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## **Analyzing the Motivational Factors and Employee Engagement among Omani Staff in Hotels in Muscat**

### **Abstract**

This descriptive and correlational research provides an in debt critical analysis of the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors on employee engagement strategies used by hotels in Muscat. In three five-star hotels, two sets of survey questionnaires were administered to 160 employees from the food and beverages department, Human resource department and front offices department. Results imply that both in the intrinsic and extrinsic levels, the hotel industries in Muscat showed an enormous concern with the welfare of their employees, as a sign of reciprocation to the service and hard work of the employees for the past few years. These results are an obvious indication that the Muscat hotel industry has a functional HR department employing best practices for the welfare of the employees. It was recommended that these establishments have to sustain and maintain these directions. It is also recommended that these establishments have to review their recruitment, hiring, and selection process to optimize more positive results and ensure that the hires employees possess the competence and skills needed to cope with the demands of a rapidly growing hotel industry in Muscat.

**Keyword:** *Employees, Welfare, Hotels, Intrinsic motivation, Extrinsic motivation*

**JEL Codes:** M12, M51, Z32

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### **1. Introduction**

The hotel sector is one of the significant industries in hospitality and tourism that provides all the basic needs of tourists such as food and beverage, accommodation, recreation, and leisure among many others. Alqusayer (2016) emphasized that this industry is a demanding labor-intensive sector, wherein such demands have triggered the key players to strengthen efforts

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for globalization and commanding development in support for the activities of the industry. Regardless of the demanding workload and labor hours do not affect many job seekers to work in hotels and accommodation sectors because of the opportunities and prospects in the field. Also, many have seen the hotel industry a gate away to a successful career and economic security.

In Oman, many people pursue working in hotels, because of the same reasons. The higher education institutions' offering the hotel management and related course indicates that the industry booming in Oman. The development of the hotel industry was associated with the universal development and growth of the hospitality and tourism industry. The more tourists visiting the country mean income opportunities to hotel establishments. The award received by Oman as the second-best destination in Asia for 2019 by Travel Lemming and as an Emerging International Tourism Destination at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Today's Traveler in Mumbai, India significantly influences tourist arrivals. Nair (2019) considers this as a multiplier effect with the entire hospitality and tourism industry considers specifically the hotels' establishments which provide many income opportunities to its input providers. Further, these swelled the demand for hotel services and in return, more employees are required to serve the purpose.

Typically, hotel industries considered employees as an important asset where employees have to be motivated by employers. According to Bernotaite (2013), motivational factors are influencing drive to engage employees to work, thus both are premises towards the achievement of organizational goals and productivity. Safiullah (2015) noted that there are intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors employed by organizations in the world like hotels. Alqusayer (2016) clarified that intrinsic motivators are gained through task performance that influences the physiological, ego, cognitive, social, self-actualization, biological, safety and spiritual. Intrinsic factors include one's appreciation of a job well done, involvement on the task, helping on problems, working interestingly, gearing of prospects towards opportunities, and employees' loyalty. The extrinsic motivation factors include a conducive work environment, discipline, and good wages and benefits for employees.

Thomas (2009) describes employee engagement as the extent that an employee can self-manages work and related to involvement, commitment, attachment to one's work. In hotels, where work is very tough during peak season, the work is demanding beyond an employee's expectations. Thus, a hotel worker has to be in the psychological state of being engaging because some cannot cope with the demands of the work regardless of the motivations provided.

In the Muscat hotels, motivation and engagement are crucial to be undertaken because of other considerations like cultural differences among employees. Thus, this study must be conducted to clarify issues related to the culture among employees and hotels to guarantee the delivery of good services to valued clientele. Moreover, although there are already many types of research conducted using the identified variables; no studies have been conducted yet in the context of Muscat, Oman. Hence, this study was pursued. As an output, the study also explores the effectiveness of human resource practices as related motivational factors towards the productivity and performance of the hotel employees.

This study aims to analyze the motivational factors and employee engagement among the Omani hotel industry. Eventually is a key towards determining the effectiveness of human resource practices in some selected multinational chain hotels in Muscat. Specifically, this study seeks answer these objectives:

1. To identify the intrinsic motivational factors among Omani employees in the hotel industry.
2. To evaluate the extrinsic motivational factors among Omani employees in the hotel industry.
3. To determine the various employee engagement strategies practiced in the hotels in Muscat.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Motivation

Motivation is defined as “the processes that accounted for an individual’s intensity, direction, and persistence of effort towards attaining a goal”. Gundala (2009) emphasized that motivation is center on the enhancement of efforts among employees. Simons (2010) stated that motivation was believed to be a human psychological characteristic contributing to add to an individual’s level of promise. Motivations have been understood from these definitions as a way of filling individuals’ different expectations and needs. Thus, must be emphasized by leaders among industries especially in hotel establishments considering it is a labor-intensive industry. Moreover, managers should be aware of those unique, employee needs.

