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Psychological contract of tourism and hospitality professionals: Gap analysis

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to explore the Psychological Contract of Tourism and Hospitality professional working in India. Using a well-designed and structured questionnaire, data linking pre-joining expectations and post-joining experience were captured on a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics, mean analysis, gap analysis, factor analysis, and simple regression analysis were employed to draw conclusions about the data. Findings reveal that specific elements of the psychological contract among tourism and hospitality staff, namely, an attractive remuneration package, support in maintaining Work-Life balance, allowing adequate time to be spent with family, assigning a job profile that provides respect and dignity, and an environment free of power and politics, are considered important but are not fulfilled by the hospitality organizations. Employees are satisfied with a few aspects of the employment relationship, but overall satisfaction is negative. Four factors, namely 'work-life balance', 'freedom to' 'quit', 'rewards and acknowledgements', and 'a safe and healthy working environment', are the most significant and influential factors in predicting workers' overall satisfaction. Amongst these, 'Reward and Acknowledgement' was the most significant factor in predicting workers' overall satisfaction with their working organization. Human resource professionals must carefully and constantly recognize and monitor the psychological contract of tourism and hospitality professionals working in the Indian tourism sector. Tourism and hospitality organizations can benefit by effectively incorporating these factors into their human resource policies.

Contribution/Originality: The study is undertaken in India, an emerging marketplace for foreign investors, tourists, and commercial organizations. The research is helpful for academicians and professionals who want to better understand how work relationships function in novel environments and apply strategic human resource management techniques that are appropriate for the Indian tourism and hospitality sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian government wants tourists from abroad to pick India as their favorite place of vacation. The government assisted the tourism industry in moving into a new age by reducing regulatory barriers and enacting favorable legislation. This created a wide range of hospitality employment options and emphasizes the critical need for skilled and competent graduates in hospitality who will prove helpful to the industry's future development. However, the Indian hospitality sector continues to grapple with a labor crisis, even though many visitors sparked a lot of growth and brought in tourism dollars.

The Human Resource department of a hotel is considered a significant component that provides tactical leadership and guidance in every aspect that impacts the day-to-day functioning (Lockyer & Scholarios, 2004). With

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effective management of human resources, particularly in hotels and businesses, it is possible to expand worker performance as well as achieve goals such as increased earnings and efficiency (Lynn, Kwortnik Jr, & Sturman, 2011). The problem is that the managers of hotels continue to fail to adequately retain hospitality workers inspired to stay in the business and frequently perceive them as inexpensive labor in the hospitality industry, as it is one of the lowest-paid sectors (Casado-Díaz & Simón, 2016), despite the pervasive and noticeable problem of increasing employee turnover in the tourism and hospitality industries. Secondly, due to the seasonal character of the hospitality sector, most businesses run on a little regular staff and lease added temporary workers throughout peak periods (Zopiatis, Constanti, & Theocharous, 2014), making it tough to guarantee stable employment and resulting in a substantial number of employees departing from the sector (Chalkiti & Sigala, 2010).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As per the Social exchange theory, human behavior is described as an individual and explanatory interface with others that tries to negotiate benefits once they notice equivalent payback (Blau, 1964). According to Coyle-Shapiro and Conway (2005), researchers increasingly use social exchange as an analytical framework for comprehending interactions between people and organizations. In other words, such a relationship results in a norm of reciprocity called a 'Psychological Contract' (PC). PC refers to individual beliefs influenced by the organization concerning the contractual conditions between people and their organization (Rousseau, 1995). According to Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000), a psychological contract is a subjective arrangement amongst employers and employees that may be interpreted differently depending on how each side has complied with their obligations. PC can be typically thought of as an individual's comprehension of his or her obligations to the firm and how the individual complies with the organization's demands (Bashir & Nasir, 2013). Employees and employers gain equally when this apparent contract is upheld (Lester, Turnley, Bloodgood, & Bolino, 2002; Robinson, 1996; Rodwell & Gulyas, 2015).

According to the theory of psychological contracts, it includes transactional and relational contracts. Raja, Johns, and Ntalianis (2004) technically describe transactional contracts as brief, having a mainly economic or materialistic orientation, and including little participation from both sides. Contrarily, relational contracts have been inclusive for a long time because they go beyond purely monetary exchange to include clauses for loyalty in business for stability or professional advancement within a group (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau & Parks, 1993). Examples of such clauses include long-term job security as well as career advancement. This reciprocity norm also states that failure to comply with these obligations may result in employees adjusting how they contribute by reducing commitment or possibly leaving their employment (Conway & Briner, 2005; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994), decreasing organizational citizenship behaviors and in-role performance (Lub, Nije Bijvank, Matthijs Bal, Blomme, & Schalk, 2012; Zhao, Zhou, He, & Jiang, 2021). Such adjustment or unhappiness results in a Psychological Contract Breach (PCB).

