating with a cohesive unit was deemed indispensable, even in decentralized work settings (Perera et al., 2018).

Pivoting to the hospitality sector, a study undertaken by the Sri Jayawardenepura University (Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2019) delved into the nexus between employee engagement and job performance, particularly zeroing in on hotel industry executives. Their research conclusively showcased a direct, positive relationship between the two, underscoring that employees who are intrinsically engaged are more likely to deliver stellar performance (Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2019). In 2005, Spanish researchers Salanova, et al. did a thorough

survey of people who work in the hospitality industry. More than 100 service units, like front desks at restaurants and hotels, gave information about organizational resources, employee engagement, and the service climate. Customers provided feedback on the effectiveness and commitment of the staff in these divisions. Structural equation modeling was used to look into the relationship between service climate, employee performance, and customer loyalty. In the context of a five-star hotel, executives play a critical role in the overall performance of the organization. Executives are responsible for managing and leading teams, as well as ensuring that the hotel is running efficiently and effectively. A study by Wang and Chi (2014) found that employee engagement is positively associated with the job performance of executives in the hotel industry. The study found that engaged executives were more likely to be productive, motivated, and committed to their work. They were also more likely to stay with their organization, which reduces the costs associated with employee turnover.

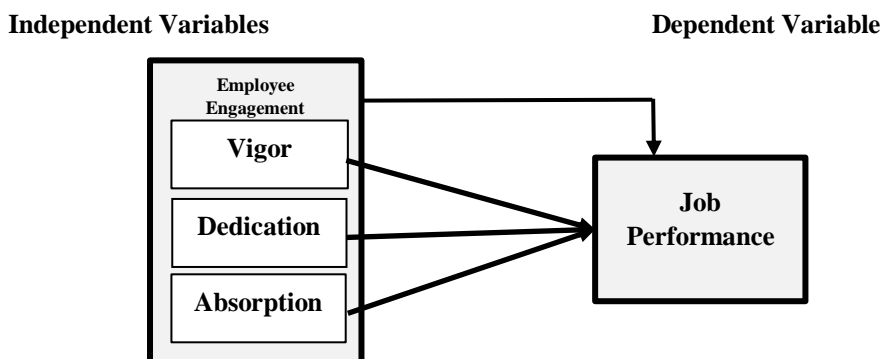
According to a study by Wang, et al. (2016), dedication is positively associated with job performance in the hotel industry. The study found that employees who were dedicated to their work and organization tended to have higher levels of job satisfaction, which in turn led to better job performance. This is supported by the work of Al-Tarawneh and Al-Lozi (2018), who found that dedication was positively correlated with job performance in the hotel industry in Jordan.

A study by Wickramasinghe and Liyanage (2018) found that absorption is positively correlated with job performance in the hospitality industry. The study surveyed executives in a five-star hotel in Sri Lanka and found that those who reported higher levels of absorption also reported higher levels of job performance. The study also found that absorption is positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which are both important factors in job performance.

METHODOLOGY

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



The following hypotheses were developed for the study.

H₁: There is an impact of Employee Engagement on the Job Performance of Executives in a selected Five-Star Hotel in Sri Lanka

*H*₂: There is an impact of vigor on the Job Performance of Executives in a selected Five-Star Hotel in Sri Lanka

*H*₃: There is an impact of dedication on the Job Performance of Executives in a selected Five-Star Hotel in Sri Lanka

*H*₄: There is an impact of absorption on the Job Performance of Executives in a selected Five-Star Hotel in Sri Lanka

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The deductive approach is the approach that works best for this study. The data used in this study were gathered by taking a cross-section of the population at one time, making it a cross-sectional study in terms of time. The method of research used in this study is quantitative.

