

Economics of Improving Hospitality Management in Bangladesh through Employee Satisfaction

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Abstract

Tourism development and hospitality management are positively correlated with each other. Demand for tourism and hospitality management has increased rapidly for last two or three decades and become important global economic phenomena. Hospitality management in hotel business is vividly dependent on the level of employee satisfaction that eventually induces to generate customer satisfaction. Satisfied employees at workplace inclined to be more involved and dedicated in delivering high quality services to their organizations. Quality of service has a positive impact on customer satisfaction and that leads to ensure the profitability of the hotel industry. There are, however, few studies that detail the current situation, tangible and practical ways to promote or ensure employee satisfaction of this specific field. This study tries to lessen the research gap. This article delineate the existing condition of the employees, identified the determinants of employee satisfaction, and stimulating factors to this end. The study was conducted in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh in May 2015. The study has prescribed policies that should bolster to design effective hospitality management plans for businesses through improving the level of employee satisfaction. The originality of this paper comes from analysis of the employee satisfaction on hospitality management industry of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, a popular tourist site, which has high potential of economic development through the tourism sector.

Keywords: technology competence, market competence, resource-based theory, organizational learning theory

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) first used the term 'Tourism' in 1939 and initiated to establish the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 1975. Tourism is defined broadly as travel for a limited duration in pursuit of recreation, leisure, religious spirituality, family or business gathering. Tourism is a multidimensional industry and their motive is to raise profit by providing services that will make the tour comfortable for tourist. This industry is a symbol of the connection, love, cordiality, friendship, brotherhood among the nations. Nowadays tourism has prolonged all over the world due to the technological enhancement, economic growth, rapid development in transport and infrastructure, and finally the natural interest of a human being towards the varieties of culture, philosophy, ethos, nations etc. Now tourism is considered to be one of the swiftly expanding business ventures in the world. During the last decade or so, tourism industry has complemented development through foreign currency earnings and significantly contributed to accelerate the

gross domestic product (GDP) in Asian economies like Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan.

Bangladesh is a country of enormous natural beauty with rivers, sea, hills and forest. She has the longest natural sea beach of the world in Cox's bazar and the largest natural mangrove forest in the Sundarbans. There are many historical and archaeological sites which can also attract tourists from home and abroad (Hassan et al, 2013). Albeit Bangladesh has all the potentials to flourish her tourism sector but unfortunately even after 45 years of liberation she yet not has managed to establish her as a brand country in the international market for tourists. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council¹ (WTTC); travel and tourism to GDP was BDT 460.3 billion (4.4% of GDP) in 2013 and is forecasted to rise by 7.9% in 2014

¹ Economic Impact Report (2014)

and to rise by 6.5% annually to BDT 935.5 billion (4.7% of GDP) in 2024 for Bangladesh.

Demand for tourism and hospitality management increased rapidly in the world and become one of the important phenomena. It's playing important role by promoting employment opportunities in various ways and governments are also focusing and investing in this sector to enhance the opportunity widely that contributes the economy's growth of GDP. According to World Trade Organization (WTO), one tourist in a particular country provides direct and indirect employment to nine persons. The report in 2013 by WTTC said, Bangladesh travel and tourism sector directly supported 1.8% of total employment and it was expected to rise by 4% in 2014. The direct contribution of hospitality industry to the country's GDP is likely to rise by 8 per cent in 2014 which was BDT 222.6 billion (2.1 per cent of total GDP) in 2013.

Hospitality management in hotel business is one of the most important sides for the development of tourism. Hospitality of hotel business is vastly dependent on the level of employee satisfaction and the level of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction depends on different categories of employee satisfaction as on-the-job or off-the-job. Employee satisfaction is about the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities through professional development and customer satisfaction depends on knowledge, skills, and abilities of employees (Sabir et al, 2014). According to Nancy C. Morse (1997) "Satisfaction refers to the level of fulfillment of one's needs, wants and desire. Satisfaction depends basically upon what an individual wants from the world, and what he gets." Employee satisfaction is a measure of how happy workers are with their job and working environment (Sageer et al, 2012).

