

An Exploration of Motivation among Generation Y Employees: A Case Study of the Hotel Business in Beijing, China

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Abstract. Generation Y members are working as the main workforce in hospitality industry. To motivate Generation Y hotel employees effectively is one of the most challenging missions that hotel practitioners are facing. This qualitative study, using a case study strategy, was conducted to explore the important motivational factors for Generation Y hotel employees and to discover the Generation Y hotel employees' expected ways of being motivating in the hotel business in China. Purposive sampling was applied to identify 17 participants, who were the current employees in the selected Beijing five-star hotel. During the data collection, document review and in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain detailed information from these different individuals. The analysis followed the manual coding process which classified a total 903 open codes into 50 sub-categories and finally emerged in six themes. The results of this study revealed that the important motivational factors for Generation Y hotel employees are: (1) future benefitting factors, (2) mental stimulation, (3) material stimulation and (4) overall working conditions. The expected motivational strategies by Generation Y hotel employees are: (1) benefitting their futures, (2) knowing them well, (3) fulfilling their mental needs, (4) treating them better, (5) more attention given to them, and (6) appropriate opportunities for increased pay and promotions.

Keywords: Motivation, Motivational Factors, Motivation Strategies, Generation Y, Generation Y Hotel Employee, Hotel Business, Hospitality Industry, Intercontinental Hotel Group, China

Introduction

On the basis of the updated World Tourism Barometer of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), China has become the world's third most-visited country (2011). The hotel industry is playing a significant role as part of the entire tourism industry which somehow represents the image of whole country. In the light of this growth of the entire hospitality industry in China, the main force of the working group indicated a new tendency as well.

Hospitality management traditionally relies on a large number of young staff to serve for the frontline staffing requirements, according to the nature of the hotel business. Thus, Generation Y, the group of people who were born from the early 1980s to the early 2000s, also known as Millennials and the Net generation is entering the workplace and becoming the newest and major personnel workforce in the hospitality industry (Horovitz, 2012; Shapira, 2008; Zhang, 2009). Generation Y have been identified as those who grew up with high technology, the Internet and with a different way of being educated (Cairncross & Bultjens, 2007).

In China, Generation Y is the first born group of people after the one-child policy was implemented during the late 1970s. As a result, Generation Y members indicate numerous of differences in the way they think, the way they act and the way they perform, compared with the previous generations. Generation Y employees' employment needs are rarely known by the hotel management (Zhang, 2009). Work attitudes and behaviors should be more focused on Generation Y

employees in order to understand them better and motivate them for the purposes of better performance, longer retention and a happier working life, specifically in the hotel industry. On the other hand, the problem of labor shortage and a high turnover rate are long-existing trends in the hospitality industry (Lin, 2012). As pointed out by Tracey, Way and Tews (2008), tight labor markets, increasing and rapidly changing labor legislation, and high turnover are the threats that the hospitality management is facing. Hence, the hotel management and the human resource (HR) practitioners are facing new challenges in motivating and retaining their Generation Y employees.

For this reason, the present researcher aimed to provide the HR professionals and the management with a better understanding of Generation Y employees who work in the selected hotel and to explore the ways that they can motivate Generation Y employees, based on their expectations in the selected hotel. In response to the purposes of the study, two research questions were addressed: What motivational factors are important to Generation Y hotel employees?

How to motivate Generation Y hotel employees in a desirable way?

The findings of the current research are intended to be helpful and reliable in providing the most appropriate ways to satisfy and to continually motivate young employees, which can bring great opportunities to the hotels in terms of both business and human capital investment. More importantly, exploring the motivational factors, based on Generation Y hotel employees' own expectations, can serve as one of the implications that can be applied to the labor shortage problem which the whole hospitality industry is facing. In addition, the findings of this study can be useful to assist hotel management and HR practitioners to modify their policies and create new strategies in the aspects of better understanding and motivating Generation Y employees.

Literature Review

Human Resource Development (HRD) has a large number of definitions. In this study, the researcher believes that "HRD is a process of improving an organization's performance through the capabilities of its personnel. HRD includes activities dealing with work design, aptitude, expertise, and motivation" (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p. 5). Three core theory domains of psychological theory, economic theory, and systems theory were believed by Swanson and Holton (2001) to support and explain the discipline of HRD and the model of HRD. According to the foundations of HRD, this study relied on psychological theory as the study was based on motivational concepts.

It has been more than 30 years since the Chinese government announced the open door policy in 1978. This policy has led to the diversification and decentralization of hotel investments in China (Guillet, Zhang & Gao, 2011). The Beijing Olympics held in 2008, along with the World Expo held in Shanghai in 2010, were widely seen as an unprecedented opportunity for China's tourism industry (Guillet, Zhang & Gao, 2011; Ma, 2012). Thus, the employment requirements of the hotel industry were higher than ever before. Tanke (1990) stressed that the work in hospitality is known as physical work, hours are long, weekends and holidays are the busiest times and wages are low. These situations together with job stress naturally lead people to re-evaluate their positions in the organization (Tanke, 1990), which also makes working in a hotel as not being an attractive choice for a lot of people (Aksu, 2008). Managing people is arguably one of the most vexing challenges in the hospitality industry (Tracey, Way & Tews, 2008). These authors also stated that "tight labor markets, increasing and rapidly changing labor legislation, and high turnover are among the numerous problems that pose serious threats to maintaining a strong competitive position" (2008, p. 4). In this study, the age factor can be seen as the most consistent individual characteristic or variable that poses a negative relationship to maintain employees in the industry. Based on the research of Aiku (2008), older employees are more satisfied than younger ones. According to Zhang (2009), to motivate young employees is important to hospitality HR professionals in order to enable them to work with a positive attitude and to retain them.

