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Impact of Employee Meals on Employee Satisfaction and Hotel Financial Performance: An Experimental Study

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ABSTRACT

It is common for hotel employees to receive several benefits tied to their workplace; in some cases, these benefits are in a nonmonetary form. Several hotel companies, in both developing and developed countries, offer employee meals as a nonmonetary form of benefits. By using secondary data on employee satisfaction prior to and post staff cafeteria renovation, this study investigated the impact of employee meals on employee satisfaction and hotel financial performance. The findings showed a significant and robust correlation among the quality of the employee meals, employee satisfaction, and financial performance of the resort.

Keywords: employee meals, fringe benefits, employee satisfaction, hotel financial performance

Introduction

By nature, the service industry is a people-oriented sector as employees, in conducting companies' daily operations, are interacting with customers (Ali et al., 2018). As in all for-profit organizations, customers are the ones driving profitability, and consequently, they need to be satisfied with the services they are being provided. This centrality of customer satisfaction in swaying financial performance tends to elude the fact that customer satisfaction and profitability of the company can only be made possible with high-performing and productive employees. To achieve expected results, employees also need to be satisfied with their work. In fact, the satisfaction of employees in an organization is of vital importance for the success of the organization (Jorfi et al., 2011; Naumenko & Schaller, 2019). The reason for that is that satisfied employees are more inclined to stay in the organization and more motivated to realize astonishing results (Latif et al., 2013). Majority

of employers offer their employees a variety of additional benefits in addition to their salaries, and employee meals is one of them (Horton, 2020).

In industries such as hospitality and tourism, the satisfaction of employees needs to be put at the core of the organization, as their attitudes and behaviors in the workplace define the perception of the overall service and contribute to determining if customers are satisfied (Zhang, 2018). The hospitality industry is one in which the turnover rate is high (National Restaurant Association, 2019). Thus, sustaining employee satisfaction can be viewed as a critical factor of success for the industry, primarily since employees represent the intangible assets of companies. This is mainly because retaining employees, which is a function of employee satisfaction, became a critical issue faced by the hospitality and tourism industry over the years (Matzler & Renzl, 2007; Fu et al., 2020).

Over the years, it has become clear that employee satisfaction contributes indirectly to financial

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performance in an organization (Koys, 2006; Hatane, 2015). A company taking good care of its employees will have them take good care of customers (Loveman, 1998). The satisfaction of employees contributes to organizational performance through productivity, and thus to financial performance (Matzler & Renzl, 2007), although there is no consensus on the latter (Fuentes-Fuentes et al., 2004).

Nevertheless, the concept of employee satisfaction is positively related to job productivity, which is, in turn, connected to firm profitability (Latif et al., 2013). There is a common assumption that the satisfaction of employees leads to the satisfaction and loyalty of customers, which in turn leads to higher sales and higher financial returns (Chi & Gursoy, 2009). Thus, initiatives and practices aimed toward increasing employee satisfaction are, therefore, critical for the success of an organization. The purpose of this research is to examine if the employee meals impact employee satisfaction in a hotel and overall hotel financial performance. This study is of particular importance to both the industry and academia as it uses real life data from before and after changes in a hotel.

Literature Review

Background of the Study

The business environment of today is much more competitive than before, and this is mainly due to globalization (Radović-Marković et al., 2019). According to Chi and Gursoy (2009), businesses are experiencing a constant race against time and therefore needs to adapt very quickly to reach success. One of the intangible assets of any service company is the employee's skills and behaviors; an essential part of the hotel experience resides on the quality of the interaction between the guest and the employee. A vast amount of studies has successfully proved that employee satisfaction is directly correlated with guest satisfaction (Chi & Gursoy, 2009; Hatane, 2015). The literature review for this study will be covering two sections, namely employee satisfaction and employee nonmonetary benefits.

Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction is defined as the satisfaction that employees have toward their work (Spector,

1997). The concept of employee satisfaction entails the feeling that employees have for their jobs, their experience in this job as related to past experiences, current expectations, and alternatives to this job (Kidd, 2006). A significant number of studies have aimed at evaluating how organizations can reach sound levels of competitiveness and profitability, and several studies agree that the most successful companies share three distinct characteristics, namely employee satisfaction, the strong performance of employees, and employees' engagement with the business (Luthans & Peterson, 2002). In fact, there is a consensus among researchers that employee satisfaction leads to employee engagement, which in turn yields excellent employee performance (Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Saks, 2006; Sundaray, 2011). In the service industry, employee satisfaction is essential to achieve quality and profitability in a company (Shah, 2014). The hospitality and tourism sector is people-oriented, and consequently, management should have as one of its top priorities the satisfaction of employees to deliver the highest quality services (Rajan & Pragadish, 2018). Without employee satisfaction, it is hard for a company to think of being successful (Yee, 2018). From this standpoint, the role played by employees in making an organization successful becomes amplified. Thus, it is very crucial to comprehend how employees can be satisfied and motivated to accomplish good and expected results.

There are conflicting research findings of the correlation between employee satisfaction and organizational financial performance across different disciplines. Although the literature confirms that satisfied employees perform better and contribute to the overall success of an organization (Bin, 2015), there are not many studies demonstrating the link and relationship between employee satisfaction and financial performance empirically. As a matter of fact, it would be tricky to affirm that employee satisfaction alone allows for better financial performance in an organization. According to Chi and Gursoy (2009), employee satisfaction does not have a significant effect on financial performance. In a similar study, Guo et al. (2004) argued that in the context of service industries, satisfaction and productivity could not both be positively associated with company profitability. Certain studies have concluded that there is an insignificant direct relationship

between employee satisfaction and financial performance (Ashton, 2017; Wiley, 1991). Tornow and Wiley (1991) have reported in their studies a consistent negative relationship between employee satisfaction (regarding aspects such as pay and benefits) and financial performance (Tornow & Wiley, 1991; Keiningham et al., 2006; Pritchard & Silvestro, 2005). Bernhardt et al. (2000) characterized the relationship between employee satisfaction and financial performance to be virtually nonexistent (Bernhardt et al., 2000).

The relationship between employee satisfaction and financial performance is mediated by customer satisfaction (Naseem et al., 2011; Chi & Gursoy, 2009), which has a direct relationship with financial performance. Constructs such as customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction have a positive correlation with sales production. The concept of employee satisfaction is very related to service quality and customer satisfaction, and customer satisfaction is linked to firm profitability (Naseem et al., 2011). This mediation of customer satisfaction in the equation between employee satisfaction and financial performance can be understood through the service-profit chain concept, according to which direct relationships exist between profitability, customer loyalty and employee satisfaction, employee loyalty, and employee productivity (Heskett et al., 1994). The service-profit chain has been used in previous studies as a theoretical base to assess non-financial measures such as customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, or loyalty, with regards to financial measures such as financial performance, revenue growth, or profitability. The concept can be seen as an attempt to understand the influence of management on firm performance as an influence on employee and customer satisfaction (Maxham et al., 2008). But for the purposes of this study, the positive relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction, on the one hand, and between customer satisfaction and financial performance, on the other hand, is assumed, allowing the opportunity to evaluate employee satisfaction effects on financial performance.

Satisfied employees are known to perform better and contribute more to organizational success than dissatisfied ones. Employees' devotion and good performances in jobs result in customer satisfaction, which translates to productivity, improved

business outcomes, and financial success (Naseem et al., 2011). It is already commonly known that a satisfied worker is a productive worker (Latif et al., 2013). Satisfied workers tend to display less absenteeism than dissatisfied workers (Latif et al., 2013) since these latter are less engaged in the work. The practical implications of these low levels of engagement can be higher absenteeism, higher turnover, lower productivity, recruitment, and training cost (AbuKhalifeh & Som, 2013). Many factors are in play when it comes to enhancing employee satisfaction, including financial benefits such as rewards, compensations or promotions, salary (Latif et al., 2013), and nonfinancial benefits such as guidance and training, physical working conditions, rules and regulations, reasonable workload, as well as recognition of contribution (Naseem et al., 2011), employee empowerment (Naseem et al., 2011; Latif et al., 2013; Ashton, 2017; Vijayakumar & Vivek, 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2016), the quality of working life, regular training (Ashton, 2017) and the retention policy. For example, in-service settings and changes in compensation rates can have an impact on employee satisfaction, which is indicative of their strategic and tactical effect on the performance (Dotson & Allenby, 2010).