Over the last decade, service management literature has acknowledged the impact of employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction on critical business outcomes. Employee satisfaction - customer satisfaction link has been widely studied and the results of past empirical researches have depicted positive relationship between them. Many researchers reviewed the relationship between financial success and either of customer and employee variables and found a positive relationship (Bhaskar and Khera, 2013). So the lack of proper employee satisfaction has an impact on employee productivity, consumer satisfaction and finally organizational performance. However, enough literatures of improving the hospitality management through employee satisfaction are not widely available since the issue is a recent phenomenon. Similarly, this sort of comprehensive

study in Bangladesh is yet to be unearthed. The present study aims to portrait the economics of improving the fast emerging hospitality industry through employee satisfaction, by using the primary level data. Such type of research is inadequate in tourism literature of Bangladesh. Expectantly, the study wishes to fill this gap.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The hospitality and tourism industry (H & T industry) implicitly understand that their customers and clients are not their number one priority rather their employees have to be. For H & T industry the customer's experience is almost entirely dependent on how a particular hotel's workforce is engaged in service. Hotels should understand that their employees drive customer satisfaction and without engaged and motivated employees, their customers will never achieve the optimum customer experience. Quality employees are an organization's foundation, and it is critical for employers to retain their valuable employees, though attracting and retaining a skilled workforce can be challenging (Branham, 2005). Employees, without satisfaction, cannot provide good service to the customers. Under this circumstance, the objectives of this study, therefore, are to investigate the following:

1. Identify the factors that make the employees satisfied and motivated.
2. Identify the factors that create dissatisfaction or demotivation among employees.
3. How business firms of this sector can improve their hospitality by improving the level of employee satisfaction that eventually play an important role for the betterment of the tourism industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Researchers have argued that service quality is influenced by job satisfaction of employees (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996). Yoon and Suh (2003) showed that satisfied employees are more likely to work harder and provide better services via organizational citizenship behaviors. The argument that employee satisfaction improves service quality is grounded on the theory of equity in social exchanges (Organ, 1977). In the context of social exchange theory, when an employer offers favorable working conditions that make its employees satisfied, the latter will in return tend to be committed to making an extra effort to the organization as a means of reciprocity for their employer, leading to a higher level of service quality (Wayne et al., 1997, Flynn, 2005).

The importance of job satisfaction among the employees of an organization is vital for success of that organization. As Troy (2002) stated that, "Job satisfaction is a key driver to corporate success. With an unhappy work force you have nothing and you will never be great". Again Chahal et al (2013) acknowledged that a productive employee is a satisfied employee and productive employees create successful business. Job satisfaction is an affective or emotional response towards various facets of one's job (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004). Judge et al (2001) stated that, "some researchers used to believe that the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance was a myth. But a review at 300 studies suggested that the correlation is pretty strong". Organizations with more satisfied employee tend to be more effective than organizations with fewer satisfied workers (Robbins and Judge, 2009). Researchers have been trying to identify actually what makes an employee satisfied towards his/her job. There is eventually no clear cut answer in this regard because sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction vary from person to person (Hellriegel et al, 1998). Money is not said to be the solely effective way to motivate an individual. Apart from monetary reward, employees need a reasonable amount of social interaction on the job (Hertzberg review, 2008). Fajana described job satisfaction as the general attitude of the employees toward the job and it has five components: monetary benefit, attitude towards work group, general working conditions, attitude towards the organization and attitude towards supervision and finally it is connected with the employee mindset regarding the work itself (Fajana, 2002).

Empirical findings showed that service quality has considered as an antecedent of customer satisfaction (Babakus et al., 2004). The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction can be accounted for by the attitude theory proposed by Lazarus (1991) and Bagozzi (1992). Research in consumer psychology has shown that exposing customers to happy employees results in customers having a positive attitudinal bias towards a product (Howard and Gengler, 2001). The direct relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction is established based on the theory of emotional contagion (Hatfield et al., 1994, Barsade, 2002). And here comes the crucial fact of job satisfaction in hospitality industry. In fact, employee job satisfaction in hospitality industry is directly linked with customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction has a long-term financial impact on the business (Nagar and Rajan, 2005). Highly satisfied customers of a firm are likely to purchase more frequently, in greater volume and buy other goods and

services offered by the same service provider (Anderson et al., 1994, Gronholdt et al., 2000). Research in accounting has also shown that customer satisfaction is an intangible asset and a leading indicator of business unit revenues (Ittner and Larcker, 1998). Solnet (2007) identified that employee attitudes and their subsequent behavior has significant correlation with customer satisfaction. In the hospitality industry, job satisfaction is very important because it is the best way to ensure quality of customer service and eventually success in the business.