Mitchell (1982, p. 82) defined motivation as "the degree to which an individual wants and chooses to engage in certain specified behaviors". Buckley and Caple (1995) described motivation as something that energizes, directs, and sustains behavior or performance. Mitchell (1982, p. 81)

concluded that “motivation was not the behavior itself or the performance itself, but the actions that are influenced by the internal and external forces”. Pintrich and Schunk (2002, as cited in Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006, p. 51) defined motivation as “the process in which goal-directed behavior is instigated and sustained”). In this study, the researcher focused on how to motivate effectively Generation Y employees, which will provide a comprehension about the difference in terms of Generation Y employees. “Effectiveness” is considered as being able to work energized, directed and sustained which is basically relying on Buckley and Caple’s (1995) definition of motivation.

Scholars in psychology have put a lot of concern on the factors that motivate people to work. This subject is complex, because the influencing patterns for motivation are various and both internal and external (Blyton & Jenkins, 2007). Herzberg (1959) stated that the employee motivation factors are achievement, recognition, growth, advancement, interest in job, responsibility and challenges. In contrast, the hygiene factors in work, which refers to factors that are necessary, but do not lead to increased job satisfaction are company policies, administration, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, status, and security.

Kupperschmidt (2000) defined a generation as an identifiable group, which shares years of birth and hence significant life events at critical stages of development. According to the generation cohort theory (Bolton, 2010), the current existing generations in society are Seniors who were born between 1929 to 1945, Baby boomers who were born between 1946 to 1965, Generation X who were born between 1965 to 1980 and Generation Y who were born between 1980 to 2000. In this study, the researcher focused on the group of people who were born between 1985 to 1994 who are the Generation Y members, as this group of people have just entered the workplace and are working on the frontline.

Generation Y is the newest generation which is the least understood group of people, although the marketers, demographers, recruiters, and other groups have formed initial impressions and continue to refine them (Wallace, 2007). Generation Y is also named as Millenials, Echo Boomers, Net Generation, Digital Generation, Gaming Generation, I Generation and Generation Why (Emeagwali, 2011). The names reflect some of the historical characteristics of this group of people. Technology is stressed as the most significant factor that influences Generation Y the most (Treuren, 2010).

Moreover, Raines (2002) concluded that multi-tasking, being goal-oriented, holding positive attitudes, being technically savvy and collaboration are the main characteristics of Generation Y. The weaknesses of this generation were also pointed out by Raines (2002) as a distaste for menial work, lack of skills for dealing with difficult people, impatience and over confidence. Particularly in China, Chinese Generation Y members are known as being smart and well-educated, but, at the same time, they are holding on to many traditional values. As a result of globalization, they are more open-minded in terms of vocally voicing their opinions and they are more influenced by foreign inputs than the previous generations (Flintholm, 2011). Flintholm (2011) also asserted that the high pressure of the Chinese education system brings self-doubt, performance anxiety, and ultimately, procrastination, particularly to Chinese Generation Y members.

As employees, Generation Y are typified as valuing skill development and enjoying the challenge of new opportunities. Similar to the Baby Boomers, they are viewed as driven and demanding of the work environment and are also likely to be optimistic (Huntley, 2006; Smola & Sutton, 2002). They are seen to be comfortable with change and are less likely to see job security as an important factor in the workplace (Hart, 2006). Displaying a high level of confidence, Generation Y are described as enjoying collective action and are highly socialized (Hart, 2006; Smola and Sutton, 2002; Tulgan & Martin, 2001). Moreover, they are seen to value responsibility and having input into decisions and actions (McCrindle & Hooper, 2006).

In general, Generation Y employees tend to exhibit the following common traits in the workplace: 1) high expectations of themselves; 2) high expectations of their employers; 3) keep learning; 4) immediate responsibility; 5) goal-oriented; 6) enjoy changes; 7) inclusive; and 8) hopeful (Raines, 2002).

In the Chinese perspective, the Generation Y employees were viewing by the management as being: 1) ambitious and demanding; 2) hypersensitive and almost allergic to criticism; and 3) “emotion” carriers while working. Essentially, they are the combination of high intelligence and over-

excitability, which actually puzzles the management when dealing with them (Flintholm, 2011).

Research Methodology

Research Design

In achieving the purposes of exploring and understanding the important motivational factors for Generation Y hotel employees, the researcher used a qualitative methodology to answer the research questions, according to the exploratory nature of this study. The qualitative approach tends to be associated with the constructivist or the transformative/emancipatory paradigms, employs strategies, such as the case study or narrative, and uses methods or data collection, such as the interview, resulting in open ended data textual data (Armitage, 2007). When seeking to uncover the interplay of significant factors of the phenomenon existing at a particular time, a case study is adaptable (Merriam & Simpson, 1995). Thus, a single case study was selected to conduct the research which the defined boundary to be the Crowne Plaza Beijing Sun Palace Hotel in Beijing, China. The selected hotel is a five-star hotel operated by the Intercontinental Hotel Group. It is branded "Crowne Plaza" which is one of the luxury hotel brands under IHG.

Data Collection

In this study, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews and documents were the two primary sources to collect the data. Interviews were set up by using a suite of structured questions, in order to allow the researcher to explore the research question in-depth and provide rich data for the stage of analysis and interpretation. In this study, the researcher applied an interview guide approach to design the interview questions. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), in the interview guide approach, topics were selected in advance, but the researcher decided the sequence and wording of the questions during each interview.

The researcher devised a total of 12 interview questions relating to motivating Generation Y hotel employees which focused on the participants' experiences or behaviors, opinions and values, feelings, knowledge, sensory perceptions, and the individual's background or demographic information in order to get rich and in-depth data. All 12 interview questions were developed by the researcher in order to respond to the research questions of this study. The interviews were conducted in the Chinese language to ensure that the information was accurately obtained and the researcher transcribed the recorded tapes into English afterwards.

In addition, documents, including print and electronic, mainly annual reports, hotel policies, hotel magazines, administrative papers, memos, meeting agendas, written reports, evaluations, and other relevant papers were reviewed as important sources of data. Merriam (1998) clarified that documents are, in fact, a ready-made source of data, easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator. Therefore, documents were also involved as a supplementary instrument to provide extra support information for the topic under study.