Employees encounter unfavorable reactions when they believe the organization has broken its commitment (Dulac, Coyle-Shapiro, Henderson, & Wayne, 2008; Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). The Indian tourism and hospitality industry is not an exception to this. Employees show less inclination towards investing their skill, effort, knowledge, and loyalty when organizations are unable to fulfill commitments, such as those related to pay, promotion, and job security (Cavanaugh & Noe, 1999), which increases the intention to leave (Collins, 2010). According to Ghiselli, La Lopa, and Bai (2001), "Turnover still remains one of the greatest concerning problems for the hospitality industry,". Interpersonal workplace tensions and stress are linked to more negative health, lower job satisfaction, and higher turnover intentions (O'Neill & Davis, 2011). Layoffs, retrenchment, less job safety, and other connected forms of structural modification have all weakened the psychological contract amongst workers and organization (Epitropaki, 2013; Ye, Cardon, & Rivera, 2012). Contrary to this, PC fulfillment positively influences perceived organizational support (Karagonlar, Eisenberger, & Aselage, 2016).

Although PC is not documented like a formal contract, it is still genuine for those who hold it. A person's understanding of his obligations and opinions on the extent to which the commitments of the opposite party have been met significantly affect behavior and attitudes (Lester et al., 2002; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson, 1996). Managers play a significant role in making the firm successful through the PC they create with the employees (McDermott, Conway, Rousseau, & Flood, 2013). Studies also show how algorithmic management influences one's PC (Tomprou & Lee, 2022).

Psychological contract studies are minimal in the Indian tourism and hospitality sectors. PC breaches negatively relate to organizational identification and affective commitment in tourism and hospitality (Li, Feng, Liu, & Cheng, 2014). Lub et al. (2012) discovered that for younger hospitality workers, opportunities for development, challenge, variation, and responsibility are more significant. Using the PC framework, Collins (2010) explained the connection between leader-member interchange and restaurant employees' inclination to leave their jobs. Bashir and Nasir (2013) found a connection between PC use and union commitment among hotel workers. Sok, Blomme, and Tromp (2014) discovered a connection between PCs and the perceived employability of hospitality workers.

Numerous important questions regarding PC remain unresolved in the tourism and hospitality sectors (Baum et al., 2016). First, more attention should be given to the actual contents of the PC. Instead, research has concentrated on the "state" of the PC. Secondly, employees' work values have changed over the period (Alcover, Rico, Turnley, & Bolino, 2017), and therefore, it is crucial to look at employees' expectations in managing the new PC in the tourism and hospitality sectors (Low, Bordia, & Bordia, 2016; Lub et al., 2012).

Another school of thought posits that hospitality organizations must promote knowledge-sharing behavior as well as team culture to achieve higher levels of performance (Hu, Kandampully, & Juwaheer, 2009). This is possible if the hospitality organizations have positive PC with their employees. Chen and Wu (2017) advocate that transformational leadership influences leader-member-exchange and PC relationships, bringing down the turnover intention of hospitality workers. The PC in the new standard era signifies more well-being and innovative behavior than the traditional PC (Mehta, Thanki, Panda, & Trivedi, 2022). Among the two types of PC, Transactional PC has a more substantial effect on employee turnover intention in Indian organizations (Agarwal & Gupta, 2018), contrary to the findings of Guchait, Cho, and Meurs (2015). For male employees, clarity in the job description and for female employees, work-family balance as well as opportunities for promotion are the forecasters of turnover intention (Blomme, Van Rheede, & Tromp, 2010). Frontline employees are widely acknowledged to play a critical role in service quality delivery, successful service recovery, and retaining satisfied as well as loyal customers (Chi & Gursoy, 2009; Chiang & Birtch, 2008). The capacity of the organization to carry out its PC, which binds the worker and organization in terms of the anticipated contributions and outcomes of both parties (Blomme et al., 2010; Turnley, Bolino, Lester, & Bloodgood, 2003), is a critical factor in whether employees invest efforts to recognize the firm's objectives.

Investigations have emphasized the crucial impact of psychological contracts on hospitality employees' intentions to leave the industry. For example, studies by Mohsin, Lengler, and Aguzzoli (2015) and Bello, Aina, and Oluwole (2021) conclude that there is a significant relationship between employee turnover and job security, pay, organizational loyalty, enthusiasm, and job stimulation. As per the findings of Sok et al. (2014), workers in the tourist occupation often experience several work pressures as well as familial disputes because of the erratic, long, and unanticipated time at work, which further results in substantial employee turnover. Kim (2015) discovered that management can lower the rate of staff turnover by implementing effective management programs. Other studies by Mooney (2017), Nyanjom and Wilkins (2016), Richardson (2009), Robinson, Solnet, and Breakey (2014), and Solnet, Baum, Robinson, and Lockstone-Binney (2016) conclude that the low pay, seasonal nature, repetitive nature, stressful job, odd working hours, and physical and emotional demands of hospitality careers discourage prospective workers from seeking employment. Retaining highly qualified hospitality professionals is one of a tourism organization's main worries (Hei & Rahim, 2011).

The disintegration of the psychological relationship between workers and their organizations constitutes one of the most significant unfavorable aspects contributing to increased turnover intentions (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006). Korir (2023) puts forth the importance of Psychosocial factors that are ignored, which affect the performance of tourism and hospitality professionals. Additionally, equal treatment for employees (Acha-Anyi & Masaraure, 2021) and Work-Family-Balance (Bhatt, Sharma, & Rana, 2023) for female hotel professionals are considered important factors. According to Hinkin and Tracey (2000), the cost of staff turnover in the tourism industry can reach thousands of dollars for departing employees. Therefore, top hotel executives should consider strategies to sustain their staff members' desire to remain in the hospitality sector.