Thomas (2009) claimed that feeling of belongingness, interesting work and appreciation of a job well done are three most considered motivational factors among employees. Wages and salary were ranked number five as the most important motivator. Kukanja (2013) proved the significance of wages to motivate employees. Promotion, full appreciation for work well done, exciting work, employees’ growth and job security are among others. It was also found out that sympathetic help with individual consequences plays a little importance as a motivational factor.

In 1997, Carter determined whether Jamaican employees can be equally motivated by similar things as employees from other developed worlds. He found out that Jamaican employees were motivated by factors such as being appreciated, being involved, and individual advancement. Jamaican managers were found to be most motivated with work conditions, wages and job security which are different from their contemporaries. These implied that the lack of awareness to motivate their employees makes it difficult for Jamaica’s managers to effectively make them involved (Dalgleish, 2008). This information is useful in the development of human resource policies towards enhancing experiences that eventually keep the employees more motivated during work hours.

Simons (2010) stated that Motivation is paramount to encourage job satisfaction among workers. It is significant in organizations to include employee motivation strategies within the organizational goal of promoting performance and lessening employees' turnover rate (Honore, 2009). Previous studies revealed that motivation is significant to organizations and individuals (Ganta, 2014). Motivation resulted to optimism and challenging attitude among employees because motivated employees can empower the team and when employees are motivated it results in better teamwork, thus also promotes productivity. For individuals, motivation helps pursue personal goals leading to job satisfaction, and promote self-development. If the employer promotes situations and working conditions that can help fulfill employees' needs wherein improves motivates and cultivates employee’s morale to fulfill the job effectively and easily.

### 2.2 Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Gundala (2009) indicated that tourism and hospitality sector include the larger umbrella of the service industry wherein different segments belong to hotels and restaurants, travel, transportation, and tour operators, among others. The industry has become the support of economic development in many countries, especially in the Asian region and the Middle Eastern area wherein Oman belongs. This development results from the increasing demand for services that provides a wide array of income opportunities among tourism and hospitality workers. Also, the industries promote investments, support, and strengthen entrepreneurial moves of the emerging businesses around the world.

Poulston (2009) declared that increasing standards in the industry resulting from globalization and alignment of competencies, the made tourism and hospitality sector stricter in employing people. They require upgraded skills and competencies to match the requirements of the global market and hospitality and tourism establishments and other components of the tourism supply chain. This resulted in decreasing manpower supply and a

shortage of skilled industry workers that resulted in more competitive remunerations. The income opportunity in the industry has become a motivating factor for employees working in the industry. Nair (2019) added that the increasing income among hotels in Oman had increased the demands of hotels from employees, giving them a hard time to recruit, hire, and deploy competent employees. Hotels, therefore, are forced to motivate the employees from the start of employment to avoid issues on low retention rates. He further said that hotels also consider other factors aside from money.

However, Gundala (2009) claimed that motivational factors are resulting from self-contentment, which is unequalled with economic benefits. Before, motivating employees were focused on different human needs at which encourages individuals to work resulting from tension brought by unsatisfied desire with the hopes that tension is reduced if they work harder. Now, the tourism and hospitality industry also described tenure, helping with personal problems, good working condition, loyalty to employees, interesting work, considerate disciplining, feeling of being “in on things”, attracting compensation, development in the organization, full appreciation of work done and advancement. These reasons contributed also to the uplift of self-esteem and raising possibilities for self-actualization.

The hotel industry is one of the largest human resource work basins in the tourism and hospitality sector. It represents the large portion of the industry that would employ most of the workers because hotel jobs are undeniably a motivator to the aspiring professionals' career (Bagri et al., 2010).

Employees consider work in the hotel, to be “sophisticated”. Sometimes hotel workers call themselves maids and caretakers in a tuxedo, “rich housekeepers”, professional butlers and cooks. This is one of the reasons that tourism and hospitality education demands bloated around the world today (Poulston, 2009).

Gundala (2009) declared that among seven hotels in the Caribbean good working conditions and good wages were ranked as the two most preferred rewards. He also claimed that employee's age influences reward preference and the existence of differences in motivations among service workers and manufacturing workers among hotel establishment in other parts of the world. The notion that hotel work is sophisticated compared to work in other service-oriented companies had been a standout of the reason that employees are motivated to work in hotel establishments.

Siu et al. (1997) revealed that opportunities for loyalty to employees, good wages and growth were considered by Hong Kong hotel employees as motivators. In this study it was revealed that there is less opportunity given for employees to advance in their career thus concluded that hotel managers should understand that their employees need respect aside from wages.

Breiter et al. (2002) conducted a study in the United States has found out that job security, good working conditions and good wages are the top three motivational factors. The study had revealed that for male's job security is more important, while for females' wages over the former. Older worker considered appreciation for accomplishment than younger ones. The study also concluded that extrinsic motivational factors were viewed more important than intrinsic factor, which means that the motivating factors are those that are outside the judgment of the worker and not within the grasp of their attitude towards work or their satisfaction to their jobs, such as working conditions, employee relationship, and human resource practices among others.