METHODOLOGY

Convenient sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. In our study a convenient sampling technique has been used to collect primary data due to the financial constraint. A structured and self-administered questionnaire was made and used to collect data. The survey was conducted among the employees of several hotels (including five star, four star and three star) at Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. The survey was conducted in the month of May 2015. Fifty one employees were interviewed and they were selected by convenient sampling. In the questionnaire there are few questions which represent the demographic data (like age, income, designation etc.), while some other questions are set to find out the employees' opinion (factors which motivate or demotivate them). Rest of the questions is set in such a manner so that a lie kart scale analysis can be done for this study. For statistical analysis the statistical package STATA and Excel have been used in this paper.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Features

In our survey, about 92 per cent of hotel employees are at the age group of eighteen to thirty years (Figure 1). All our respondents are male. Female participation in the hotel management is very poor and still limited to the front desk job. Majority of the employees are engaged in room services while others are engaged in restaurant service, laundry service, drinks and bar service, security and maintenance service, and front desk service. Besides, there are few supervisor and manager are in the charge to maintain the standard of hotel management as well as to improve hospitality management.

The salary structure in this industry is not impressive. The employees engaged in hotel management are barely paid. The highest percentage (approximately 58 percent) of the respondents earns within BDT 5,000 to 7,000 monthly. The monthly income of the second highest percentage (27 percent) of the respondents is less than

BDT 5,000. Only 12.5 percent respondents' (who are mainly in supervising position) monthly income is within BDT 7,000 to 15,000 and unfortunately just one respondent (who is a manager) earns a monthly income of BDT 15,000 to 20,000 (Figure 2). So with this low pay scale, the employees cannot lead a standard life according to the current market expenditure level.

Determinants of Employee Satisfaction

The study discusses the determinants of the satisfaction level of the employees engaged in hotel management and these are- **(a) Financial Benefits** are most important for motivating employees. Beside of regular salary provisions of other financial benefits are little in practice in the tourism industry of Bangladesh albeit employees do get festive bonus. Only 22 percent get performance bonus and 18 percent earn overtime fees along with the festive bonus (Figure 3). There is no existence of other financial benefits like incentive bonus, profit bonus, transportation facility, provident fund, gratuity, any scheme/insurance policy for life/health care etc. **(b) Leave Policy;** more than 60 percent employees are dissatisfied with the leave policy of their respective organization whereas 31 percent are highly dissatisfied. On the other hand, only 8.33 percent have expressed their satisfaction towards the leave policy of their respective organization (Table 1). **(c) Relationship with the manager/supervisor;** from Table 2 it is clearly observed that almost half of the respondents (approximately 49 percent) are dissatisfied with their relationship to the management. Approximately 37 percent feel they have good relationship with the management. Only 4 percent expressed about their highly satisfactory relationship with their management while 10 percent employees have mentioned about their poor relationship with management. **(d) Food** (Table 3) around 43 percent has expressed high dissatisfaction with their daily food at workplace and 14.29 percent were dissatisfied. Meanwhile about 35 percent were satisfied to the food given to them and only 8.16 percent were highly satisfied. The inner fact is that the employees are not properly feed. **(e) Working Environment and Shift** (Figure 4) explains that almost all the respondents are happy with their respective working environment. About two third of the employees have claimed their environment is good to work while 30 percent mentioned excellent. Only 4 percent were not satisfied with their working environment. Table 4 shows shift wise data regarding working environment. In general employees have two regular shifts of duty i.e. morning and night shift. In recent years, few hotels are making endeavor to improve their hospitality management and to reduce the workload of their employees by segregating the work schedule in three shifts with an

addition of evening shift. **(f) English learning program;** speak in English nowadays is essential for the employees engaged in hotel management to provide better service to the foreigners. Still most of the hotels' management does not have any English training program to improve their employee's communication skills. About 71 percent strongly claimed they do not receive any English learning program while only 4 percent strongly agreed for such type of facility (Table 5). **(g) Working days and working hours in a week;** On an average the employees work 6 days in a week with the lowest 5 days and highest 7 days. Similarly in a day their average working hour is 7.3 with the minimum 6 hours and maximum 8 hours (Table 6). **(h) Working Experience and Job Type** Table 7 presents data on types of job and data on working experience jointly. Most of the respondents (46 out of 51) were permanent employee and only 4 of them were part timer. The average years of experience for permanent employees is almost 6 years while that is for part time employees is just one and half years.

Factors to be Motivated

According to our survey estimation, several motivating factors have been identified for employee's satisfaction in hospitality management (Figure 5). **(a) Promotion in Regular Interval** works as aspiration for employees. 98 percent respondents have agreed that promotion is the first factor which stimulates them for doing hard work for the organization. **(b) Increase in Salary** is always a matter of sufficient incentive to employees to stay productive. So, 94 percent respondents have consent on that. **(c) Other Financial Facilities** like incentive bonus, festive bonus, performance/profit bonus, life insurance scheme, provident fund/gratuity etc becomes the third factor with 76 percent response. **(d) Overtime Fees** is one kind of incentive payment for carrying extra workload. Thus it is also an important factor of inspiration and 72 percent have voted for it. **(e) Leave Policy** is another important matter for the employees. If the employees have suitable and convenient leave policy for serving their personal things, they will be more motivated to the employer and thus 68 percent employees addressed that the policy of leave is a factor of their motivation towards work. **(f) Flexible Working Hour** is necessary for health or family emergency. Hence it is one of the important factors to be motivated according to 54 percent respondents. **(g) Working Environment** is an indispensable factor for the employees. Around 20 percent employees engaged in hotel management think it is a factor of motivation.

Factors to be Demotivated

The study also has tried to figure out the factors for which the employees become demoralized to their job

(Figure 6). (a) **Insufficient Leave** creates discomfort both in workplace and family. In our survey almost 94 percent respondents were disheartened due to the dissatisfying policy of leave. (b) **Lack of Promotion** is one of the leading factors of demotivation and approximately 92 percent respondents have the similar consent. (c) **Lack of Proper Evaluation from the Management** means the employees are not properly appraised by the managerial body. Even they do not get anything like incentive bonus, profit bonus or performance bonus etc. About 51 percent think that managers' unreceptive behaviour towards the employee demotivates them the most. (d) **Inadequate Financial Support** means apart from the salary the employees do not get any financial support from the management even if in an emergency situation occurs. According to our survey 49 percent voted this as a demoralizing factor. (e) **Lack of Entertainment** means the employees engaged in hotel management do not have that much place of entertainment. The management also does not provide or arrange any event for the amusement of their employees. About 65 percent respondents have addressed lack of entertainment is a demotivating factor to work. (f) **Repetition in Work** means the work pattern in a hotel is kind of monotonous. So the employees do their same routine works daily. There is nothing new, challenging or adventurous work for them. Almost 45 percent said that they demotivated because of this monotonicity in their job.

Employee Satisfaction and the Benefit of the Hotel Industry

The measurement of employee satisfaction has recently become the main aspect of human resource management. Companies have to make sure that employee satisfaction is high among the workers, which is a precondition for increasing productivity, responsiveness, and quality and customer service (Sageer et al, 2012). Employee satisfaction represents a component of the success of each company and more satisfied workers are less likely to leave their employer (Diaz- Serrano et al, 2005; Gaziougou et al, 2002).

On the basis of our collected data Table 8 represents the respondents' opinion regarding the relation between employee satisfaction and the benefit of the hotel industry. About 29 percent respondents have agreed while 69 percent have strongly agreed that satisfied employee is a blessing for the industry. Meanwhile only 2 percent respondents have disagreed with the view. According to the respondents, if the employees are happy or satisfied to the employer they will try their level best to provide all types of services properly to the customers in order to make them satisfied. It is well known that satisfied customers bring a good luck to the organization. In this way content employees can satisfy

the customer's desire and at the end become the profit generator for the hotels.

Proposed Policy to Improve the Satisfaction Level of the Employee

The study has found out a hard fact regarding how the employees engaged in hotel management are in Cox's Bazar. Through the total analysis of the data collected astoundingly it has been observed that the employees are not satisfied for anything related to their job and to some extent they lead a deprived life balancing their professional and personal life. Moreover, the study asked the employees about their career prospect in the industry and has figured out that just 22 and half percent answered positively that means almost 78 percent respondents do not find any future in their career in this industry (Figure 7). Figure 7 reflects that although 72 percent claimed that their job is secured, the rate of turnover is very high (58 percent) as there is no hope for the development of the career.

Under these circumstances, when the employees are deprived of everything that influences their satisfaction level, obviously they cannot provide a quality service to the customers. As a result the quality of the total hospitality management side will go down which will finally hampers the tourism sector in future. So, there is no other option without improving the employee satisfaction in this case. The Following steps can be taken for this purpose.

