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Customer and Employee Satisfaction in Hotels

ⓘD Asier BAQUERO[1]

Abstract

Various academic studies have been conducted on customer and employee satisfaction in the service industries. This research focuses on the hotel sector, exploring 1) job satisfaction (intrinsic, extrinsic, and general) in departments whose employees most frequently come into contact with hotel customers (reception, housekeeping, bar and restaurant, kitchen, and entertainment); and 2) customer satisfaction for these departments. The aim of this research is to examine customer and job satisfaction in the aforementioned departments in greater depth. The research was carried out at the beginning of the 2021 summer season, during the COVID-19 pandemic. A sample of 1,488 individuals was analyzed to find out if employee job satisfaction can predict customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction was minimally explained by the three dimensions of employee satisfaction (intrinsic, extrinsic, and general), although not in all departments. Extrinsic employee satisfaction achieved higher results than intrinsic employee satisfaction in the reception, kitchen, and bar and restaurant departments. The results show a clear difference between departments that are managed directly by the hotel and those that are outsourced (housekeeping and entertainment), which did not show a predictive relationship between employee and customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, Job satisfaction, Outsourcing, Tourism, Hotels, COVID-19
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1. INTRODUCTION

It is well known that there is a relationship in the service industries between the quality perceived by customers and the level of satisfaction and organizational commitment of the employees who provide the service. This relationship is more significant in the hotel sector, where customer satisfaction is closely linked to that of employees (Gonzalez et al., 2011). This sector is more vulnerable than others to being affected by health crises, instabilities, and other issues (Jung et al., 2021). The introduction of social distancing, facemasks, and other restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic has modified the relationship that previously existed between hotel customers and employees (Chin & Musa, 2021).

Customer satisfaction has been analyzed in the academic literature exploring the job satisfaction of employees in various sectors of the service industry. For example, Jung & Yoon (2013) conducted a study of a restaurant chain, evaluating the opinion of sixty-nine employees and 259 customers. Their study showed that a positive relationship exists between job satisfaction and customer satisfaction, but not between job satisfaction and customer loyalty. Elsewhere, through their review study of 325 article, Pupo & Garcia (2014) demonstrated that there is a relationship between customer satisfaction and the high degree of individual and collective commitment of employees. In Spanish samples, Dominguez-Falcon et al. (2016) interviewed sixty-eight hotel managers and 296 supervisors of four- star hotels in the Canary Islands. The results showed that if supervisors have job satisfaction and are committed to their role, this leads to better economic results because of improved customer satisfaction.

[1] PhD, Westford University College, United Arab Emirates, abaquero@ucam.edu, Orcid ID: 0000-0002-9500-9344

Scholars studying job satisfaction have produced varied research about its intrinsic and extrinsic factors. For example, drawing on a sample of accountants and engineers, Wernimont (1966) identified recognition, achievement, work by itself, advancement, and responsibility as intrinsic factors; and salary, company policies, technical competences, interpersonal relations, and working conditions as extrinsic factors.

The academic research conducted thus far on customer and employee satisfaction in the hotel sector has focused on general aspects, taking the hotel as a whole. In contrast, my study—in addition to assessing the general satisfaction of customers and employees in a sample of eight hotels—explores whether the satisfaction of employees in five selected hotel departments can predict the customer satisfaction for these departments. It also contributes further to the research on intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction in hotels and their relationship to customer satisfaction. The findings from my sample of hotels in the Balearic Islands (Spain) offer hotel managers valuable insight into how employees' job satisfaction affects how they behave when working on reception, in the bar and restaurant, in the kitchen, in the rooms and communal spaces, and in the entertainment department. My findings will also help hotel managers to understand how employee job satisfaction affects or predicts customer satisfaction, as well as how to approach human relations in this sector in order to achieve the best outcomes for everyone involved.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chin & Gursoy (2009) conducted a study of 2,023 people (employees and customers) of fifty-three- and four-star hotels in five international destinations. They found that, although customer satisfaction has a direct impact on the financial performance of the company, employee job satisfaction does not have a significant and positive impact on financial performance. Instead, there is an indirect relationship between employee satisfaction and financial performance, which is mediated by customer satisfaction. Similarly, Kansal (2012) found, after considering the opinion of 150 employees and 150 customers of four hotels in India, that the level of quality perceived by customers depends on the job satisfaction of the employees. In terms of the influence of sociodemographic variables, education was associated with the quality of the service, while age, sex, and salary were not. In a sample of 18,944 customers and managers in hotels in the Canary Islands, Baquero et al. (2020) analyzed the relationship between leadership and customer satisfaction, confirming the importance of human relations for achieving customer satisfaction in hotels.

