
Researching the implementation of motivation practices in human resources in hotels: an experience from a Greek resort

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to present the implementation of major motivation practices in the hotel industry, through the prism of Human Resources Department of a well established Greek resort. In order for the above aim to be achieved, an extensive literature review took place in conjunction with a questionnaire-based survey. The survey was conducted on all levels of company employees and interviews were performed with selected executives. The main motivational factors have been identified and their affect on the manpower was analysed. The valuable knowledge that was gained, regarding the practical implementation and usage of the motivation theories, allowed us to provide a list of suggestions. Those suggestions targeted on the improvement of hotel employees' motivation, in conjunction with the new motivational trends as they are recorded in international literature.

Keywords: hotels; resorts; human resources management; motivation; Greece.

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1 Introduction: the role of human resources management in hotels

It has been more than five decades since the principles, research, theory and implementation of human resources management (HRM) were developed. Altered and upgraded by important internal and external business changes, HRM was evolved, from a management function with small attribution and influence, to a source of viable competitive advantage in the world economy in the course of action of many enterprises (Ferris et al., 1999). HRM uses the human factor aiming in the achievement of business strategic goals and the satisfaction of the personal needs of those working for the business. International literature summarises HRM as:

- 1 a wider dimension of management, which includes working relations, HRM and organisational behaviour
- 2 a method that ensures the internal consistency of the organisation and the smooth operation of human resources in relation with external factors
- 3 an advantage for a company, directly related with its competitiveness since it is influencing the quality characteristics of its product
- 4 an operational department of an organisation, where economical changes very often affect the way the organisation is behaving towards its employees (Baum, 1995; Stone, 2002).

Undoubtedly, HRM in a business or organisation combines all the above and a lot more. According to Beardwell and Holden (1994), HRM constitutes a key element for the development of internal cooperation and effective exercise of management functions in an organisation. According to the beliefs of other scientists the actions of HRM many times have an important role in the creation of a viable competitive advantage, via human capital investment and efficient recruitment (Ferris et al., 1999; Langbert, 2000).

Especially in hotels, HRM is of strategic importance, conducing towards their success and affecting, the diligence of the employees along with the working relations amongst them and the employers. The correct application of the HRM principles leads to harmony and cooperation between the employees in order to achieve the wanted results at any given time. The human element is used in such manner, so that it will ensure: the creation and distribution of goods and services (accommodation, food and guest entertainment),

the smooth relationships between coworkers (team work) and those of official working groups (departments). All the above have as a result consistent quality provided by a trained manpower, and therefore competitive advantage for the company and personal development and satisfaction for the employees (Ferris et al., 1999; Huemann et al., 2007).

The functions of the Human Resources Department are divided into the following: planning, selection, recruitment, training, development, motivation and evaluation (Harris, 2000). These functions constitute key fields, on which HRM strategies are being developed (Katou and Budhwar, 2007) and aim in the improvement and increase of the manpower and business productivity (Mullins, 1995). Large and middle size hotels include in their organisational chart individual departments responsible for the management of human resources. Usually, smaller hotels do not have a separate department therefore to assign this responsibility to one or two executives (Harris, 2000).

2 The motivation of human resources in hotels

The role of motivation is to create and guide towards particular ways of working behaviour. Motivation is a combination of many factors such as the organisational culture, the management style, the organisational structure and the policies and procedures of HRM. Various theories have been developed regarding the motivation at work, particularly referring to the shaping of interpretational models of the employees' yield, with emphasis on the working efficiency and the factors that maximise it. These theories are categorised in:

- 1 the ontological, which interprets the content and the kind of motives (Maslow, Herzberg, etc.)
- 2 the mechanistic or procedural, which focuses on those behaviours and circumstances that encourage or discourage the working efficiency (Vroom, Porter/Lawler) (Herzberg et al., 1959; Stone, 2002).

Maslow categorised human needs in: physiological (food, shelter, sleep, etc.), security (security and protection from natural and emotional threats, etc.), social (social acceptance, friendship, affection, etc.), appreciation (independence, self-respect, social position, status, etc.) and self-actualisation (development, success, evolution, etc.) (Maslow, 1987; Riley, 1996; Robbins, 2005). He connected employment with human needs stating that humans through work manage to satisfy gradually all their needs while at the same time work brings humans closer resulting into turning a work environment into a small society offering promotion, status, respect and self-esteem (Whitmore, 2002).

Herzberg's theory, also known as the two factors theory, claims that motivation constitutes a constant dimension of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. According to this theory, the factors that cause satisfaction (motivational factors) are different to the ones that cause dissatisfaction ('hygiene' or maintenance factors) but not necessarily opposite

to each other. The motivational factors are created from the need for recognition, achievement, responsibility and interest for the job itself. The 'hygiene' factors are connected to rewards, working conditions and the company's policies. Further to this separation, Herzberg concluded that with the presence of motivational factors one can ensure satisfaction and increased performance, while the 'hygiene' factors can prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily contribute into motivating the employees (Herzberg et al., 1959; Riley, 1996; Stone, 2002).

Vroom's theory attempts to interpret the way in which individuals select their working roles amongst different alternatives, in order for them to receive the maximum benefits out of it. He claims that if we are to connect work with motivation, we need to, simultaneously examine the effects of motivation on the individual's attitude while performing a specific job, and the effects of the job role on the motivation's variables. Within this generic field for every action of the employee we take under consideration three factors:

- 1 The size, which translates into the fluctuation of the expected satisfaction received from each job role choice.
- 2 The functionality, which refers to the degree in which the mean connects with the target. The employee will choose the action that connects him more directly with his general plan of fulfilling his aspirations.
- 3 The expectation, which refers to the calculation of all those unstable factors that are possible to affect the choice of the specific job task, meaning the level of performance or effectiveness.