- I. **Improvement of the Monthly Salary:** There should be a structured monthly salary scale and the employees should be paid a smart amount so that they can maintain their family with a minimum living standard.
- II. **Providing Other Financial Facilities:** Like other industries the employees engaged in hotel management in Cox's Bazar also should be provided the festive bonus, performance/profit/incentive bonus, overtime fees, provident fund, gratuity etc.
- III. **Opportunity for Promotion and Career Development:** The organization should give the opportunity to the employees to show their efficiency, skill, creativity etc. in their work and on the basis of these the employees should be promoted timely.
- IV. **Proper Quality Food:** Food is considered as the first basic need for human being. Hence quality food should be given properly for the daily portion of the employees.
- V. **Structured Leave Policy:** Like other industries, a structured leave policy should be implemented in the hotel management in this area also.
- VI. **Keeping a Good Relation between the Employees and the Management:** If there is a

good relation within the employer and the employee, then it's possible for the employees to bargain for their salary and other financial facilities or shift of working with the managerial body and thus they become happy, satisfied and productive.

VII. Initiatives to Heighten Employee Satisfaction:

The employer can take some initiatives to make the employees satisfied like flexible working hours, emergency leave system or emergency financial support, organize social gathering etc.

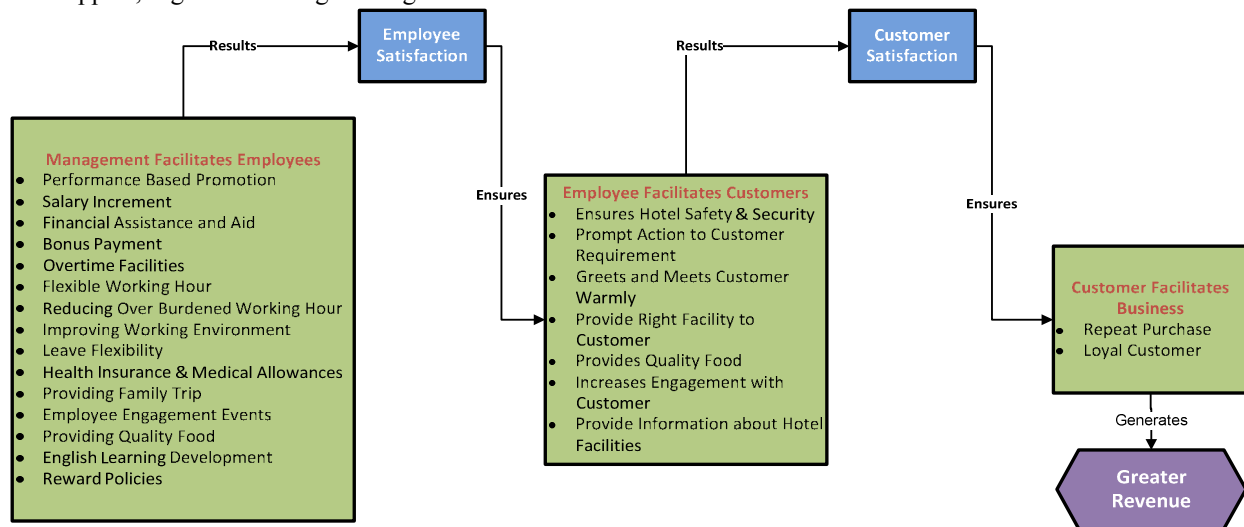


Figure 8: Determinants of Employee Satisfaction and Its Impact on the Industry

LIMITATION

It is apparent that the level of employee satisfaction acts differently for differently ranked employee. This paper could not distinguish the employees according to their qualification ranking. The descriptive statistics used in this paper generated by interviewing 51 employees of several hotels at Cox's Bazar only. Several tourist sites with hospitality establishment have ignored in this study. Had there been a moderately large sample size, the results would be more authentic

CONCLUSION

Human resource in tourism is one of the most important segments of the quality of the services provided. If the industry of hotel management wants to function optimally and gain profit, it should have educated, motivated, and therefore satisfied staff, because the success of the company lies in their human resources (Kovačević et al, 2012). The study have found out that employee satisfaction has a positive influence on service quality and both of them have a positive influence on customer satisfaction. Finally customer satisfaction ensures firm profitability. If the employees involved in hotel management in Cox's Bazar are made satisfied, the hospitality side of the hotel management will be improved, as a result the customers will be

Finally based on the above discussion the study has formed a model (figure 8). The model describes the determinants of employee satisfaction, what the employers have to do for their employees, the relationship between employee satisfaction and the customer satisfaction and at the end how this relation generates revenue for the industry

satisfied which will be profitable for the industry. Finally through this process the tourism industry of Bangladesh will also be developed and one day it will be one of the preferred destinations for tourists.