Simons (2010) revealed in his study in the Greece that the disagreements between industrial workers and hotel employees on good wages, followed by job security and opportunity for advancement. The author claimed that good wages was one of the critical motivational factors in employee jobs. Good wages are considered as an extrinsic factor but can cause a change in attitude of the individual that promotes self-esteem and actualization. In the end, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors are influencing each other.

### 2.3 *Intrinsic Motivational Factors*

Alqusayer (2016) clarified that concept of intrinsic motivation by emphasizing that these are gained from performing a task. Other factors relating to human need are physiological, ego, cognitive, social, self-actualization, biological, safety and spiritual emphasized in Maslow's Theory of Needs. The author stresses that the intrinsic factors namely feeling of being involved, loyalty to employees, full appreciation of work done, interesting work, sympathetic help with personal problems and opportunities for advancement. Are the manifestations that the need theory has been already satisfied. On the other hand, Islam and Ismail (2008) claimed that intrinsic factor is the individual's, motivations towards himself/herself to continue working and progressing in a job without being motivated by other factors. It is also self-motivation, to reach a certain point someone's career life and the feeling of being fulfilled as well. Also, recognition for achievement might be very important to the employees, that they only experience in their present employment, thus they feel more that just belongingness and importance. As a result, they work and perform better because they feel their importance and they feel happy about it. This feeling can be upgraded to fulfillment towards work, and they seek to advance for the good of the company. (Hunter and Thatcher, 2007). Thomas (2009) said this is true among the workers in tourism and hospitality industries especially those that are inclined to travel, history, culture, as well as human management. They do not do it only for money or for good working environment, but they do it because of self-fulfillment.

The intrinsic motivation is the feeling that seeks for fulfillment because of the activities. Alqusayer (2016) explained that recognition for achievement is important for employees not just for the rewards, but because of the feeling that boosted their ego and pride. It is an enjoyment-based motivation which is an emotional and psychological motivator. Mattila (1999) stated that if the hotel employee was cited as best employee, the feeling is something that money cannot buy because the more he or she will be recognized, the motivation is also intensified.

Kaufmann et al. (2011) clarified another category of intrinsic motivation. The authors emphasized that the hotel industry requires very specific skills and knowledge that are interesting and enjoyable. Workers meet many people from all walks of life that hotel workers found it fulfilling. Also, the fulfillment towards work is often brought about by enjoyment-based motivation rather than by rewards or extrinsic motivators. There are things in life that cannot be understood and cannot be explained. It is something that only that person can explain. Simply the person or employee seeks for fulfillment generated by the activity or actions he or she is doing at work.

While the extrinsic motivation, had been explaining that growth or advancement drives an employee to perform better or more engage at work, growth and advancement can also be considered as intrinsic motivator. Safiullah (2015) stated that growth or advancement can either be self-enjoyment motivation or community-based motivation. The latter, as counterpart of the social motivation or simply can be called self-identification motivator.

Soomro et al. (2011) also stated that growth and advancement for other employees does not mean for rewards alone but might be contributing to self-actualization or boosting self-esteem. Hotel employees are keeping themselves motivated and engaged in their work to acquire employment growth and advancement. As such they are working harder, to be promoted and feel their worth as employees and as a person.

### 2.4 *Extrinsic Motivational Factors*

Thomas (2009) argued that motivational factors are influenced by human needs whether it is intrinsic or extrinsic. However, the extrinsic motivators are those that are caused by external factors rather than those caused by the individual feeling or judgment. Extrinsic factors include good wages, job security, tactful disciplining, good working conditions and cash bonus incentive. Gavin and Mason (2004) stated that aside from economic upliftment, the

workers can also have the opportunities to develop themselves because of the vast array potential for the workers to promote themselves. The economic upliftment, due to big salaries in hotels, and bigger income opportunities from tips and incentives can provide an individual prospect to change their present status in life as well as their families (Ugwu et al., 2014).

Gavin and Mason (2004) mentioned that some hotels have good human resource management practices and provide benefits aside from monetary compensation to their employees. The human resource development program intends to develop the skills of employees allowing employees to upgrade themselves. Many employees appreciate this, especially the ones yearning for professional growth to make themselves better. These programs make them proud of being a member of the group and decided to stay for a long time in the company in exchange for the good thing that the company have offered them aside from money. Nevertheless, Soomro et al. (2011) noted that there are also establishments that cannot provide good benefits to their employees. This happens especially during peak season wherein employees can merely receive overtime pays for their extended long hours. Hotels usually change their shifting time from three (8 hours/shift) to two shifts (12 hours/shifts) to maximize working hours. This may cause too much exhaustion, burn out, and stress to the employees resulting to higher turnover rate.

There are three categories of extrinsic motivation for employees such as the immediate payoffs, delayed payoffs and social motivation described as follows: Firstly, Kaufmann et al. (2011) described that immediate payoff include those compensations and benefits that are immediately received by employees as payment for the work done in a particular period. In hotels, compensation and benefits may include over time pays, hazard pays, vacation leave pays, insurances, sick leave pays, incentives, profit sharing, bonuses, 13<sup>th</sup> month pay and other pays that are required or mandated by the labor law. In addition, Clark (2002) stated that immediate payoffs are expected by the employees because it is paid to them regularly, like bi-monthly or monthly and are counted as a fraction of what the employee earn by per hour/day. Since it is mandated by law the employees have the rights to complain if not given to them on a specific day or time. This kind of motivation has a conditioning effect. Based on this explanation, this present study will explore similar practices among the hotels in Oman covered in this investigation that could shed light to this query.

