



CAREER MANAGEMENT IN HOSPITALITY: THE CASE OF FOUR AND FIVE STAR HOTELS IN ISTANBUL

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Abstract

In order to provide survive in increasing competitive environment, managing human resources effectively is one of the most important factors for organizational success. The fact that human is the most important factor affecting organizational productivity, increases the importance of career management, career commitment and career satisfaction. In the meantime, defining the relationship between these concepts will also help design more effective organizational policies. The scarcity of both national and international studies that explain the relationship between career management, career commitment and career satisfaction in hospitality industry, is one of the main reasons for this research. Therefore main objective of the study is to investigate the link between career management, career satisfaction and career commitment via a survey applied to 4- and 5-star hotels located in Istanbul-Taksim district.

In the study, quantitative methods were used in data collection and analysis. Data were collected from four and five stars hotels in Istanbul-Taksim. 70 questionnaires were administered during November, 2014. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 20 software. Firstly, descriptive statistics on different attributes are supplied and then Pearson correlation was utilized to measure the relationship between career management, career satisfaction and career commitment. The results indicate that there is significant positive relationship between career managements, career commitment and career satisfaction. The article concludes with implications for theory development and suggestions for human resources management in the hospitality and tourism domain.

Keywords: Human Resources, Hospitality Industry, Career Management, Career Commitment, Career Satisfaction.

Jel Classification: L83, O15.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a growing phenomena that attract billions of people every year, and hospitality is an important part of all tourism activities. Trends in globalization, competition, vibrant economies, and improvements in information and communication technologies are affecting hospitality organizations in terms of management of human resources like many other industries. The competition in work environment, rapid changes and improvements in

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technology and uncertainty in economy caused by globalization, are changing the shape of organizations and altering employee functions which might also drag some employees into burnout, despair and disappointment (Kilic, Pelit & Altunoz, 2011; Kuruüzüm, Cetin & Irmak, 2009; Tepeci & Bartlett, 2002). Moreover the profile of workforce is changing, the young force is generally acknowledged to be less committed to the organization than their senior colleagues (Inelmen, Zeytinoglu & Uygur, 2012).

The growth of the tourism industry in both quantitative and qualitative ways increased the need for skilled employees. Hospitality industry in Turkey just like many developed countries create 8-10% of the jobs. The job qualifications which depend on the employment characteristics are getting stricter and more selective. Because hospitality services is intangible the role of employees are more important than manufacturing industries. The employees in hospitality should be more skilled in interpersonal communication, more committed and well educated (Koyuncu, Fiksenbaum, Burke & Demirer, 2008).

There is a wide acceptance in literature, that the jobs in hospitality industry are labor intensive, repetitive, seasonal and with rough working-hours, low social-status, low-paying and low-quality jobs (Baum, 2007; Gunlu, Aksarayli & Percin, 2010; Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge & Ogden, 2007; Kozak, 1999). These job qualifications result in lack of motivation, lack of continuity, decline in employee performance, and decrease in employee commitment, increasing their tendency to quit and resign (Ayres, 2006; Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge & Ogden, 2007; Karatepe, 2013; Karatepe & Douri, 2012; Kuslivan, Kuslivan, Ilhan & Buyruk, 2010).

The employee motivation, attitude and quality of interactions with customers are crucial in hospitality in order to satisfy guests because of the heterogeneity of services. There is not only a problem about staff's attitude and behavior but also there are issues about their career satisfaction and career commitment in the hospitality industry. In order for employees to be motivated there needs to be long term policies behind human resources (Cetin & Dincer, 2014). People who graduate from tourism departments of universities quit up their first job approximately after 13.4 months and their second job after 10.5 month (Ayres 2006). Even after internship there is a significant amount of university students with tourism majors who



stop considering to work in tourism industry in future (Koc, Yumusak, Ulukoy, Kilic, & Toptas, 2014).

Importance of employee satisfaction has been well supported in hospitality and tourism literature (Cetin, Akova & Kaya, 2014). Emotional labor, organizational climate and work values are also popular areas of research (Gursoy, Uysal, Sirakaya, Ekinici, & Baloglu, 2015). However career management in hospitality received less attention. Although the number of qualified graduates who majored in hospitality are increasing rapidly a few of them want to be willing to peruse a career in tourism industry (Song & Wang, 2008). Thus, studies on career management, career commitment, and career satisfaction are crucial in creating the environment that would motivate hospitality employees.