The current study uses a quantitative methodology to explore the psychological contract between tourism, travel, and hospitality workers. Additionally, the study is being undertaken in India, a fresh geographical setting and an emerging marketplace for foreign investors, tourists, and commercial organizations. The research is helpful for academics and professionals who want to better understand how work relationships function in novel environments and apply strategic management techniques that are appropriate for these societal circumstances.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To explore the Psychological Contract of Tourism and Hospitality professionals in India.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main objective of undertaking this study is to explore the PC of employees working in hospitality, travel, and tourism organizations in India. The data for the study has been collected over seven months, from September 2022 to March 2023. A quantitative analysis linking pre-joining expectations and post-joining experience will provide detailed insights into numerous factors that outline the understanding of employment relationships.

Based on an extensive literature review, a well-designed and self-administered survey was undertaken based on the study of Aggarwal and Bhargava (2009) that determined how workers anticipated and perceived their employment relationship. Part I covers the pre-joining expectations and post-joining experience, captured on a five-point rating scale ranging from Expected to a Great Extent (5) to Not at all expected (1) and Met to a great extent (5) to Not at all met (1), respectively. Part II consists of demographic data. The survey questionnaire was distributed with the help of the human resources department to 500 employees across hospitality and tourism organizations in India after receiving suggestions from six hotel employees who participated in a pilot test. In the end, 231 responses were welcomed with a response rate of 46%, out of which 200 were complete and were selected for further analysis. The data was examined using SPSS 27. Descriptive statistics, mean analysis, gap analysis (Performance-Importance), factor analysis, and simple regression analysis were employed to draw conclusions about the data. Cronbach's Alpha was used to evaluate the validity of the scale and the data. Factor analysis was considered to shorten the original scale of 53 variables.

The mean analysis shows the employees' opinion of the importance of and satisfaction with the employment relationship. The employees are satisfactory if the mean value is between 3 and 5. Scores between 1 and 2 specify that they do not consider it essential. The gap analysis displays the scores between the performance mean (perceived mean post-joining) and the importance mean (importance mean pre-joining). If the Gap number is zero or positive, the employees' expectations have been met or exceeded, suggesting satisfaction/fulfillment. If the value is negative, the employees' expectations are higher than their actual experience, indicating dissatisfaction. Statistically, it was used to test the succeeding hypothesis:

H₁: There is no significant difference between employees' perceptions of the importance given to and satisfaction with their employment relationship/Psychological Contract.

Table 1. Demographic analysis (N=200).

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	124	62%
Female	76	38%
Age in years		
21-30	134	67%
31-40	48	24%
41-50	14	07%
Above 50	04	02%
Department		
Front office	57	28.5%
Housekeeping	65	32.5%
Sales and marketing	28	14%
Food and beverage	24	12%
Human resource	18	09%
Others	08	04%
Educational level		
Post graduation	77	38.5%
Graduation	117	58.5%
Higher secondary school certificate	04	02%
Secondary school certificate	01	0.5%
Others	01	0.5%
Marital status		
Single	115	57.5%
Married	85	42.5%
Working experience in years		
Below 10 years	171	85.5%
11-20 years	20	10%
Above 20 years	09	4.5%

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As per Table 1, of the 200 respondents, 62% were male, and 67% were in the age group of 21-30 years. Around 32.5% work in the housekeeping department, and 28.5% work in the front office; 58.5% have graduation degrees, 57.5% are single, and 85.5% have working experience below 10 years.

Table 2. Employees' expectations and perceptions mean score (N= 200).

Sr no.	Variables	Expectation mean (SD)[a]	Ranking	Perception mean (SD)	Ranking	Gap means (SD)	Ranking
1	Allow me to avail myself of training programs that enhance my skills and competencies as per my job and industry needs.	4.52 (1.02)	8	4.47 (0.98)	3	- 0.05 (1.01)	43
2	Provide continuous feedback	3.96 (0.93)	30	3.94 (0.87)	53	- 0.02 (1.03)	49
3	Provide career development opportunities	4.21 (0.72)	14	4.20 (0.83)	6	-0.01 (1.02)	50
4	Sufficient time to adapt to any changes in working conditions	4.10 (0.73)	17	3.79 (0.88)	52	-0.31 (1.03)	12
5	Sufficient authority to make decisions related to my job	3.98 (1.04)	27	3.97 (1.02)	27	-0.01 (1.04)	50
6	Loyalty to the organization is defined by the terms of my contract	4.35 (1.01)	11	4.19 (0.97)	7	-0.16 (0.92)	31
7	Opportunities to exhibit a variety of skills that I possess	4.07 (0.98)	22	3.96 (0.81)	51	-0.11 (0.80)	41