Secondly, extrinsic motivation was categorized as the delayed pay-off when the benefits that are provided by the employer to the employee are meant to strategically generate future advantages such as signaling and human capital advancement. Kaufmann et al. (2011) also stated that signaling is the use of possible actions that transmit signals to surroundings like giving hotel employees a chance to show their talents during events or giving a break to employees in doing special assignments so that they can be noticed. Clark (2002) mentioned that praises are given to the employee while in some establishments rewards or incentives are given in the form of recognition or other material endowment. The authors added that the human capital advancement is under the category of delayed payoffs. Human capital advancement refers to the motivation by training employees to create future material gains. This is considered as one of the best practices in human resource management and development aside from compensation. Usually, this type of motivation greatly influences efficiency and productivity. This present study will inquire how this practice impact the efficiency and productivity of employees of hotels understudy, based on the aforementioned discussion.

According to Honore (2009) another category of motivation is social motivation that covers socially motivated gestures such values, norms and responsibilities beyond the community platform and secondary feedback from the job and the need for social contact were presented. These include actions that are significant to external values or that concerns with the compliance to values from outside community that is perceived by a worker. When making contributions or working on a task; actions that are significant to external obligations and norms or those that are induced by a third party from the community. Affecting the

obligations of the worker or social norm he wants to comply in avoidance of sanctions from the employer. Lastly those that are relating to indirect feedback from the job or those that covers motivation in prospects of good feedback from the requesters.

Shahid and Azhar (2013) noted that in hotels good impression to service quality had been part of these motivation and these are actually generated by service quality dimensions namely empathy, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance, and reliability. This study will cover social norms or standards and feedback from the community regarding hotel jobs. The query will include the employee's attitude towards community and family perception about people working in the hotel to find out if this has an influential effect on motivation.

### *2.5 Employee Engagement Strategies*

Employee engagement strategy is another component of the study. Skinner and Pocock (2014) specified that engagement strategies can strengthen work and life balance among hotel employees. They can enjoy work while they play and involve with some activities with their families. These strategies also give the employees more time for their families, self, and society. It might as well make them better hotel workers because of reduction of stress and burn out due to the busy hotel life and time-consuming schedules.

Maheshwari (2019) noted that Employee engagement strategies are also HRM and HRD practices cloaked differently to meditate the extent to which employees can ideal their affective, cognitive, and psychomotor means to complete their jobs. Generally, companies make their HRM practices effective to serve the employees. Menguc, et al. (2013) stated that in organizations all over the world, there are five most renowned employee engagement strategies designed as part of HRM/ HRD best practices. First, is the provision of a strategic action plan or roadmap emphasizing that they have a good future in the company, especially for those who are planning to stay in the company for a long term. Second, recognition of good work, because there is no better feeling than working if all that you have contributed to the company was acknowledged and appreciated. This explains the operant theory, that every good deed deserves a reward (Nelson, 2016).

Third, establishment of two-way communication or openness, wherein the employees can be heard. Some companies are doing this by having a dialogue session or conferences with the employees. Fourth, companies have to provide a sense of purpose for every task assigned to the employees, for them to know their worth. Lastly, companies have to be fair and realistic. Avoidance of favoritism, and acknowledgment and recognition of employees their work by giving incentives. Work and targets have to be achievable, and projects must be feasible to avoid confusion for employees to work better because they know that they have goals and objectives to achieve (Menguc et. al., 2013).

Employee engagement strategies more are applicable to hotels as employee turnover is rated as highest among other industries. Much more that, the hotel sector has a combination of brain cracking and menial works for employees. Honore (2009) stated that marketing strategies that must be done in order to boost sales cannot be successful without employees doing it. Such strategy can be done on the internet, but a front office staff, housekeeping supervisor, and food and beverage service crew can also do sales merchandising to upgrade sales be. The author also expressed that Inclusion on the employees on the goals of the hotel if they hit their target can be a realization of the first engagement strategy mentioned previously. Likewise, recognition of work done, by acknowledging the best employee for a given period of time is common among hotel establishments as well. In addition, Maheshwari (2019) mentioned that Two-way communication also is the best way to boost employee morale in hotel establishments that would engage them better in their work. Setting targets and purpose is also applicable among hotels like in other organizations. Finally, Nelson (2016) claimed that treating hotel employee fairly is important regardless of position, rank, status, race, and cultural orientation is one also of the most successful engagement strategies employed by hotel industries.

### 3. Methodology

This study was employing Stratified Random Sampling. Blanza (2018) point out that Stratified Random Sampling is the process that allows the subdivision of the population into subgroups or substratum. In this study, stratified sampling is appropriate because the population niche consist of sub-groups or substratum such as the Human resource department, the food and beverage department, and the front office department of the 3 –five start hotels in Muscat, Oman. The study allows 160 employees from the identified department of the said hotels or at least 20 percent of the total population of every hotel that was generates more reliable data. These departments were selected because these are the most affected departments with motivational and engagement issues due to the responsibilities at hand.

