Hotel employees: A systematic literature review

Funcionários de hotelaria: Uma revisão sistemática da literatura

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Abstract

With the increase of studies on hospitality professionals over the years, it is essential to perform a review on those works. This review was conducted through the databases Web of Knowledge, Web of Science (Social Sciences Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index, Medline), and Science Direct. We searched for articles published between 2000 and 2014, crossing the keywords "hospitality", "tourism", and "hotel" with the keywords "professionals", "employees", and "workers". Our aim was to identify the most studied variables on hospitality employees. The search process resulted on 3700 initial references, being selected 242. We verified that work satisfaction was studied in 51 articles and stress, burnout, and mental exhaustion in 31. For that reason, this review aggregates and analyses these results. This study has implications for the understanding of the roll of these variables in hospitality and tourism economic profitability, as well as in human resources management policies and individual well-being.

Keywords: Systematic review, hospitality, professionals, attitudes.

Resumo

Com o aumento dos estudos realizados com profissionais de hotelaria nos últimos anos, torna-se importante fazer uma revisão desses trabalhos. Esta revisão foi realizada com recurso às bases de dados Web of Knowledge, Web of Science (Social Sciences Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index, Medline) e Science Direct. Pesquisámos artigos publicados entre 2000 e 2014, cruzando as palavras-chave "hospitalidade", "turismo" e "hotel" com as palavras-chave "profissionais", "empregados" e "trabalhadores". Objetivámos, desta forma, identificar as variáveis mais estudadas nos profissionais de hotelaria. Da pesquisa resultaram 3700 referências iniciais, tendo sido selecionadas 242. Verificou-se que a satisfação no trabalho foi analisada em 51 estudos e o stresse, burnout e exaustão emocional em 31, pelo que esta revisão incorpora e analisa estes resultados. Este estudo possui implicações para a análise do papel destas variáveis na rentabilidade económica da hotelaria e do turismo, na gestão de recursos humanos e no bem-estar dos colaboradores.

Palavras-chave: Revisão sistemática, hospitalidade, profissionais, atitudes.

1. Introduction

Tourism is responsible for a high number of trips around the world having a positive impact on the economy of recipient countries (Cunha, 2013; Eurostat, 2013; Santos, Ferreira, & Costa, 2014). From all economic activities, tourism has the highest global growth rate. In 2012, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2012a, 2012b) predicted a drive of 285 million tourists, a 5.4% increase comparatively to 2011.

The importance of tourism in the global economic recovery was recognized, implying facilitated travel, demand stimulation, and creation of new jobs. The UNTWO (2013) predicted, for 2012, an income of €837 billion of tourism worldwide, added the cost of travel, this amount would rise to €1 trillion. In 2013 (UNWTO, 2014), 52 million more tourists travelled the world than in previous years, with an increase of 5% for 2014 and 3.8% more each year until 2020. According to the UNWTO (2013), based on the study "Tourism towards 2030", the growth of tourism worldwide will be 3.3% per year

until 2030. In Europe, between 2006 and 2010, the European Commission Statistics (Eurostat, 2012) found an average of one billion travels, this value increased 0.5% in 2011, 5 million holidays more than in 2010. Spending on holidays increased by 7% in 2011, on average €64 per night, €50 in domestic travel, and €82 in trips abroad. In 2013 (Eurostat, 2014), the number of nights spent in tourism establishments rose to 2.6 billion, an increase of 2.6% compared to 2012. The value of arrivals (UNWTO, 2013) was estimated at €356 billion. Europe (UNWTO, 2014) remains the world's most visited region with 29 million arrivals. In Portugal (Eurostat, 2013a), in 2008, €8.82 million were spent by tourists. In 2009, 444.717 jobs were generated in the tourism sector. In 2011 (Eurostat, 2012), in comparison with 2010, there was an increase of 11096-vacation travel. In 2012, the National Statistics Institute (INE, 2012) stated that tourism revenues showed a balance of €5660 million against €5172 million in 2011, an increase of 9.4%. According to the Eurostat (2014), the number of nights spent in tourism establishments was 47.9 million, 31.1 and

16.8 for non-residents by residents. The UNWTO (2013) stated that Portugal was one of the countries that experienced the largest increase in the number of arrivals (4%). The latest report from this organization (2014) showed that in 2013 there was a growth of 52 million tourists, the number of arrivals worldwide reached a record of 1.098.700, foreseeing further growth of 4.5% for 2014 and 3.5% by 2020.

