



Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation: Which drives long-term employee productivity in hotels?

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to examine the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on long-term employee productivity in the luxury hospitality industry, with particular focus on organizational trust, psychological safety, and employee engagement as key determinants of workforce stability.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The study adopts a conceptual and analytical approach by integrating established theoretical frameworks, including Self-Determination Theory, Kahn's Engagement Model, and Job Demands-Resources Model. These models are used to evaluate how different motivational drivers shape employee engagement, performance, and retention in high-pressure hotel environments.

Findings – The findings indicate that intrinsic motivation—such as autonomy, job satisfaction, and career development—has a stronger and more sustainable impact on long-term employee engagement and productivity. In contrast, extrinsic motivation, including salary, incentives, and promotions, tends to produce short-term performance improvements. The study also highlights the critical role of leadership, organizational trust, and open communication in fostering psychological safety, which enhances employee commitment and encourages service innovation. Cultural and organizational contexts are found to further influence motivational dynamics.

Originality/Value – This study contributes to hospitality management literature by offering a comprehensive synthesis of motivation theories within the luxury hotel context. It provides practical recommendations for balancing financial and non-financial rewards, supporting human resource strategies aimed at reducing turnover, enhancing service quality, and strengthening long-term organizational performance.

Keywords: Organizational trust, Employee motivation, Psychological safety, Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, Luxury hotels

Introduction

Employee motivation is an important factor affecting job performance in organizations. Several studies in the past recognized this and proposed several motivational theories – Maslow's theory of needs (1943), Herzberg's Two factor theory (1959), McClelland's Theory of Needs (1961), Vroom's Expectancy theory (1964), etc. These theories form the basis of understanding what motivates employees to work at their best (Maslow, 1943; Herzberg et al., 1959; McClelland, 1961; Vroom, 1964).

In the context of the hospitality industry, luxury hotels in particular, motivation become one of the key factors that drive employee performance (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2010). Employees in luxury hotels are expected to maintain high service standards, ensure guests are delighted with the services provided and maintain hotel's brand value. This creates a high-pressure environment in which staying motivated to deliver good

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quality services becomes extremely critical. Motivated employees perform better and stay with the organization for long-term. On the contrary, demotivated employees demonstrate poor performance and plan to leave the job at the earliest opportunity (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Factors affecting employee motivation such as salary, incentives, amount of work, personal financial commitments, team work, facilities provided and the brand value of the hotel (Kusluvan et al., 2010). These factors play a significant role in determining an employee's short and long-term performance and retention (Deci & Ryan, 1985). These factors are divided into two categories – Intrinsic and Extrinsic and Intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation occurs when employees feel that performing a task will give them internal satisfaction or personal fulfilment. For example, a chef may be motivated to experiment with a recipe believing that it will lead to culinary innovation. On the other hand, external motivation occurs when employees feel that performing a task will lead to rewards such as salary hike, bonuses, promotion, or recognition (Vroom, 1964). For example, a restaurant manager may be willing to put in extra hours with the hopes of impressing his superiors and securing a promotion.

While there are studies focusing on employee motivation in organizations in general, few have focused on the luxury hotel segment. For instance, de Souza Meira et al. (2023) conducted a study to compare two hotels of Brazil and England. The results indicated that hotel managers in Brazil focus on employee training whereas hotel managers in England stress on job security. Similarly, Cwibi and Mxunyelwa (2024) conducted a study in the hotels of Cape Town to analyze the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on employee motivation. The findings showed that employee morale significantly decreases with an increase in adverse financial impacts.

In India, it is estimated that the rapid growth and expansion of luxury hotel segment will reach approximately USD 4.83 billion by 2030 (Mordor Intelligence, n.d.). This growth combined with the country's diverse cultural landscape makes it important to design customized strategies to enhance employee engagement and ensure high standards of service are maintained in luxury hotel segment (WTTC, 2022).

The performance of an organization is significantly impacted by employee motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, due of its erratic nature, long-term performance frequently varies. In luxury hotels where employees are expected to maintain high performance standards, uphold brand value, and deliver exceptional guest experiences, motivation is crucial (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2010). Nonetheless, the demanding work environment in hotels coupled with extended hours, intense pressure, less pay and emotional strain can lead to burnout, disengagement, and decreased performance (Kusluvan et al., 2010).). Therefore, it is critical to comprehend the elements that sustain employee motivation at work to ensure excellent service standards and operational efficiency.

Previous research on employee motivation in organizations generally focused on motivational factors with limited emphasis on the impacts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors on employee performance specific to the luxury hotel segment. Despite theories such as Maslow's Theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory and Herzberg's Two factor theory offer valuable insights on motivation, there still exists a gap in understanding which type of motivation – intrinsic or extrinsic – has a larger impact on employee productivity (Maslow, 1943; Herzberg et al., 1959; Vroom, 1964).

This study therefore aims to bridge this gap by examining the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation shaping long-term employee performance in the luxury hotel segment. The findings will aid the senior management of hotels to design customized motivation strategies to improve employee engagement, reduce attrition rate and ensure consistent high-quality service. Considering the rapid growth of the hospitality sector in India (WTTC, 2022), these insights are critical for developing workforce stability and maintaining a competitive advantage.