Vroom supported that the decision for action is a result of multiplying those three factors, and as Gordon mentions (1974), if one of the three factors equals to zero, then as a result the total motivation for the execution of a chain of actions will be zero. Each of those factors can be considered as a function in the relationship between motives and the common characteristics of the job roles (Papanis and Rontos, 2005; Vroom, 1995).

Hotels' managers invest in motivation, firstly, because of the complicated nature of the product they offer and secondly, because of the actual production and distribution of the product largely depends on the character and the personality of the individuals working for them (Riley, 1996). The correct application of the motivation rules in hotels:

- 1 allows the adjustment of wages based on employee performance
- 2 encourages employees to minimise cost and increase productivity
- 3 helps the development of close relationships between employer and employee, in order to serve common interests and of course those of the organisation
- 4 increases job safety
- 5 reduces the employee turn over.

3 Research methodology

The primary research was conducted in one of the most modern and developed resorts in Greece, comprised of five hotels and other facilities. It has centralised Human Resources Department and its employees reach the number of 1,500 during the summer season. Human Resources Department caters for all the employees in the organisation irrespectively of their status (permanent, seasonal, operational or administrative). The fundamental responsibilities and services of the department has and offers are briefly the following: internal and external attraction of employees, recruitment and evaluation of employees, training, creation of motivation systems, improvement of working relations, production of statistical reports, employee health and safety and issues of assistance towards the employees (accommodation, transportation, etc.), employee contracts and payroll.

The aim of the research was to discover the motivation techniques-methods that the Human Resources Department of the resort adopts. The existence of structured and clearly defined patterns of motivation within the company was examined as well as the way by which these are applied. By doing so it was possible to identify the main motivational variables that affect the efficiency of the employees and their effect in various groups of the personnel by using several criteria (age, years of employment, education, etc.).

The research was carried out in the resort premises with the researchers having personal contact with the front line employees and the executives of the company. For the collection of the information senior executives were interviewed and questionnaires were filled in the presence of the researchers, by employees of all levels of hierarchy and departments. The interviews were half-structured type (Saunders et al., 2003), as there was a list of 11 questions which were posed in specific order, so that conclusions could be drawn more effectively. The researchers emphasised in company's policies regarding the motivation of the employees. The executives that were interviewed were the Human Resources Manager, the Financial Manager, the Hotel Manager and the Food and Beverage Manager of one of the company's hotels. The reason for selecting two executives from operational departments and two from administration departments was that this way the research would receive qualitative and more holistic information and, furthermore, it would make the detection of clashing views in employee motivation, due to the differences of working environments, possible.

While conducting the interviews, questionnaires were distributed to all levels of front line employees, aiming at the recording of the employees' views regarding the methods-practices the company applies for motivating them and the degree of satisfaction drawn from those methods-practices. In a total of 1,500 employees, 500 questionnaires (consisted of 35 closed questions) were distributed (33.33% of the employees), 200 given to Greek nationals and 300 to foreigners. About 212 (110 Greeks and 102 foreigners) returned their questionnaires filled, a highly satisfying response rate (42.4%). The 49% of the employees participating in the research were male and 51% female. The data collected were processed by the statistical program SPSS. In Table 1, one can study the departmental separation of the research participants. It is clear that permanent employees are employed in majority by horizontal departments (administration and technical services). On the contrary, as expected, in the front office and housekeeping departments the relation of permanent and seasonal employees is reversed having the majority of the employees on seasonal employment.

Table 1 Department and contract of employment

<i>Department</i>	<i>Department</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<i>Seasonal</i>	<i>Permanent</i>	<i>Internship</i>	<i>Missing</i>	
Administration services	4	44	2	0	50
Housekeeping	10	12	0	2	24
Kitchen	8	4	0	0	12
F&B	46	4	4	0	54
Front office/front Line employees	14	12	8	0	34
Technical support	0	10	0	0	10
Spa/Gym	4	2	12	0	18
Entertainment	6	2	2	0	10
Total	92	90	28	2	212

4 Research results

From the interviews conducted with the company executives it was obvious that the strategic target of the organisation, with regards to Human Resources, were the reduction of turn over and the maximisation of productivity levels. The aim is for the work subject itself to act as a motivator, increasing the feeling of satisfaction deriving from the working experience. Employees are encouraged to maximise their personal contribution, increasing productivity and await, as a return, for development and promotion within the company.

The company employees a number of motives which are depended on and adjusted according to current situations and conditions. Those most commonly used are financial motives and company benefits (i.e. life insurance, company cars, transportation, accommodation, etc.). Promotions are also used as motivation factors, usually the ‘carrier path’, and others which aim into influencing the emotional status of the employee (i.e. continue improvement of the working environment, improvement of working relations, reinforcement of collaboration, etc.). Working relations are overall considered especially important for achieving company goals and for this reason friendly relations and team work are actively promoted. Supporting the employees and emphasising on the difficulties they are facing is also considered as a major motivational parameter towards succeeding strong collaboration.

As far as it concerns the relationships between supervisors and subordinates, the existence of very clear perceptions were made obvious from early stages of the research. According to the responses, the supervisor has the main responsibility for the balance within a department, takes care of task distribution of each teammate, controls and corrects whenever he thinks it is necessary. All the above exist without excluding actions like dismissal if the employee does not correspond or improve on his assigned tasks. Even on those extreme circumstances the company follows specific, prior established procedures.

One can identify the importance of providing training and education. Even though there are opportunities for training the employees, the relative actions are still in a very

primitive stage, while there are plans for the extension of their application in the near future, aiming at the improvement of motivation. Regarding the relationship of the pay rise policy with the increase of productivity and the use of the above as a motivation factor, executives supported that high wages can and should act as a motivator. But they placed interpersonal relationships higher in the priorities claiming that verbal communication, used as a form of recognition, can move employees into working more effectively and productive.