Furthermore, Rahman et al. (2015) found in a study of three-, four- and five-star hotels in Bangladesh that satisfied employees tend to be more involved and dedicated to providing high-quality services. They also found that the quality of the service has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. Similar results were found by Singh et al. (2016) from the 150 questionnaires they administered across five five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). These authors showed that employee satisfaction has a vital impact on the quality of service and customer satisfaction, subsequently increasing the profitability of the business.

Moreover, Worsfold et al. (2016) conducted a study using structural equations in 170 international four-star hotels. Using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss et al., 1967) and an ad hoc customer evaluation questionnaire, they obtained information from 61,116 employees and 426,700 customers over twelve months. The results showed that job satisfaction was associated with customer satisfaction when it came to the quality of service and the intention of returning to the hotel. Abukhalifeh & AlBattat (2017) found in a sample of 430 customers of four- and five-star hotels in Jordan that the quality of service is directly related to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Likewise, Chigozie (2017) showed in a sample of 110 customers and employees from Lagos (Nigeria) that the

lack of clarity in responsibilities and the lack of group cohesion were responsible for organizational conflicts, with the consequent impact on the satisfaction and involvement of the employees, the quality of the service and, finally, the satisfaction of the customers. Finally, the results of the research carried out by Ambepitiya & Dharmasiri (2017) with a sample of fifty-three employees and fifty customers from ten hotels in Sri Lanka showed that there was a correlation between the quality of the service and customer satisfaction, with the quality of the service being improved through employee training programs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected tourism and hotels across the globe. According to Mao et al. (2020), during a global crisis, business organizations must pay attention to the psychological capital of their employees. In the hotel industry, relationships between employees and customers play a fundamental role (Kim & Qu, 2020). Thus, it seems even more important than in other sectors that the hotel industry focuses on the psychological capital of its employees in this current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mehta et al. (2021) carried out a sentiment analysis and topic modelling on comments made by customers staying in hotels around the world from January to September 2020, during which time their stay was affected by the pandemic situation. Perceived hygiene attributes appear to be an important issue to pay attention to in hotels in order to achieve customer satisfaction and gain customer retention during the COVID-19 crisis (Yu et al., 2021). In this new normal, acts such as the wearing of facemasks by hotel employees affect customers in different ways. According to Wu et al. (2021), the wearing of facemasks improves the perception that customers have about average-looking employees, and thus increases customer satisfaction.

Hotel employees' perceptions of occupational stressors before the pandemic differed from their perceptions once the pandemic situation had begun (Wong et al., 2021). According to the research carried out by Karatepe et al. (2021) using a sample of 151 employees of five-star hotels in Turkey, the threat of the COVID-19 virus increased absenteeism among hotel employees. This situation of employee absenteeism could affect the quality of work and thus affect customer satisfaction.

Considering the previous empirical evidence on the relationship between job satisfaction and customer satisfaction in the hotel industry, this article aims to demonstrate that:

Hypothesis 1: High job satisfaction explains the higher rates in general customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: High indices in job satisfaction for each hotel department are significant predictors of customer satisfaction for each department (reception, bar and restaurant, kitchen, entertainment, housekeeping).

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Participants and Procedure

The study data were collected between 1 June and 31 July 2021, in eight four- and five-star hotels located in the Balearic Islands (Mallorca, Menorca, and Ibiza). I contacted a Spanish hotel chain based in the capital of the Balearic Islands, Palma de Mallorca, which kindly offered to pass a job satisfaction questionnaire I had devised on to its employees, to be completed on a voluntary basis. I also requested access to the chain's internal customer satisfaction surveys.

To measure job satisfaction, I used the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (Weiss et al., 1967). To evaluate customer satisfaction, I used the ad hoc customer satisfaction survey used by this hotel chain, managed by the software company ReviewPro.