The data collection is the compilation and evaluation in a systematic manner of information on variables of interest that helps to answer inquiries, define research questions and assess outcomes (Nemanja, 2019). The process involved in collecting data for this study involves four steps. First, the researcher was notifying the target hotel to be one of the participants in the study by sending a letter of approval. The second step is the actual survey, which was takes place upon receiving a response of approval to survey the target hotels. The actual survey was done within one to two weeks. The questionnaire was put up in survey monkey for ease and convenience of the respondents and the researcher as well. Instructions were also being posted to guide the respondents in answering the survey questionnaires. The target participants were 160 employees from the different departments of the identified hotels in Muscat. The third step is the collection of the answered survey questionnaire followed by the tabulation of the data to complete the four steps.

The questionnaire is the primary instrument to be used in this present study to gather the required data. According to Amaresan (2019) the survey questionnaire was consisting of set of questions and indicators as a tool to intend to conduct a survey. It is for the same purpose that the questionnaire was used as a tool to gather data for statistical analysis. The survey questionnaire is important in solving the problems posited in the study. More specifically, the questionnaire is made to answer the objectives of the study and give justice to the research endeavor (Engidaw, 2021). The questionnaire is consisting of four main parts. Part 1, was determine the socio-demographic profile of the respondents; Part 2 and Part 3 determines that most prevailing intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors among the Omani hotel industry workers; Part 4, is a multi-response checklist that was determine the most prevalent intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors among the Omani hotel employees Part 2 and 3 of the survey questionnaire utilizes a Five Point Likert Scale Format.

This quantitative study employed the following descriptive statistics to analyse the gathered data. The frequency distribution, percentage, rank, and weighted mean was used to analyse the data. More specifically, the frequency distribution is the statistical tool that was used to determine the distribution of respondents as well as the frequency of the respondents belonging to a particular specific profile such as gender, age, and marital status. The Percentage was employed to determine the portion of the respondents as well as the portion of respondents belonging to a particular profile. The rank was used to analyse the most prevailing motivational factors as well as the styles of employee engagement among Omani hotel industry workers. The weighted mean is the statistical tool determines the level of motivational factors as well as the level of employee engagement among Omani hotel industry workers.

### 4. Analysis and Results

#### 4.1 Profile of Respondents

The demographic variables details below in the table 1 such as age group consists of the Muscat hotels employees. In term of age the data showed that 31-35 are higher by (f=48) or 30%, the respond of age 22-30 are by (f=44) or 27.5%, and 36 –above (f=40) or 25%, and the



lowest responds age are 18-21 (f=28) or 17.5%. It was found that majority (f=120) or 75 % of the employees are male, and minority of female are (f=40) or 25%. The data showed that there is an equal number of single and married employees are working in the hotel as indicated in there obtained frequencies of 80 (50 %). Data in Table 1 showed that majority (f=84) or 52.5% are high school graduates, (f=64) or 40% have obtained diploma courses, and (f=12) or 7% are having graduate degrees. The employees are also scattered in different departments such as Human Resource (f=48) or 30%, Food and Beverage (f=72) or 45%, Front Office (f=40) or 25%. Most of the employees are working in the hotel for at less 3 years and below (f=64) or 40%, and the rest have been working for 4-6 years (f=36) or 22.5%, and 7-10 years (f=60) or 37.5%.

**Table 1:** Profile of Respondents.

Profile of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Entire Group</b>	160	100
<b>Age</b>		
18-21 years	28	17.5
22-30	44	27.5
31- 35	48	30.0
36- Above	40	25.00
<b>Gender:</b>		
Male	120	75.0
Female	40	25.0
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	80	50.00
Married	80	50.0
<b>Level of education</b>		
High School	84	52.5
Diploma	64	40.00
Graduate	12	7.50
Past Graduate	0	0
<b>Department</b>		
Human Resource	48	30.0
Food and Beverage	72	45.0
Front Office	40	25.0
<b>Length of Service</b>		
0-3 years	64	40.0
4-6 years	36	22.5
7-10 years	60	37.5

#### **4.2 Descriptive Statistics**

The intrinsic motivational factors among Omani hotel employees were identified in Table 2. Results revealed that among the identified motivational factors number 1 or “The Hotel has designed a convenient promotion guideline for employees” was perceived as the strongest among the respondents. This was revealed by the obtained weighted mean value of 4.58 (Very Strong). These imply that the Hotel establishment in Muscat is concerned with the individual

welfare of their employees. From the findings it was also deduced that hotel establishments in Muscat promotes human resource management by designing promotion guidelines that favors their employees.

Results also revealed that the rest of the intrinsic motivational factors were evaluated as strong and moderate as shown in the obtained weighted mean values which fell within the range of 3.51-4.00 and 2.51- 3.50 respectively. These imply that the Muscat hotel establishments are really eager to practice the human resource management functions to secure the welfare of the Omani hotel employees.