The executives' interviews shaped a clear view of the ways employees are motivated, from the prism of senior management. This view was compared to and completed from the interesting results drawn by the employees of the company. According to these and regarding to the level of education of those employees, the research showed that the employees belonging to the 41–51+ age group are mostly Elementary School graduates. About 50% was educated in Tourism, in Institutes for Professional Training (IPT), which mostly reflects on the 21–25 age group, while graduates of Technological Educational Institutes (TEI) are found mostly in the two younger age groups of 21–25 and 26–30, in equal percentages of 38%. It is also important to note that graduates of High School take over a large percentage of 38% and 29% in the age groups of 21–25 and 26–30, respectively. Percentages that reach the amount of 43% in the age groups of 26–31 and 31–35 and 14% in the age group of 21–25, belong to university graduates and masters education.

It becomes clear that the age of the employees is inversely proportional with their educational level, having as a result younger employees with higher qualifications (Figure 1). Those findings are highly connected with the answers given by the executives and as, partially, a result of the company policy which aims in attracting young employees. It is also connected with the company's target to train young employees at the beginning of their carrier, according to its organisational culture and standards.

The research focused on the experience of the employees towards specific parameters that act as motivation factors. Primarily, the research aimed at the degree of understanding the employees had regarding the company goals and their role in achieving them. In the answers that were given, a high level of clarity-knowledge of the company's goals was recorded (an average of four in a five-band scale), in which Figure 2 is examined according to the years of employment in the company. Employees with fewer years (0–3) of employment in the resort stated an average of clarity-understanding of 3.3. The trend recorded is that clarity-understanding rose accordingly to the years of employment. Employees with employment from 12 to 15 and more than 24 years claim (average rate 4) that the goals of the company and their contribution in achieving them are clearly perceived. It is an expected derivative of long service in the company that those employees will understand the company goals more and see themselves as a part of the company culture clearer. This fact acts motivationally during their work since they feel that they are active contributors in the goal achievement process. Highly positive was the fact that the goals are clear and understandable to new employees as well. This fact can only be a result of well organised internal procedures. The results are an impressive match with the conclusions drawn from the executives' interviews, this way declaring that the employees are informed for the company goals especially in cases of changes (i.e. changes in strategies and targets, or organisational structure changes) the supervisors inform their subordinates towards a common action.

Figure 1 Educational level and age

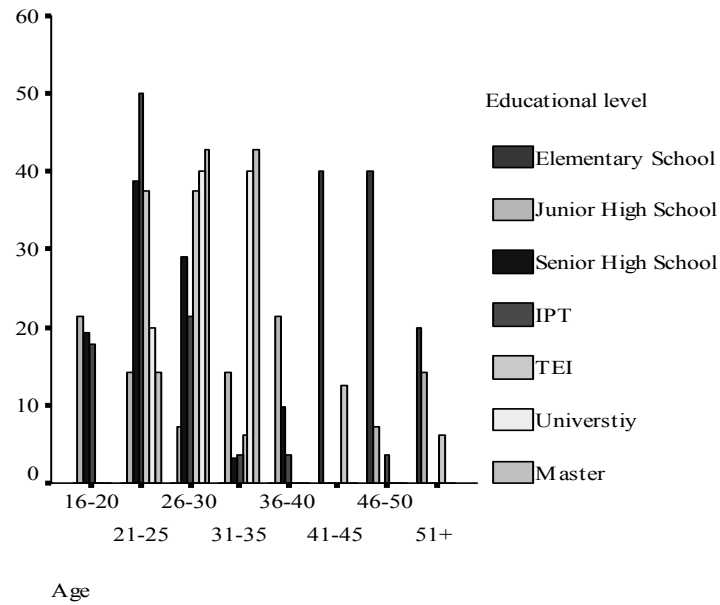
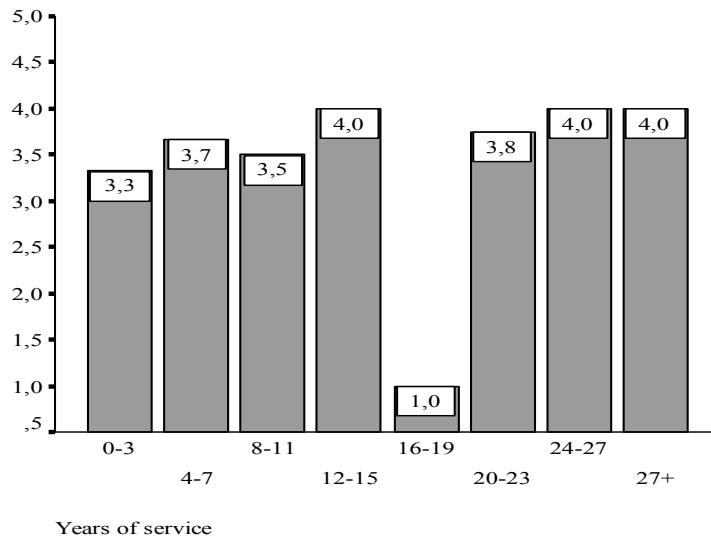