Although job-performance affects career management positively, behaviors such as absenteeism and high turnover have an adverse effect on employee performance (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Career development and career management are issues frequently discussed and a growing field in the hospitality industry (Kong, Cheung & Zhang, 2010). Especially growing number of executive positions make career management an important process that needs to be handled carefully. So, it is important to improve the career satisfaction and career commitment of the employees in hotels. The aim of this study is to explore the link among career management, career satisfaction and career commitment in the hotels and provide suggestions for implications.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Personal orientation in business life and the future are directly related with career (Ladkin, 2002). At the same time, individuals are indispensable part of the career management process because job descriptions also rely on career. Sorensen and Feldman (2005) define organizational career management as “organizational support for career development” or “organizational sponsorship”, and refers to the programs, processes and assistance provided by organizations to support and enhance their employees’ career success (Kong, 2010). Blau (1985) defines career commitment as “one’s attitude towards one’s profession or vocation. It is the psychological link between a person and his or her occupation that is based on an effective reaction to occupation”. According to Kong Haiyan (2010);



career satisfaction is defined as the satisfaction that individuals derive from intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of their careers, including pay, advancement and developmental opportunities. Thus, employees' perceived career satisfaction reflects how they feel about their career-related roles, accomplishments and success.

Despite the fact that the problem of career choices (Cho, Wood & Sciarini, 2006; Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge & Ogden, 2007; Ballout 2009; Song & Chon, 2012), career path (Ladkin, 2002; Ayres, 2006; McCabe, 2008; Kong, Cheung & Zhang, 2010) career commitment (Lin & Chen, 2004; Ballout, 2009) and career achievement (Chung, 2000; Akrivos, Ladkin & Reklitis, 2007; Ballout, 2009) have been broadly studied in literature, career management in hospitality is neglected (Kong, Cheung & Zhang, 2010). Kong, Cheung and Song's (2012) study show that career competency intervenes with the effects of three dimensions of hotel career management (career appraisal, career development, and career training) on career satisfaction in hotels.

Especially in Turkey there is scant research on career management. Kozak (1999), studied five-star hotels and first-class holiday villages, and found on-job training (empowerment, business training, job rotation), and training which is applied outside workplace (conferences, workshops) are often performed; while, counselling, performance appraisal, and group work methods are not very common.

It is suggested by Kilic and Ozturk (2009) in their research that activities and policies which are related to career management are applied on the middle scale at best. They investigated the link between career management system in five-star hotels and organizational commitment and found that career management, career planning and career improvement variables affect organizational commitment.

Although career management, career satisfaction and career commitment are extensively studied individually (Anafarta & Cizel, 2003; Kara, 2012; Koyuncu et al., 2008; Kuslivan, 2003; Yavas, Karatepe & Babakus, 2013), there is limited research about the interrelationship of these three variables in literature. This research aims to fill this gap by evaluating the link between career management, career satisfaction and career loyalty. Study



offers important implications not only for literature but also for human resources departments in hotel industry. The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

H₁: Career Management has a positive relationship with career commitment.

H₂: Career satisfaction has a positive relationship with career management

H₃: Career commitment has a positive relationship with career satisfaction.

3. METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach involving a questionnaire was utilized in data collection. The survey was developed based on extensive literature. For example 13 factors were derived from Kong, Cheung and Song (2011) and their measures of hotel career management was adopted (three dimensions consisted of “career appraisal, career improvement, career education” scales). Career satisfaction was measured by factors adopted from the study of Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley (1990). Blau’s (1989) five factors scale were used to measure career commitment. Hotel employees were requested to answer questions based on five point likert scale between strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5). Demographic, job experience and job position related information was also collected. Some attributes were reverse coded in order to prevent tendency of “ja saying”.

The field research was conducted on 70 employees of four- and five-stars hotels in Istanbul, Taksim. Four- and five-stars hotels can be considered as a suitable domain to analyze career management, career satisfaction and career commitment, because these hotels place more importance to human resources than lower category hotels (e.g. 3-stars hotels). The employees of these upscale hotels can also be regarded as more dedicated to their careers. Descriptive statistics were employed, first mean scores and standard deviations were calculated, then the relationships between career management, career commitment and career satisfaction was explored through Pearson’s correlation analysis.

4. FINDINGS

The sample consisted of 58.6 % males, 50.5% of the participants comprised employees between 25 and 34 years of age, 77,1 % had a university degree and 74,3 % of respondents were single. 44,3 % of them were had between 4 and 6 years of experience in the tourism industry.

Reliability of factors used in the study were computed using Cronbach's alpha. Reliability coefficient of career management ($\alpha=0,85$), career satisfaction ($\alpha=0,72$) and career commitment ($\alpha=0,96$) were all found to be adequate. These values are higher than 0.70 alpha value, which is acceptable for Social Sciences. Therefore the scales used in this research are reliable (Nunnally, 1967).