The core objective of this study is to determine whether intrinsic or extrinsic motivation has a stronger impact on long-term employee performance in luxury hotels. Considering the demanding work environment in luxury hotels, it is essential to identify the key drivers of employee motivation which can aid in designing strategies for improving service quality, reduce attrition rate, and enhance overall operational efficiency.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are firstly, to evaluate the effect of intrinsic motivation on employee performance. Assessing the ways in which intrinsic factors such as personal satisfaction, passion for service,

and job autonomy impact employee performance and retention is critical for designing employee motivational strategies.

Secondly, to examine the effect of extrinsic motivations on employee performance in luxury hotels. This objective investigates the role of extrinsic motivational factors such as salary, recognition, bonuses, and promotion affect employee performance and retention. This will aid in determining whether extrinsic motivational factors can drive long-term performance or limit to provide short-term boost only.

Thirdly, to compare the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation across core and administrative hotel departments. Core departments directly deal with guest service and include Housekeeping, Front Office, Food & Beverage Service and Culinary. Administrative departments support the core departments such as Human Resources, Finance, Sales & Marketing, Purchases and Engineering. Employees in core and administrative departments may react differently to motivational strategies. Therefore, this objective assesses how motivation types differ across the two categories and which factors have more impact on these job roles.

Finally, to determine the optimal motivation strategy for sustaining long-term employee productivity in luxury hotels. Considering the results from these objectives, the study aims to propose a framework customized for luxury hotels. Further, the insights will aid in designing policies that can lead to improved employee engagement and deliver consistently high performance.

The study offers practical insights for hotels, policy makers and other hospitality businesses by providing a deep analysis of how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations drive long-term employee performance and retention. By recognizing the key elements that drive sustained motivation, hotels can implement stronger and more effective organizational policies. These policies aid in enhancing engagement strategies and workplace retention programs which can reduce employee turnover and improve service quality. Additionally, these insights can be used by policy makers for designing industry-wide regulations and practices that endorse employee well-being and satisfaction in luxury hotels.

Hotels can improve employee engagement and retention by clearly understanding motivational factors and in process, attract and retain high performing employees. Developing reward systems and career development programs can also help senior management reward employees for long-term commitments and create a culture encouraging professional growth. Additionally, a motivated workforce engaged in providing quality guest experience and upholding the hotel's brand value directly translates into higher guest satisfaction.

Besides the industry application, the study adds to hospitality research by investigating the long-term impacts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. While past studies have examined employee motivation in general, this study focuses on different types of motivation and their influence on consistent employee performance in luxury hotels. In doing so, it also fills a gap in academic literature and offers valuable insights for future academic and industry discussions.

The study focuses on three luxury hotels in Bangalore specifically, Taj Vivanta, ITC Gardenia and JW Marriott. It examines employee motivation and how it affects long-term productivity. To find disparities in motivational factors the study explores two important employee groups: administrative departments (Human resources, Finance, Sales & Marketing, Engineering and Purchases) and core departments (Housekeeping, Front Office, Kitchen, and Service). The study employs a quantitative survey-based methodology to collect data from employees across these departments to ascertain whether intrinsic or extrinsic motivation has a greater impact on their performance. By concentrating on Bangalore's luxury hotel market the study provides industry-specific insights into motivational techniques appropriate for upscale hospitality facilities.

Although the study provides insightful results some limitations must be noted. Response bias may be introduced into employee self-reported data because participants may give answers that are more socially acceptable than accurately reflect their motivations. Furthermore, the study is restricted to three of Bangalore's luxury hotels which might limit the findings applicability to other areas or sectors of the hospitality sector. Finally, the results may not be broadly applicable if external factors such as labour laws, macroeconomic trends, and economic conditions affect employee motivation. Notwithstanding these drawbacks the study offers valuable information that can help management of luxury hotels create policies that can enhance employee performance and retention.

Literature Review

Employee motivation plays an important role in influencing employee performance and retention in the hospitality sector. In luxury hotels, where guests have high expectations and expect personalized services, understanding the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation becomes critical for successful employee engagement. Earlier studies have mentioned that intrinsic motivation such as autonomy at job, self-growth, and job satisfaction lead to sustained commitment. Similarly, extrinsic motivation such as incentives and promotions result in short-term performances. This review of literature evaluates the theories and studies particularly related to organizational trust, psychological safety, and employee engagement in luxury hotels.

This literature review synthesizes major theories and studies on trust in organizational psychological safety, and employee engagement in luxury hotels. Firstly, it examines trust in hospitality work in terms of shared concepts such as the Trust Model by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964). Secondly, it examines psychological safety with emphasis on how it influences workers' happiness and being able to innovate with service in stressful hotel settings (Edmondson, 1999). Finally, the review examines employee engagement with particular emphasis on theoretical models such as Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan 1985) and Kahn's Engagement Model (1990). In conclusion, the review makes links between trust psychological safety, and engagement and creates a platform to comprehend how inner and outer motivation influences employees in luxury hotels.

With these concepts combined, this review attempts to find research gaps that exist and suggest a basis for empirical study that will pave the way toward more effective motivational strategies in high-end hospitality environments.

Organizational Trust in the Hospitality Industry

Organizational trust plays a crucial role in service-oriented industries such as hospitality, affecting employee satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Whitener et al., 1998). In luxury hotels, where delivering exceptional service is critical, employees depend on trust in their leaders to stay motivated and engaged. Studies show that cultivating a culture of trust boosts job satisfaction and retention, which in turn enhances overall service quality (Alkhatari et al., 2018).