Participants

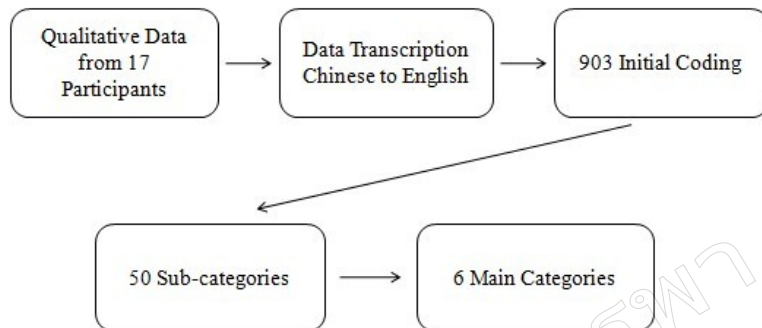
In this study, there were 17 participants from a total eight departments who were current full time employees in the Crowne Plaza Beijing Sun Palace Hotel. The positions of the participants covered eight management level employees and nine frontline staff. All the participants were Generation Y members who were born between 1985 and 1991.

All the participants were non-randomly invited for a semi-structured interview through purposive sampling, which normally allows researchers to explore and understand their audience (Kerlinger & Lee, 1999). Using this sampling method, the researcher asked for assistance from the selected hotel's HR Department, which contacted two participants for the researcher to begin the interviews and then the researcher used snowball sampling to access the remaining 15 participants who were all current full-time Generation Y employees from eight various hotel departments.

Data Analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p. 364) pointed out that “qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns (i.e., relationships) among the categories”. In this study, the researcher went through the following process to analyze the data, as illustrated in Figure 1:

Figure 1: The Qualitative Data Analysis Process



The tape-recorded interview data were transcribed from the Chinese language to English. A manual coding method was applied to code the data. The researcher reviewed the data and constructed the categories of the data before coding. Accordingly the researcher coded and organized the data focusing on the purposes and categories. They were sorted into initial open codes, based on the original descriptions and the interpreted meanings. The categories were named by seeking the linkage between different sources of information through comparison and contrast. There were 903 initial open codes found in the data from 17 participants. The similar initial codes within these 903 open codes were then merged and generalized as 50 sub-categories and lastly formed into six main categories by using grouping, merging and renaming techniques.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) claimed that qualitative researchers should establish the trustworthiness of their findings by demonstrating that they are (a) credible, (b) transferable, (c) dependable, and (d) confirmable. In order to ensure the findings’ credibility, the researcher applied a member checking technique by sharing the final interview results with the participants to affirm the accuracy of the data. A detailed and full description of the contents was provided to enable the readers to assess the transferability of the findings and to consider the applicability of the study. The recorded tapes and interview notes were kept for confirming the information when necessary. In addition, triangulation was implemented by using multiple sources of data (i.e., interviews, documents) and sourcing the information from different individuals (i.e., working in various departments) to validate the research findings.

Findings

The researcher grouped all the major findings into 6 main themes which are shown in Table 1 below. The first 4 themes were directly related to the research questions. Moreover, themes 5 and 6 served as the additional findings to supplement and strengthen the research findings.

Themes
Attractions of working
Important motivational factors in work
Solutions for Negative Emotions
Self-Expectations of Motivation
Direct Causes of Turnover
Causes of Negative Emotions

Table 1. Main themes of the study

Attractions of Working

The participants stressed eight elements that mainly made their jobs attractive. These elements were understood as their primary expectancies before the participants practically started working in the selected hotel. These eight attractions were the future career development benefits, effective HR work, educational reasons, IHG's brand influence and reputation, overall working conditions, the prosperity of hospitality industry, personal interest and skill improvement. The participants discussed why and how the hospitality industry and the selected hotel were attractive to them, which motivated them to make their choices for their careers. The emphasized elements served vitally in terms of understanding what factors are important to motivate Generation Y members. The data showed that Generation Y hotel employees consider their future as one of the most important factors which covered their career development, the prosperity of hospitality industry, IHG's brand influence and reputation and skill improvement. In addition, the Generation Y members considered a lot of conditions, including the working atmosphere, compensation, welfare and treatment, and also the overall status of the whole hospitality industry when considering if the job is attractive.

Important Motivational Factors at Work

Understanding the initial attractions of working in the hospitality industry, the important motivational factors at work illustrated the Generation Y hotel employees' current desires in their work. There were 13 participants who answered that, when learning and training opportunities are provided, they felt better about their jobs and performed better, with longer retention and a pleasant working mood. P3, P4, P6, P8, P11, P12, P13, P15 and P17 shared that they were still young and new to the workplace, just becoming connected to the society. One of the biggest concerns about their current jobs was to see if they can learn more from it, which includes skills, knowledge, experience or even difficulties and mistakes. In addition, personal growth was a big concern for them, not only by learning and training, but also by improving their skills, getting more knowledge and establishing their social network.

Another important motivating factor was a clear career path. As P10 pointed out, "It goes like a linkage when you get promoted first, then your diverse skills will be improved and lastly you will get higher paid as the outcome". P1, P12 and P13 also agreed with this opinion. Most of the abovementioned points relied on their perspective of future considerations, according to the participants' statements.

Compensation, welfare and treatment were also pointed out by P1, P2, P5, P11, P12, and P14 as very important motivational factors at work. As P14 explained: "the management has provided me the opportunity for promotion before, but still, the salary is not competitive to other industries in Beijing. The life expanse brings me too much pressure which made me feel lack of motivation". Welfare and treatment were considered to be as important as compensation. "Staff welfare is an important motivator to me. For example, under-rested is a common problem for hotel staffs. It would make me feel better if I can get more vacations. On the other hand, more staff activities and material welfare goodies while festivals and holidays will make the staffs feel warmer to work for the hotel," said P11.

In addition, the participants addressed various mental stimulations to be one of the most significant factors to motivate them. Recognition was widely mentioned by the participants, which can be fulfilled in both materially and mentally, such as getting promotion or simply verbal praise. The participants mainly discussed three types of recognition: recognition from the management, recognition from the colleagues and recognition from the guests. Furthermore, challenges and freshness, interest, caring from others, responsibility, achievement, support and guide, sense of belonging and sense of fulfillment were all covered in the participants' statements as factors which can effectively motivate them.