Hospitality, a product of tourism, is defined by the relationship between the service provider, the service itself, and the guest, being characterized by offering a range of services that include the satisfaction of physiological and psychological needs (Revés, 2011). Ariffin (2013) incorporated in this concept the social, cultural, private, and commercial context, noting that hospitality is possibly the world's largest industry. This author stated that the key feature of hospitality is the emotional relationship established with costumers, this calls for hotels to be more competitive and for employees to create value in the development and success of companies (Ariffin, 2013). In turn, Ariffin, Maghzi, and Aziz (2011) reported that in hospitality an excellent service leads to customer satisfaction, causing an emotional sense of memorable experience, which in turn makes the guest loyal to the company, contributing to its' robustness and financial growth.

The increase of studies about hospitality calls for a review on the works in this field, in order to understand the key studied variables and comprehend their relevance for individuals and hotels. Until this date there is a gap in the literature on hotel employees, since there are no reviews, that the authors are aware of, that synthesize the individual and organizational constructs that influence these professionals. With this review we aimed to assess the articles published on hotel employees and get an overview of the most studied concepts. Given that there are no other literature reviews on this issue, our study had an exploratory objective. Our approach will shed some light on this theme, which will help hotel managers to identify the factors that are related with the performance of these organizations and help improve them. This review possesses three sections. The following addresses the methods and procedures regarding the study's selection. Subsequently, the results from the sample of studies are presented. Also in the aforementioned section, the concepts most frequently studied are underlined and the main results of the selected documents are integrated. Lastly, the conclusions of this review are presented, as well as its' academic implications, limitations, and suggestions for future studies.

2. Method and procedure

In the present literature review, conducted on the Web of Knowledge, Web of Science (Social Sciences Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index, Medline), and Science Direct databases, we crossed the keywords "hospitality", "tourism", and "hotel" with the keywords "professional", "employees", and "workers". This review was performed in December 2014, for the studies published between 2000-2014. The inclusion criteria were: (a) studies analysing issues from the perspective of hospitality workers; (b) studies including hospitality workers, either as a dependent or independent variable; (c) studies where these constructs were assessed using validated

questionnaires and performed in accordance with the underlying theories; (d) studies including the necessary information to be evaluated; and (e) articles that addressed work-related variables in hospitality workers. In turn, the exclusion criteria were: (a) studies with workers from other occupations; (b) studies addressing hospitality from the customer's perspective; (c) studies that portrayed hotels as a unit without regard to workers; and (d) non empirical studies.

In a first phase we collected the total number of published studies. In a second phase, based on the title, abstract, and application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, we selected the studies to be taken into account. In a third phase, based on further reading and assessment of repeated references, we selected the final sample, 242 articles.

3. Results and discussion

In Table 1 we can observe the keyword crossings and the number of studies obtained.

Table 1 - Resulting studies from the crossing of keywords

Variables	Crossings	Nº references[a]
Hospitality	Professionals	134
	Employees	407
	Workers	282
Tourism	Professionals	517
	Employees	313
	Workers	304
Hotel	Professionals	313
	Employees	894
	Workers	536
Total		3700

Note. [a] Number of references.

The title and abstract of the 3700 references were analysed. Of these, 450 were selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The repeated studies were subsequently removed, as well as those that checked the exclusion criteria. Thus, the final number of works was 242. These were then categorized by the authors' name and concept addressed.