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APPENDIX

Tables & Figures

Table 1: Data on Leave Policy		
	Frequency	Percent
Highly Dissatisfied	15	31.25
Dissatisfied	29	60.42
Satisfied	4	8.33

Table 3: Data on Satisfaction with Daily Food Provided to the Employees		
	Frequency	Percent
Highly Dissatisfied	21	42.86
Dissatisfied	7	14.29
Satisfied	17	34.69
Highly Satisfied	4	8.16

Table 5: Satisfaction Level on English Learning Program		
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	35	71.43
Disagree	9	18.37
Agree	3	6.12
Strongly Agree	2	4.08

Table 2: Data on Relationship with the Management		
	Frequency	Percent
Highly Dissatisfied	5	10.2
Dissatisfied	24	48.98
Satisfied	18	36.73
Highly Satisfied	2	4.08

Table 4: Data on Shift of Work and the Working Environment			
Working Environment	Percentage		
	Excellent	Good	Bad
Morning Shift	27.78	66.67	5.56
Evening Shift	22.22	77.78	-
Night Shift	50	50	-

Table 6: Data on Working Schedule in a Week				
Working Schedule	Average Hour	Std. Dev.	Minimum Hour	Maximum Hour
In Days	6	0.21	5	7
In hours	7.3	0.54	6	8

Table 7: Data on Type of Job and Job Experience					
Job Nature	Frequency	Average years of experience	Std. Dev	Minimum years of experience	Maximum years of experience
Permanent	46	5.85	4.25	1.5	10
Part-time	4	1.5	0	1.5	1.5

Table 8: Data on the Relation between Employee Satisfaction and the Benefit of the Hotel Business		
	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	1	2.04
Agree	14	28.57
Strongly Agree	34	69.39

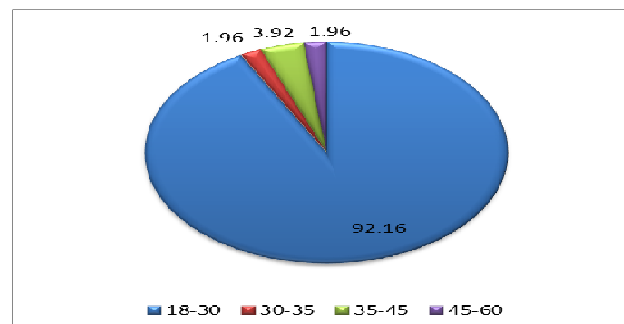


Figure 1: Data on Age of the Respondents

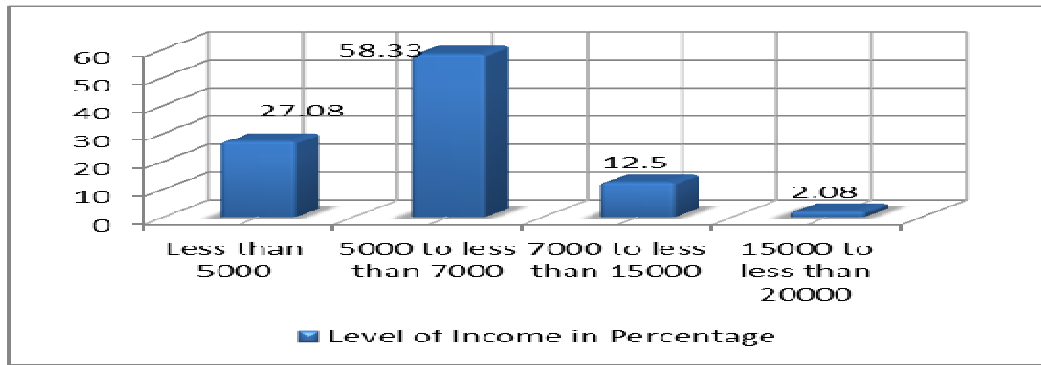


Figure 2: Data on Monthly Income of the Respondents

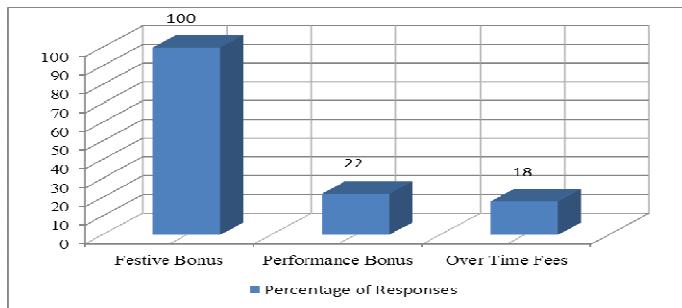


Figure 3: Data on Financial Benefits

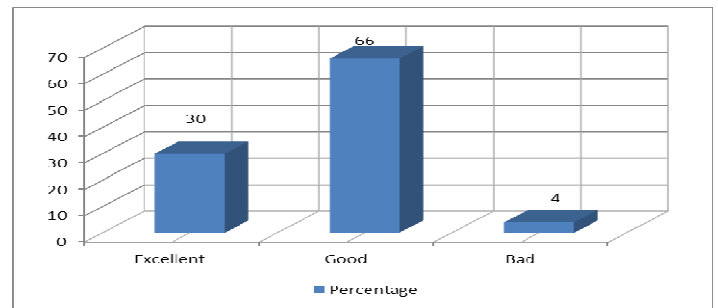


Figure 4: Data on Working Environment

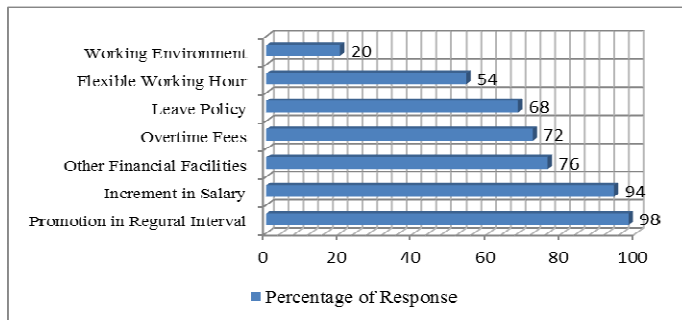


Figure 5: Data on Motivational Factors

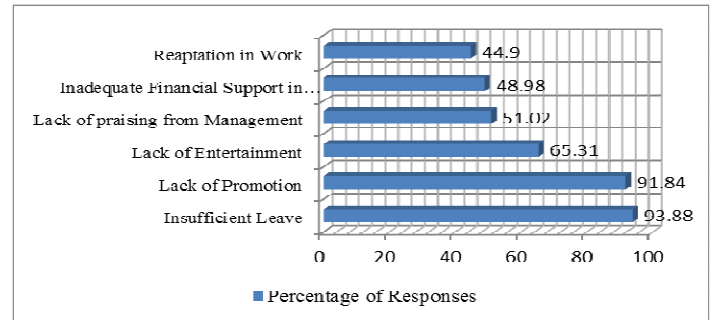


Figure 6: Data on Demotivating Factors

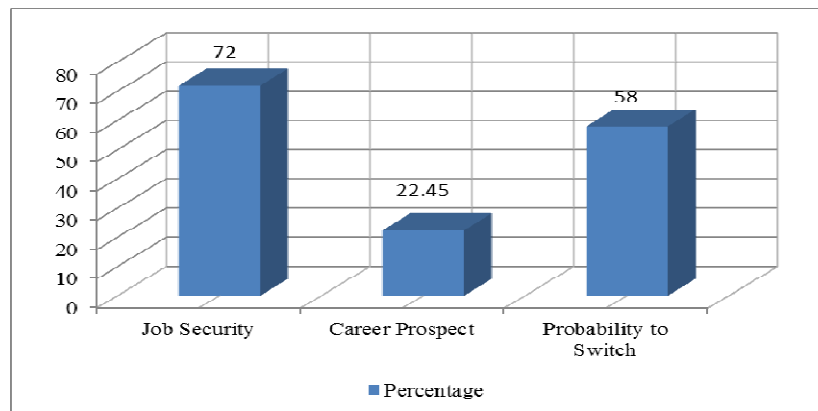


Figure 7: Data on Job Security, Career Prospect and Probability to Switch

Source of all tables and figures: research by authors