Interpersonal relationships were emphasized as one of the important motivational factors as well. The relationships, according to the participants, refer to relationships with supervisors, with colleagues and with guests. P1, P6, P10, P11, P13, P14, P15, P16 and P17 shared their viewpoint of how the interpersonal relationships influence them in terms of motivation. Similar but different was the reason why the researcher divided this factor, with the "relationships" being that the working atmosphere sometimes depends on the working attitude of the surrounding people. The participants

also mentioned teamwork, which plays a vital role in the working atmosphere. Therefore, the working atmosphere and working climate are differentiated from the relationship matters. There were 13 participants who mentioned the working atmosphere and climate. Most of these participants were seeing working atmosphere as a factor to produce a pleasant working mood. The working climate, however, is more likely to result in better performance.

Solutions for Negative Emotions

This theme provided the information that the participants mentioned about how they deal with negative emotions and what kinds of ways may possibly motivate them, while suffering from negative emotions.

Communication played a highly effective role when the participants were in a negative mood. Most of the participants chose to communicate with their supervisors, colleagues, and friends when experiencing unfavorable emotions. As P11 explained, the biggest meaning of communicating with others was not just a way to get help and comfort from others, but to pour out and to relieve their feelings. There were 11 participants who believed that some of the problems could be solved by communicating with others, at least to show their difficulties may help them to gain some advice.

Caring and guidance was also demanded while the participants were suffering from negative emotions. As P2 stated: "In my opinion, a good boss would perceive the subordinates' emotions by observing how they behave differently. If the supervisors can provide concern and guide in time, the employees would be comforted. If the supervisors understand the situations and know well about my conditions, and they can help me to adjust my emotions, even to allow me to take some special leaves, would make me very grateful and get the confidence back to solve the problems". Again, a caring attitude was highly important when facing bad emotions. P3, P5, P9, P12 and P13 shared a similar idea. However, according to the participants' thoughts, guidance was more likely to be provided by the supervisors. The difference was that caring could be also delivered by the colleagues.

Getting help from others was pointed out by the participants as well. Being a bit different from communication and caring and guidance, the participants who mentioned help here mentioned that actions were more effective than mental support. P4 stated: "When I face the negative emotions, I hope that someone could push me and help me out." P6 shared a similar idea. She said that: "I would directly ask someone who could possibly provide help to take me out of the tough situations."

Most of the participants believed that self-adjustment was the ultimate way to deal with the negative emotions. Interestingly, to divert the attention and to take a short leave were the most widely mentioned ways to adjust their emotions, according to the participants. Furthermore, positive thinking was quite helpful in this case as well. P11 stressed an example of dealing with picky guests: "I used to think positively. I counted the times of being complained and the times of being thanked every day. When I compare the numbers, I still get much more recognition, where the value of my job indicated. You never know how you will be treated by the next guest; you cannot avoid the tasks just because of the former negative emotions. The best way is to think positively". P1, P2, P6, P9, P14, and P15 shared that, if they were allowed to take leave while they had negative emotions about their job, the problems would be prone to be solved. According to the participants' explanations, taking leave somehow works the same as diverting their attention and getting rid of the unpleasant situations. Furthermore, the participants mentioned the word "relieve" here, in the same manner as communication. The function of taking leave, thus, is one kind of self-adjustment for a longer duration to relieve the "selves", according to the participants. The last sub-category is entertainment. The participants did not address the importance of staff activities here. Instead, the entertainment here refers to the entertainment in their personal lives. Repeatedly, "to relieve myself" was mentioned by four participants. The participants shared that they feel more comfortable to relieve their feelings outside of work. "The enjoyment can normally beat the unpleasant feelings", said P9.

Raises and promotions were also mentioned as effective solutions for negative emotions. P5, P6 and P7 shared the similar idea on raises and promotions. They agreed that to get a raise or promotion while the exact time the negative emotions occur is a bit impractical. It cannot be decided by them. Also, it is impossible for the management to provide the chance of getting a raise or promotion to

everybody who is suffering a negative emotion. However, they claimed, if such chances are offered, it would be easier for them to get over the negative emotions.

Self-Expectations of Motivation

This theme emerged as the desired ways to be motivated provided by the participants. The overview of this theme can be roughly divided into mental stimulations and extrinsic stimulations. However, the boundary is not clear enough to simply understand it this way. Thus, in this theme, the researcher focused on illustrating these detailed elements.

As the previous sections indicated, the participants enjoyed challenging and fresh tasks. In this theme, again, they claimed that they expected to be motivated by having more challenges and freshness in their work.

More opportunities for learning and training were expected by the participants as well. As P9 stressed, more training allowed him to understand his strengths better in the way of getting more knowledge. P11 explained: "More opportunities for learning is now the biggest desire for me. There would be the different superiors who can guide you when you work in different departments. It does not have to be a training course to teach me, but the people I work with. I want to learn from different people. For example, departmental cross-training can be very helpful in this manner". P15 highlighted this "learning from people" point as well. P12 emphasized that providing the training opportunities was a signal of caring and concern from the management, which would be taken as a big motivator for him.

Know them well was one of the most vital elements in this theme. The participants expected to be known in the perspectives of knowing their needs, knowing their interests and knowing their conditions. P6 and P9 emphasized the significance of needs analysis. They believed that the management should understand the staffs' needs, accordingly providing analysis and sustainably giving support. P9 explained: "To firstly understand the needs and follow up with the corresponding support would be a lot more motivated me rather than blindly providing the benefits". P4 and P7 shared the similar opinions as well. Personal career development plans and guidance were desired by six of the participants. P6 stated: "We have the personal development plan program in this hotel. Certainly it is helpful. However, in terms of practicing, I still expect more guide from both of the HR department and my supervisors. The on paper plan is sometimes too abstract, also the reality might not be that smooth. More detailed and practical guide would motivate me step by step".