This led me to have a sample of 1,488 individuals: 1,096 customers and 392 employees. The 1,096 customers were obtained by taking the first 137 valid surveys from each of the eight hotels, assuming a weight of 12.50% for each hotel. I obtained the 392 valid employee questionnaires by distributing fifty job satisfaction questionnaires to each hotel, with 98% of those returned deemed as valid. The total sample of 1,488 individuals had a mean age of 45.18 years and comprised 55.10% men and 44.90% women.

3.2. Survey Instruments

I measured job satisfaction using the MSQ questionnaire (Weiss et al., 1967). This questionnaire is protected by copyright but is freely accessible online and free to use. Specifically, I used the 1977 short form, which is adapted from the 1977 long form that has one-hundred questions. The long form takes about twenty minutes to complete, while the short form, which has twenty questions, takes about five minutes. The respondent must answer these twenty response items (which take the form of statements) by assigning each of them one of five Likert-type options: very dissatisfied (VDS) = 1; dissatisfied (DS) = 2; neither (N) = 3; satisfied (S) = 4; very satisfied (VS) = 5. This short form of the MSQ makes it possible to evaluate extrinsic satisfaction (with six questions relating to this), intrinsic satisfaction (twelve questions) and general satisfaction (all twenty questions). To give some examples, one of the items used to measure intrinsic job satisfaction was: 'On my present job, this is how I feel about [. . .] Being able to keep busy all the time', and one of the items used to measure extrinsic job satisfaction was: 'The way company policies are put into practice'.

According to Hirschfeld (2000), the intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction subscales used with MSQ show discriminant validity. In this way, the aspects Hirschfeld (2000) analyzed were promotion opportunities, salary, the recognition received for doing the job well, the competence of superiors, the length of the working day, the opportunity to teach or help colleagues, the freedom to use one's own criteria, pride in a job well done, and the opportunity to do different jobs and as such break up the monotony.

The MSQ is a questionnaire that has been widely used and validated in real practice, as part of several studies (e.g., Singh & Sharma, 2011; Tziner et al., 2011; Yan et al., 2021). It was officially translated into Spanish by Rodriguez in 1997, is freely accessible, and has been used by numerous studies in Spain and Latin America (Aguilar et al., 2015; Escortell et al., 2020).

The MSQ questionnaires used in this study were distributed in paper form to fifty employees of the five departments selected in eight hotels in the Balearic Islands in June and July 2021, with the assistance of the human resources manager of each hotel. In my study, I used SPSS24.0 statistics package programme and the results showed that the internal consistency coefficients, Cronbach's alpha, were satisfactory for the general satisfaction (α = 0.92), intrinsic satisfaction (α = 0.87), and extrinsic satisfaction (α = 0.80) subscales.

Customer satisfaction was measured using the hotel chain's online survey, which is hosted on the ReviewPro platform. This survey enables customer satisfaction in hotel establishments to be evaluated using a 5-point response system: 1=1; 2=25; 3=50; 4=75; 5=100. The ad hoc questionnaire, comprising thirty-three questions, is sent via email to the customer after they check out. Customers are asked to assign various items a score ranging from 1 to 5. These items include overall satisfaction, staff kindness, reception, room maintenance, room cleanliness, daytime entertainment, night-time entertainment, children's entertainment, breakfast food, breakfast service, lunch food, lunch service, dinner restaurant food, dinner restaurant service, bar food, and bar service. There is only one item about reception for customers to respond to, but in some cases when there was more than one item relating to a certain department, which was the case for entertainment, I had to consolidate the results

of three questions into one result. In the online survey, if the customer gives the item a score between 1 and 3, the online system displays a comment option so that they can give more information and their dissatisfaction can be qualitatively assessed. If the customer gives the item a score of 4 or 5, no comment option is displayed. For my study, I only used the results for the items relating to the five departments under study, and I only took into account the scores given by the customers, not any qualitative comments they left. The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) were adequate ($\alpha > 0.71$).

ReviewPro is a company based in Spain and is a world leader in applications for the hotel industry, with more than 60,000 customers in 150 countries (Majo et al., 2021). According to Hensens (2015), its tools are a remarkable example of the software available on the market for managing customer comments on online sites. The company's tools can also be used to manage questionnaires made ad hoc for a particular company (ReviewPro, 2021).