**Table 2:** The Strongest Intrinsic Motivational Factors

Intrinsic Motivational Factors	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretations
1.The hotel has designed a convenient promotion guideline for employees	<b>4.58</b>	Very Strong
2. I feel involved in every endeavor in the hotel	<b>4.47</b>	Strong
3. I can fill how the hotel takes care of our career path	<b>4.40</b>	Strong
4. I have the feeling of belongingness in my current job	<b>4.35</b>	Strong
5. The hotel understands our needs	<b>4.35</b>	Strong
6. I feel many opportunities for advancement and development	<b>4.20</b>	Strong
7. I tend to work harder to stay longer in the hotel	<b>4.10</b>	Strong
8. I can always feel the sense of loyalty to the hotel	<b>4.05</b>	Strong
9. I am interested in my work;	<b>3.92</b>	Strong
10. I am happy with the current job position	<b>3.82</b>	Strong
11. I have a feeling that my employer/supervisor appreciates my work	<b>3.55</b>	Strong
12. I feel the sympathy of my colleagues with personal problems	<b>3.42</b>	Moderate

The extrinsic motivational factors among Omani hotel employees were evaluated in Table 3. Results revealed that among the extrinsic motivational factors, number 1 or “The Hotel has an HR practice that promotes tactful disciplining” appeared the strongest. This was indicated in the obtained weighted means value of 4.51. This result implies that the hotel establishments in Muscat have a tactful practice that favors the welfare of the employees. There might also some actions that lead to imposing discipline, however it seems that these actions of the HR promote good practices that creates a good working condition among the employees. This result is also associated with the strongest intrinsic motivational factor identified in Table 2 wherein the hotel’s favorable actions in maintaining and sustaining the employee’s welfare are observable.

**Table 3:** The Strongest Extrinsic Motivational factors

Extrinsic Motivational Factors	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretations
1. The hotel have an HR practices that promotes tactful disciplining	<b>4.51</b>	Very Strong
2. The hotel provides insurance for the employees	<b>4.38</b>	Strong

3. The hotel designs flexible work hours for employees	4.29	Strong
4. The hotel has a very attractive health insurance benefits.	4.29	Strong
5. The hotel designs training and development program that can meet the needs of the employees	4.16	Strong
6. The hotel ensures the safety and security of the employees	4.11	Strong
7. The hotel provides incentives, bonuses, and other fringe benefits	4.05	Strong
8. The hotel provide us good compensation package	3.92	Strong
9. The hotel provides a reasonable retirement package for the employees	3.84	Strong
10. Our hotel provides us with the good working conditions	3.46	Strong
11. The hotel assures our tenure and job security	3.46	Moderate

Table 4 revealed that “Good working condition” is the most prevalent intrinsic motivator (R=1) used by hotels in Muscat as engagement strategy. This was followed by “Good relationship with employer” (R=2), “The Feeling of being employed in the hotel” (R=3). This implies that hotels in Muscat provide a good working condition for employees and maintain a good relationship among the employees. Employees on the other side resemble the sense of pride and belongingness of working in Muscat hotels. The proud feeling among employees also further implied that hotels are prestigious enough to give the employees such feeling.

**Table 4:** Most prevalent Intrinsic Motivators Used by Hotels as Engagement Strategies

Intrinsic Motivator	Frequency	Rank
Good Working Condition	124	1
Good Relationship with Employer	88	2
The Feeling of being employed in the hotel	76	3
Feeling of Being Fulfilled	68	4
Career Growth and Advancement	64	5
Empathy towards Colleagues	60	6
Loyalty to the hotel	60	6
Recognition	48	8
Belongingness and mutual trust	44	9

Table 5 revealed that “Insurance Benefits” (R=1) is the most prevalent extrinsic motivator used by hotels in Muscat, followed by “Training and development Package “(R=2) and “good promotion policies and guidelines “(R=3). This imply that the Muscat hotels have employed the significant functions of human resource management and are concerned of the welfare of the employees especially those that that have a long term rather than short term impacts among their employees.

**Table 5:** Most prevalent Extrinsic Motivators Used by Hotels as Engagement Strategies

Extrinsic Motivator	Frequency	Rank
Insurance Benefits	116	1
Training and Development Package	112	2
Good Promotion Policies and Guidelines	104	3

Bonuses and other Fringe Benefits	96	<b>4</b>
Paid Vacation, sick, and leave benefits	80	<b>5</b>
Flexible Work Hours	40	<b>6</b>
Attractive Incentive Package	36	<b>7</b>
Attractive Compensation Package	32	<b>8</b>
Retirement Package	8	<b>9</b>

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

### 5.1 Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the study. The discussion will have two levels. First is the analysis based on the results and the second level is corroborative analysis which will present the similarities and differences of the results from the works of different authors.