Most of the participants also looked for comprehensive self-improvement. As P5 explained: "sometimes the growth of salary or the position is less concerned because I am still too young to deserve these". However, I have to see the progress on my overall skills, I have to see what I have learnt and gained from this job. When I am able to see my skills and knowledge have been improved, the higher salary and higher position would come along in the near future". Personal growth, thus, in the Generation Y members' perspective played a highly important role, based on their considerations of the future.

More caring and concern were pointed out by five of the participants, according to their expectations. "Show we care", as one of IHG's visions, was highlighted by the participants as an element that the management should pay more attention to.

P7, P8 and P10 mentioned that they expected to be motivated by being recognized by the surrounding people in different ways. P7 described: "The measurement of recognition is to see the current position and how important you are within the team". P8 and P10 agreed that more recognition was desired in their jobs and it did not have to be a material reward, but by making them feel valued.

Spiritual motivation, as the participants explained, was contained in the sense of belonging and the sense of accomplishment. P2 mentioned if the management put more effort into building up their staff's sense of belonging, the material stimulation might reduce its importance. She stated: "See the people who work for their own family firm, the reason why they can give so much effort sustainably is because they work for themselves. That is the sense of belonging". P12 gave the same opinion. For P1 and P7, they were concerned more with feeling a sense of accomplishment. Similarly, they indicated that when they could feel valued and useful to the hotel, their sense of accomplish rose.

Back to the basic desires, higher compensation and higher position were expected as well. Strangely, none of the participants gave specific explanation about compensation. P13 stated: "I always see salary as an additional factor that would come along with the ability and the position. When your ability is good enough, you will get the deserved position and the higher salary would automatically come along." P10 also explained: "The chance of raise and promotion cannot be occurred all the time. Everybody wants to earn more money as well as to get a higher position. However, it is impossible to provide the opportunity of raise and promotion too frequent in order to motivate the employees. Due to the opportunity is rare, it tends to be more effective when it comes. In spite of the time it comes, there are still a lot of other ways to motivate the employees".

Lastly, better welfare and treatment were mightily expected. P3 stated: "The better the organization treat the employees, the more money it saves". There were seven participants who emphasized their expectations of being treated better. Staff activities played a significant role in this pattern. In addition, P3 and P5 expected to be treated fairly in their jobs. They claimed that they hoped the management could judge everybody using the same measurement, to set their biases aside.

Direct Causes of Turnover

As one of the additional findings, this theme introduced the possible factors that might directly lead to the participants' turnover. In summary, no opportunities to be promoted or reaching the target position, job burnout, bad relations with supervisors and colleagues, inappropriate policies, low salary and negative impact from others' quitting were six major reasons that can directly lead to turnover, according to the data. These causes all related to the abovementioned motivational factors on the opposite side, which illustrated that, when the motivational factors are not provided, the participants may choose to quit their jobs.

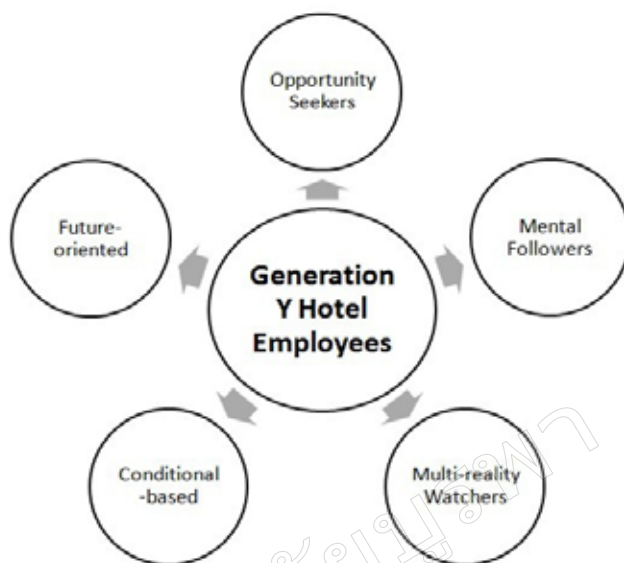
Causes of Negative Emotions

This theme served as another additional finding, which contained all the abovementioned factors that led to negative emotions at work. Being a bit different from the last theme, the negative emotions here, did not necessarily result in turnover, but caused low performance, loss of a positive attitude and less concentration on the participants' jobs. Problems with the policies and management, ineffective communication, mentally unsatisfied, unpleasant working atmosphere, difficulties, personal emotions and mistakes were mainly mentioned as the factors that produced negative emotions at work. To understand these causes of negative emotions better could help generate motivational solutions in order to work more effectively.

Discussion

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher summarized the findings and found five main characteristics of Generation Y hotel employees, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Characteristics of Generation Y Hotel Employees