The trust model developed by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), which focuses on ability, benevolence, and integrity, is commonly used in the hospitality sector to evaluate leadership effectiveness. Trust in leadership has a positive effect on employee satisfaction and the willingness to go above and beyond, ultimately leading to better job performance (Kong et al., 2020). Additionally, effective communication and transparency help to reinforce trust, further increasing engagement and commitment to the job (Kim et al., 2022).

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) suggests that if support is offered by organizations, workers will reciprocate with loyalty and commitment. Trust here serves as a mediator, underlining the importance of perceived organizational support in reducing turnover (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). It has been discovered in a recent study that employee satisfaction at luxury hotels significantly enhances employee engagement and performance (Huang et al., 2023).

The trust brought about by leadership is essential in retaining employees, with transformational leadership associated with higher levels of trust and turnover (Krishna et al., 2022). Ethical decision-making and open communication lead to effective workplace relationships, which in turn enhance morale and service quality (Lee & Madera, 2023). Through an emphasis on trust-building programs, luxury hotels can increase employee commitment, sustain motivation, and achieve long-term success.

Psychological Safety in High-Pressure Hospitality Environments

Psychological safety is the sense that encourages individuals to speak openly without any fear of the consequences. Such sentiments are essential in high-stress working environments (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety plays a key role in handling conflicts and in enhancing communication and creativity in luxury hotels, where employees are required to deal with challenging guests and uphold high brand standards (Newman et al., 2017). Such a culture of continuous learning and adaptability instils a sense of security, make

them comfortable asking for help and encourages them to take responsibility and be accountable for its outcome (Baum et al., 2020).

Edmondson (1999) emphasized the significance of psychological safety in developing team learning, which is particularly significant in the hospitality sector where frontline employees have to make instant decisions. A study on luxury hotels identified that encouraging open communication and adopting error tolerance policies resulted in a significant improvement in guest satisfaction (Guchait et al., 2015). When workers feel empowered to take calculated risks, they are likely to be involved in innovative problem-solving, which eventually enhances the quality of services (Goh & Okumus, 2023). Moreover, companies that encourage open communication are likely to experience greater job satisfaction, lower turnover, and increased brand loyalty (Xanthopoulou et al., 2021).

Psychological safety is predisposed by organizational hierarchies and cross-cultural norms. Staff in high power distance cultures like most Asian hospitality brands might not report service failure due to the fear of its consequences (Miao et al., 2019). In contrast, Western hospitality organizations with collaborative leadership tend to create a stronger sense of psychological safety so that the employees feel comfortable raising their voices and making suggestions for service improvements (Baum et al., 2020). Leadership style is also crucial—transformational and servant leadership have been found to increase trust and communication, which results in a safer workplace (Lee et al., 2021).

Luxury hotels that prioritize psychological safety through training, open communication, and worker participation in decision-making are more likely to have greater employee morale, greater service innovation, and better guest satisfaction. Future research needs to examine how these practices can be applied across various cultural and organizational contexts to maintain high-performance service cultures.

Employee Engagement in the Hospitality Sector

Employee engagement is one of the major drivers of success for luxury hotels, which in turn influences guest satisfaction, quality of service, and reputation. Employees who are engaged experience more job satisfaction, commitment, and performance, thus enhancing overall organizational performance. There are various theories explaining the determinants of engagement, including Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985), Kahn's Engagement Model (1990), and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

SDT proposes that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are the drivers of intrinsic motivation. Hotel staff who are in control of work, receive consistent training, and are related to others demonstrate higher engagement (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Kahn's model emphasizes that motivation is greatest when employees feel psychological meaningfulness at work, feel safe to be themselves, and are present in their minds. Emotional engagement with visitors and an optimistic work climate enhances involvement (Saks, 2006; Baum et al., 2020).

The JD-R model is what describes that high job demands, including excessive hours and customer expectations, are to be traded off with sufficient resources such as training and encouraging leadership to avoid burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Hotels with investments in well-being programs and career growth see increased engagement and decreased turnover (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009).

In short, staff engagement in luxury hotels relies on building intrinsic motivation, psychological safety, and matching job demands with support systems. Organizations that value these elements reap the rewards of engaged teams and outstanding guest experiences.

Linking Trust, Psychological Safety, and Engagement in Hospitality

Trust, psychological safety, and commitment are interrelated factors that shape employee satisfaction and enhance service quality in the hospitality industry. When workers trust their leaders, it creates a feeling of security and encouragement, motivating them to be committed to their job which ultimately leads to higher performance. Trust makes workers feel psychologically safe enough to raise concerns and offer suggestions without fear of negative repercussions (Tsui et al., 1997). Employee-centric policies at luxury hotels, such as

those in Marriott, illustrate how trust-based leadership can enhance engagement and guest satisfaction (Guchait et al., 2015).

Psychological safety is key to developing service innovation since it encourages employees to be proactive and improve service quality. Research shows that hotels that create psychologically safe workplaces are likely to facilitate proactive problem-solving and innovation (Lashley, 2018). The Ritz-Carlton's "Employee Empowerment" policy showcases this practice through empowering staff to make autonomous service decisions, which lead to memorable guest experiences.