*Objective 1: To identify the intrinsic motivational factors among Omani employees in the hotel industry.* Result have identified that the strongest intrinsic motivational factor among Omani hotel employees has translated to “*The Hotel has designed a convenient promotion guideline for employees*”. Base from the results it was construed that the Muscat hotels has an established human resource management department wherein each of the functions are directed to the welfare of the employees. The promotion guidelines are one of the best practices among organizations that can be beneficial to both parties because it has clarity and lessens the instances of conflict. The results agreed with the arguments presented by Kukanja (2013) that one of the most vital motivational factors among employees’ promotion and employees’ growth. Kukanja also emphasized that promotion enables the employee to raise his or her living standards, status as well as his or her family which results to upliftment of morale. These findings also agreed with the claims of Safiullah (2015) emphasizing that growth or advancement can either be self-enjoyment motivation or community-based motivation and Soomro et al. (2011) stating that growth and advancement for other employees does not mean for rewards alone but might be contributing to self-actualization or boosting self-esteem.

The results also justified the claims of Alqusayer (2016) clarifying the concept of intrinsic motivation by emphasizing that these are gained from performing a task. Other factors relating to human need are physiological, ego, cognitive, social, self-actualization, biological, safety and spiritual emphasized in Maslow’s Theory of Needs.

*Objective 2: To evaluate the extrinsic motivational factors among Omani employees in the hotel industry.* The study has evaluated that the strongest extrinsic motivational factors among Omani hotel employees was the ones translated with “*The Hotel have an HR practice that promotes tactful disciplining*” Which is associated with the intrinsic motivation stated above. Knowing this result it was deduced that hotel industries in Muscat has emphasis in tactful disciplining of employees which is clear and just. The results also construed that the Muscat hotel industries do not underestimate the capacity of their employees and provided them with a committee to investigate in whatever wrong doings they have. It seems that the HR department among Muscat hotel industries are taking all actions of the employees seriously, wherein it can help to promote good relationship between each employee, between employees and the hotel management and good working condition in general.

The results further explained the points emphasized by Ugwu et al. (2014) that some hotels have good human resource management practices and have best practices aside from those within the human resource functions like what the Omani hotels have. This result is also associated with the arguments raised by Shahid and Azhar (2013) that there also other category of motivation among employees such as those related to social motivation that covers socially motivated gestures such values, norms and responsibilities beyond the community platform. Further, these includes actions that are significant to external values or that concerns with the compliance to values from outside community that is perceived by a

worker when making contributions or working on a task; actions that are significant to external obligations and norms or those that are induced by a third party from the community affecting the obligations of the worker or social norm he wants to comply in avoidance of sanctions from the employer; and lastly those that are relating to indirect feedback from the job or those that covers motivation in prospects of good feedback from the requesters. Thus, the discipline imposed by the Omani hotels can be effective in letting the hotel employees obey with all the rules and regulations in accordance with the rules and regulations of the society in general.

The results of extrinsic motivation favored the argument of Thomas (2009) saying that motivational factors are influenced by human needs. However, the extrinsic motivators are those that are caused by external factors rather than those caused by the individual feeling or judgment. Extrinsic factors include good wages, good working conditions job security, tactful disciplining and cash bonus incentive.

*Objective 3: To determine the various employee engagement strategies practiced in the hotels in Muscat.* It was also revealed that “*Good working condition*”, “*Good relationship with employer*”, and “*The Feeling of being employed in the Hotel*” are the three most prevalent intrinsic motivational factors used by hotels as engagement strategies. Knowing this, it can be intruded that the hotel establishments in Muscat are concerned with the welfare of employees. By providing a good working condition they can assure the safety and security of the employees wherein they can work comfortably as well. In the end, the employees can work efficiently and achieve high productivity. The results also are implied that the employees are eager to maintain good relationship with the employers to maintain a good working condition, and because of this they feel the sense of belongingness and pride while working in Muscat hotel establishment.

As the results are concerned, this has explained by Alqusayer (2016) that concept of intrinsic motivation by emphasizing that these are gained from performing a task, which is already beyond physiological needs of man, and herein the employees of Muscat hotels are motivated and more engaged in their work if the context of their physiological, ego, cognitive, social, self-actualization, biological, safety and spiritual emphasized in Maslow’s Theory of Needs are fed. Alqusayer also emphasized that intrinsic factors namely feeling of being involved, full appreciation of work done, sympathy, working conditions and loyalty are very significant to keep the employees engaged because the basic needs have been already satisfied.

Further, the results also revealed that “*Insurance Benefits*” “*Training and development Package*” and “*good promotion policies and guidelines*” are the three most prevalent extrinsic motivational factors used by Muscat hotels as engagement strategies. These results construe that the Muscat hotels are employing a long-term actions as human resource management practice. These extrinsic motivational factors do not only provide the employees with their immediate basic needs but also preparing the employees future by providing them with benefits and goodwill than have a long term and sustainable impacts.

These results supported by Thomas (2009) that motivational factors are influenced by human needs. However, the extrinsic motivators are those that are caused by external factors rather than those caused by the individual feeling or judgment wherein in the case of Omani hotels and its employees these those that have a long-term impact rather than short term benefits only. This is also associated with the claims of Ugwu et al. (2014) that stated that some hotels have good human resource management practices and provide benefits aside from monetary compensation to their employees such as human resource development program intends to develop the skills of employees allowing employees to upgrade themselves, and other benefits that have long term effect to the employees as well as their respective families.

As a validation to these findings, transcripts from interviews with the human resources and food and beverage departments among selected Muscat hotels were undertaken. The

interviewees also agreed that it is not only the salaries and wages that kept the employees engaged in their work. The respondents emphasized that good working condition, respect with one another, as well as safety and security of the employees are also important among them. It was also added by the respondents that respect and good treatment by managers have boosted their morale and encourage them to work harder for the good of the organization. This in effect is translated to higher performance and higher productivity that is expected to come back to the employees through more benefits such as higher salaries, bonuses, and incentives. These findings agree with Soomro et al. (2011) stating that their other factors aside from money that motivates employees to work and might as well contributing to self-actualization or boosting self-esteem. Hotel employees are keeping themselves motivated and engaged in their work to acquire employment growth and advancement. As such they are working harder, to be promoted and feel their worth as employees and as a person.

Further, it was also emphasized that the issues and challenges that the employees are facing are related to stress and burn out due to the hectic demands of the hotel industry during peak season. However, the hotels in Muscat are persistent in retaining the employees by compensating their efforts by rewarding the employees in terms of giving bonuses and incentives. These results favored by the arguments of Nair (2019) stating that the increasing income among hotels in Muscat had also increased the demands of hotels from employees and thus challenges the hiring and retaining capabilities of hotels. Thus, hotels are forced to motivate the employees from the very start of employment to avoid issues on low retention rate.

### *5.2 Conclusion*

Several conclusions were derived such as hotels in Muscat do not have strict selection and hiring process, or maybe they are giving opportunities to young and dedicated individuals to be accommodated. The fact that Muscat hotels excel in customer service, it was also concluded that they have a very good training and development programs that helped the high school graduates cope with the demands of hotel jobs. Further, this finding was affirmed having found out that Muscat hotels most identified intrinsic motivational factors was that they have a guidelines and policies for promotion. Thus, it was also concluded that the new employees are supported by the company to develop their talents through their training and development programs.

Furthermore, the study has found out that the Muscat hotels have human resource management practices that ensure discipline among its employees which was evaluated to be the most prevalent extrinsic motivational factors. Herein, it was concluded that the Muscat hotels are serious about how the employees act regardless of their age, educational attainment, marital status, position, length of service and whatever backgrounds. Thus, the employees can also positively act to this matter because they are also compensated well and treated with respect regardless of their profile.

Besides, it was also concluded that hotels in Muscat is not only concerned with the good working conditions but also safety and security and general welfare of the employees. This has a positive influence on the motivation of the employees to work better in such a way that they have reciprocated these company gestures with commitment and engagement to their jobs. Also, it was concluded that Muscat hotels and employees are equally concerned with factors that have long term benefits such as insurance, training and development, and promotion policies and guidelines. Moreover, these assumptions can be a premise that Omani hotel employees are men with families and that above all they always think of the welfare of their respective families and not only of the immediate and short-term benefits that they can avail while working in Muscat hotels.

Lastly, it was concluded that engagement strategies used by Muscat hotels can strongly influence the motivation of employees to work and have a good performance. In particular, if the Muscat hotels will intensify their engagement strategies definitely the employees will be

more motivated, committed and eventually get high performance. In the end, this can result to higher organizational productivity and success that can be returned to employees through monetized benefits as well as other incentives and remuneration packages.

### 5.3 Recommendations

The hotels in Muscat functioning well in terms of their human resource management practices wherein many practices are seen to have benefited the employees. This study wanted to recommend the following:

- The Muscat hotels have to review their recruitment, selection, and hiring process and provide some qualification standards in terms of competency, skills, and education of applicants.
- The hotel industry in Muscat should accommodate female employees or open opportunities among female applicants. The hotels should provide programs to ensure gender sensitivity awareness in the workplace in order to provide equal opportunities to both male and female employees in selection and promotion.
- Based on the research, there wasn't any retirement system among the hotels; therefore, the hotels must conduct such a system.
- Continuous monitoring of human resource management and practices among Muscat hotels must be done. Benchmarking with other hotels is also recommended wherein simulations of the best practices to motivate employees are encouraged.

### 5.4 Limitations and future research

The researcher was able to identify certain limitations especially in the socio demographic variables of the respondents. As such, only the Omani hotel workers were considered as respondents and that other nationality was excluded. Considering the limited time given to the researcher, only 160 respondents or 20 percent of the total population of the hotel employees from 3–five-star hotels in Muscat, Oman. Another limitation of the study is that the motivational factors and engagement of employee in five-star hotels may not reflect the motivational factors and engagement of employee in other hotels. Further, aside from socio-demographic profile and geographical limitations, time is also one important consideration. Most importantly, due to limited financial resources of the researcher, the researcher had come across to consider, as much as the identified number of respondents, hotels and geographical scope. Despite the fact that the study began with 250 participants in five-star hotels but due to Corona virus (CoViD19) only 160 hotel staff from three five-star hotels took part.

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