To test my initial hypotheses, I selected five hotel departments in which employees have greater contact with customers: reception, the bar and restaurant, the kitchen, housekeeping, and entertainment. Taking advantage of the information offered by the ReviewPro system, I also collected information on customer satisfaction, across a time period of two months (1 June to 31 July 2021). The system allows data to be obtained in the form of reports, from which the direct scores necessary for data analysis can be taken.

3.3. Data Analysis

I carried out predictive analysis by studying logistic regressions. In order to do so, I used the Wald statistic-based forward stepwise regression method, since according to Alderete (2006) it presents the following advantages with respect to linear regression: it does not require the fulfilment of assumptions such as that of multivariate normality and homoscedasticity, it allows the use of continuous and categorical independent variables, it has direct statistical contrasts, it has the ability to incorporate non-linear effects, and it is useful for making diagnoses.

To consolidate my sample, I worked with the means of job satisfaction and customer satisfaction for each hotel. For example, I added to each employee at hotel X the mean customer satisfaction for hotel X, and vice versa, I added the mean of hotel X's job satisfaction to each customer of hotel X. Doing this meant that all the cases in the database had data on both job satisfaction and customer satisfaction. I gave the coefficients of each variable being studied in the regression equation, along with the statistics produced by the models when categorizing the subjects into the groups they belonged to, to move the logistic regression analysis along. I made the interpretation using the beta (B) coefficient of the variables, which indicate the increase in the probability of being satisfied at work or of customer satisfaction depending on the changes in the values of the study variables. The x^2 value and the p index, which were obtained after the predictive model was created, gave information on the amount of accurate estimating that the model permitted, with Nagelkerke's R^2 being in charge of figuring out the adjustment value.

The odds ratio (OR), which offers information on the chance of occurrence and indicates that OR>1 indicates that the probability of occurrence is lower than that of non-occurrence, is how I finally assessed the likelihood of an event occurring.

4. RESULTS

To test whether job satisfaction subscales (intrinsic, extrinsic, and general) are significant predictors of customer satisfaction, I analysed the study sample, and were able to create a logistic model for predicting customer satisfaction from employee satisfaction (see Table 1).

The predictive model allowed me to correctly estimate 89.90% of the cases for the intrinsic satisfaction ($\chi 2$ = 11.43; p = 0.001), extrinsic satisfaction ($\chi 2$ = 25.45; p = 0.000), and general satisfaction ($\chi 2$ = 23.54; p = 0.000) subscales, with the adjustment value (Nagelkerke's R2) oscillating between 0.001 (intrinsic satisfaction) and 0.004 (extrinsic satisfaction). The ORs of the logistic model indicate that customers are 1%, 4%, and 1% more likely to be generally satisfied in hotels as the intrinsic, extrinsic, and general satisfaction scales increase by one unit, respectively.

Table 1. Results of the probability of achieving general customer satisfaction as determined by binary logistic regression

	B	SE	Wald	P	OR	95% CI
Intrinsic employee	0.01	0.004	11.52	0.001	1.01	1.01-1.02
Constant	1.49	0.21	52.55	0.000		
Extrinsic employee	0.04	0.01	35.59	0.000	1.04	1.03-1.05
Constant	1.3	0.14	86.62	0.000		
General employee	0.01	0.002	23.78	0.000	1.01	1.01-1.02
Constant	1.26	0.19	43.38	0.000		

Note: B: coefficient; SE: standard error; P: probability; OR: odds ratio; CI: confidence interval.

To examine the relative weight that job satisfaction scales in the reception department have in terms of predicting customer satisfaction for this department, I carried out a logistic regression analysis. This gave me a model that predicts customer satisfaction based on job satisfaction (see Table 2).

The predictive model allowed me to correctly estimate 88.30% of the cases for the intrinsic satisfaction ($\chi 2$ = 8.07; p = 0.004), extrinsic satisfaction ($\chi 2$ = 18.76; p = 0.000), and general satisfaction ($\chi 2$ = 13.99; p = 0.000) subscales. The adjustment value (Nagelkerke's R2) was 0.001 for intrinsic and general satisfaction, and 0.002 for extrinsic satisfaction. The ORs of the model report that customers are 1%, 3%, and 1% more likely to be satisfied with the reception department as the intrinsic, extrinsic, and general satisfaction scales of the reception employees increase by one unit, respectively.

Table 2. Results of the probability of achieving customer satisfaction for the hotel's reception as determined by binary logistic regression

	B	SE	Wald	P	OR	95% CI
Intrinsic employee satisfaction	0.01	0.004	8.12	0.004	1.01	1.01-1.02
Constant	1.47	0.19	57.69	0.000		
Extrinsic employee satisfaction	0.03	0.01	18.83	0.000	1.03	1.01-1.05
Constant	1.44	0.14	112.39	0.000		
General employee satisfaction	0.01	0.01	14.09	0.000	1.01	1.01-1.02
Constant	1.34	0.18	55.67	0.000		

Note: B: coefficient; SE: standard error; P: probability; OR: odds ratio; CI: confidence interval.

Using the analyzed sample, I was able to create a logistic model for predicting customer satisfaction in the bar and restaurant department, based on employee job satisfaction in this department (see Table 3).

The logistic model allowed me to correctly estimate 87% of the cases for the intrinsic satisfaction ($\chi 2$ = 24.43; p = 0.000), extrinsic satisfaction ($\chi 2$ = 73.47; p = .000), and general satisfaction ($\chi 2$ = 51.69; p = 0.000) subscales. The model fit value (Nagelkerke's R2) ranged between 0.002 (intrinsic) and 0.007 (extrinsic). The ORs of the model report that customers are 2%, 5%, and 2% more likely

to be satisfied with the department, as intrinsic, extrinsic, and general satisfaction increase by one unit, respectively.

Table 3. Results of the probability of achieving customer satisfaction for the hotel's restaurant and bar as determined by binary logistic regression

	B	SE	Wald	P	OR	95% CI
Intrinsic employee satisfaction	0.02	0.01	24.64	0.000	1.02	1.01-1.03
Constant	0.99	0.18	29.25	0.000		
Extrinsic employee satisfaction	0.05	0.01	73.65	0.000	1.05	1.04-1.06
Constant	0.81	0.13	39.57	0.000		
General employee satisfaction	0.02	0.002	52.24	0.000	1.02	1.01-1.02
Constant	0.67	0.17	15.61	0.000		

Note: B: coefficient; SE: standard error; P: probability; OR: odds ratio; CI: confidence interval.

As shown in Table 4, I was able to create a predictive model of customer satisfaction for the kitchen department, based on employee job satisfaction in this department. The model allowed me to correctly estimate 83.50% of the cases for the intrinsic satisfaction ($\chi 2 = 6.07$; $p = 0.014$), extrinsic satisfaction ($\chi 2 = 44.31$; $p = 0.000$), and general satisfaction ($\chi 2 = 21.79$; $p = 0.000$) subscales. The adjustment value (Nagelkerke's $R2$) oscillated between 0.001 (intrinsic) and 0.004 (general). The ORs of the logistic model show that customers are 1%, 3%, and 1% more likely to be satisfied with the kitchen department as the intrinsic, extrinsic, and general satisfaction scales increase by one unit, respectively.

Table 4. Results of the probability of achieving customer satisfaction for the hotel's kitchen as determined by binary logistic regression

	B	SE	Wald	P	OR	95% CI
Intrinsic employee satisfaction	0.01	0.003	6.10	0.014	1.01	1.00-1.01
Constant	1.21	0.17	51.42	0.000		
Extrinsic employee satisfaction	0.03	0.01	44.43	0.000	1.03	1.02-1.04
Constant	0.85	0.12	52.21	0.000		
General employee satisfaction	0.01	0.002	21.94	0.000	1.01	1.00-1.01
Constant	0.89	0.16	32.57	0.000		

Note: B: coefficient; SE: standard error; P: probability; OR: odds ratio; CI: confidence interval.

Using the analysed sample, I was able to create a predictive model of customer satisfaction for the entertainment department, based on employee job satisfaction in this department (see Table 5). The model allowed me to correctly estimate 54.40% of the cases for the intrinsic satisfaction ($\chi 2 = 124.68$; $p = 0.000$), extrinsic satisfaction ($\chi 2 = 100.98$; $p = 0.000$), and general satisfaction ($x2 = 130.47$; $p = 0.000$) subscales. The fit values (Nagelkerke's $R2$) ranged from 0.007 (intrinsic) to 0.009 (general).

The ORs of the logistic model show that customers are 3%, 4%, and 2% less likely to be satisfied with the entertainment department, as the intrinsic, extrinsic, and general satisfaction scales increase by one unit, respectively.

Table 5. Results of the probability of achieving customer satisfaction for the hotel's entertainment department as determined by binary logistic regression

	B	SE	Wald	P	OR	95% CI
Intrinsic employee satisfaction	-0.03	0.01	123.57	0.001	0.97	0.96-0.98
Constant	1.16	0.13	158.44	0.000		

Extrinsic employee satisfaction	-0.04	0.01	100.30	0.000	0.96	0.96-0.97
Constant	1.09	0.09	146.24	0.000		
General employee satisfaction	-0.02	0.01	129.19	0.000	0.98	0.98-0.99
Constant	1.56	0.12	167.16	0.000		

Note: B: coefficient; SE: standard error; P: probability; OR: odds ratio; CI: confidence interval.

Based on staff job satisfaction in the housekeeping department, I was unable to develop a model that predicted customer happiness in that area. None of the scales were included in the model as statistically significant predictors of customer satisfaction.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Discussion

The data presented confirms for this sample that high employee job satisfaction is a predictor of higher rates of general customer satisfaction. However, high rates of employee job satisfaction for each department are not predictive of higher rates of customer satisfaction for each department in all cases. Employee job satisfaction was predictive of higher rates of customer satisfaction in the case of reception, the bar and restaurant, and the kitchen, but not for housekeeping or entertainment. Customer satisfaction was minimally explained by the three dimensions of employee job satisfaction (intrinsic, extrinsic, and general), although not in all departments, and there was a clear differentiation between departments that are directly managed by the hotel and those whose management is outsourced. As such, hypothesis 1 was confirmed and hypothesis 2 was not fully confirmed. Specifically, hypotheses 2 (referring to entertainment and housekeeping respectively) was not confirmed.

Although there is little prior scientific evidence that analyses the predictive power of employee job satisfaction on the satisfaction of hotel customers, there have been some findings in this regard. After examining the opinions of 150 employees and 150 customers of four hotels in India, Kansal (2012) found that the level of quality perceived by the customer depends on employee job satisfaction. As can be seen, if employees have their needs met in terms of promotion opportunities, salary, recognition, freedom to use their own criteria, and so on, this predicts the general satisfaction of the customer to a greater extent.

In my study sample, extrinsic employee satisfaction achieved higher results than intrinsic employee satisfaction in the reception, kitchen, and bar and restaurant departments. It can therefore be said that emphasizing extrinsic satisfaction can predict slightly higher customer satisfaction than intrinsic satisfaction in the reception, kitchen, and bar and restaurant departments. This difference is very subtle but is a novel discovery because there is no evidence from previous research supporting this very specific issue. In terms of analysis of job satisfaction alone, Huang & Van De Vliert (2003) confirmed that socio-economic and cultural approaches make a difference to it. Intrinsic job characteristics and job satisfaction are stronger key points in countries with high governmental social welfare, while extrinsic job characteristics proved to be strongly and positively related to job satisfaction in all forty-nine countries analysed, being Spain part of the sample of 107,272 employees from different industries and professions.

All these results can be explained by taking into account that if employees are satisfied, they offer a higher quality of service, leading to higher levels of customer satisfaction. Consistent with this, Reshidi et al. (2016) highlighted that the quality of service and customer satisfaction are closely

linked, because the quality of all services affect customer satisfaction in a proportional way. Along the same lines, Markovic et al. (2013) found, after analyzing 253 customers from fifteen international hotels using multiple linear regressions, that the quality of hotel service is a significant predictor of customer satisfaction, explaining 61% of the variance.

As previously stated, hypothesis 2 is only partially confirmed, considering the results obtained on job satisfaction in each department and the prediction of customer satisfaction for each department, since this prediction was not found to be true for all departments.