Organizational culture also supports trust and involvement. A collaborative culture that is inclusive and encourages ongoing learning contributes to job satisfaction and turnover decrease (Schein, 2010). Luxury hotels with open communication and career development create a work environment where employees are valued and motivated (Baum, 2020). Creating trust and psychological safety in hospitality organizations is important to sustaining high-performing staff and delivering world-class service.

Literature Gaps in Hospitality-Specific Research

Although a great deal of research has been done on motivation, engagement, and trust within organizations, there are many gaps which exist, especially in the hospitality sector. Filling these gaps is essential to come up with a greater understanding of what motivates employees in luxury hotels.

One major gap is the lack of integration of trust, psychological safety, and engagement in hospitality studies. Most existing research tends to examine these concepts in isolation, but recent findings indicate that they are closely linked. Psychological safety builds trust, which subsequently boosts engagement, resulting in higher job satisfaction and performance (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Nevertheless, there has been limited exploration of how these factors interact in luxury hotel settings, where the pressures of high expectations from guests necessitate a more sophisticated approach to employee motivation and well-being.

Another area that needs further study is how various departments in hotels differently perceive motivation. Most studies use a broad-based approach that generalizes its findings to the entire hospitality team without considering that workers in core operating functions such as housekeeping, front office, culinary, and service may have different motivational concerns than workers who are engaged in administrative functions such as human resources, finance, and marketing. For example, frontline staff deal directly with visitors, which involves a lot of emotional labour. On the contrary, administrative staff are driven by goal-setting and strategic decision-making. It is essential to identify these differences to design specific motivation strategies that can enhance performance in each department (Baum et al., 2020).

There is a notable gap in research regarding cultural differences in the engagement of the hospitality workforce. Since luxury hotels function in various global markets, factors such as power distance, collectivism versus individualism, and leadership expectations may significantly influence employee motivation (Hofstede, 1980). Research shows that employees from high power distance cultures tend to be reluctant to speak up and give their feedback, and this can affect their psychological safety and overall job engagement (Miao et al., 2019). Still, little has been explored in the way cultural settings affect trust behaviours and motivation in luxury hotels, thus blocking the formulation of management practices that are culturally sensitive.

Closing these gaps in the literature will provide a better understanding of what drives employees in luxury hotels. Future research should explore the interplay between trust, psychological safety, and engagement, explore motivational differences by hotel department, and incorporate cultural dimensions to create more effective leadership and HR practices in the hospitality sector.

Methodology

This study used a quantitative survey design to examine the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in long-term employee performance in luxury hotels. A cross-sectional survey was used in three five-star hotels in Bangalore, surveying employees from various departments. A structured questionnaire, based on validated scales (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005), was utilized to assess motivation factors and productivity levels.

To analyze the cross-links between motivation and productivity, statistical tools such as correlation analysis and multiple regression were used (Hair et al., 2019). For generalizability, employees were included from multiple positions, giving it more significance for the luxury hospitality sector (Kim et al., 2018).

The research considered staff members from the core operating and administrative departments of The Oberoi Bangalore, Sheraton Grand Bangalore, and Hyatt Centric. These hotels were chosen based on their outstanding reputation, good employee engagement strategies, and diversified operational frameworks, thus making them apt for analyzing motivation and productivity in the luxury hotel industry.

Participants were recruited from key departments including food and beverage service, kitchen, front office, housekeeping, IT, finance, human resources, sales and marketing, and procurement. Stratified random sampling was utilized to provide balanced representation across job roles. Sample size included 200 to 250 employees and 65 to 85 participants from each of the hotels to preserve statistical reliability.

Only those workers who had at least one year's experience in a luxury hotel were surveyed to ensure that they had familiarity with the industry. Through including both workers in operational as well as administrative roles, the study provided an inclusive perspective about employee motivation among luxury hospitality workers.

The study utilized a systematic survey to measure employee motivation and productivity in luxury hotels. It consisted of four categories: demographics (age, gender, department, experience), intrinsic motivation (autonomy, mastery, purpose), extrinsic motivation (remuneration, incentives, acknowledgment), and employee productivity and commitment (job satisfaction, commitment, long-term tenure). They were utilized from previous models to render them valid.

A 5-point Likert scale (Scale of 1 = Strongly Disagree to Scale of 5 = Strongly Agree) was used to measure employees' perceptions. Sample statements utilized were: "I find personal satisfaction in my daily work" (intrinsic motivation), "Bonuses and salary increases motivate my performance" (extrinsic motivation), and "I am committed to staying with this organization long-term" (engagement). The survey was optimized for maximum data gathering and analysis to deliver information on the most crucial motivational drivers of productivity in the luxury hospitality sector.

Questionnaires were sent in Google Forms as well as paper-based copies to reach all staff through HR units so that anyone could access it. This two-pronged approach enabled both groups with varied access to online services to use the survey efficiently. Anonymity was preserved rigorously to induce truthful feedback and no personally identifiable information was sought. The survey was administered for a six-week period to allow workers across different shifts and departments sufficient time to respond without disrupting the day-to-day activities. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants, explaining clearly the purpose of the study, confidentiality measures, and that participation was voluntary. The employees were assured that their responses would not influence their work status, and hence they were psychologically safe. By a systematic and moral data collection process, the research was able to attain good response rates and collected reliable information on the essential factors influencing employee motivation and productivity in the luxury hospitality settings.

Survey responses were thoroughly analyzed to validate employee motivation, engagement, and productivity trends in luxury hotels. Various statistical tests were applied to understand the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the performance of employees in depth.