The following results were obtained: (a) job satisfaction (51 studies); (b) stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion (31); (c) work involvement and performance (26); (d) intention to leave (23); (e) commitment (18); (f) conflicts (16); (g) interpersonal relations (12); (h) innovation and creativity (11); (i) general attitudes (10); (j) physical health (10); (k) life quality and well-being (9); (l) organizational citizenship behaviours (9); (m) leadership, engagement, individual characteristics, and personality (8); (n) culture and substance use (7); (o) affectivity, life satisfaction, empowerment, and career skills (6); (p) intention of staying and knowledge sharing (5); (q) coping, flexibility, emotional intelligence, wages, and employee retaining (4); (r) service and customer orientation, psychological contract, organizational support and confidence, leisure, and multiculturalism (3); (s) competence, confidence, brand awareness, and generational differences and similarities, work-life balance, team spirit, practices, feature and work results, trust, organizational cynicism, and perception of change (2); (t) competitiveness, gender, absenteeism, improper supervision, values, organizational

policy, initiative, marital satisfaction, self-assessment, organizational justice, working conditions, beliefs, status, occupational health, loyalty, experience, strength and work value, seasonality, work practices, training, goal orientation, aggression, emotional dissonance, disability, learning, image, feedback, unemployment, tourism language, capacity, work integration, job control, deviant behaviours, psychological capital, entrepreneurship, personal resources, service orientation, work-family role, behavioural intention, mood, tourist involvement, alienation, counter-productivity, openness to change, career satisfaction, corporate social responsibility, productivity, harassment, and sexual discrimination (1).

In Table 2 we identify the studies related with the satisfaction of hospitality professionals, as well as stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion. These concepts were selected given their importance to the organizational context. Job satisfaction is the most important work attitude, satisfied employees bring benefits to their organizations (Lease, 1998). The malaise factors (i.e., stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion) may harm organizational performance, since they contribute to its decrease, so these concepts must deserve special attention from researchers and practitioners (Jesus, Miguel-Tobal, Rus, Viseu, & Gamboa, 2014).

Table 2 - Most studied variables and studies in which they appear

Nº of studies[a]	Variables	References
51	Work satisfaction	Almeida, Faisca, & Jesus, 2012; Arasli & Baradarani, 2014; Bilgin & Demirer, 2012; Brown & Lam, 2008; Cheng, Yang, Wang, & Chu, 2013; Chi & Gursoy, 2009; Chiang, Birtch, & Cai, 2014; Dawson, Abbott, & Shoemaker, 2011; Duygulu & Kurgan, 2009; Fisher & McPhail, 2011; Fisher, McPhail, & Menghetti, 2010; Fock, Chiang, Au, & Hui, 2011; Gallardo, Sánchez-Cañizares, López-Guzmán, & Jesus, 2009; Gu & Siu, 2009; Gunlu, Aksarayli, & Perçin, 2009; Hechanova, Alampay, & Franco, 2006; Hon & Lu, 2010; Ineson, Benke, & Lászlo, 2013; Jang & George, 2012; Karadal & Arasli, 2009; Karatepe, Uludag, Menevis, Hadzimehmedagic, & Baddar, 2006; Karatepe & Sokmen, 2006; Kim & Brymer, 2011; Kim, Murrmann, & Lee, 2009; Kong, 2013; Lam, Zhang, & Baum, 2001; Lee, Magnini, & Kim, 2011; Lee & Ok, 2012; Lee, Song, Lee, Lee, & Bernhard, 2013; Lee & Way, 2010; Liao, Hu, & Chung, 2009; Lee, Chen, Tsui, & Yu, 2014; Lin, Wong, & Ho, 2013; Madera, Dawson, & Neal, 2013; Mazler & Renzl, 2007; Nadiri & Tanova, 2010; Namasivayam & Zhao, 2007; Ogaard, Marnburg, & Larsen, 2008; O'Neil & Davis, 2011; Pelit, Öztür, & Arslantürk, 2011; Qu & Zhao, 2012; Sledge, Miles, & Coppage, 2008; Tian & Pu, 2008; Upchurch, Davies, & Sverdlin, 2000; Yang, 2008, 2010; Yeh, 2013; Zhao & Namasivayam, 2012; Zhao, Qu, & Ghiselli, 2011; Zhen & Jie 2009; Zopiatis, Constanti, & Theocharous, 2014;
Nº of studies[a]	Variables	References
31	Stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion	Almeida & Davis, 2011; Chiang, Birtch, & Kwan, 2010; Choi, Kim, Lee, & Lee, 2014; Hwang, Hyun, & Park, 2013; Jung & Yoon, 2013; Jung, Yoon, & Kim, 2012; Hon, Chan, & Lu, 2013; Karatepe, 2011; Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009; Karatepe & Baddar, 2006; Karatepe, Beirami, Bouzari, & Safavi, 2014; Karatepe, Babakus, & Yavas, 2012; Karatepe & Sokman, 2006; Karatepe & Uludag, 2008; Krause, Scherzer, & Rugulies, 2005; Kim, 2008; Kim et al., 2009; Lee & Ok, 2012; Lee, Kim, Shin, & Oh, 2012; Lin, Huang, Yang, & Chiang, 2014; Loi, Ao, & Xu, 2014; McNamara, Bohle, & Quinlan, 2011; O'Neil & Davis, 2011; O'Neil & Xiao, 2010; Pienaar & Willemse, 2008; Shen & Huang, 2012; Shiu & Tsai, 2006; Whiting, Donthu, & Baker, 2011; Wong & Huang, 2014; Tsaur & Tang, 2012; Yang, 2010.