Figure 2 Understanding of company goals and expectations

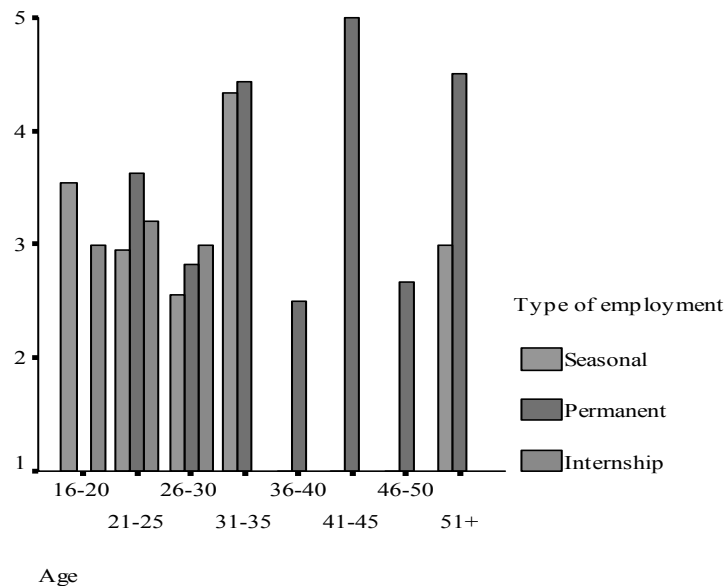


Financial rewards are considered to be a classic motivation factor for hotel employees. For this reason the degree of knowledge-information the employees had, regarding the rewards system, was examined with the application of two criteria: the contract of

employment (permanent, seasonal, etc.) and the age. The research revealed that the level of knowledge-awareness about the rewarding system is clearly higher in the case of permanent employees, especially in the age of 41–45 and over 51 yr old absolute knowledge (factor 5) was recorded. However, amongst the permanent employees intense variations were found, particularly in the age groups of 36–40 and 46–50 where the factor drops to 2.5. This demands further investigation as it might reveals dissatisfaction and could potentially decrease performance and demote the company's operations. In the case of seasonal personnel the factor is clearly lower with an exception in the age group of 31–35 years old. In the case of young employees who were performing their internship in the company the average knowledge runs at level 3. It is interesting to mention that in some internship age groups (i.e. 26–30) the average knowledge of the rewarding system is higher from the one of the seasonal and permanent employees.

The research revealed that the level of knowledge-awareness of the rewarding system is affected grossly by the type of contract of employment rather than the age, as one would expect (Figure 3). It is important to note that as a part of the process of improving the employee motivation, emphasis has to be given in informing the employees about the existing rewards system. All the above are contrasting the interview results, as the executives are not aware of the dissatisfaction of the lower rang employees, as they are under the impression that employees are easily motivated by a bonus received after the achievement of a set target. Within the frame of trying to improve the degree of response by the employees and to achieve effectiveness in their motivation, special emphasis must be given to the crucial parameter of the financial rewards system and in the information the employees receive regarding its existence.

Figure 3 Information-knowledge of rewards system



Highly important motivational factor is the working conditions and the level of security the employees feel. The notion of security relates to the stability of employment and the level of certainty the employees feel whether the company will keep on fulfilling their working needs. At this point of the research, we should mention a noticeable variation between the answers of male and female employees. Despite the generally high level of security (4.06 for male and 3.12 for female), male employees feel clearly safer than their female colleagues, especially the female employees of older age groups (41–45 and over 51 years old), element that causes intense questioning. Exception is found in the age groups of 16–20 and 31–35 where female employees feel more secure. It is interesting that in the case of male employees the level of security tends to rise along with the age especially in the ages of 41–45 and over 51 years old, which are exactly the ages in which the female participants declare more insecurity. This parameter should attract the interest of the executives since lack of job safety may lead to a high level of resignations as well as low satisfaction and performance (Figure 4).

Especially, crucial parameter is the perception of employees regarding the fairness in which they are treated by their colleagues and supervisors (Figure 5). This motivational factor appears to have high percentages of satisfaction (average of 3.45) even though there were declinations between male (average 3.61) and female (average 3.28) with male employees feeling that they are treated fairer than their female colleagues. It is obvious that the majority of male and female employees who are IPT and TEI graduates believe that are treated fairly from their colleagues and supervisors with 4.2 and 3.9 for the IPT and 4.1 and 3.5 for the TEI category. Examining the fairness factor it is interesting to notice the high level of dissatisfaction coming from Higher Education (University) female employees with an average grade of 2.0, while on the contrary the lowest satisfaction grade in male employees are the Primary school graduates with average grade of 3. Even though it is very complicated to objectively record the interpersonal relationship at the workplace, comparing the results with the opinions of the company's executives one can come to the conclusion that higher management is not aware of the declinations existing, amongst specific groups, within their workforce regarding the way they are treated. In general, they believe that there is professional equality, mutual recognition of work responsibilities and a friendly level of communication.

The qualitative characteristics of employees' facilities have great significance for them, particularly in the hotels, affecting directly the level of satisfaction and personnel's efficiency. The largest percentage of the respondents (27.4%) declared a level of satisfaction 3. However, 21.7% of them note a very low level of satisfaction (1). A further exploration of this parameter shows that facility satisfaction is influenced in a great degree from the age of the employees rather than their sex. The trend appears to be that satisfaction is increased when it comes to older (41 and above) male and female employees. Despite that fact, satisfaction levels remain low, revealing an unpleasant feeling from the employees. A 2.3–3.2 grade in employees from 16 to 35 years old, while one can identify the greatest dissatisfaction in the age group of 36–40, with an average grade for female employees below 2. This parameter needs the immediate attention of resort's management as a factor directly affecting the employees' performance. The fact that satisfaction rises with the age (average from 2.8 for females in the 41–45 age group and 5 for females in the 51 and above group) can partially be explained by the fact that older, and in most cases, long service employees do not use the company facilities. From the evaluation of all the answers, it is clear that there is still room for improvement of the

employees' facilities and for sure that could potentially act as a motivational factor and increase the employees' interest in the company and their job (Figure 6).