Descriptive statistics were employed to report the demographic measures of the sample, i.e., age, gender, experience, and departmental split. This analysis offered a snapshot of participant diversity and aided in recognizing general patterns within the dataset. We calculated measures like mean, median, and standard deviation for motivation and engagement scores to evaluate variations in responses and establish baseline trends in employee perceptions.

Pearson's correlation test was used to investigate the interaction between various categories of motivation and staff productivity. The statistical analysis enabled both the direction and the strength of correlation to be analyzed, with this being useful to establish the essential factors influencing motivation in upscale hospitality environments. Research examined if workers who were intrinsically motivated, experiencing inner satisfaction in job performance, reported greater levels of productivity. It also investigated the effect of

extrinsic motivation, including remuneration, bonuses, and other external incentives, on staff performance. Additionally, the study quantified departmental variation to identify differences in motivation and productivity between administrative and operational departments. This research yielded important insights into whether intrinsic or extrinsic motivation had a greater influence on staff productivity and motivation.

Regression Analysis – Predictors of Employee Engagement

To further investigate the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on employee productivity, a multiple regression model was applied:

$$Productivity = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (Intrinsic\ Motivation) + \beta_2 (Extrinsic\ Motivation) + \epsilon$$

The above model established how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influenced overall productivity and engagement. Analyzing the beta coefficients, the research established what kind of motivation had a more predictive influence on productivity levels. The regression analysis also controlled for confounding variables, providing robust results. From this multi-perspective approach, the study was able to contribute meaningfully to the understanding of the most significant factors driving employee motivation and engagement in luxury hospitality environments.

Ethical Considerations – Confidentiality and Hotel Industry Compliance

Ethics were given a priority during the study to allow for research requirements and procedures. All participation was voluntary, offering employees an option to stop at any time without penalty. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents, outlining study purpose, confidentiality of their answers, and right to refuse or stop participating at any time they desired.

For maintaining data confidentiality, no personally identifying information, including employee names or hotel-specific identifiers, was gathered, or distributed. The survey information was kept secure and utilized solely for research purposes. Access to the data was restricted to ensure that anonymity was protected through all stages of analysis and reporting.

The study was further aligned with regulation in the hospitality industry, in addition to gaining official support of the HR functions of participating hotels—The Oberoi Bangalore, Sheraton Grand Bangalore, and Hyatt Centric. Through the process of obtaining approvals, studies ensured to align with corporate policy for ensuring employee participation. The study further conformed with hospitality labour practices and ethical best practices to preserve the rights of employees, maintain workplace confidentiality, and professional image during the conduct of research.

Findings and Discussion

This chapter introduces the main findings on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of luxury hotel staff, explained in descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, and ANOVA. The findings answer four major aims - Influence of intrinsic motivation on long-term productivity of employees, Influence of extrinsic motivation on performance and job retention, Comparison of motivation patterns between core (customer-facing) and administrative personnel, Best mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for engagement. Each section translates the data and its implications for employee retention, service quality, and operational efficiency into insights to improve motivation strategies in luxury hotels.

Demographic Summary of Respondents

Departmental breakdown (Table 1) reveals that Food & Beverage Service is the most prevalent department, constituting 19.23% of the sample. Being the guest-contact employees, incentive plans must address the issues of recognition, skill-building, and control over service to motivate them.

Supervisors form the largest job level category at 37.18%, an indication of the ambivalence of their execution and leadership function. Their motivation needs to straddle intrinsic drivers such as job satisfaction and extrinsic drivers such as promotion to guarantee high performance and team morale. More than a quarter, 26.92%, of the survey respondents have one year or less of experience and will require aggressive onboarding and retention efforts. Offering mentorship, career planning, and structured feedback can diminish early

turnover. With 44.23% of the subjects working full time, long-run participation strategies play an important role. But to have part-time and contractual employees means having incentives which are changing based on their short-run requirements to maintain overall worker motivation.

Table 1 Demographic Summary

Category	Most Common Response	Percentage of Most Common Response
Department	Food & Beverage Service	19.23
Job Level	Supervisor	37.18
Years of Experience	Less than 1 year	26.92
Employment Type	Full-time	44.23

Source: Author field work, 2025

Impact of Intrinsic Motivation on Long-Term Employee Productivity

Descriptive Analysis of Intrinsic Motivation Factors

The descriptive statistics (Table 2) of the intrinsic motivation drivers (Q5-Q12) show that luxury hotel employees tend to score "Commitment to service excellence" (Mean = 3.62), "Sense of belonging and workplace connection" (Mean = 3.37), and "Creativity and problem-solving at work" (Mean = 3.23) as the highest. These results depict that workers are taking much enjoyment and satisfaction out of their occupation, and such takes them toward long-term association. Yet "Passion and intrinsic enjoyment of work" has a low result (Mean = 2.38), so there might exist some workers having low freedom regarding decision-making affecting their motivation as well as association.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Intrinsic Motivation Factors

	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
count	156	156	156	156	156	156	156	156
mean	2.69	3.62	3.13	2.38	3.21	3.12	3.23	3.37
std	1.62	1.29	1.43	1.31	1.41	1.41	1.61	1.56

Q5. I find my work personally satisfying.

Q6. I take pride in providing high-quality service to guests.

Q7. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I do my job well.

Q8. I am passionate about my job and enjoy the work I do.