Note. [a] Number of studies.

We verified, based on the results in Table 2 that, in the last 15 years, among the variables that were assessed, job satisfaction was the most studied variable, followed by stress, burnout,

and emotional exhaustion. In Table 3 we present a chronological analysis of the studies. We observed that most of the studies were performed since 2010.

Table 3 - Chronological analysis of the studied variables

Year	Job Satisfaction	Stress, Burnout, and Emotional Exhaustion
2000	1	-
2001	1	-
2002	-	-
2003	-	-
2004	-	-
2005	-	1
2006	3	3
2007	2	-
2008	6	3
2009	8	2
2010	5	3
2011	8	5
2012	6	6
2013	7	3
2014	4	5
Total	51	31

Most studies emphasize the role of job satisfaction. We found that the variables related to satisfaction were: (a) the type of work (Sledge et al., 2008); (b) socialization (Gallardo et al., 2009; Pelit et al., 2011; Yang, 2008); (c) self-esteem, performance, independence, and initiative-taking (Gunlu et al., 2009); (d) ethical behaviour (Cheng et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2013); (e) commitment (Yeh, 2013); (f) personal satisfaction, social involvement, salaries, and benefits (Lam et al., 2001; Mazler & Renzl, 2007; Qu & Zhao, 2012); (g) directors entrepreneurial behaviour (Duygulu & Kurgan, 2009; Kim & Brymer, 2011); (h) training and support (Bilgin & Demirer, 2012; Kong, 2013; Gu & Siu, 2008); (i) openness to innovation (Lee et al., 2014); (j) competitiveness, self-efficacy, and effort (Karatepe et al., 2006); (k) organizational justice (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010); (l) empowerment (Pelit et al., 2011); (m) growth opportunities and security (Tian & Pu, 2008); (n) affective commitment, clear work roles, and autonomy (Yang, 2010; Zopiatis et al., 2014); (o) leadership (Arasli & Baradarani, 2014); (p) the organization itself (Ogaard et al., 2008); and (q) age and gender (Tian & Pu, 2008). Some of the factors that promote dissatisfaction were: (a) conflicts (Namasivayam & Zhao, 2007; O'Neil & Davis, 2011; Zhao et al., 2011; Zhao & Namasivayam, 2012); (b) absence of professional training (Lam et al., 2001); (c) policies, management, and security (Sledge et al., 2008); (d) turnover (Pelit et al., 2011); (e) low wages (Gallardo et al., 2009; Pelit et al., 2011; Sledge et al., 2008); and (f) high variability in labour demand (Chiang et al., 2014.). Based on these results we can conclude that several aspects promote satisfaction and dissatisfaction among hotel employees. Hotel management must address these issues, given that there is: (a) a positive association between job satisfaction and financial performance (Fisher et al., 2010); (b) a direct link between customer satisfaction and financial performance; and (c) the existence of a relationship between customer and employee satisfaction (Chi & Gursoy, 2009).