Figure 4 Job safety at the workplace

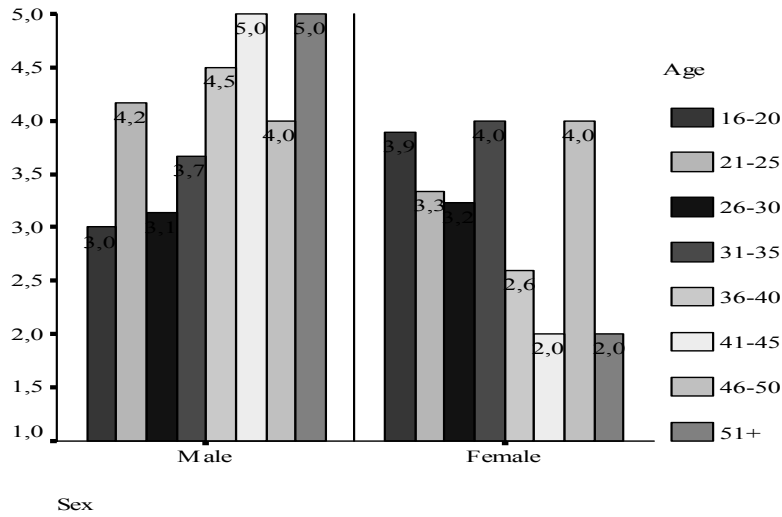


Figure 5 Fair treatment from colleagues and supervisors

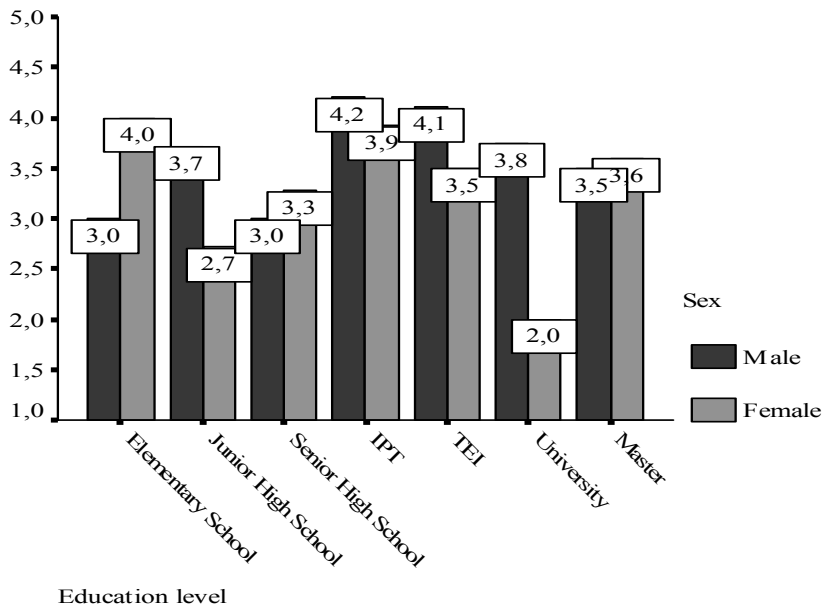
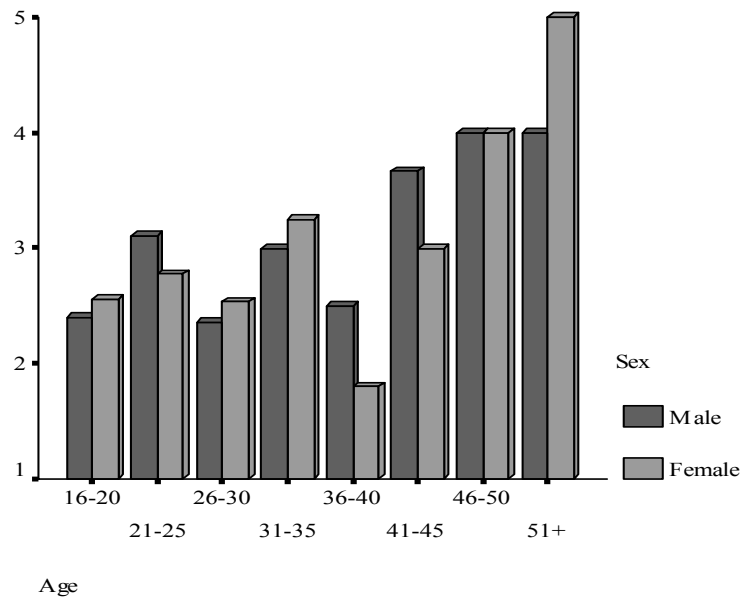
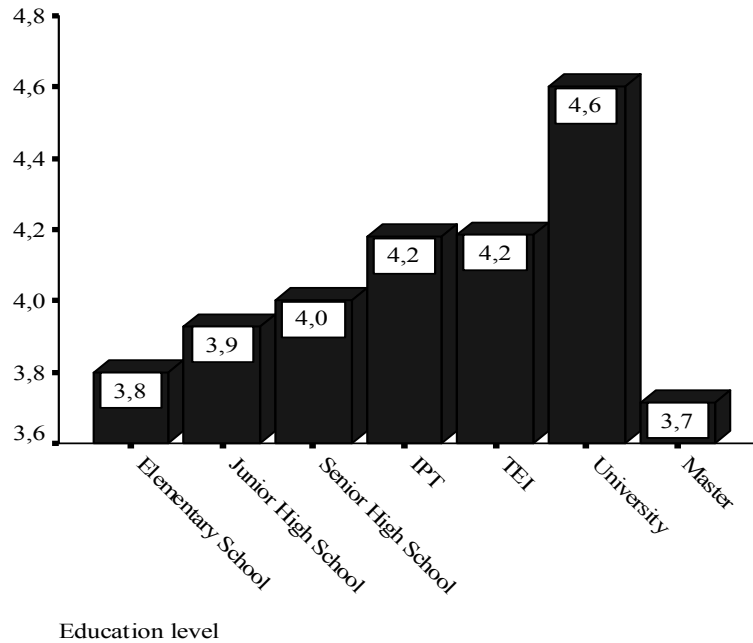


Figure 6 Satisfaction from the employees' facilities



The element of recognition of the contribution of the employees in the workplace promotes constant improvement and assists in, the smooth coexistence in an organisation as well as in the development of health working relationships. The recognition of the attributes of an individual is directly connected with the placing of an employee at the right position according to his skills and abilities. Based on the research it is made clear that a very limited number of employees at resort believe that their working position does not reflect their qualifications and abilities. The majority of the employees (45.3%) are very satisfied from their position with a lot of employees grading this question with 3 and 4. The above ratings constitute a great success for the Human Resources Department.