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Sr no.	Variables	Expectation mean (SD)[a]	Ranking	Perception mean (SD)	Ranking	Gap mean[s] (SD)	Ranking
8	Assign a job profile that gives me respect and dignity	4.69 (0.73)	3	4.38 (0.84)	4	-0.31 (0.81)	13
9	Not subjecting any employee to indignity or shame	3.81 (0.82)	38	3.60 (0.83)	50	-0.21 (0.91)	26
10	Treat employees of various departments/ Job profiles equally without any favoritism	3.18 (1.01)	46	3.07 (0.71)	16	-0.11 (0.93)	40
11	Not to discriminate against any employee based on background factors (Like gender, caste, religion, region, etc.)	4.05 (0.99)	26	3.31 (1.06)	23	-0.74 (0.92)	4
12	Provide fair and reasonable treatment to individual employee	4.09 (0.77)	19	4.08 (0.93)	8	-0.01 (0.92)	50
13	Provide flexibility to prioritize and seek a balance between personal needs and work demands	3.90 (0.83)	32	3.63 (0.81)	49	-0.27 (0.96)	19
14	Support me in maintaining a work-life balance	4.95 (0.95)	1	4.73 (0.99)	48	-0.22 (0.83)	25
15	Provide clarity on my career paths	3.86 (0.69)	34	3.56 (1.06)	22	-0.30 (0.91)	14
16	Freedom to quit whenever I want	4.06 (1.06)	24	3.79 (1.01)	29	-0.27 (1.02)	18
17	Company to allow informal interaction between supervisors and subordinates	3.07 (0.93)	49	3.00 (0.76)	18	-0.07 (1.05)	42
18	Employment contracts that allow me to freely seek employment opportunities elsewhere	4.30 (1.02)	12	4.05 (0.71)	10	-0.25 (1.03)	20
19	Promote competitive spirit, stimulating the greater desire to excel	3.71 (0.83)	41	3.51 (0.91)	13	-0.20 (1.01)	28
20	Chance to search for potential job opportunities outside	3.80 (0.94)	40	3.66 (0.78)	47	-0.14 (1.02)	34
21	Promote a spirit of camaraderie among co-workers and not cutthroat competition	3.08 (0.73)	47	3.03 (1.03)	25	-0.05 (0.96)	44
22	Provide a physically and socially safe environment	4.08 (1.03)	20	3.85 (1.02)	26	-0.23 (0.79)	23
23	Allow me to quit whenever I want	4.63 (0.81)	7	4.59 (0.73)	1	-0.04 (0.90)	47
24	Pay for any overtime I do	4.67 (0.71)	6	3.92 (0.94)	46	-0.75 (0.85)	3
25	Work accordingly strictly defines a set of rules	3.08 (0.69)	48	2.96 (0.77)	45	-0.12 (0.73)	38
26	Do only what is necessary to get the job done	3.82 (0.94)	36	3.68 (0.68)	44	-0.14 (0.81)	35
27	Fair and reasonable treatment of all employees	4.07 (0.67)	23	4.06 (0.83)	9	-0.01 (0.92)	50
28	Most people can be trusted	3.01 (0.78)	53	2.57 (0.87)	19	-0.44 (1.10)	8
29	An environment free of power and politics	4.67 (1.05)	5	4.51 (0.97)	2	-0.16 (1.03)	30
30	Healthy atmosphere at the workplace	4.08 (0.82)	21	3.92 (0.79)	43	-0.16 (0.77)	32
31	Opportunity for leadership	3.94 (0.79)	31	3.69 (0.78)	42	-0.25 (1.01)	21
32	Support to attain a higher level	3.82 (0.86)	37	3.67 (0.84)	41	-0.15 (0.89)	33
33	Stay for a long time in the organization	3.02 (0.95)	51	2.79 (0.86)	40	-0.23 (0.69)	24
34	Opportunity for promotion	4.06 (1.03)	25	4.01 (0.96)	12	-0.05 (0.82)	45
35	Introduce changes, taking me in confidence	3.67	42	3.29	21	-0.38	11

Sr no.	Variables	Expectation mean (SD)[a]	Ranking	Perception mean (SD)	Ranking	Gap mean[s] (SD)	Ranking
		(0.97)		(1.06)		(1.07)	
36	Share relevant information about the job	3.02 (0.76)	52	2.44 (0.94)	20	-0.58 (0.73)	7
37	Make a decision with my interest in mind	4.38 (0.84)	9	3.05 (0.93)	17	-1.33 (0.81)	1
38	Trust the people who work with me	3.63 (0.92)	44	2.94 (0.87)	39	-0.69 (0.91)	6
39	Not change the job profile without taking me in confidence	4.13 (1.01)	16	3.85 (0.97)	38	-0.28 (0.64)	16
40	Adequate supervisory guidance	3.82 (0.94)	35	3.78 (0.83)	37	-0.04 (0.84)	48
41	Steady employment	4.38 (0.73)	10	4.19 (1.01)	28	-0.19 (0.85)	29
42	Secured employment	4.28 (0.84)	13	3.37 (1.04)	24	-0.91 (0.77)	2
43	Appreciation for good work	3.67 (0.86)	43	3.40 (0.97)	14	-0.27 (1.05)	17
44	Identify and reward employees	4.09 (0.88)	18	3.88 (0.84)	36	-0.21 (0.61)	27
45	Offer an attractive remuneration package	4.68 (1.03)	4	4.28 (0.78)	5	-0.40 (0.76)	9
46	Compensate employees for their strenuous efforts	3.96 (1.01)	29	3.72 (0.98)	35	-0.24 (0.91)	22
47	Promote a culture of excellence	4.19 (0.93)	15	3.80 (0.83)	34	-0.39 (1.10)	10
48	Promotion within the organization	3.43 (0.97)	45	3.39 (0.76)	15	-0.04 (1.11)	46
49	Concern for the long-term well-being of the employee	3.97 (0.84)	28	3.86 (0.84)	33	-0.11 (0.95)	39
50	Concern for the personal welfare of the employee	3.06 (0.86)	50	2.76 (0.97)	32	-0.30 (0.69)	15
51	Allow sufficient time to be spent with family	4.71 (0.83)	2	4.01 (0.77)	11	-0.70 (0.90)	5
52	Feedback on performance for improvement purposes	3.81 (0.77)	39	3.68 (0.97)	31	-0.13 (0.91)	36
53	Explore better career development opportunities within and outside	3.87 (0.87)	33	3.75 (0.88)	30	-0.12 (1.02)	37