Researchers selected executive level employees working at the five-star hotel in the Colombo District as the population. Approximately more than 1000 employees are working in this sector (Tourism Department, 2020). Simple Random sampling technique is used for this study. The questionnaire developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) was utilized as the measurement of employee engagement and employee job performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Reliability Analysis

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of questions
Vigor (EV)	0.732	5
Dedication (ED)	0.735	5
Absorption (EA)	0.724	6
Job Performance (JP)	0.795	16

The table shows the results of the reliability analysis conducted using SPSS for four dimensions: Vigor, Dedication, Absorption, and Job Performance. The Cronbach's alpha values for the dimensions are 0.732 for Vigor, 0.735 for Dedication, 0.724 for Absorption, and 0.795 for Job Performance. These values indicate high internal consistency reliability for all the dimensions, as they are all above the generally accepted threshold of 0.70.

Table 2

Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.865 ^a	0.748	0.746	0.161

a. Predictors: (Constant), EE

According to the table, the model's R squared value is 0.748. It demonstrates that 74.8% of Job Performance may be accounted for by Employee Engagement. The model's adjusted R Square value is 0.746. The number and the estimate's standard error of 0.161 indicate that the data has diverged from the fit regression line.

Table 3
Coefficients of Regression Model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	Coefficients β		
1	(Constant)	-0.307	0.176		-1.742	0.084
	Vigor	0.237	0.037	0.247	6.467	0.000
	Dedication	0.127	0.056	0.125	2.265	0.025
	Absorption	0.715	0.051	0.720	14.083	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: JP

According to the regression results, H₁, H₂, H₃, and H₄ can be accepted as the sig values are less than 0.05.

Table 3
ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.595	3	4.198	236.457	0.000 ^b
	Residual	2.592	146	0.018		
	Total	15.187	149			

a. Dependent Variable: JP
b. Predictors: (Constant), EA, EV, ED

The ANOVA table shows that the regression model is significant with an F-value of 236.457 and a p-value less than 0.05, indicating that the predictor variables are significantly related to the dependent variable (Job Performance).

H₁ posited that employee engagement would positively predict job performance, H₂ suggested that vigor would positively predict job performance, H₃ hypothesized that dedication would positively predict job performance, and H₄ proposed that absorption would positively predict job performance. All of these hypotheses were supported by the data, indicating that each independent variable contributes significantly to job performance.

The recent study under discussion brings forth intriguing insights, shedding light on the role of variables such as employee engagement, absorption, vigor, and dedication. Drawing on the regression analysis, the study posits that the strongest determinant of job performance is employee engagement, evidenced by a B-value of 0.865. This implies that with every unitary increase in employee engagement, there's an expected increment of 0.865 units in job performance when other variables are kept constant (Christian et al., 2011). Absorption is another significant factor, having a beta value of 0.720, resonating with the tenets of flow

theory which suggests optimal performance when individuals are deeply absorbed in their tasks (Wang & Chi, 2012).

While vigor and dedication might exhibit lower beta values in comparison, they too positively contribute to job performance. Studies have highlighted a positive correlation between dedication and performance with engagement mediating this relationship (Bakker et al., 2004). Vigor, although not as extensively explored as the other variables, shows promising potential with Halbesleben and Buckley (2004) finding a positive correlation with job performance, again mediated by engagement.

To encapsulate, this investigation seamlessly aligns with prior academic endeavors, underscoring the profound impact of employee engagement, absorption, dedication, and vigor on job performance (Bakker et al., 2004).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Since it is established that there is a substantial impact of employee engagement on job performance, it is recommended that the administration staff attempts to increase employee engagement, thus that the hotels can persist and expand performance. The study showed that there is an impact of vigor, dedication and absorption on job performance of the executive level employees working at Five-star hotels in the Colombo district. It is recommended to maintain cost-effective employee engagement strategies for organizations when there are no signs of revenue. The motivation of both individuals and teams, enabling exciting communication tools such as chat groups, and informal meetings might make an impact on employee satisfaction due to the virtual engagement. Caring for employee wellbeing through healthy meals and, healthy minds by Yoga programmers, and recognising their team spirit and performance by lunching small competitions can make a good sense for employee engagement and overall job satisfaction. It is essential to emphasize team spirit, training, open communication, and effective interrelationships to implement employee engagement initiatives as a boosting tool for job satisfaction in the domain.

Keywords: Absorption, dedication, employee engagement, job performance, vigor

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