Focusing on the reception department, the results showed that the customers of the hotels in the sample feel satisfied because the employees have their intrinsic and extrinsic needs met. Thus, it is shown that employees who feel fulfilled in their position and who have good opportunities in terms of promotion and salary perform better at work, and that this results in greater customer satisfaction. Similar results were obtained in the bar and restaurant and kitchen departments, with customer satisfaction increasing with the intrinsic, extrinsic, and general satisfaction of the employees in these departments. The study sample consisted of employees from vacation hotels, where the customer has a great deal of contact with reception employees, and where the customer's 'sense of arrival' is a key aspect. Customers also have frequent contact with bar and restaurant employees, and in the case of kitchens, this type of hotel offers a 'show cooking' service, where there is an interaction between kitchen staff and customers. Along the same lines, Woon & Kahl's (2015) evaluation of 100 employees of three Hilton hotels in Malaysia and found that employee empowerment was the best predictor of service quality, company loyalty, and subsequent customer satisfaction.

The evidence I found for entertainment differed from that found for the other departments: customer satisfaction increased as the three types of employee satisfaction decreased. Finally, for housekeeping, no logistic model was found to explain the results obtained. The entertainment department has a strong interaction with customers in this type of hotel, where sports, cultural, and general entertainment activities are offered during day, afternoon, and evening sessions. In the case of housekeeping, contact is more limited with the customers, but interaction takes place in the communal areas or if the customer is in the room at the time of cleaning or makes a request to a chambermaid that they encounter in communal areas.

The evidence I found is consistent with the findings of Hodari et al. (2014). They found that hotel spa employees whose management was outsourced showed greater work stress than those spa employees employed directly by the hotel itself. Escortell et al. (2020) found similar results in outsourced departments—those of housekeeping and entertainment—in a sample from the Canary Islands, Spain.

As I have stated, both the extrinsic and intrinsic satisfaction of the employees explain the subsequent customer satisfaction, except in the housekeeping and entertainment departments, which are outsourced. These results can be explained, once again, in terms of the feeling of belonging held by the hotel's directly employed and outsourced employees. Regarding this aspect, Davila & Gimenez (2014) highlighted that the affective commitment of employees is the most important predictor for employees who perform an entry-level position, while the sense of belonging is the only predictor for mid-level and management positions.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

Various studies have postulated that one of the aspects most related to customer satisfaction is the quality of service. A good example of this is the study conducted by Markovic & Jankovic (2013), in which they administered 253 surveys across fifteen hotels in various international destinations. Similarly, Herath et al. (2016) found, with a sample of 100 Sri Lankan hotel customers, that customer

satisfaction is mediated by quality of service. All of this is applicable to the present study sample, especially taking into account the relationship shown between job satisfaction and the quality of the service provided in the hotel industry (Baquero, 2022; Gonzalez et al., 2011; Morillo & Morillo, 2016). It is necessary to take into account the aspects that the employees themselves consider important, since there is no doubt about the strong relationship that exists in the service sector between the quality perceived by customers, the levels of employee job satisfaction, and the organizational commitment of the employees who provide the service. This relationship is stronger in the hotel sector, where customer satisfaction is closely linked to employee job satisfaction (Gonzalez et al., 2011).

However, to take into account the results of the study sample, we must recognize that customer satisfaction in hotels is mediated by various factors unrelated to staff performance. Among them, the effect of price on the perception of guest satisfaction stands out (Gonzalez et al., 2011), since the quality–price ratio is usually a factor that determines whether or not the experience is satisfactory for visitors (Pacheco, 2017). On the other hand, certain studies have warned that satisfaction is mediated by the attributes of the hotel, either in terms of facilities or the physical environment (Radojevic et al., 2017; Ryu & Han, 2010; Worsfold et al., 2016). Finally, it is important to consider that nowadays it is increasingly common to use the internet to make room reservations, so the decision to hire the services of a hotel establishment is increasingly influenced by online comments written by customers (Molinillo et al., 2016).

5.3. Practical Implications

It is particularly important to pay attention to the practical implications that lie behind the evidence found. Tourism (specifically staying in hotels) has become one of the major sources of income for developed countries. The hotel industry is characterized by the sale of a product that defines it: service. This depends, among other things, on human resources, the quality of the service, and the attitude of the people in charge of offering this service. The reception, bar and restaurant, and kitchen departments presented similar predictive models. Thus, customer satisfaction for these departments was explained by the high levels of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction of their employees. In this case, customers are satisfied with the services of these departments because the employees of each department are offered opportunities for promotion, are recognized for the work they do, take pride in their salary, and have the freedom to use their own criteria. On the contrary, I could not obtain a successful predictive model for customer satisfaction for the entertainment and housekeeping departments. Both of these departments share a characteristic that differentiates them from the rest: they are outsourced. As such, the failure to obtain a successful predictive model for customer satisfaction for these departments can only be explained by the lack of connection that their employees have with the hotel company, because of the fact that they work for an outsourced company. All of this invites me to reflect on the degree of involvement of external employees, as well as their feeling of belonging to the hotel company.