All negative gap the Mean differences indicated that the expectation of an internship could not be met for students and vice-versa.

All mean scores were rounded up to two decimal places.

a. SD: standard deviation.

b. Rankings of means and gap means are from high to low.

c. Gap mean = perception mean-expectation mean.

Table 2 results show that the employees have the highest expectations in terms of 'Support me in maintaining Work-Life balance' (M=4.95, SD= 0.95, R= 1) and 'Allow sufficient time to be spent with family' (M= 4.71, SD= 0.83, R=2). This indicates that the workers are highly concerned about balancing family life and work. Another expectation about 'Assign a job profile that gives me respect and dignity' (M= 4.69, SD=0.73, R= 3) and 'Offer an attractive remuneration package' (M=4.68, SD= 1.03, R 4) clearly makes one understand that the employees expect to be placed at a position suitable as per their competency as well as a salary commensurate with the same. With

rapid changes in and boosts to the tourism sector, employees will undoubtedly expect higher salaries and other benefits. Salary may be an effective tool for presenting employees with a favorable view of their career prospects, motivating them to stay dedicated to tourism and hospitality.

Similarly, expectations about 'Environment free of power and politics' (M= 4.67, SD= 1.05, R=5) and 'Pay for any overtime I do' (M= 4.67, SD 0.71, R=6) are expected to a great extent. One reason could be the demanding job in the hospitality sector that does not correspond to the salary paid, as discussed earlier. One can carefully observe the performance/perception/satisfaction score for these six variables; none are above or equal to the importance/expectation presumed by the employee. This non-fulfillment gives rise to dissatisfaction among employees and subsequently results in a breach of the psychological contract.

Similarly, the lowest expectations in terms of 'Most people can be trusted' (M=3.01, SD= 0.78, R= 53) and 'Share relevant information about the job' (3.02, SD= 0.76, R=52) indicate that there are trust issues amongst the workers. In a service industry, the workers must adapt and cooperate with each other. Amongst others, 'stay for a long time in the organization' (M= 3.02, SD= 0.95, R= 51) and 'concern for the personal welfare of the employee' (M= 3.06, SD= 0.86, R=50) are low on expectations. Many young workers only tend to stay for a short time in one organization. The average age of employees at restaurants and bars is 29 years old or less. Our study consists of 67% of workers falling in the age range of 21-30 years. This indicates that hospitality employees are more concerned about Transactional Psychological Contracts, than relational ones. The other expectations, such as 'Company to allow informal interaction between supervisors and subordinates' (M= 3.07, SD= 0.93, R= 49) and 'Work accordingly strictly defines set of rules' (M= 3.08, SD= 0.69, R= 48), are on the lower side of expectations. A minute observation about these concludes that, even if employee importance is low, organization performance is below the expected level, resulting in a breach of the psychological contract.

Further, as seen from Table 2, relatively high employee perception scores were noticed in the case of 'Allow me to quit whenever I want' (M=4.59, SD= 0.73, R= 1). This implies that the organization provides freedom to quit jobs whenever a worker chooses. Since the 1980s, businesses have had to contend with an ever-changing climate and fiercer competition; employees could remain with an organization if they could contribute by acquiring fresh roles and increasing their employability (Hiltrop, 1996). Secondly, employees' experience in terms of 'Environment free of power and politics' is at number two (M=4.51, SD=0.97, R=2). It is interesting to notice that the workers are satisfied with the working environment in the hospitality sector. Studies have found that a competitive climate is a part of the overall working environment where workers frequently find themselves in situations with a competitive focus, especially those in the service sector. A competitive environment often presents written and unwritten protocols that enable employees to understand hotel management and compare their performance to that of their colleagues (Lam, Liang, Ashford, & Lee, 2015). Therefore, a competitive climate and culture exist in place of power and politics. Another experience of the employees in terms of 'allowing training programs that enhance my skills and competencies as per my job and industry needs' is experienced positively (M= 4.47, SD= 0.98, R= 3). According to Thijssen, Beatrice, and Rocco (2008), employees were enthusiastic about working for an employer if they were given enough prospects for growth and could raise their market value. Employees do have positive perceptions of other variables, including 'assigning a job profile that gives them respect and dignity' (M=4.38, SD= 0.84, R= 4), 'attractive remuneration package' (M= 4.28, SD= 0.78, R= 5), and 'providing career development opportunities' (M= 4.20, SD= 0.83, R= 6).