Even though many companies provide formal rewards and recognition programs, a lot of employees still expect to receive day-to-day informal recognition regarding their offering and contributions (Hofmans et al., 2012). Financial rewards, such as bonuses or commissions, also contribute to increasing the satisfaction level of employees (Sarker & Ashrafi, 2018). The U.S. Department of Labor has established that employee recognition and appreciation are primary factors for employees when it comes to deciding whether to quit jobs (Holbeche, 1998). Therefore, organizations should view employees as internal customers and provide them opportunities to develop themselves within the organization to ensure employee satisfaction (Sarker & Ashrafi, 2018).

Employee Nonmonetary Benefits

Nonmonetary benefits gained initial attention in 2010 because of the economic downturn (Morrell, 2011) as companies lacked financial resources to offer traditional monetary incentives. These types

of incentives not only reflect lower costs for the company, but at the same time, they benefit employees intrinsically. It is common for hotel employees to receive several benefits tied to their workplace; in some cases, these benefits are in a nonmonetary form. Individuals are motivated by both internal (intrinsic) rewards, the reward of completing an activity is the activity itself and external (extrinsic) rewards, such as rewards outside of the self that one receives from completing a task (Morrell, 2011). Furthermore, nonmonetary incentives can also act as an extrinsic reward (Abdullah & Wan, 2013). Although nonmonetary stimuli act as extrinsic rewards, they do affect employee's intrinsic motivation (Akgunduz et al., 2019). Intrinsic motivation, although challenging to increase, has proven to be the more reliable predictor for job satisfaction (Lawler & Porter, 1967). Benefits, in general, are considered to positively affect job performance and employee satisfaction (Koo et al., 2019). Contrary to popular belief, monetary incentives are not the only motivator, not the main one (Sorauren, 2000). The aforementioned research argues that the best way to motivate people is to treat them as human beings; we may draw a conclusion based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs that a vital part of human needs are physiological ones, food being a part of them.

In several countries, employees of resort hotels receive meals as part of their job benefits (Erdem & Duman, 2016). A study conducted by Spinelli and Canavos (2000) lists job benefits as one of the top predictors for employee satisfaction. Kshirsagar and Mhashilkar (2015) identified employee meals as an incentive scheme. They further argue that employee incentive schemes not only help toward satisfaction but also morale and reduced turnover. In a different study, DeVries (2010) explains that having a personalized meal choice for employees helps to build a more productive workforce. Tepeci and Bartlett (2002) add that hotel frontline employees' satisfaction is impacted by organization factors. Ghiselli et al. (2001) emphasizes that benefit packages and quality of life of employees have a direct impact on satisfaction and dissatisfaction. A study that was set in Turkey by Erdem and Duman (2016) discovered that the way the employee meal was served positively affected job satisfaction. A similar study conducted by Erdem and Kalkin (2016) found that

the perceived quality of employee meals positively enhanced motivation. Employee's work attitude and level of motivation are impacted by the appreciation of meal services (Türen & Çamoğlu, 2015). Furthermore, Wanjek (2013) explains that free meal or meal ticket practices in both developed and developing countries have a positive impact on an individual's attitude toward work. Turen and Camoglu (2015) concluded in their study that the perceived appeal of meals played an important role in employee job performance as well as the setting of the dining hall. Larson and Luthans (2006) conducted a study looking at hourly employee retention identifying that employee meals were one of the most critical employment characteristics. Furthermore, the author explained that in that particular study, males attributed higher importance to free employee meals than females. In light of the literature presented, the following hypotheses have been developed:

- H1: Employee satisfaction will increase significantly as the quality of employee meal is increased.
- H2: Employee meal satisfaction will predict overall employee satisfaction.
- H3: Employee satisfaction is correlated with the financial performance of hotels.