Despite the above, if one examines the results in relation to the employees' education, one can come across some interesting results. Figure 7 shows that employees with Masters degrees are the least satisfied with their position, but still form an average grade of 3.7. Right after this group, with an average grade of 3.8 is the Elementary School graduates while the Junior High School, Senior High School and TEI groups rank from 3.9 up to 4.2. Especially, positive is the fact that the Higher Education (University) group touches the grade of 5 with 4.6 average grading. Those results establish the fact that the employees are placed in positions according to their knowledge and abilities and that their education is also important in the process.

Figure 7 Working position according to knowledge and skills

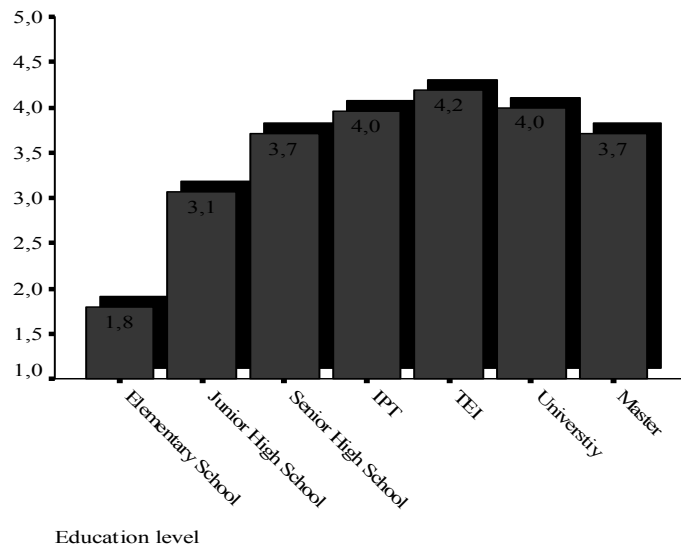
One of the motivational techniques that the company applies is the rendering to its employees the ability to develop and advance professionally within the company. This results to employees considering their company to supply important potential for professional development. It is remarkable that all departments' personnel (with the exception of housekeeping) have agreed with marks of 3 and above that they have the ability to climb up hierarchically in the organisational structure. They also believe that by working in the resort they develop skills, on the job they perform, which in time are recognised by third parties. The executives, in their interviews, supported the fact that the potential for professional growth and carrier opportunities actively exist in the company (Figure 8). More specifically, the policy commands that all employees should be appraised based on their skills and new job roles should be assigned to employees that have developed or improved their knowledge and abilities (carrier path).

Applying the parameter of education in the above question the researchers came up to useful results regarding the crucial subject of providing potential for professional development to company employees. With the exception of the low average grade given by the Elementary School graduates (1.8) the remaining groups of employees, irrespectively of their education level, have a positive reaction regarding the existence of potential development. The Elementary School graduates, mostly senior employees, take their position for granted and consider it as something that offers them a dissent life style without expecting anything more from it. On the contrary, and taking as a fact that many employees have high education, most other employees are seeking opportunities to progress. Moving to the next educational level, the average grades of agreement appear to be high especially with employees that have attended high and higher education

(average grade of 4 for the graduates of IPT, 4.2 for TEI education graduates, 4 for university graduates and 3.7 for Masters degree holders). The comparison of this question with the previous ones (i.e. compatibility of position according to knowledge and skills) revealed a pattern in terms of average grades gradually increasing along with education levels, with only exception the university graduates. Therefore, one can identify a common belief amongst the employees, which is that the company is placing individuals into positions according to their knowledge and skills, while at the same time it offers professional development.

Resort’s policy focuses on the education of the staff ‘on the job’. The ability to attend seminars and training sessions was enhanced even more since the company started to invest on education. In Figure 9, there is a representation of the degree of satisfaction employee draw from the abilities to receive professional training from the company in relation to their educational level. With the exception of the Elementary School graduates (average 2.8), all the employees appear to be satisfied from the professional experience they gained while employed for the company. The level of satisfaction is increased depending on the educational level with the exception of those holding a postgraduate degree. While the grade is 3.3 for the Junior High School graduates and 3.4 for the Senior High School graduates it reaches the 3.7 for the IPT graduates, 3.8 for the TEI graduates and 4 for the university degree holders, it drops at 3.1 for the Masters degree graduates. Based on the above results the researchers identified a clear relation between professional training provided from the company and the already existing educational levels of the employees. This parameter completes the generally positive image of the company in terms of motivating employees and proves that the employees are becoming active receivers of the constant effort of the company to train and to develop them. From those conclusions, one can certify and support the opinions of the company’s executives, who claimed that the company identifies training needs and gaps and acts towards covering them via professional and educational seminars and training sessions.

Figure 8 Opportunities for professional growth within the company



Interesting findings came up by the investigation of the fact of whether or not the company provides employees with motives for constant improvement of their performance (Figure 10). Since motivation is not a static factor but a constantly evolving and changing one, always aiming at the maximisation of the wanted result, which in our case is performance, this parameter was examined having education as the major criteria. The results appear to be positive with an average grade of agreement in opinions being in 3.3 to 4. Exceptions to the above average are the Elementary School graduates who have an average grade of 2.4. Employees with Elementary education are individuals of senior age and long service in the company usually employed in positions that even themselves do not believe that they have potential for development or improvement. For Junior High School and IPT graduates the grade was higher (from 3.3 to 4) while a small decline was noticed for the TEI education graduates (3.8). Finally, the average grade formed by the university graduates was 4 and 3.3 for the Master degree holders. Once again, undoubtable truth appears to be that, improving performance is majority connected with the increase of skills and abilities, a fact which makes the provision of special motives to the higher educated employees an important issue. It is certain that those employees set, as a rule, higher goals that assist in their development and consequently the obtainment of better positions in the company's hierarchy. To conclude one can state that a high percentage of employees are motivated into improving self and performance through their own professional tasks.