Descriptive statistics revealed that some items had higher loadings as shown on table 1. For example "I have participated in in-house training provided by my hotel" (mean= 3,39), "I have been clear feedback on my performance"(mean= 3,39) had greater loadings with regard to career management items. With regard to career commitment "I'm disappointed that I ever entered this profession" (mean= 3,43), "I definitely want a career for myself in my current area"(mean= 3,27) and "I spend a significant amount of personal time reading profession-related journals or books" (mean= 3,07) had greater averages. And concerning career satisfaction "I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals" (mean= 3,49), "I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement"(mean= 3,4783) and "I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income" (mean= 3,4783) had greater means, as demonstrated in table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics related to items used in the questionnaire

Factor	Mean	SD
Career Management		
I have been giving training to help develop my career	3,19	1,170
I have been offered financial support for my further education by my hotel	2,57	1,334
I have experienced 360° performance appraisal in my hotel	3,06	1,145
I have been clear feedback on my performance	3,39	1,081
I have been given necessary career advice by my direct manager or the human resource(HR) manager when I need it	3,26	1,159
My direct supervisor // manager has discussed my career development plan with me	3,16	1,150
I learned about hotel culture and behaviors in an orientation/ induction program	3,64	1,111



I have experienced job rotation conducted by the hotel to gain cross-functional experience	3,07	1,229
I have been told about the succession plan, the possible replacement of other managers and the potential of promotion	3,07	1,243
I have been informed of job vacancies by hotels job posting	2,99	1,439
I have been offered dual ladder to enable my upward mobility and recognition	3,12	1,119
I have participated in in-house training provided my hotel	3,39	1,086
Career Commitment		
If I could get another job different from this one and get paid same amount of money, I would probably take it.	2,91	1,316
I definitely want a career for myself in my current area	3,26	1,146
If I could do it all over again, I would choose to work in this profession	2,59	1,142
I would recommend a career in hospitality industry to others	2,95	1,195
I'm disappointed that I ever entered this profession	3,43	1,209
If I had all money I need without working. I would probably still continue in this profession	2,04	1,221
I spend a significant amount of personal time reading profession-related journals or books	3,07	1,322
Career Satisfaction		
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income	3,46	1,045
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement	3,48	1,119
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills	3,45	1,078
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals	3,49	1,113
I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career	3,41	1,083

The relationships among career management, career satisfaction and career commitment are measured by using Pearson's Correlation Analysis. Table 2 reflects the results of correlation analysis. As exhibited in table 2, career management and career commitment was found to have significant positive relationship with each other ($r = ,360$). Thus H_1 was accepted with these findings.

Table 2. Career management, career commitment and career satisfaction Pearson's correlation chart

	Career Management	Career Commitment	Career Satisfaction
Career Management	1		
Career Commitment	,360**	1	
Career Satisfaction	,511**	,536**	1
**The correlation is significant at the 001 level.			

Career management and career satisfaction were also significantly and positively related to each other ($r = ,511$). Based on these findings, H_2 was accepted. Career satisfaction

and Career commitment dimensions were also significantly and positively related ($r=,536$). Therefore H_3 accepted as well.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study explored the relationship between career management, career satisfaction and career commitment in hospitality operations. Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship among variables of career satisfaction, career management and career commitment. According to results of correlation analysis, there was a positive relationship and significant relationship between career management and career satisfaction. This result corroborate with the findings of Kong, Cheung and Song (2012). Career management and career commitment had also positive and significant relationship. Ballout (2009) also found a positive relationship between career satisfaction and career commitment in his study. And finally, a positive and significant relationship between career satisfaction and career commitment was found as a result of correlation analysis. This result is in the same direction with the relationship suggested by Kong's et al. (2012).

This study is not free from limitations. Frist of all the results are not generalizable to whole hospitality industry. The sample size and background (4- and 5-stars hotels) is a limitation. However it offers valuable insights into relationships and importance of career management, career satisfaction and career commitment. This study found significant positive relationship between career management, career satisfaction and career commitment. Based on the findings it can be stated that hospitality operations should imply career management practices which will improve career satisfaction and career commitment in order to decrease the problem of employee turnover in hotels. These three variables as they are significantly correlated should be given more importance by hospitality executive. For example the employees should be provided feedback about their performance and a facilitating environment (e.g. training) should be provided for employees to move onto higher positions. Impact of organizational support has also been found important by Guzel and Ayazlar (2012) in their research on 4- and 5-star hotel employees. Another important suggestion that can be derived from these findings is that the recruitment process is critical, the job descriptions and job specifications should be detailed and clear. Candidate employee's attitudes should also be



considered as one the criteria with their experience and technical knowledge during the hiring process.

The result of this study contributes to career management literature. The link among career management, career satisfaction and career commitment in hospitality were neglected in the literature. Although some studies worked on these individual variables, no previous study targeted their relationship in a single research in hospitality industry. It can be considered that the result of this study supports to career management literature.

This study has also used established scales derived from the literature; however cultural differences might affect the validity of dimensions. Therefore in the future quantitative studies in the subject matter would be in a better position if supported by qualitative enquiry employed in different cultural backgrounds and different types of hotels so that more valid scales might be used. Another suggestion that might be offered based on the findings is that students of tourism and hospitality management degrees should get familiar with the career path in hospitality through additional seminars during their education. Hospitality is an applied industry, most executives had to work in various lower rank positions to acquire additional knowledge and skills to be promoted as managers. Therefore by inviting those role models to universities and organizing seminars would create more realistic expectations on the students' side. Satisfaction is a function of confirmation of expectations, thus this would reinforce the idea that *executive positions need experience*. The students then would better be committed to their careers and be more demanding from their organizations.

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