Methodology

For this study, an experimental methodology was used with secondary data. The researchers worked with the management team of a resort hotel in the south of Turkey. The hotel implemented a renovation to its employee restaurant and its meal benefit offerings. Quarterly employee satisfaction data from the five-star resort hotel based in southern Turkey was collected before and after the employee restaurant and meal service was upgraded.

The resort decided to make two changes to their employee meal benefit service: 1) To upgrade the employee restaurant; (Figure 1 shows the pretreatment version of the employee dining room; Figure 2 shows the posttreatment version of the employee dining room) 2) to upgrade the meal service from Table d'hôte style (three-course fixed course meal) (See Figure 3) [pretreatment] to buffet service style (several choices for starters, salads, main course, and desserts) (See Figure 4 and 5) [posttreatment].



Figure 1. Pretreatment version of the employee dining room [pretreatment]



Figure 2. Posttreatment version of the employee dining room

Employee Satisfaction Survey

The resort used a 33-item employee satisfaction survey. Several items were adapted from Lee and Way (2010) and Shinnar (1998). The items related to the employee restaurant and meal quality were developed by the resort's human resources department. Job satisfaction was measured with four items. Data were collected on a monthly basis. The renovation to the employee restaurant was done in March 2019. Secondary data were obtained for three months prior (December 2018, January 2019, and February



Figure 3. Table d'hôte style (three-course fixed course meal) [pretreatment]

Source: stock.adobe.com



Figure 4. Buffet service style (several choices for starters, salads, main course, and desserts) (posttreatment)



Figure 5. Buffet service style (several choices for starters, salads, main course, and desserts) (posttreatment)

2019) the renovation and three months post the renovation (April 2019, May 2019, and June 2019). The number of surveys for the pretreatment period was 290, and for the posttreatment was 461. This difference was due to the fact that the posttreatment period is peak season; hence more staff members were employed.

Findings

A dataset with 751 employee satisfaction survey results was used for this study. Of the results, 290 belonged to the period before the employee restaurant was renovated and meal service was upgraded,

while 461 employee satisfaction surveys belonged to the period after the employee restaurant was renovated and meal service was upgraded (See Figures 1–5).

Table 1 shows employee departments. Kitchen and housekeeping are the biggest departments with 158, respectively, with 103 employee satisfaction surveys filled out from these departments. The highest survey participation came from these two departments as they are the ones who employ the most employees.

Table 2 shows the educational level of the respondents. Almost half of the employees (44%) had a high school degree, while 33.1% had a primary school degree.

Hypothesis Testing

H1: Employee satisfaction will increase significantly as the quality of employee meal is increased.

Two data sets were used to test the hypothesis. An independent t-test was performed to see if employee satisfaction increased significantly after the quality

Table 1. Respondents Departments

Department	Frequency	%
Kitchen	158	20.8
Housekeeping	103	13.5
Restaurant	103	13.5
Bar	78	10.2
Dishwashing	62	8.1
Engineering	51	6.7
Front Desk	29	3.8
Security	26	3.4
Accounting	21	2.8
Missing	19	2.5
Animation	18	2.4
Garden	14	1.8
General Admin	12	1.6
Human Resources	12	1.6
Guest Services	9	1.2
Purchasing	8	1.1
A la carte Restaurant	7	0.9
Laundry	5	0.7
Reservation	5	0.7
Bell Desk	3	0.4
IT	3	0.4
Call Center	1	0.1
Other	1	0.1
Minibar	1	0.1
Mini Club	1	0.1
Spa	1	0.1
Total	751	100

Table 2. Respondents' Education Levels

Education	Frequency	%
High School	335	44
Primary School	252	33.1
College Degree	81	10.6
Associate Degree	67	8.8
Missing	13	1.7
Graduate Degree	3	0.4
Total	751	100

of the employee meal was increased. Table 3 shows the satisfaction scores for 33 items for pre and post-treatment. Of the 33 items, 31 of them were significantly higher in the posttreatment period. Only two items were not different between pre and posttreatment. This result shows that employee satisfaction increases when the quality of the meal is improved.

H2: Employee meal satisfaction will predict overall employee satisfaction.

To test the hypothesis, stepwise multiple regression was used to determine the impact of employee meal quality on employees' overall satisfaction. The regression model for the impact of employee meal quality on overall employee satisfaction was proposed as follows:

$$Y_s = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_4 X_4, \quad (1)$$

Where

Y_s = overall employee satisfaction

β_0 = constant (coefficient of the intercept)

X_1 = The employee restaurant is clean and hygienic.

X_2 = Meals in the personnel cafeteria are varied enough. (Meat, fish, chicken, vegetables, salad, etc.)

X_3 = The food served in the employee restaurant is delicious.

The summary model results for the stepwise regression are shown in Table 4. Stepwise regression produced three models. The best model (#1) explains 22.2% of the variation in the dependent variable. The explanatory power of the model is good. Overall, the result is statistically significant ($p = .000$). Given the coefficient of the significant

Table 3. Employee Satisfaction Items for Pre- and Posttreatment

Statements	Pre Treatment		Post Treatment				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
I can recommend my workplace to family and friends	3.94	1.258	4.28	1.109	-3.843	744	0.000
I plan to continue my career in this workplace.	3.88	1.417	4.20	1.142	-3.335	739	0.001
I feel that I am valued as an employee of my workplace.	3.46	1.539	3.99	1.317	-5.026	746	0.000
Working at this workplace makes me hopeful/confident about the future.	3.76	1.456	3.98	1.283	-2.206	742	0.028
I can fully exploit my potential at work.	4.15	1.179	4.10	1.205	0.583	741	0.560
The distribution of tasks between the employees doing the same job is done in a balanced and fair way.	3.26	1.521	3.50	1.468	-2.121	744	0.034
I am generally satisfied with the conditions in my work environment.	3.64	1.183	4.08	1.070	-5.253	748	0.000
The personnel resting areas in my workplace are clean and comfortable.	2.56	1.399	3.68	1.391	-10.684	743	0.000
The employee restaurant is clean and hygienic.	3.01	1.447	4.45	0.919	-16.719	749	0.000
Meals in the personnel cafeteria are varied enough. (Meat, fish, chicken, vegetables, salad, etc.)	3.06	1.481	4.42	0.983	-15.149	746	0.000
The food served in the employee restaurant is delicious.	3.24	1.430	4.25	1.168	-10.521	749	0.000
I feel safe that my workplace is well prepared to face situations such as accidents, injuries, etc.	3.64	1.302	4.06	1.192	-4.560	747	0.000
The occupational physician informs and correctly guides the employees about health problems.	2.88	1.522	3.41	1.531	-4.683	748	0.000
Managers in my department regularly share their motivating and constructive views to help me improve my performance.	3.44	1.557	3.86	1.378	-3.875	738	0.000
The managers in my department greet me with a smile and an appropriate address.	3.78	1.405	4.05	1.267	-2.681	740	0.008
The words and behaviors of the managers in my department are consistent.	3.63	1.425	3.97	1.282	-3.389	740	0.001
My department manager plans shifts in a fair manner.	3.67	1.495	4.03	1.332	-3.384	743	0.001
Rewarding and appreciation practices in my workplace are fair.	2.63	1.544	3.23	1.641	-4.853	732	0.000
A fair path is followed in the selection of employees who display personal development in the workplace.	3.11	1.452	3.53	1.526	-3.711	738	0.000
Appointment and promotion decisions are taken in a fair manner in our workplace.	2.86	1.623	3.28	1.664	-3.380	736	0.001
For vacant positions in this workplace, internal employees are given priority.	3.09	1.700	3.49	1.671	-3.116	737	0.002
I feel that I can easily refer to colleagues in my department if I need help with work.	3.86	1.280	4.32	0.911	-5.618	738	0.000
Ethnicity, culture, language, religion, and gender differences at workplace are met with respect.	3.92	1.326	4.34	1.006	-4.843	738	0.000
Our employees can express their opinions and suggestions without fear of any sanctions.	3.51	1.423	3.86	1.366	-3.330	737	0.001
Senior managers in my workplace can be easily reached when necessary.	3.46	1.526	4.16	1.226	-6.914	734	0.000
My department successfully applies guest service standards.	3.95	1.248	4.48	0.926	-6.644	734	0.000
I am generally satisfied with the personnel lodging/housing.	1.72	1.864	2.02	2.078	-0.999	512	0.318
I am generally pleased with the changing/dressing rooms.	2.58	1.574	3.31	1.587	-3.162	512	0.002
I am generally satisfied with the personnel service offered in my workplace.	3.09	1.497	3.40	1.507	-1.386	512	0.166
I am generally satisfied with my uniform.	3.28	1.498	3.28	1.639	0.032	512	0.975
I am pleased with the wage I receive compared to employees doing similar work with me in other similar hotels.	2.79	1.261	3.91	1.317	-5.887	508	0.000