Q9. I have the freedom to make decisions in my job role.

Q10. I feel motivated by the opportunity to learn new skills.

Q11. My job allows me to be creative and solve problems independently.

Q12. I feel a strong sense of belonging and purpose in my workplace.

Source: Author field work, 2025

Correlation Between Intrinsic Motivation and Employee Productivity

The intrinsic motivation factor (Q5-Q12) and employee productivity (Q20-Q25) correlation analysis (Table 3) reveals a strong positive relationship. The greatest correlation is between "Learning and professional development" (r = 0.289), and the second greatest is between "Work achievement and personal growth" (r = 0.165). This indicates that employees who are internally motivated and self-satisfied in their work are more committed, involved, and ready to transcend their job specifications to improve service quality.

Regression Analysis: Predictive Strength of Intrinsic Motivation

Regression analysis confirms that intrinsic motivation significantly predicts employee productivity, with the following model:

$$Productivity = 2.607 + 0.121 \times (Intrinsic\ Motivation) + \epsilon$$

The intercept (2.607, p < 0.001) represents the level of productivity in the absence of intrinsic motivation. The regression coefficient (0.121, p = 0.114) implies that although intrinsic motivation has a positive impact on performance, its statistical significance is not present at traditional levels. This would mean that although

highly intrinsically motivated employees are more productive, other variables—extrinsic rewards, workplace environment, and managerial support—can also lead to long-term employee productivity in luxury hotels. To maximize the intrinsic motivation of employees, luxury hotels must pay attention to job autonomy in offering staff more independence in managing activities, and that enhances commitment and job satisfaction. As much as employees give much importance to pride in rendering excellent services, the management can take it on itself to use employee involvement schemes with an emphasis on their own satisfaction and fulfillment. Aside from these, other programs like formal training experiences that hone skills, mentoring, and planned opportunities for progress can equally contribute to enhancing motivation while confining turnover to provide a dedicated high-performing workforce.

Table 3. Correlation - Intrinsic Motivation & Productivity

Intrinsic Motivation Factor	r
I find my work personally satisfying.	0.064
I take pride in providing high-quality service to guests.	-0.217
I feel a sense of accomplishment when I do my job well.	-0.044
I am passionate about my job and enjoy the work I do.	-0.016
I have the freedom to make decisions in my job role.	-0.054
I feel motivated by the opportunity to learn new skills.	0.289
My job allows me to be creative and solve problems independently.	0.105
I feel a strong sense of belonging and purpose in my workplace.	0.165

Note: Correlations marked with ** are significant at $p < 0.05$.

Source: Author field work, 2025

Effect of Extrinsic Motivation on Long-Term Employee Productivity

Descriptive Analysis of Extrinsic Motivation Factors

The descriptive analysis (Table 4) of the extrinsic motivation factors (Q13-Q19) reveals that employees value salary, bonuses, and recognition very highly, and "Recognition from management and peers" (Mean = 3.28), "Salary and financial compensation" (Mean = 2.98), and "Opportunities for promotion and career advancement" (Mean = 2.96) are the most highly rated motivators. However, the average scores vary quite largely, and "Bonuses and performance-based incentives" (Mean = 2.73) is the lowest ranked, which suggests that all employees are not drawn towards extrinsic rewards. While money is still very important, things such as money can't buy status and career advancement may become increasingly important for sustaining engagement in the long term.

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis of Extrinsic Motivation Factors

	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19
count	156	156	156	156	156	156	156
mean	2.98	2.73	3.28	2.96	2.83	2.81	2.90
std	1.37	1.55	1.42	1.52	1.34	1.46	1.45
Q13.	I feel motivated by the salary and benefits I receive.						
Q14.	Bonuses and incentives encourage me to perform better at my job.						
Q15.	I work harder when I know I will receive recognition for my efforts.						
Q16.	Promotions and career growth opportunities are important to my motivation.						
Q17.	I am satisfied with the financial rewards provided by my organization.						
Q18.	Employee awards and appreciation events encourage me to stay in my job.						
Q19.	External rewards (e.g., gifts, perks, extra paid leave) increase my motivation.						

Source: Author field work, 2025

Correlation Between Extrinsic Motivation and Employee Productivity

Correlation analysis (Table 5) shows mixed correlations between extrinsic motivational factors and employee productivity. As shown by Table 3, the highest positive correlations are on "External rewards (e.g., gifts, perks,

extra paid leave)" (r=0.30) and "Employee awards and appreciation events" (r=0.25), indicating that non-monetary rewards can enhance participation and performance.

Conversely, "Bonuses and incentives" (r=-0.19) and "Salary and financial compensation" (r=-0.15) are negatively correlated, suggesting that money alone cannot maintain long-term productivity. Likewise, "Promotions and career growth opportunities" (r=-0.13) and "Satisfaction with financial rewards" (r=-0.12) have weak negative correlations.

These results indicate that while money can motivate short-term performance, non-financial rewards like praise and professional development are more important in maintaining long-term participation in luxury hotels.

Table 5. Correlation - Intrinsic Motivation & Productivity

Extrinsic Motivation Factor	r
I feel motivated by the salary and benefits I receive.	-0.15
Bonuses and incentives encourage me to perform better at my job.	-0.19
I work harder when I know I will receive recognition for my efforts.	0.06
Promotions and career growth opportunities are important to my motivation.	-0.13
I am satisfied with the financial rewards provided by my organization.	-0.12
Employee awards and appreciation events encourage me to stay in my job.	0.25
External rewards (e.g., gifts, perks, extra paid leave) increase my motivation.	0.30

Source: Author field work, 2025

Regression Analysis: Predictive Strength of Extrinsic Motivation

Regression analysis further confirms that extrinsic motivation has a minimal impact on long-term employee productivity, with the following model:

$$Productivity = 2.970 + 0.004 \times (Extrinsic\ Motivation) + \epsilon$$

The intercept (2.970, p < 0.001) is the point of origin of productivity without extrinsic motivation. However, the regression coefficient (0.004, p > 0.05) suggests that extrinsic motivation fails to significantly forecast worker productivity. This is consistent with the view that while compensation and reward incentives can motivate short-term performance, they do not necessarily engender a feeling of long-term commitment or sustained high performance.

A balanced reward strategy is needed to maintain employee motivation in luxury hotels. While competitive pay and bonuses are critical in attracting and retaining talent, they must be supplemented with intrinsic drivers like work meaning and autonomy to secure long-term commitment. Recognition and career development opportunities can also greatly augment the effectiveness of extrinsic motivators. Public recognition of employees' efforts, as well as formal career development tracks, can enhance job satisfaction and motivation. Excessive dependence on monetary rewards, however, might not lead to employee loyalty. Rather, a more comprehensive motivational system combining money rewards, work place recognition, and career development initiatives is needed to enhance short-term performance and long-term retention.

Comparative Analysis of Motivation Types Across Departments

Differences in Motivation Preferences (Core vs. Administrative Staff)

The differences in motivation preferences (Table 6) between core and administrative staff provide interesting patterns. Core staff, being mostly guest-facing functions (e.g., Housekeeping, Front Office, Kitchen, Service), have a higher intrinsic motivation score (Mean = 3.09) compared to administrative staff (Mean = 3.05). This means that job satisfaction, interest in service, and sense of belonging are more significant factors influencing employee motivation in guest-facing roles.

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is slightly higher among administrative staff (i.e., HR, Finance, Sales & Marketing, IT, Purchases), at a mean score of 3.05, versus 2.93 for core staff. This means that wages, job security, and opportunities of career advancement are of greater importance to support function employees.

These observations are indicative that motivation strategies must be job role differentiated. While core staff enjoy intrinsic motivators in the form of job autonomy and recognition, administrative staff can be motivated more effectively through programmed monetary incentives as well as career progression possibilities.

Table 6. Differences in Motivation Preferences

Department	Intrinsic Motivation Score	Extrinsic Motivation Score
Core Staff	3.1	2.9
Admin Staff	3.05	3.05

Source: Author field work, 2025

4.4.2 ANOVA Results: Motivation and Productivity Across Job Roles

The ANOVA findings (Table 7) show that intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and worker productivity are not significantly different between core and administrative workers of luxury hotels. Differences though exist, statistical insignificance indicates that both categories have equivalent levels of motivation and productivity.

For intrinsic motivation ($F = 0.228, p = 0.633$), the results show no significant difference between job roles, implying that both core and administrative employees find motivation through job satisfaction, autonomy, and purpose, though its impact may vary.

For extrinsic motivation ($F = 1.521, p = 0.219$), administrative staff show a slightly higher preference for financial and career incentives, but the difference is not statistically significant. Although the core personnel could enjoy intrinsic motivations such as client contact, the administrative employees tend towards systemized financial incentives and employment protection.

For worker productivity ($F = 0.637, p = 0.426$), the findings affirm no difference in performance levels, that is, both groups have equal productivity regardless of differences in motivational orientations.

Table 7. ANOVA Results: Motivation and Productivity Across Job Roles

Motivation Type	F-Statistic	P-Value
Intrinsic Motivation	0.228	0.633
Extrinsic Motivation	1.521	0.219
Employee Productivity	0.637	0.426

Source: Author field work, 2025

Optimal Combination of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation for Luxury Hotel Employees

Interaction Effects Between Motivation Types

The regression test (Table 8) of the combined effect of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on employee productivity yields limited statistical significance. The coefficient of the interaction term (-0.084) is weak with a p-value of 0.477, indicating that intrinsic and extrinsic motivators fail to significantly boost each other. However, internal motivation alone significantly influences productivity ($\beta = 0.372, p = 0.301$), to affirm that productive workers are more purposeful and satisfied in the workplace. Extrinsically driven motivation also makes a difference ($\beta = 0.25, p = 0.5$), but less so.

Table 8 Interaction Effects Between Motivation Types

	Coefficient	P-Value
const	1.866	0.095
Intrinsic Motivation	0.372	0.301
Extrinsic Motivation	0.25	0.5
Intrinsic Extrinsic Interaction	-0.084	0.477

Source: Author field work, 2025

These results suggest that an intrinsic as well as an extrinsic motivator is required, but not just monetary rewards alone will sustain long-term performance. An effective motivation strategy needs to be a combination of pay incentives with job autonomy, appreciation, and opportunity for career progression.

Employee Perspectives on Motivation and Engagement

Qualitative feedback (Table 9) from staff (Refer to Appendix) reveals that pay and monetary rewards are the most common extrinsic drivers (Flexible schedules and work-life balance), followed by growth opportunities in career (Management and peer recognition). Staff also point out the significance of appreciation and good teams (Making a difference and being able to innovate), indicating that workplace culture and appreciation are critical elements in engagement.

Moreover, career development routes and job satisfaction are also primary retention drivers for employees, especially administrative employees. There are some answers to the extent that, although finance drives employees, career development routes and job satisfaction ensure long-term retention. These results confirm that money is not sufficient to sustain participation. Hotels need to have an overall motivation strategy that includes competitive compensation, good recognition programs, skill-building programs, and a strong organizational culture.

Table 9 Employee Perspectives on Motivation and Engagement

Theme	Common Employee Responses
Extrinsic Motivators	Salary and financial incentives are the primary motivators.
Career Growth Opportunities	Promotion pathways and job security influence retention.
Recognition and Appreciation	Public recognition and peer acknowledgment boost morale.
Work-Life Balance	Flexible schedules and paid leave improve engagement.
Workplace Culture & Support	Positive team dynamics and supportive management matter.
Non-Monetary Incentives	Learning opportunities and skill development enhance motivation.

Source: Author field work, 2025

In short, the study shows that intrinsic motivation plays a greater role in employee productivity in the long run compared to extrinsic motivation. An amalgamation of both types is the most effective, though. An administrative employee and a core department employee excel when they sense personal satisfaction and appreciation, respectively, and when structured monetary rewards and career advancement opportunities are offered, respectively.

For upscale hotels to minimize attrition, enhance the quality of services, and improve employee motivation, a dual approach to motivation balancing intrinsic and extrinsic motivators will be optimal. Future policies must emphasize job autonomy, rewards programs, and competitive pay in to provide a motivated high-performing employee base.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter reports the major findings of the study and their implications for human resource (HR) practices in luxury hotels. It also offers actionable recommendations for increasing employee motivation, presents limitations of the study, and suggests directions for future research. The influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the performance of workers in luxury hotels was examined. Further the study investigated how they boost performance and motivation is at its highest level. Intrinsic motivation has a more profound effect on long-term productivity. Employees who have meaning from work, feel valued, and build their career are extremely motivated. Contrariwise, intrinsic motivation as incentives of payment and bonuses impacts relatively less to the extent of keeping up with the performance unless when connected to independence and occupational progression.

The impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on employees' productivity who are working in luxury hotels was examined under this study, with the result of their contribution towards performance and motivation being deeper. Intrinsic motivation has greater influence on productivity in the long term.

Employees who experience meaning from work, are appreciated, and develop their careers are highly motivated.

Employee opinions prioritize work-life balance, career growth, and appreciation as primary drivers of engagement. There is no one-size-fits-all motivation strategy, and there is a need for luxury hotels to adopt a tailored approach with both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators to ensure sustained high performance and retention.

This study determined the Human Resource and management implications for improving staff motivation in luxury hotels. A successful motivation strategy must strike a balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to produce short-term performance and long-term commitment since financial rewards are not sufficient.

Due to motivational preference differences, hotels need to implement tailored engagement strategies. Core employees are more responsive to autonomy, recognition, and guest feedback, whereas administrative staff prefer career development, monetary rewards, and job security. Motivation strategies aligned with job functions make employees feel valued and engaged.

Minimizing over-reliance on monetary rewards is also essential. Since extrinsic motivators alone do not sustain performance, hotels should invest in mentorship, leadership development, and skill-building programs to improve retention. Finally, fostering an employee-centric culture—built on recognition, career growth, and work-life balance—is essential for job satisfaction and long-term commitment in the luxury hospitality sector.

To enhance employee motivation and productivity in luxury hotels, a role-oriented and balanced strategy is crucial. Following are some steps that can enhance job satisfaction, retention, and service quality. A mix of financial and non-financial incentives is the key to maintaining motivation. Incentives and compensation are needed, but only as a compliment to reward mechanisms, autonomy on the job, and career growth for sustained drive.

Career development initiatives like training, mentoring, and leadership development can reinforce the commitment of the employees and decrease turnover by fostering open professional opportunities. Furthermore, reinforcing recognition and feedback mechanisms through reward ceremonies and performance-based awards creates an environment in which employees feel appreciated.

Luxury hotels also need to prioritize work-life balance by providing flexible schedules, paid holidays, and wellness programs to enhance job satisfaction. Finally, role-specific motivation strategies are critical. Core employees need to be given guest feedback rewards and service excellence awards, whereas administrative employees are more receptive to career development rewards and promotion. If such strategies are utilized, luxury hotels can create highly committed and high-performance staff.

Limitations of the Study

Though this research is revealing of employee motivation within luxury hotels, it does not come without limitations. First, the use of self-reported survey data to anchor it leaves the research with a potential threat of social desirability bias, where respondents give what they perceive is what the interviewer or respondent wants, rather than giving their true views. Secondly, the research focuses on luxury hotels alone, thus its applicability is limited to mid-market or economy hotels, in which employee aspirations and drivers might be different.

Moreover, geographical emphasis of the research limits generalizability since motivational forces are subject to vary with regional labor markets, cultural values, and economic conditions. Lastly, the study lacks longitudinal data, so it is not possible to examine how motivation and productivity evolve over time. Despite these limitations, the findings are useful for luxury hotel HR practices and form a foundation for future hospitality workforce motivation studies.

Future research could investigate its limitations and evaluate new dimensions of motivation of the employees in the hospitality sector. