

## EXPLORING THE ELEMENTS OF EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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**Abstract:** Nowadays, many companies are aware that the starting point and continuing basis of a successful company strategy are the human capital and not financial capital. It means that the company's success is not influenced by the capital or technology used but more on the knowledge, skills, and behaviour of the employee that an organisation possessed. Motivated employees can lead to increased productivity and allow an organisation to achieve higher levels of output. Motivated employees can perform better and help the company to become more efficient, effective and competitive. In the hospitality industry, employees are required to work for long hours and stay focused on servicing their customer, thus ensuring that the employees are kept motivated is considered crucial. In order to increase employees' motivation, it is vital for organisations to understand what the elements that make employees stay motivated are. This research adopted the qualitative method using a case study approach and aimed to understand the elements that motivate employees in the hospitality industry. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews. The results of this research have identified nine elements which considered important in ensuring that employees stay motivated in the work. The elements that been identified are 1) convenience 2) happiness, 3) working environment, 4) will and desire, 5) relationship with colleagues, 6) work interest, 7) salary, 8) relationship with the employer and lastly 9) gaining new knowledge. Success investigation would assist us in understanding the scenario and subsequently enable employers to recognize the areas that need to be enhanced in order to increase the motivation among the employees in their organization. Apart from that, this research also contributes to the general knowledge in the area of motivation and improve the future researcher understanding of elements of motivation among the employees.

**Keywords:** Employee's Motivation, Hospitality Industry, Motivation Elements

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## **Introduction**

Most organizations today realize the significance of having motivated employees as it enables them to do better at work and in the long-term, helps to improve the growth of organizations as well as achieve high performance. The performance of an organisation can be determined by many factors such as the management, financial condition and employees. Employee performance is very important since it will affect the company's performance. When the employee performs well in their work, indirectly the company's performance will increase (Campbell, 1990). Employees usually perform well in their work when they possess motivation. Thus the organizations must try hard to offer better-working environments, welfare provisions and provide opportunities for the employee to cherish their talents and increase their motivation.

According to Kinicki and Fugate (2012), good employee motivation has been one of the important but hard duties of management, and its success has become more vital now than ever mainly in light of the worldwide competition for organizations to produce better quality products while managing the diverse employees. In order to motivate and satisfy employees, the managers should care about each individual's differences by using various approaches especially taking into consideration that motivation is one of the factors that influence employee performance. Employees usually feel motivated when they are included in making effective strategic contributions towards the achievement of the organization's objectives. Therefore, employees with good motivation are bound to influence the efficiency of an organization to achieve its goals (Thompson & Martin, 2010).

Previous studies have been carried out on motivation and further research has been recommended on factors affecting employee motivation at both public and private sectors of employment (Gichure, 2014). Soud (2014) also recommends future research to be done on factors that influence employee performance and those factors are usually factors that motivate employees. The components of motivation are very important to be understood by the company in order to increase employee performance. The motivation can lead towards higher employee satisfaction (Chudley, 2004). Motivation also can improve the level of effectiveness in the workforce (Greeno, 2002). Besides that, Jesop (2005) claimed that motivation can bring employees closer to the company which will increase the employee and company performance.

## **Literature Review**

In this section, we discuss some issues related to motivation to help in understanding what motivation is.

### ***The Concept of Employee Motivation***

Hodgetts & Hegar (2008) defined motivation as a group of processes that support person to act towards a particular objective. They emphasize that any research on motivation should focus on both why and how of what influences peoples' action. Motivation also being defined by Armstrong (2006) as those factors that influence people to take detailed actions and further states that if people being motivated, they will move in the direction in order to achieve certain objectives. He says that people most likely repeat certain actions if the objective were set to fulfil certain needs are accomplished. So, the companies need to figure out the needs of individual employees as a basis to understand what will motivate them to take necessary actions.

Bruce (2003) claims that there is a direct link between employee motivation and their performance because employee eagerness and enthusiasm was reflected in the quality of their

work. Kroth (2007) states that employee who is motivated will not always be productive matching with internal motivation. This is because there are other factors such as resources and a good working environment that influence motivation. It is obvious that managers need to focus on both intrinsic and extrinsic of motivation that may influence employees since both are important. An employee that is motivated is alert to the objectives that individuals must achieve and less motivated employees will not be able to utilize the organizational facility efficiently. Most top management aware that positive motivation leads to better performance. It is because motivation increases the willingness of workers to work and the effectiveness of the organization (Shadare, Hammed & Ayo, 2009).

### ***Theories of Motivation***

In order to further understand the motivation and what motivates employees to excel in their work, a few theories explaining the concept of motivation is discussed in the following section. These theories could help in providing a basic understanding of what motivation is and why it is important.

#### ***Herzberg's Two Factor Theory***

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory or known as Motivation-Hygiene Theory is one of the ways to identify intrinsic components that contribute to satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the workers (Robbins, Judge & Judge, 2007). The groups of motivation components in this theory are motivators' factor and hygiene factors. Motivators' factor function is to increase job satisfaction while hygiene factors are to decrease job satisfaction.

Motivators' factor relates to the job content of the work itself. It is an attempt to motivate individual to work harder and perform towards higher standard such as achievement, recognition, and advancement. Hygiene factors concerned with the job environment and are external to the job itself such as company policy, work conditions, salary and job security (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959).

#### ***McGregor Theory X and Theory Y***

McGregor (1969) suggested that management is given a task to guide people's actions and efforts in order to fulfil the organizational objectives. McGregor then suggested that employers have two thoughts correlated with their assumptions of the nature of employees. These assumptions were known as Theory X and Theory Y. Theory X, he states four assumptions about employees. The assumptions were the employee being lazy and try to avoid work, the force must be used to make them work, employees avoid responsibility and have zero ambition and put security above all factors related with work (McGregor, 1969).

Theory X is an improper method to measure motivation because the nature of employees as presumed are consequences of management practice and not by the nature of human beings. McGregor (1969) then state that Theory Y is based on the true assumptions of human nature, which are employees enjoy work and think of it as a normal part of life. They also work with minimal supervision if dedicated to achieve organizational goals and learn to accept responsibility and have the capability to make a decision even though they are not in managerial positions (Latham, 2007).

Theory Y can be used in the job enlargement concept as it inspires lower level employees to take responsibility and provides chances for employees to satisfy their social and self-seeking needs (McGregor, 1969). Theory Y also can be used in order to include the employees in the decision-making process (Latham, 2007).

### ***Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory***

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory is a theory introduced by Abraham Maslow that is based on the satisfaction of human needs to achieve motivation. The needs of motivation are physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs.

Firstly, physiological needs are the most essential such as foods, shelter, and clothing. These needs can be possessed by receiving salary and wages and ensuring a safe working environment. Secondly, safety needs refer to physical and economic protection. The employer can fulfil this need by providing benefits such as retirement plans. Thirdly, social needs are the need for an individual to feel belong or accepted by others. Employees want to have a good relationship with others in order to participate in teamwork. Fourthly, esteem needs are the needs to get recognition from others such as the value in the society that eventually lead to acquiring self-respect and status. Lastly, self-actualization refers to an individual's drive towards attaining their potential and self-satisfaction (McGregor, 1969).

The hierarchy of needs theory shows that the needs that have been fulfilled are no longer provides enough appeal to motivate employees. When the lower needs are satisfied to a certain level, the dominance of the higher-order needs is initiated. So, if the managers want to motivate employees, they need to know at what level of the hierarchy the employee currently is targeting. Then, the manager can focus on preparing the opportunity to fulfil the needs at that stage or above it (Robbins, Judge & Judge, 2007).

### ***Expectancy Theory of Motivation***

A mathematical model has been developed by Victor Vroom as an explanation of motivation in an organization known as the expectancy theory. This theory focuses on the results of a person's effort and not on the needs of the person. The theory states that the intensity of a tendency to perform in a particular manner is dependent on the intensity of an expectation that the performance will be followed by a definite outcome and on the appeal of the outcome to the individual. He managed to come up with three variables that are important for motivation namely, valence, instrumentality, and expectancy. The expectancy theory emphasized that employee's motivation is an outcome of how much an individual wants a reward (Valence), the assessment that the likelihood that the effort will lead to expected performance (Expectancy) and the belief that the performance will lead to reward (Instrumentality). In short, valence is defined as a value of results of work, while expectancy is one's belief that effort will bring to certain results and instrumentality is the belief that link one results to another.

In addition, valence is the significance associated by an individual about the expected outcome. It is an expected and not the actual satisfaction that an employee expects to receive after achieving the goals. Expectancy is the faith that better efforts will result in better performance. Expectancy is influenced by factors such as possession of appropriate skills for performing the job, availability of right resources, availability of crucial information and getting the required support for completing the job (Vroom, 1964). This description of employee motivation is acknowledged widely because most of the evidence supports the theory (Robbins & Judge, 2007). The theory believes that employees willing to work with a high level of effort as it will lead to desired results (Armstrong, 2006).

This theory implicated that the managers can correlate the preferred outcomes to the aimed performance levels. Thus managers must ensure that the employees can achieve the aimed performance levels and deserving employees must be rewarded for their exceptional performance.

### ***The Elements of Motivation***

Supervision, workgroup, job content, wages and opportunity for promotion are the components that influence employee motivation and their productivity (Vroom, 1964). He elaborates that under supervision, the thought for employees' needs and feelings is what the supervisor should worry themselves with. The employees that be given opportunities to make a decision will have a higher level of motivation and productivity. Herzberg et al., (1959) state that the best motivation of an individual to work increase from the sense of growth in responsibility that given by the supervisor.

Likert (1969) claims organizations that apply supportive supervision increase the non-economic motivation in general. The employees will increase in teamwork and productivity as they focus on achieving the goals. The important factor in the relationship between employees and supervisor is that it applied from the view of the employee. This shows the value of effective supervision to increase employee motivation. The wage is known as one of the components of motivation. Vroom (1964) concludes that employees may be satisfied with their wages, but can feel dissatisfied if they find that their wages are lower than others. Lawler & Porter (1969) said that the organization that wants to have highly motivated employees need to provide high salaries and benefits to them. The salary usually causes a negative effect on motivation rather than affect positively Herzberg et al., (1959). The managers then need to remember that even though the pay is not the main factor, but it is important to an employee as it can lead to unproductively and it cannot be exchanged for non-financial benefits.

Opportunities for advancement is viewed as challenging motivational to study because when an employee is promoted, the new position involves different work groups, salary and job description (Vroom, 1964). Herzberg et al., (1955) believe that job advancement is an important factor of motivation in employee's productivity since the motivation will lower when absent. Then, promotions also expected to motivate higher efficiency although they are not surely followed by the difference in salary arrangements.

Recognition is also a strong motivator. Dubrin (2004) states the direct way of positive reinforcement is by giving recognition to employees. Bowen (2000) also said that recognizing the employee for their action is good practice for both parts. According to Bowen (2000), there are two types of recognition which are formal recognition and informal recognition. Informal recognition is recognition that an individual receives from others such as colleagues or managers. Formal recognition is recognition that derives from the organization to the employees such as when they achieve the organization's goals.

### **Methodology**

This research adopted a qualitative approach which aims to identify the components of motivation among employees in the hospitality industry in Perlis. The qualitative approach was chosen due to its appropriateness since this research needs to capture expressive information that cannot be conveyed in quantitative data. Respondents for this research were selected using purposive sampling which consists of employees from a various position working in a few hotels located in Perlis. A total of six respondents participated in the research. Semi-structured interview method was used to collect data from the respondents which took about one a half month to complete. The semi-structured interview consists of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored which are elements of motivation and also allows the researcher to diverge in order to continue the idea or response for more details. This interview format is used most frequently by the interviewer that wants to have more in-depth data from the respondents. Since the employees came from various work position, this method is suitable

in order to identify the elements of motivation among the employees. Data that have been collected in the research was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is appropriate for research that seeks to ascertain using interpretations and offered ordered elements to data analysis (Yin, 1994). Qualitative research requires understanding and collecting diverse aspects and data. Therefore, by using thematic analysis, the researcher can understand any issue more widely (Marks & Yardley, 2004).

### **Results and Discussions**

This section discusses the findings on the elements of motivation among employees gained from the interview session in the qualitative research phase. During the investigation, the researcher found nine elements of motivation among employees, which are 1) convenience 2) happiness, 3) working environment, 4) will and desire, 5) relationship with colleagues, 6) work interest, 7) salary, 8) relationship with the employer and lastly 9) gaining new knowledge. In general, the findings on the elements of motivation among employees in the hospitality industry could be divided into two broad categories, which are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal desires to perform a particular task, while extrinsic motivation is an external factor that triggered the actions. Details of each element are discussed in the following section.

The first element found is convenience. Convenience refers to employees' ability to go to work without spending a high cost. Most respondents stated that this is one of the most important elements that drive their motivation to work. As most of the respondents are normal workers, the resources that they have are very limited. Thus the convenience for them to go to work is considered as one of the elements of motivation especially if the workplace is not far from where they are staying.

The second element found during the interview is happiness. Happiness refers to a sense of well-being, joy, or contentment. When people are successful, or safe, or lucky, they feel happy. All respondents stated that the feeling of happiness is important for them to keep them motivated in doing their work. The feeling of happiness is always considered as intrinsic motivation factor as it lies within someone. However, it is very closely related to other extrinsic elements found in the research as happiness is an emotion that easily changed due to some other factors that can be found in the organisation.

The third element found in this research is the work environment. Work environment refers to the surrounding conditions in which an employee operates. The work environment can be composed of physical conditions, such as office temperature, or equipment, such as personal computers. It can also be related to factors such as work processes or procedures. During the interview, all respondents stressed that the work environment is one of the important element that increases their motivation to work. The work environment refers to a surrounding that is comfortable, without any pressure and easy. Apart from that, a good work environment is also based on the spirit of trust, understanding and cooperation between the management and other personnel in the organisation. Thus, the human resources manager, along with other managers has an important role to play in the development and maintaining a good working environment.

The fourth element found in this research is will and desire. Will and desire refer to the strength and condition that an employee has to start something and follow it through, and wanting to take action to materialize it. Some respondents mentioned that the will and desire that exist within their own self-makes they feel motivated to work. This is in line with Theory Y which assume that employees are internally motivated, enjoy their job, and work to better themselves

without a direct reward in return. When managers view their employees as one of the most valuable assets to the company, it drives the internal workings of the corporation. Employees additionally tend to take full responsibility for their work and do not need close supervision to create a quality product.

The fifth element found in this research is the relationship with colleagues. This refers to the relationship with other employees in the same workplace. To have a good working relationship means that they are on good terms, and can work effectively together. Most respondents state that relationship with colleagues does influence their level of motivation. The good relationship with colleagues makes employees feel happy to work in the company as the friends give support in their work. They also feel more motivated working in a group together with their colleagues as they work together and help each other.

The sixth element found in this research is work interest. Work interest refers to the passion of employees in doing their work. This is closely related to whether their work is something that they are interested in, the employees' favourite aspects of work and what they really enjoy doing. Respondents in this research stated that when they are given work that is of their interest, they feel motivated in doing their work compared to when given work that they are not interested in. They also added that, if it is, then they will put as much effort as they can to make sure that the work is carried out well.

The seventh element found in this research is salary. Salary refers to a fixed regular payment, typically paid on a monthly basis made by an employer to an employee, as a return of the work carried out by the employee. The salary is a well-known component of motivation as it is mentioned in the literature review as the main component of motivation among employees. The respondents mentioned that the salary is very important in order to increase employee's motivation. This is in line with a few theories of motivation found in the literature. For example, Herzberg theory stated that one of the motivation factors which is the hygiene factor concerned with the job environment and are external to the job itself such as company policy, work conditions, salary and job security (Herzberg et al., 1959). This is seconded by Maslow (1943) in his theory where he mentions the physiological needs are the most essential such as food, shelter, and clothing. These needs can be possessed by receiving salary and wages and ensuring a safe working environment.

The eighth element found in this research is the relationship with the employer. An organization with a good employee relations program provides fair and consistent treatment to all employees so they will be committed to their jobs and loyal to the company. Employees stated that having a good relationship with the employer helps to motivate them in doing their work. The employer that treats the employees right and nice by taking care of the employees can increase the employee's motivation to work. Likert (1969) claims organizations that apply supportive supervision increase the non-economic motivation in general. The employees will increase in teamwork and productivity as they focus on achieving the goals. The important factor in the relationship between employees and supervisor is that it is applied from the view of the employee. This shows the value of effective supervision to increase employee motivation.

The last motivation element found in this research is gaining new knowledge. It refers to the process of learning new knowledge or skill by studying, practising, being taught, or experiencing something while working in the organization. Most respondents said that the company provides them with an avenue for them to gain more knowledge and learn new things while doing their work. This element is said to be one of the elements that increase their

motivation to work. The summary of the analysis of the motivation elements is presented in Table 1 below.

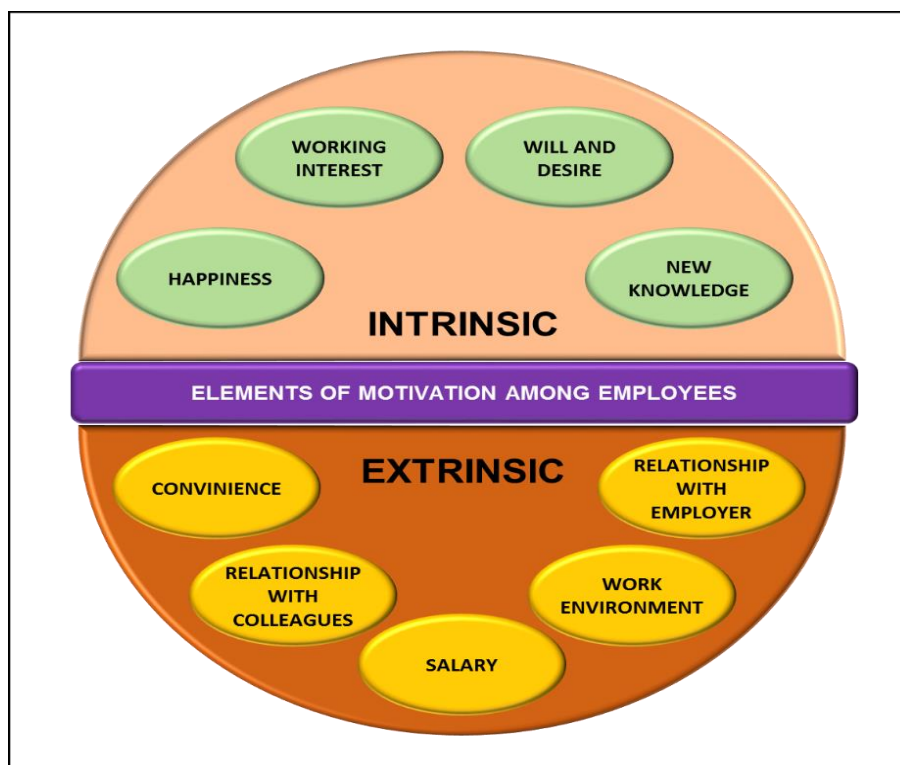
**Table 1: Summary of Analysis of Motivation Elements among Employees**

ELEMENTS OF MOTIVATION	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
Convenience	Stay in Perlis and don't feel like going anywhere else.	Stays nearby with the company.	The workplace is not far and originally from Perlis.	Near to the house. The wife's hometown .	Near the house.	Not stated
Happiness	Feels really happy	Feels happy to work with this company	So happy to work in the organization .	Feels happy to work with the company	Feel happy working in the organization	Feel happy to work with the company
Working Environment	The environment in the workplace makes her happy.	The working condition very comfortable .	The workplace environment without any pressure. Can have fun when the employer does not put pressure on the employee.	Environment plays an important role to feel motivated.	No pressure while working in the organization. The workplace is very comfortable.	The environment makes it feel easy to work in the company.
Will and Desire	Motivated to come to work because of the will and desire that comes from our self.	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Own will to work in the field (guest service).
Relationship with Colleagues	Relationship with colleagues that influence motivation .	Feel happy to work in the organization because of friends that give support.	Friends that feel like siblings.	Motivated because of the friends that work together in the organization.	Friends that help each other and good understanding.	The relationship between colleagues are like siblings and help each other. Have a good relationship with the co-workers.
Working Interest	Not stated	Feels interested in the job.	Not stated	Not stated	Feel interested in the work.	Not stated
Salary	Not stated	Salary can affect the motivation to work.	The salary that can affect motivation level.	Getting a good salary keep me motivated	Not stated	Not stated
Relationship with the employer	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	An employer	The good relations	The good relationship



ELEMENTS OF MOTIVATION	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
				that is nice when speaking. The good relationship with employers.	hip with the boss.	p with the employer. An employer being very nice thus feels motivated to work. Employers always care about the workers.
Gaining Knowledge	New	Not stated	Get to learn the job that is done.	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated
						Gain more knowledge by interaction with guests.

In order to give a better understanding of the motivation elements, the elements are illustrated and depicted in Figure 1 below. The elements have been broken into its main elements which are the intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. This division could help the organisation in understanding the motivation element better in order to strategize their method in keeping their employees motivated.



**Figure 1: Elements of Motivation Among Employees**

## **Conclusion**

Motivation is the main factor that influences organizational performance. An employee that is motivated is alert to the objectives that individuals must achieve and less motivated employees will not be able to utilize the organizational facility efficiently. Most top management are aware that positive motivation leads to better performance. It is because motivation increases the willingness of workers to work and the effectiveness of the organization. This research investigates the elements that lead to motivation among employees in the hospitality industry. It found five elements which are the which are 1) convenience 2) happiness, 3) working environment, 4) will and desire, 5) relationship with colleagues, 6) work interest, 7) salary, 8) relationship with the employer and lastly 9) gaining new knowledge. It was found that there is a direct link between employee motivation and their performance because employee eagerness and enthusiasm was reflected in the quality of their work. The employee who is motivated will not always be productive matching with internal motivation. This is because there are other factors such as resources and good working environment also influence motivation. It is obvious that managers need to focus on both intrinsic and extrinsic of motivation that may influence employees since both are important. The findings of this research could be used by organisations to improve their employee motivation and further help the organisation to perform better in the future.

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