5.4. Conclusions

Considering all of the above, this research is of great relevance for the hotel sector, because it analyses each department separately in order to explain the high employee and customer satisfaction. Tourism organizations are labour intensive, since their teams are made up of a large number of people in order to guarantee good service. For this reason, as Gonzalez et al. (2011) pointed out, hotel managers must get to know the people who make up their team, since the human factor is the key element that makes up the product and becomes the intangible value that best characterizes the tourist experience.

Customer satisfaction is everything in the hospitality sector. Specifically, and in the words of Nikou et al. (2016), customers are the soul of any business and in the case of the hotel industry, they are the key to success (Rios et al., 2016). In addition, the existing excessive competitiveness in the current industry means that hotels need to differentiate their services in order to achieve satisfaction, the quality of service being the direct route and a highly significant factor not only in meeting the expectations of the customer, but in gaining their loyalty (Albukalifeh & Al Battat, 2017). Thus, it seems clear that the hotel industry needs employees who are satisfied with their jobs and customers who are satisfied with their choice of hotel. Additionally, the restrictions and new forms of management that have been adopted in hotels during the COVID-19 pandemic can help redefine the new normal with positive effects on customer experience (Bonfati et al. 2021).

6. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

First, it is important to comment on the generalization of the results. Although the sample is large, comprising a total of 1,488 subjects, the conclusions found may only be applicable to those groups with similar characteristics, and not to other populations. The predictive analyses carried out in this study only allow relationships between variables to be established. Therefore, as it is not a longitudinal study, the relationship analyzed in the results is not causal. As such, it would be interesting to expand the sample by including a longitudinal model that would enable a causal explanation of the relationship between employee job satisfaction and customer satisfaction.

Second, I must also emphasize that not all the differences found have been reinforced by consistent effect sizes. In fact, many of the variables obtained small magnitudes. With this in mind, it is important to exercise a degree of caution and precision when interpreting the results.

Third, the fact that the hotels in the sample belong to the same hotel chain and are in the same destination (the Balearic Islands) could have a bias effect on the results. Therefore, I would recommend that future studies examine the validity of the results using, among other elements, larger samples of employees, hotels that belong to different companies, and/or hotels that are located in different areas. Cross-cultural studies that compare results from national and international samples could also be conducted.

Fourth, I must also note that in the departmental satisfaction analysis, I only examined five departments. Other departments, such as maintenance, have a similar interaction with customers to the housekeeping department. Maintenance also tends to be an outsourced department, so including this department in a similar study may help to find out more about the satisfaction of outsourced employees in hotels and how this relates to customer satisfaction.

Finally, my research shows a picture of a very specific situation when hotels operated with lower occupancy than usual due to the COVID-19 situation. Although in July and August in Europe, and Spain in particular, there was not a lockdown as there had been some months previously, there were certain restrictions that applied to customers and employees and that affected their general life. It is unlikely that these restrictions will be the same in the near future, so this should be taken into account for future research.

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Yazar(lar) Hakkında/About Author(s)

Asier Baquero/abaquero@ucam.edu

He received a PhD in Business Management from the Catholic University of Valencia, Spain. Dr. Baquero combines his work as a hotel general manager at Barcelo Hotel Group, in the United Arab Emirates, with the role of Postdoctoral research fellow at Westford University College, also in the UAE. His research focuses on leadership and employee and customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

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Research Support Information: This research has received no funding from any source.
(X) Ethics committee approval was required.
( ) Ethics committee approval is not required. The reason is stated below.
( ) Since the data were collected before 2020, ethical committee approval was not obtained.
( ) The method used in the study does not require ethics committee approval.
Contribution Rate of Author(s)
1. Author: 100%
Informed Consent Form: All parties are involved in the study voluntarily.

* I declare that I comply with scientific ethical rules.