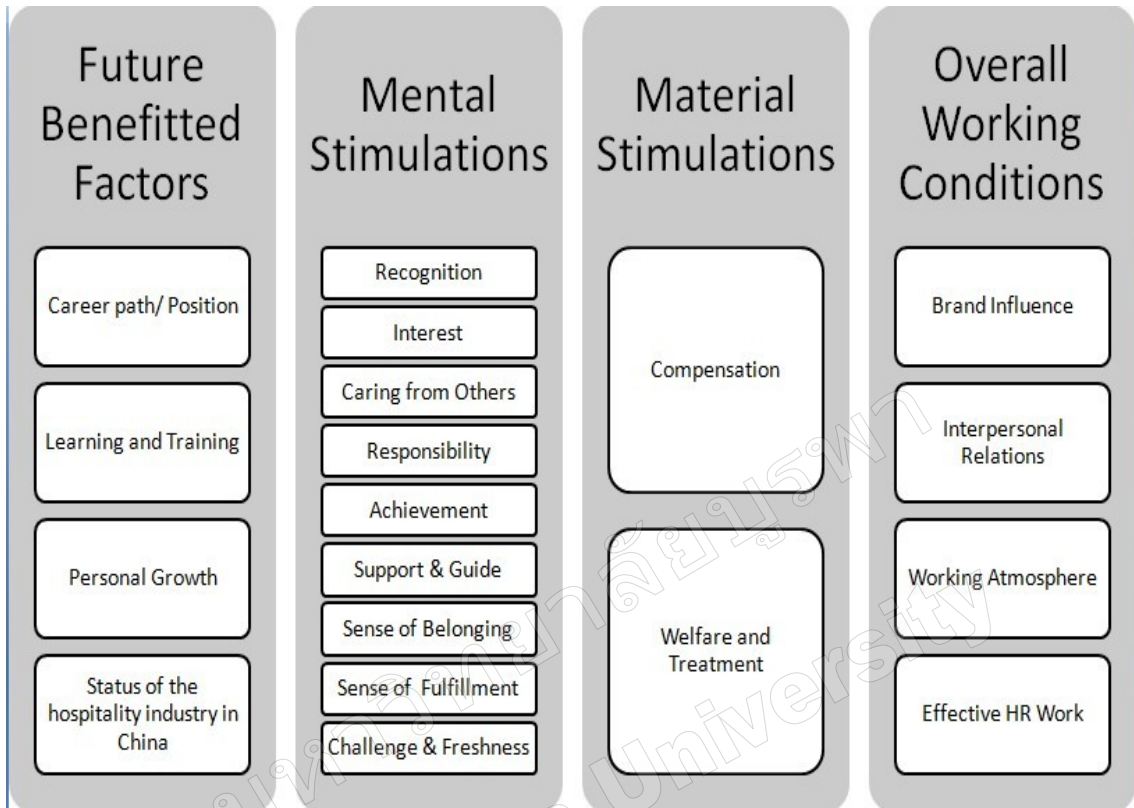


The researcher found that Generation Y members were prone to view their jobs in terms of a bigger picture. They did not stick to only one hotel or one position. Instead, they kept their eyes wide open to the whole hospitality industry. Generation Y is opportunity driven, seeking new chances for career enhancement over a higher salary or a more secure job (Deloitte Development, 2009). In addition, the Generation Y hotel employees are future-oriented. According to Deloitte Development (2009), being future-oriented, ready to contribute now, and opportunity-driven are seen as the characteristics of this generation's signs about the working world. The sight of the future plays a significant role for them to decide if the job is motivating. They addressed future career development as one of the most important motivators to drive their job choice and performance. Furthermore, the Generation Y hotel employees put their attention on a lot of conditions at work, including the working atmosphere, working climate, communication, teamwork and interpersonal relationships, which can be generally labeled as being conditional-based. Similar to the findings of Raines (2002) and Huntley (2006), Generation Y members are inclusive and driven and demanding of the work environment. They watch out for multi-realities as well when considering their jobs, such as compensation, welfare and treatment, personal growth and various other factors. Lastly, Generation Y hotel employees are mental followers who are sensitive to their mental needs and emotions. Aligned with a study of Flinholm (2011), Chinese Generation Y members are hypersensitive and almost allergic to criticism, as well as being "emotion" carriers while working.

Research Question One: "What motivational factors are important to Generation Y hotel employees?"

In responding to research question one, the important motivational factors to Generation Y employees were incorporated to answer this question. The researcher found that two of the discussed themes, namely the attractions of working and important motivational factors illustrated the answer of this question. Figure 3 below was constructed and summarized the important motivational factors for Generation Y hotel employees.

Figure 3: Important Motivational Factors for Generation Y Hotel Employees



The important motivational factors for Generation Y hotel employees can be mainly divided into four types. The future benefit factors, as a result of Generation Y members’ future-oriented perspective, were significantly emphasized relating to their career path/position, learning and training, personal growth and status of the hospitality industry in China. The sight of the future plays a significant role for them to decide if their job is motivating. They considered their future career development as one of the most important motivator to drive their jobs. Generation Y employees seek more opportunities for their career development in terms of better positions. They tended to be willing to make their efforts on the jobs which allowed them to see a clear career path. Keep learning is one of the common traits of Generation Y members, which was concluded by Raines (2002), so that the Generation Y hotel employees consider their jobs as a long term learning process, since they have the awareness of being younger and less experienced in the workplace. Training helps the employees to have on-the-job experiences and provides information that helps employees become more proficient or qualified in their current jobs (Panwar & Gupta, 2012). Therefore, they seek more learning and training opportunities to motivate them. In addition, in Generation Y employees’ viewpoint, personal growth to establish their social network and strengthen different skills can aid them to earn more opportunities in their future development. Therefore, the progress and improvement in skills plays a big part in their better future. In the same manner, the prosperity of the whole hospitality industry in China affects Generation Y hotel staff in a positive way, since it creates great future opportunities for them.

Since Generation Y hotel employees are mental followers who consider their mental needs and stimulation as the effective motivators in their jobs, recognition, interest, caring from others, responsibility, achievement, support and guidance, a sense of belonging, a sense of fulfillment and challenge and freshness were all important research findings. Herzberg (1959) listed achievement, recognition, growth, advancement, interest in job, responsibility and challenges as the motivating

factors in his theory. For Generation Y hotel employees, all these factors are vital in terms of motivation as well.

For material stimulation, Generation Y hotel employees stressed compensation, welfare and treatment as important motivational factors. Compensation within the hospitality industry in China is quite similar and the differences between same level hotels are slight, which made the compensation factor become less important as a motivator. Indeed, the Generation Y hotel staff desired to achieve higher compensation and might be motivated by receiving a raise. According to Panwar and Gupta (2012), money was considered as an instrumental motivational factor for some people, which serves to satisfy non-economic needs, such as power, status and affiliations with desired groups. However, they also know well about the realities which do not allow them to emphasize the monetary terms too much, because their current compensation is already competitive with the average income within the industry. According to Barford and Hester's findings (2011), Generation Y ranked compensation as being less important than Generation X and Baby Boomers. Plus, the problem of low salary in the whole hospitality industry did not result in the Generation Y hotel staff to emphasize the compensation as a big motivator, but as a significant solution to removing their negative moods at work. Also, unlike previous generations, Generation Y members believe work-life balance is more important than just money (Netto, nd). This phenomenon has interestingly emerged with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), which understood salary as one of the hygiene factors. The Generation Y hotel staff clarified that it is too difficult to see a big change in terms of their salary within the hospitality industry, yet the real motivators in their jobs tend to be something else.