Table 4. Stepwise Regression Model

Model	B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.443	.227		10.747	.000
Meals in the personnel cafeteria are varied enough (meat, fish, chicken, vegetables, salad, etc.)	.237	.068	.226	3.457	.001

a. Dependent Variable. I am satisfied with the wages I receive compared to employees who do similar work in other workplaces.

independent variables, the regression equation for the returned model can be written as follows:

$$Y = 2.44 + .237$$

(Meals in the personnel cafeteria are varied enough. [Meat, fish, chicken, vegetables, salad, etc.])

The only variable that is significant was “Meals in the personnel cafeteria are varied enough. (Meat, fish, chicken, vegetables, salad, etc.)” ($p = .001$), indicating that there is a positive relationship between “Meals in the personnel cafeteria are varied enough. (Meat, fish, chicken, vegetables, salad, etc.)” and overall employee satisfaction. In other words, one unit of increase in “Meals in the personnel cafeteria are varied enough. (Meat, fish, chicken, vegetables, salad, etc.)” variable would lead to a .227 unit increase in the overall employee satisfaction.

H3: Employee satisfaction is correlated with the financial performance of hotels.

Several financial performance indicators were obtained from the hotel for the pretreatment and posttreatment periods. Table 5 shows these financial performance indicators.

There is a statistical difference between pre and posttreatment periods. The correlation between employee satisfaction and the financial performance indicators was tested using the Mann-Whitney U z statistical test. The Mann-Whitney U test is used to compare differences between two independent

groups when the dependent variable is either ordinal or continuous, but not normally distributed (Nachar, 2008). Occupancy rates from the pretreatment period (77.57%) were significantly lower than the posttreatment period (89.02%), $U = 14$, $z = 1.964$, $p < 0.005$, $r = 0.801$. Similarly, REVPAR for the pretreatment period (₺555.26) was significantly lower than the posttreatment period (₺681.44), $U = 15$, $z = 2.121$, $p < 0.034$, $r = 0.865$. The average daily rate did not show a significant interaction between pretreatment (24%) and posttreatment (33%), $U = 18$, $z = 1.786$, $p < 0.074$, $r = 0.729$. The gross operating profit % also displayed a significant increase between pretreatment (24%) and posttreatment (33%), $U = 12$, $z = 2.053$, $p < 0.040$, $r = 0.838$. Even though it is difficult to attribute these significant changes to the improvements of employee meal offerings, it is quite clear that there was a positive relationship between employee satisfaction scores and the financial performance of the resort. In other words, it is hard to say what caused this significant change in the financial performance of the resort; however, the Mann-Whitney U statistical test shows the correlation between the two.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this resort's example, two significant changes were made to employee meals: 1) The employee restaurant was renovated, modern furniture was added to improve ergonomic comfort, and the area has a more relaxed feeling because lighter and

