

Employee Commitment as a Means of Revitalising the Hospitality Industry post-Covid: Considering the Impact of Psychological Contract and Psychological Capital

Authors : Desere Kokt

Abstract : Hospitality establishments worldwide are bearing the brunt of the effects of Covid-19. As the hospitality industry is looking to recover, emphasis is placed on rejuvenating the industry. This is especially pertinent for economic development in areas of high unemployment, such as the Free State province of South Africa. The province is not a main tourist area and thus depends on the influx of tourists. The province has great scenic beauty with many accommodation establishments that provide job opportunities to the local population. The two main economic hubs of the Free State province namely Bloemfontein and Clarens, were the focus of the investigation. The emphasis was on graded accommodation establishments as they must adhere to the quality principles of the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) to obtain star grading. The hospitality industry is known for being labour intensive, and employees need to be available to cater for the needs of paying customers. This is referred to as 'emotional labour' and implies that employees need to manage their feelings and emotions as part of performing their jobs. The focus of this study was thus on psychological factors related to working in the hospitality industry – specifically psychological contract and psychological capital and its impact on the commitment of employees in graded accommodation establishments. Employee commitment can be explained as a psychological state that binds the individual to the organisation and involves a set of psychological relationships that include affective (emotions), normative (perceived obligation) and continuance (staying with the organisation) dimensions. Psychological contract refers to the reciprocal beliefs and expectations between the employer and the employee and consists of transactional and rational contracts. Transactional contracts are associated with the economic exchange, and contractual issues related to the employment contract and rational contracts relate to the social exchange between the employee and the organisation. Psychological capital refers to an individual's positive psychology state of development that is characterised by self-efficiency (having confidence in doing one's job), optimism (being positive and persevering towards achieving one's goals), hope (expectations for goals to succeed) and resilience (bouncing back to attain success when beset by problems and adversity). The study employed a quantitative research approach, and a structured questionnaire was used to gather data from respondents. The study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, which hampered the data gathering efforts of the researchers. Many accommodation establishments were either closed or temporarily closed, which meant that data gathering was an intensive and laborious process. The main researcher travelled to the various establishments to collect the data. Nine hospitality establishments participated in the study, and around 150 employees were targeted for data collection. Ninety-two (92) questionnaires were completed, which represents a response rate of 61%. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, and partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was applied to examine the relationship between the variables.

Keywords : employee commitment, hospitality industry, psychological contract, psychological capital

Conference Title : ICASBPM 2023 : International Conference on Administrative Sciences and Business Process Management

Conference Location : Amsterdam, Netherlands

Conference Dates : February 06-07, 2023