On the contrary, past studies have drawn our attention to the dissatisfaction of hospitality employees concerning remuneration packages, working conditions, and career development opportunities. Continuous pressure exists to achieve more with less due to the challenges many hospitality and tourist organizations encounter (Wang & Wang, 2004). The quick developments in society and sectors over the past 30 years have impacted the employee-employer relationship (De Vos, Buyens, & Schalk, 2005; Torka, Looise, & Zagelmeyer, 2011). The employment relationship was steady and predictable before the 1980s. Employers provided job security

and advancement opportunities, and employees reciprocated by working hard and being loyal (Herriot & Pemberton, 2020). Since then, the businesses have had to contend with an ever-changing climate and fiercer competition, making survival difficult.

On the other side, employee perception is lower, somewhat dissatisfied with expectations in terms of 'providing continuous feedback' (M= 3.94, SD= 0.87, R= 53), 'sufficient time to adapt to any changes in working conditions' (M= 3.79, SD= 0.88, R= 52), and 'opportunities to exhibit the variety of skills that employees possess' (M= 3.96, SD= 0.81, R= 51). Other variables that are low on employee perception include 'providing flexibility to prioritize and seek a balance between personal needs and work demands' (M= 3.63, SD= 0.81, R= 49) and 'support in maintaining work-life balance' (M= 4.73, SD 0.99, R= 48).

A negative gap between perception and importance among all the variables in the study indicates non-fulfillment of their psychological contract, and employees may consider this a breach of their psychological contract, leading to a change in their behavior and attitude. This outcome is maintained by studies by Rousseau (1989) and Morrison and Robinson (1997). The five most significant gap scores were observed for 'taking decisions with employee interest in mind' (gap mean -1.33, R= 1), 'secured employment' (gap mean -0.91, R = 2), 'pay for overtime' (gap mean -0.75, R= 3), 'not to discriminate based on background factors like gender, caste, religion, region, etc. (gap mean= -0.74, R= 4), and 'allow sufficient time to be spent with family' (gap mean= -0.70, R= 5). Previous studies have confirmed career stability (Lashley, 2015) discrimination and low pay (Goh & Lee, 2018) long working hours, and being physically demanding (Richardson, 2009; Solnet et al., 2016) are critical factors for tourism and hospitality workers.

Table 3. Factor analysis on gap means score of PC variables (N=200).

Variables	Factor loading	Communality	Eigen-values	% of variance	Cumulative variance %	Reliability coefficient
Factor 1: Respect and honor			12.650	38.13	38.13	0.905
Fair and reasonable treatment of all employees	0.763	0.724				
Assign a job profile that shows respect and dignity	0.865	0.790				
Not subjecting any employee to indignity or shame	0.761	0.753				
Treat employees of various departments/ Job profiles equally without any favoritism	0.725	0.982				
Not to discriminate against any employee based on background factors (Like gender, caste, religion, region, etc.)	0.853	0.932				
Provide fair and reasonable treatment to individual employee	0.901	0.871				
Factor 2: Work-life balance			4.643	17.29	55.42	0.869
Allow sufficient time to be spent with family	0.798	0.941				
Provide flexibility to prioritize and seek a balance between personal needs and work demands	0.683	0.741				
Support me in maintaining a work-life balance	0.746	0.639				
Concern for the personal welfare of the employee	0.724	0.890				
Concern for the long-term well-being of the employee	0.821	0.726				
Factor 3: Freedom to quit			2.864	8.84	64.26	0.780
Freedom to quit whenever I want	0.780	0.817				
Employment contracts that allow me to freely seek employment opportunities elsewhere	0.683	0.707				
Chance to search for potential job opportunities outside	0.730	0.794				
Allow me to quit whenever I want	0.617	0.663				
Explore better career development opportunities within and outside	0.734	0.684				

Variables	Factor loading	Communality	Eigen-values	% of variance	Cumulative variance %	Reliability coefficient
Factor 4: Training and development			2.730	7.84	72.10	0.814
Allow training programs that enhance my skills and competencies	0.721	0.652				
Provide career development opportunities	0.734	0.849				
Opportunity to exhibit the variety of skills I possess	0.734	0.839				
Opportunities for leadership	0.634	0.526				
Opportunities for promotion	0.684	0.646				
Promotion within organization	0.759	0.665				
Factor 5: Rewards and acknowledgement			2.682	7.67	79.77	0.813
Pay for any overtime I do	0.844	0.847				
Do only what is necessary to get the job done	0.891	0.811				
Steady employment	0.690	0.634				
Secured employment	0.637	0.621				
Appreciation for good work	0.658	0.890				
Identify and reward employees	0.617	0.753				
Offer an attractive remuneration package	0.701	0.682				
Compensate employees for their strenuous efforts	0.730	0.732				
Factor 6: Trust and feedback			2.672	6.84	86.61	0.793
Promote a competitive spirit, stimulating the greater desire to excel	0.680	0.719				
Most people can be trusted	0.661	0.603				
Trust the people who work with me	0.639	0.941				
Feedback on performance for improvement purposes	0.727	0.713				
Provide continuous feedback	0.741	0.681				
Factor 7: Support and guidance			2.431	5.17	91.78	0.762
Sufficient time to adapt to any changes in working conditions	0.763	0.753				
Allow informal interaction between superiors and subordinates	0.871	0.681				
Promote a spirit of camaraderie among co-workers and not cutthroat competition	0.743	0.637				
Support to attain a higher level	0.841	0.691				
Share relevant information about the job	0.831	0.708				
Make a decision with my interest in mind	0.742	0.672				
Not change the job profile without taking me in confidence	0.675	0.619				
Adequate supervisory guidance	0.694	0.713				
Factor 8: A safe and healthy working environment			2.423	5.09	96.87	0.742
I have sufficient authority to make decisions related to my job	0.728	0.807				
Loyalty to the organization is defined by the terms of my contract	0.793	0.761				
Provide a physically and socially safe environment	0.870	0.618				
An environment free of power and politics	0.797	0.672				
Healthy work atmosphere	0.698	0.736				
Promote a culture of excellence	0.697	0.741				