With regard to the second largest variable studied, stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion, we observed that factors, such as: (a) less flexibility (Almeida & Davis, 2011); (b) work responsibility, conflict, and low task control (Chiang et al., 2010; Hwang et al., 2013; Baddar & Karatepe, 2006); (c) work environment (Jung & Yoon, 2013); (d) reduced leisure time (Tsaur & Tang, 2012); (e) interpersonal relationships and workload (O'Neil & Davis, 2011); and (f) extended work schedule (Wong & Huang, 2014), contributed to increased malaise. These factors weaken financial and work performance, which will have a negative impact on hotels. Intervention programs must be developed, at an individual and organizational level, to reduce the incidence of stress, burnout, and emotion exhaustion, and improve hotel functioning.

The obtained data demonstrated that job satisfaction is highly relevant for hotel employees. This concept has great importance both for individuals and organizations. We found that satisfaction relates to security (Fisher & McPhail, 2011), work schedules, wages, and type of contract (Gallardo et al., 2009), and is decisive for financial competitiveness, satisfied employees are more productive and involved with work (Fisher, McPhail, & Menghetti, 2010). Stress, burnout, and

emotional exhaustion may contribute markedly to either the psychosocial discomfort or company imbalance. Some of the variables that contribute to the increased incidence of these aspects are: (a) conflicts; (b) excess of responsibility; (c) negative work environment; and (d) adverse interpersonal relationships. This situation may result in: (a) reduced employee well-being; (b) unsatisfactory service providing; and (c) low organizational competitiveness.

In sum, job satisfaction is associated with several work-related aspects meaning that it must be analysed meticulously. On the other hand, stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion are aspects that impair organizational functioning. Human resource management must design strategies (e.g., intervention programs focused on individual strengths) for their elimination, these may improve employee health and, consequently, hotel performance.

4. Conclusions

Based on the analysed studies, job satisfaction and stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion were the most studied variables in hotel employees. It is relevant to perform further researches on these variables, to ensure that the knowledge is adequate to the needs of hotels managers when it comes to boost employee's performance and hotel growth, and avoid mismanagement and uncertainty. More knowledge provided from theses variables would help to implement better and new working conditions and specific staff training programs.

We can affirm that it is possible to increase the knowledge about the importance of satisfaction in the hotel industry to further knowledge about the mechanisms that are at its' base, in order to promote individual and organizational satisfaction. This might promote direct and indirect growth and profitability to hotels. We suggest the study of this variable in this context to confirm the positive impact of job satisfaction in the performance and results of hotels. In terms of human resource management, studies would allow changes in the functioning and organization of services, increasing employee satisfaction and, consequently, hotel profitability. Regarding stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion, we suggest that an in-depth study of these variables would result in companies being able to implement a set of measures that may reduce their incidence and increase productivity and employees' well-being. It appears, based on the studied variables, that although the tourism workers are crucial elements in the tourism context in general and hotels in particular, few studies were conducted in the last 15 years, which can lead to the occurrence of mismanagement errors and low efficiency in terms of human resources and hotel operation. Also, future studies should seek to deepen the research on the presented variables in this review, in order to determine the state of the art, by conducting a meta-analysis and equally developing studies with other relevant variables for the hotel context.

This review possesses some limitations worth considering. Firstly, the period of time considered. Choosing a longer time period would give a more accurate picture of the considered issues. The option for the period between 2000-2014 may

have skewed our results. The selection of the most studied concepts might have excluded other variables that, although less studied, are equally relevant. However, given the lack of reviews on this subject, the authors chose to synthetize the variables with greater relevance, using the frequency of studies to assess this aspect.

Given the importance of maintaining a satisfied workforce and the need to reduce malaise symptoms, which will negatively affect organizational performance, hotel managers must adopt measures to promote satisfaction and reduce ill-being, these will benefit hotel bottom-line and service providing (Moura, Orgambídez-Ramos, & Jesus, 2015).

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