Table 5. Financial Performance Indicators for Pre- and Posttreatment

	Pretreatment	Posttreatment	z	Mann-Whitney U	r	p
OCC	77.57%	89.02%	1.964	14	0.801	0.005
REVPAR	₺555.26	₺681.44	2.121	15	0.865	0.034
ADR	₺715.81	₺765.49	1.786	18	0.729	0.074
G.O.P %	24%	33%	2.053	12	0.838	0.040

brighter colors were used on the wall surfaces. The dark grey floor tiles in the employee dining area were replaced with a lighter tile that brightened the dining venue. By far, the most significant addition to the employee dining area was the increased window size that allowed seated employees an outdoor view while dining and increased sunlight entering the venue during the day. The results of the change in the physical environment of the dining hall are also in line with Wall and Berry's (2007) research, as well as Jayaweera (2015). 2) The new dining experience offered a buffet-style menu. Employees have many of the same food choices as the guest buffet choices in the main buffet dining, with a smart modern ambiance, in clean, bright surroundings, and a plethora of local, regional, and international meal options. Signage was used to indicate that the food offered to employees was the same as the ones offered to the resort guests. These two changes made a significant impact on employee satisfaction. In this context, employee meals are part of fringe benefits. The results of this study are in line with Ahmad et al. (2010), in which the authors discuss that fringe benefits such as meals impacted employee retention and satisfaction; as well as Türen, Erdem, and Çamoğlu (2017) where employee meal quality improved employee satisfaction and overall productivity, as well as Turen and Camoglu (2015), where meal appeals impacted individual performance.

Of the 33 statements that measured employee satisfaction, 31 of them were statistically higher after the changes in the employee restaurant and meal offerings. This result indicates that employees appreciate a meal as a benefit. Rahmadani et al. (2019) discussed that at the core of employee motivation is satisfying basic needs. In the current context, meals are one of the most basic needs that an individual wants. This conclusion was made from the employee satisfaction results before the changes were implemented. However, if similar physical and quality features that resorts guests enjoy are offered to employees, the satisfaction level increases significantly. With the marginal cost increase in enhancing the quality of employee meal, it appears to be well worth the investment, provided that happy employees do their jobs better and more efficiently, hence more satisfied guests. These results are also in line with the effective event theory (Howard &

Russell, 1996), which explains how emotions and moods influence job satisfaction. The findings also indicated that "Meals in the personnel cafeteria were varied enough. (Meat, fish, chicken, vegetables, salad, etc.)" is the best predictor for the overall employee satisfaction in the resort. It is quite interesting to note as the dietary restrictions and religious beliefs play an essential role in determining what one eats. Having a variety of foods from all different categories increased their satisfaction level significantly. Other hotels may study these results and reflect on their employee meal offerings as well. Furthermore, the Mann Whitney U statistical test showed that there was a statistical positive correlation between the financial indicator indices and the satisfaction of employees. There only insignificant relationship was average daily rate (ADR), which is tied into employee performance.

The findings also showed a significant and robust correlation between employee satisfaction and financial performance of the resort. This paper is unique for several reasons:

1. It used real data. The resort hotel made improvements in the employee meal offerings: physical dining area and the quality of food choices.
2. The resort shared the actual employee satisfaction survey scores anonymously with the researchers.
3. The resort shared the financial performance indicators with the researchers.
4. The paper showed employee satisfaction is positively correlated to the financial performance of the resort.

Limitations

The renovations to the employee restaurant were done in March. This is understandable as the resort has very low occupancy this month. The hotel has employee satisfaction data for only three months before the treatment. It would be better if the employee satisfaction data were available for one year before the treatment and one year after the treatment. However, given the difficulty of accessing proprietary data like this, the study contributes to the body of knowledge significantly.

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