Figure 9 Provision of professional training

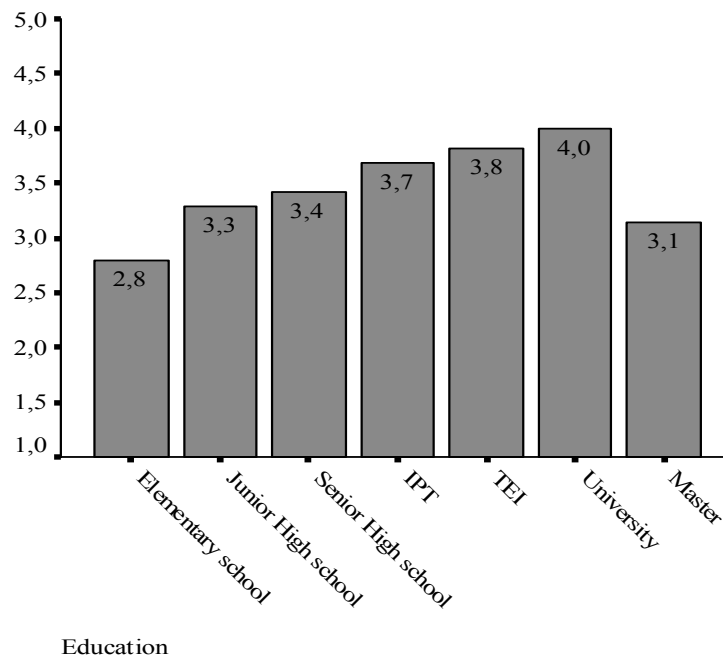
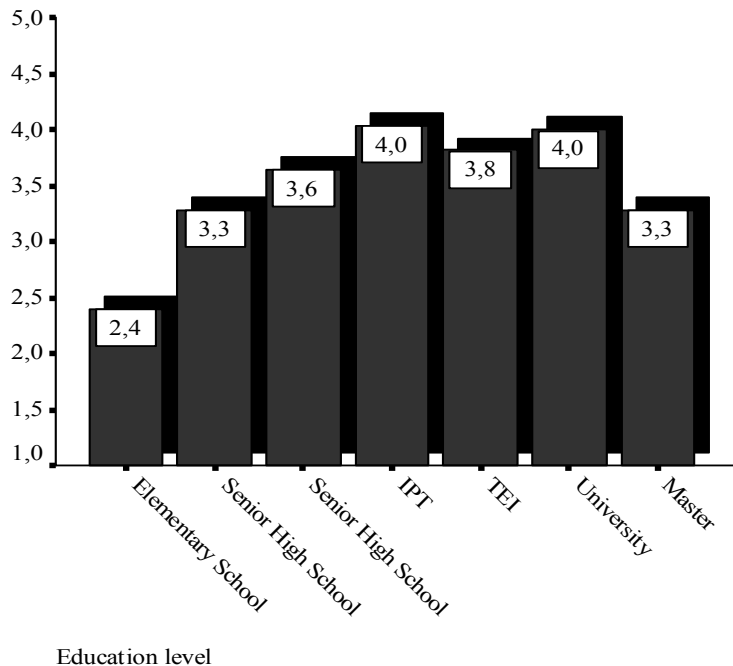


Figure 10 Provision of motives for constant improvement



5 Conclusions – policy suggestions

The successful operation of a hotel lies in the identification and right projection of the ‘Golden rule’, which is the connection of the personal ambitions and aspirations of the employees with the company goals. It is of vital importance to set clear directions and operate on principles, commonly believed by employees and employers and develop all the functions of the company having those beliefs as the foundations. For all the above to come to life, the first step is the constitution of Human Resources Departments in all middle and large hotels and the appropriate execution of the basic principles of HRM. In Greece, the importance for the existence of an organised Human Resources Department has been only lately recognised and only by few hospitality operations. The value of the present paper lies in the fact that it is an initial attempt to scientifically explore the way major motivation principles are exercised in a large Greek hotel firm that has Human Resources Department and to infer useful conclusions.

From the interviews conducted with the executives of the company it becomes clear that employees are recognised as an extremely important factor for the viability of the company while no company goal can be achieved if the employees are not the communicators of the company’s vision. The use of a number of motives was determined, with financial ones climbing at the top of the ladder, without though undermining other categories, such as the potential for promotion within the company, the development of interpersonal relationships, the cultivation of a support climate from

the company towards the employees and more. However, caution is needed in the application of many motivational techniques. This, although ordinary to an extent, may lead to goal confusion and disorientation of the employees. The constant effort of the company to improve the employees' skills and knowledge through training and education is also considered to be a major motivational factor.

Executing a combined examination of the answers of executives and front line employees the researchers discovered certain areas that require the immediate attention of the Senior Management of the resort. More specifically, emphasis must be given in the way the payment policy is communicated, in order for all employees, irrespectively of their age, sex and position, to be equally informed. Executives appear not to be aware of the amount of importance the sense of job safety has for the employees. The Human Resources Department plays an important role in ensuring that job safety and employee facilities are established aspects of employment and therefore improve employee satisfaction and productivity.