As per Table 3, Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was used. Four factors were eliminated because their factor loadings were less than 0.5: "stay for a long time in the organization," "provide clarity on my career path," "introduce changes taking me in confidence," and "work accordingly according to a strict defined set of rules.". Eight factors with 49 variables were upheld for scale interpretation. The Barlett Test of Sphericity was 1618.120 (p = 000), while the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) criterion of sample adequacy was 0.736, exceeding the

indicated value of 0.60 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). The reliability coefficients fluctuated from 0.742 to 0.905, which was more than the suggested significant threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The variables have strong internal consistency; these eight factors explained a total variance of 96.87 percent.

Table 4. Comparison of Employees' expectations and perceptions by the eight factors (N=200).

Factors	Expectations mean (SD)	Perception mean (SD)	Gap mean (SD)	Rank[a*]
Respect and honor	3.98 (0.76)	3.75 (0.62)	-0.23 (0.61)	4
Work-life balance	4.12 (0.84)	3.80 (0.56)	-0.32 (0.72)	3
Freedom to quit	4.13 (0.57)	3.97 (0.80)	-0.16 (0.87)	6
Training and development	4.00 (0.67)	3.92 (0.98)	-0.08 (0.66)	7
Rewards and acknowledgement	4.06 (0.80)	3.69 (0.87)	-0.37 (0.76)	2
Trust and feedback	3.47 (0.72)	3.08 (0.69)	-0.39 (0.57)	1
Support and guidance	3.77 (0.91)	3.45 (0.74)	-0.32 (0.87)	3
Safe and healthy working environment	4.06 (0.76)	3.86 (0.81)	-0.20 (0.68)	5

Note: SD represents standard deviation.
Gap mean = Perception mean-expectation mean.
*a ranking of gap means is based on the mean values and indicated from high to low.

Table 4 demonstrates gap means of the eight factors and their ranks. The gap mean was calculated by substituting the factor's perception for its expectation mean. All gap values are negative, indicating expectations were higher than actual experience, resulting in dissatisfaction amongst these factors. Rankings (R) of gap means determined by mean values have been identified for comparative purposes. The first highest gap mean was for the factor 'Trust and Feedback' (Gap mean= -0.39), followed by 'Rewards and Acknowledgement' (Gap mean= -0.37), and two factors in third place, namely 'Work-Life balance' (gap mean= -0.32) and 'Support and Guidance' (gap mean= -0.32). Among the factors on the lower side of the gap mean are 'Respect and Honor' (gap mean= -0.23), 'Safe and Healthy working environment' (gap mean= -0.20), 'Freedom to quit' (gap mean= -0.16), and 'Training and Development' (gap mean= -0.08), indicating that the worker's expectations have not been fully met but to a certain extent were satisfied.

Table 5. Regression analysis of Employees' expectations and perceptions factors on overall satisfaction (N= 200).

Factors	β	Beta	T	VIF	Tolerance
Respect and honor	0.104	0.131	1.061	4.805	0.260
Work-life balance	0.634	0.704	8.095**	2.574	0.367
Freedom to quit	0.493	0.550	6.575**	1.762	0.958
Training and development	0.024	0.194	0.205	5.134	0.143
Rewards and acknowledgement	0.683	0.682	7.624**	2.376	0.698
Trust and feedback	0.137	0.271	1.279	4.038	0.295
Support and guidance	0.210	0.283	1.239	4.538	0.705
Safe and healthy working environment	0.485	0.684	6.427**	3.173	0.859
Constant	6.904	------	66.945	49.068	0.958

Note: Multiple R = 0.845, R²= 0.586, Adjusted R² = 0.638
Standard error = 0.582, F = 34.531, Significant F = 0.0001
**p<0.01.
Dependent variable: Overall satisfaction; independent variables: Five internship factors; β: unstandardized coefficient; Beta: Standardized coefficient; VIF: Variable inflation factor; T: Tolerance.

Linear regression was used, with overall satisfaction as the dependent variable and the eight factors as independent variables, as seen in Table 5. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.586 demonstrated that four factors explained 58.6% of the variance in overall satisfaction. The t-values indicated that the regression model was statistically significant. The variance inflation factor (VIF) and the tolerance value revealed no evidence of multicollinearity as suggested by Belsley, Kuh, and Welsch (1980). The result indicate that 'Rewards and Acknowledgement' (β= 0.683) emerged as the most crucial factor in predicting overall satisfaction, followed by 'Work-Life balance' (β= 0.634), 'Freedom to Quit' (β= 0.493), and lastly 'Safe and Healthy working environment'

(β= 0.485). This suggests that employees will be satisfied when their organization rewards and acknowledges them for their excellent services. Employees' satisfaction is also significantly influenced by their ability to balance their professional and family life. Hospitality employees also do not want to be tied to their organization, as the freedom to quit the job whenever they want is significant to them. Finally, a safe and healthy working environment, free from organizational politics, is also preferred. If due care is not exercised, the possible detrimental effects are inevitable. This supports the findings of Pavesic and Brymer (1990); Walsh and Taylor (2007); AlBattat and Som (2013); and Aynalem, Birhanu, and Tesefay (2016).

6. CONCLUSION

The employee brings a list of expectations regarding a potential relationship to the organization. Promises implicitly or explicitly assured by the employer will be called the PC. The study brings forth some of these specific elements by contributing to the scarcity of studies examining the PC of the hospitality workforce (Baum et al., 2016).

The research aimed to answer the following questions: What do workers anticipate before joining the hospitality organization? What do workers feel about their employment relationship? What is the overall level of satisfaction? Is there any connection between the gap in perceptions and expectations and overall happiness? The study's findings reveal that workers have higher expectations in terms of 'offering an attractive remuneration package, support in maintaining Work-Life balance, allowing sufficient time to be spent with family, assigning a job profile that gives respect and dignity, and an environment free of power and politics.' It is a known fact that employees demand higher salaries. Due to their lower wages compared to other sectors, hospitality jobs could be more rewarding. Employees who realize that other rival organizations offer rich salaries leave the existing organization (John & Teru, 2017; Milkovich, Newman, & Gerhart, 2016).

As per the scores in Table 2 (Column No. 3), workers are satisfied with a few aspects of the employment relationship. However, the overall satisfaction is negative. Four factors, namely 'Work-Life balance,' 'Freedom to Quit,' 'Reward and Acknowledgements,' and 'Safe and Healthy Working environment,' are significant and powerful influential factors in predicting workers' overall satisfaction. Among these four factors, 'Reward and Acknowledgements' was the most critical factor in predicting workers' overall satisfaction with their working organization. These findings are consistent with prior research (Iqbal, Hassan, & Habibah, 2018; John & Teru, 2017; Pavesic & Brymer, 1990; Tangthong, Trimetsoontorn, & Rojniruntikul, 2014).

Being a people-oriented industry, much could be understood by appreciating the employees' expectations. The eight factors extracted highlighting the key characteristics of workers in the hospitality and tourism industry (please refer to Table 3) suggest that human resource professionals should cautiously as well as regularly monitor the employee PC in the tourism and hospitality sector. Understanding and communicating about their psychological contract will not only benefit employees but will also indicate that the organization is concerned about the well-being of its workforce.

India's hospitality sector has significantly contributed to the growth of the country's tourism economy. The behavior of employees has been the theme of most studies in this discipline since workers are a vital resource and are critical to the success of every business. Hospitality professionals are regarded as a vital component in the success of hospitality enterprises too, conducive to making a difference for the organization. These findings highlighted how crucial psychological contract factors are in raising workers' satisfaction in the hospitality sector. In conclusion, a happy employee remains loyal to his Company; the more productive individuals work, the greater their devotion to the Company. When expectations (such as those related to the working environment, interpersonal relationships, prospects for advancement, compensation policy, and other factors) are fulfilled, employees feel satisfied with their employment. To attract and keep many employees, hospitality businesses must pay more than their rivals.

7. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The psychological contract in the service industry, particularly the hospitality sector, has received little attention, even though a tremendous amount of literature is available in the hospitality sector (Campo, Díaz, & Yagüe, 2014; Chen, Wang, Lyu, & Zhang, 2022). The hospitality organizations in India can benefit from effectively implementing the study's findings in their workplaces.

A competitive salary structure helps attract and keep top talent, preventing people from quitting their employers over pay issues. Since businesses utilize salaries to reward employees' efforts at work, they should carefully consider how they create and implement salaries, adhering to critical concepts including fairness and motivating factors. Adding amenities, including transportation, medical coverage, and employee dining, by new organizations in the hospitality sector will widen the scope of worker compensation. This idea advocates what types of non-financial motivators might replace salaries to lure employees who are not driven by higher wages.

We urge the managers to be honest about the opportunities pertaining to pay, career paths, and other Human Resource Management regulations addressing flexible working hours and part-time work during the recruitment phase of new personnel by providing Realistic Job Previews (RJP). Potential employees' expectations will thus be aligned with the opportunities that the organization may provide. Furthermore, we strongly advocate for staff involvement in organizational innovation and improvement. Employees will develop emotional ties with the organization due to their participation and belief that its problems are theirs. Employees' passionate commitment will grow, increasing the likelihood of having long-term relationships with the organization.

8. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this work has some limitations, it offers several practical and theoretical implications. The study used convenience sampling to compile samples because it is still being determined how many hotel employees there are. As a result, an unknown percentage of the total population of the chosen hotels was sampled. Therefore, it would be preferable in future studies to use probability sampling with a larger sample size.

The balance between work and family was determined to be crucial in the study. More research is required to find out what causes employees to feel poorly regarding the work-family balance in their position and organization. Several elements, including working hours, overtime, and assistance from the workplace, may be significant issues that call for additional study.

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