Welfare and treatment were considered to supplement the low salary situation for Generation Y employees. Nowadays, welfare benefits become equal to money as an important role to motivate hotel employees (Panwar & Gupta, 2012). Generation Y hotel employees stressed that welfare and treatment can help the employees establish their sense of belonging, which can also be seen as one of the ways to judge how well the organization treats their people. When better dormitory conditions, better food in the staff canteen and more staff activities are provided, the Generation Y staff interpret these as the management actually paying attentions to them, instead of only hiring them to work cheaply. It is not merely about balancing high life expenses and low salary, but also about showing a caring attitude.

Lastly, overall working conditions were pointed out as mainly focusing on brand influence, interpersonal relations, working atmosphere and effective HR work. As a result of Generation Y employees' future-oriented perspective, they prefer to work in the bigger brand hotels. The advanced management and comprehensive organizational culture are considered as good conditions to broaden their horizons. Generation Y are more interested in working for larger, more conservative and well established companies (Janderson, 2012). Also, the high class hotels were seen as a good platform to access higher class people in their concern for establishing a social network which plays a vital role in their personal growth. Once again, all these experiences serve their future development. On the other hand, the Western cultural corporation brings a variety of and fresh challenges which lead Generation Y hotel staff to feel curious and passionate about their job. The brand influence and awareness also fulfill Generation Y members' sense of honor which makes the job valuable to them. Thus, the brand influence and reputation also play an important role in terms of motivation for Generation Y members.

Generation Y hotel staff pay attention to the working conditions and interpersonal relationships. The working conditions here refer to working atmosphere and climate and working environment. Relationships with the surrounding people also play a big role in Generation Y hotel staff's understanding in this area. When the overall working conditions are good, they tend to be happier with their jobs. However, when the working conditions and the interpersonal relationships turn bad, negative emotions about their jobs are produced. Once again, aligning with Herzberg's (1959) theory, when the hygiene factors are removed, the job satisfaction decreases.

Since Generation Y members seemed to reach out with a lot of different concerns, the researcher found that effective HR work can also motivate them while making decisions about their careers. The research findings indicated that Generation Y members consider the HR department as the heart of an organization which represents the organization's image, including the way they treat people and the

organizational culture. They believed that the environment has an effect on one’s performance and attitude. Hence, effective HR work which indicated a favorable working environment was understood as one of the important motivational factors for Generation Y hotel employees.

Research Question Two: “How to motivate Generation Y employees in their desired ways?”

In responding to this research question, the researcher developed the following figure based on Themes 3 and 4, which emerged to directly provide the answer, namely solutions for negative emotions and self-expectations of motivation. Figure 4 specifically indicates the expected ways to motivate Generation Y hotel employees.

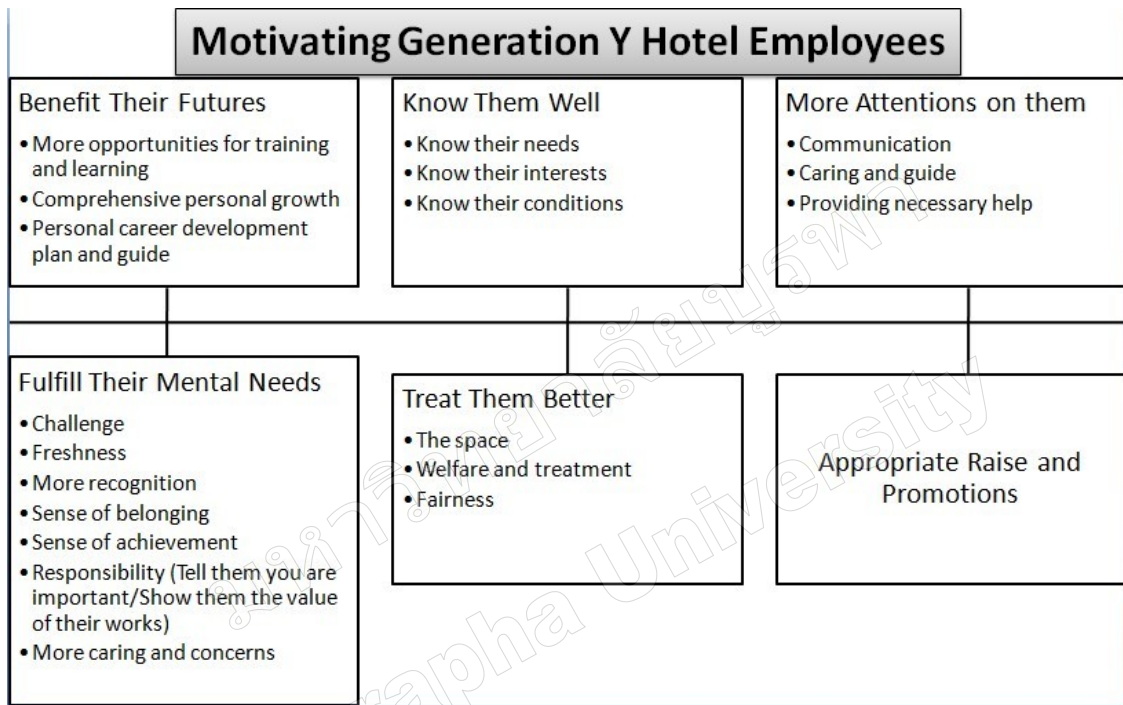


Figure 4: Motivating Generation Y Hotel Employees

Based on Generation Y hotel employees’ future-oriented characteristic, they desired to get more opportunities for training and learning, comprehensive personal growth and personal career development plans and guidance. Similar to the findings of Sayers (2007), Generation Y members are motivated by a desire to enhance their professional skills in order to remain marketable.

Generation Y members tended to have higher expectations about their employers as well, according to Raines (2002). This researcher found that Generation Y hotel staff prefer to be understood as different individuals. Thus, they demand that management know them well in the ways of knowing their needs, knowing their interests, and knowing their conditions. They believed that, once the management knows them well, the positions and working content will more or less follow according to their preferences, which served as a long term motivator.

As another result of Generation Y’s high expectations for their employers, another characteristic of demand, according to Flinholm (2011), Generation Y hotel employees expect the hotel management to give them more attention. Communication is one of many factors to motivate employees into a cohesive working module which results in objectives being achieved (Morgan, 1990). Generation Y appear to be deficient in key skills, such as listening, communication, independent thinking, time management, teamwork, job commitment and a good work ethic (Pekala, 2001). In addition, communication is a matter that indicates if they are concerned about others.

Their relationship with the immediate manager is considered crucial to their level of engagement (Lowe, Levett, & Wilson 2008). Caring and guidance from others are required as well, in terms of

motivation for Generation Y hotel employees. Being different from previous generations, Generation Y members tended to be more open about showing their difficulties and expressing their feelings in work, instead of being silently tolerant. To communicate with others and to ask for help is one of their ways of operating. Generation Y have an expectation of constant feedback from friends, families and employers, instead of trusting their own judgment (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). Moreover, they expect the supervisors, the HR department and the management have the foresight of initially realizing the problems that they are facing and a willingness to lend a hand when it is necessary.

To fulfill their mental needs is one of the widely expected ways to motivate Generation Y hotel employees. As discussed above, Generation Y hotel employees can be motivated by a various range of mental stimulations. Thus, to fulfill their mental needs is demanded through providing more challenge, freshness, recognition, sense of belonging, sense of achievement, responsibility, and caring and concern. Aligned with Herzberg (1959), these mental stimulations serve as motivating factors.

Generation Y hotel employees also expected to be treated well, specifically in terms of giving them enough space, good welfare and treatment, and fairness in their jobs. They demand the flexibilities of the policies which allow them to take leave or even just to take a walk outside to relax and relieve their feelings when they found the situations they are facing are tough. Generation Y employees do not want to be micromanaged. They seek considerable freedom in the performance of their tasks (Netto, nd). In order to be able to retain Generation Y, managers need to be able to relate to and value these employees (Morton, 2002). For example, they expect the policies are flexible. Meanwhile, the management has to be unified as well. Fairness, as one of the widely mentioned patterns, is demanded by improving the standard of management and evaluation strategies. Welfare and treatment is one of the most common material ways to motivate the employees. For Generation Y hotel employees, they consider good welfare and treatment to be the easiest way to establish the employees' sense of belonging, especially providing staff activities.

Lastly, appropriate raises and promotions were emphasized. Compensation and position were stressed as one of the Generation Y employees' biggest desires. They clarified that they can be motivated by themselves and other factors, but the further goals in their careers have to be aligned with higher compensation and higher positions. Appropriate raises and slight movements in their positions will motivate them as strong motivators after they have contributed to the hotel for a while. Here, the personal career development plan can be very helpful by providing them with the clues on how to reach their goals.

Implications

For the Policy Makers: Firstly, for the problem of the whole industry's labor shortage, the research findings of this study might be helpful to make working in a hotel attractive to Generation Y members, based on understanding their characteristics and desires at work. Especially when the policy makers tempt to emphasize the opportunities of career growth and to show the future directions, the amount of recruitment might be increased. Secondly, the research results might be useful for the policy makers to be aware that even the mental stimulation and other factors in this study played significant roles to motivate Generation Y members. A simple, but serious, reason might cause turnover which is the general low salary situation. In order to increase Generation Y hotel professions' retention, the compensation term might be re-considered to fit their growing life expense pressures. In addition, adding some special social insurance might serve as better welfare treatment in order to balance the low income. Thirdly, to serve for the problem of the high turnover rate in the whole hospitality industry, this study can be possibly helpful by proposing the motivational factors and solutions for the policy makers.

For Hotel Management: As this study focused on understanding the Generation Y hotel employees better and to motivate them effectively, the results of this research might be able to be put into practice by the hotel management. Generally, to benefit their futures, to know them well, to fulfill their mental needs, to enhance the staff treatment, to give them more attention and to provide appropriate opportunities for raises and promotions can probably help the hotel management to

motivate their Generation Y employees, which may lead to better performance, longer retention and better working attitudes, according to this study. These patterns might be able to assist the hotel management to establish the organizational cultures, policies and regulations. Also, the research findings can serve for improving the hotel policies and strengthening the organizational cultures. In addition, this study was conducted in one of the IHG brand hotels, which has a clear organizational culture. In the IHG's operating strategies, the value contains some of the elements, such as show we care, celebrate the differences and work better together, which were significantly stressed as important motivational factors in this study. Thus, it is probably safe to put more attention on the abovementioned elements when managing Generation Y employees. Moreover, as part of the IHG's commitment to its employees are labeled room to have a great start, room to be involved, room to grow and room to be yourself can be even more important when having Generation Y employees, accordingly to these research findings.

For HR Practitioners: Some of the Generation Y members' characteristics were concluded to be future-oriented, conditional-based, opportunity seekers, multi-reality watchers and mental followers.,, Yet these might be useful when engaging Generation Y employees and modifying their working conditions by the HR practitioners. Furthermore, the negative factors mentioned in the additional findings might serve as the preventing factors when dealing with Generation Y members.

Recommendations

Firstly, the issues of how important each motivational factor is and how effective each motivational strategy is were not covered in this study. Thus, for further studies, a different direction of replacing the research purpose and methodology might discover new findings in this field. Secondly, the current study collected the data by using document review and interviewing methods. An observation case study based on this study would be able to examine the effectiveness of the motivational factors for Generation Y hotel employees. Thirdly, the participants were all Generation Y hotel employees in the current study. A future study is recommended to involve Baby Boomers and Generation X hotel employees to discover other motivational factors and strategies that are appropriate for these two groups of employees. Fourthly, the gender factor can be added in the further studies to specifically understanding Generation Y members and motivation. Fifthly, the current study focused on the hospitality industry in China. For further suggestions, relevant studies can be conducted in different nations in order to gain the deeper knowledge of the hospitality industry and the people who work within the industry.

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