The research showed that the employees appear to a significant degree conversant of the goals, the objectives and the aspirations of the company. The dominant trend is to have increase in knowledge and understanding of company goals aligned with long service employment. The information regarding changes in the workplace and setting of new targets flows from the top of the hierarchy pyramid to the lower levels. The awareness of the employees' that belong to those levels of the hierarchy concerning that information can be considered as a success for the Human Resource Department. Furthermore, it is the foundation that motivation and high performance standards can be based on.

Another important motivational practice is considered to be the financial incentives connected with the awareness the employees have for them. The degree of knowledge for the rewarding system, though high, is differentiated greatly amongst employees with different working relation, while this knowledge seems to be affected only a little by the age of the personnel. As far as it concerns the degree of information employees receive concerning financial incentives, permanent employees appear to be the most knowledgeable with differentiations according to their age group. The levels of knowledge-information are lower when it comes to the seasonal employees. This suggests the need for attention and better awareness in the employees that work temporary in the resort, especially when they are recruited for crucial divisions, as it happens in the seasonal operation resorts.

Where the company should emphasise on is the nurture of greater sense of safety to the personnel. This safety is directly connected with the company's management, the supervisors and the policies and procedures they establish. The administration of the company is correctly based on personal relations and tries in any way to empower these relations. However, despite the high average of safety feeling, the important divergence between different age groups and sexes causes problems. The sense of safety of male employees tends to grow in older age groups, while on the contrary it appears to shrink in the case of female employees. Those differences should be followed by serious thinking as to why, in almost all cases, female employees appear to be more insecure than their male colleagues. What the resort should know is the variables that determine the sense of safety to the employees of different ages and sexes and also offer motivations for specific tasks. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt a motivation policy that will focus not only on certain departments of the company but also on social and demographic elements of the personnel.

Psychological parameters in the workplace deeply affect the level employees are motivated. Appropriate communication between supervisors and their subordinates is essential not only for the creation of a trust environment but also for the successful motivation of the employees. Especially important is to cultivate the sense of fairness in the way employees are treated by their colleagues and supervisors. A lot of emphasis has been given to this parameter a fact which is reflected in the research findings, without even having differences between male and female employees. At this point, we should mention that those qualitative dimensions of motivation are hard to trace and, as a result, to be controlled since they are based on subjective, rather than objective, interpersonal relationship amongst the employees. For this reason, constant interaction of the Human Resources Department with the employees is essential as well as the use of appropriate recruitment methods.

The research has shown that the additional employee benefits the company offers (accommodation, food) are doubted with regards to their importance as motivational factors, most importantly because employees think that they are areas that need a lot more extra care from the company's site. Their satisfaction from the employee facilities is very much influenced by their age group. Even though the average was a low satisfaction grade, older employees appear to be more satisfied mostly because they are not using the company accommodation and other facilities. Despite the above, the dissatisfaction reflected on the results reveals an area which immediate attention must be given. The company has to invest in the improvement of employee areas and facilities, as it constitutes a major mistake to underestimate the importance of this factor has for the employees and the satisfaction of their basic needs. It is undoubtedly a fact that an improvement of satisfaction for the employee facilities will trigger and increase in the employee interest in their job and the company as a whole.

One of the strategic targets of the resort is to maintain a low turn over rate. This fact, amongst, others, depends largely on the increase of the employees feeling that their job tasks reflect their knowledge and abilities. As the results of the research clearly show, Human Resources Department has emphasised on this parameter. The success of this parameter depends on the cultivation of interpersonal relationships and reveals the existence (subconscious or not) of an organised system of placing the employees in working positions that match their skills and qualifications.

The resort offers to its employees the ability for working development and satisfaction of their personal aspirations. This is proven by the high satisfaction levels the employees have on this parameter, which, with rare exceptions, increase according to the educational level. To a large degree this is a result of the existing policy for 'creating' executives and supply chances for development within the company. The existence of a nurturing policy development within the company is one of the most important ways of motivation, despite the difficulties that arise in the case of seasonal resorts.

Equally important is for the company to be able to provide employees with the education-training necessary for their development and improvement on a professional and personal level. Research has proven that the company emphasises on education and the straightening of the employees' potential by increasing its qualitative characteristics and by enhancing their level of satisfaction. Attention is also paid to the correct training of newly hired employees via training sessions and on the job training. The objectives in those cases are the improvement of the service levels, the embodiment of the proper communication and conduct rules, and their smooth integration in the company culture.

Therefore, it is clear that the company not only has the ability to discover its training needs but also to cover them using education and training as a motivational factor.

The success for the Human Resources Department is established by the employee satisfaction from their work as a mean in achieving constant development in a professional and social level. From the research results one can draw the conclusion that employees of a higher educational level tend to improve their performance as a response to motivational factors, aiming at the same time for promotional opportunities. This occurs as a reaction in the adaptation of motivational practices that involve the employees' participation in setting the company's objectives. This practice allows employees to feel part of the decision-making process while at the same time helps them to adopt the company philosophy and culture making them more productive and minimising absence and turn over rates.

In hotel businesses it is extremely difficult, but imperative to maintain the consistency of the manpower aiming at a common target that will satisfy the interests of both employees and employers. In advanced hotel companies, where the services are various and quite diverse there is need for people that are different in their abilities and at the same time alike in their business culture. Here lies the particularly demanding part of the Human Resources Department which works as the connecting link between the senior executives and the front line employees and also handles the most valuable asset of the company, its people.

6 Limitations of the study – further research

This paper offers useful experience on how the motivation practices adopted and performed by a well established Greek resort. This experience allowed the formation of suggestions concerning a more effective action of the Human Resources Department. However, the results of our research cannot be fully generalised as a representation of all Greek resorts policy and practices on human resources motivation.

Further research may include a larger number of resorts in order to increase the reliability and the validity of the results. Interesting findings may result from a focused research on the interpersonal characteristics and the personality of the employees and their interaction with the motivation practices the company adopt.

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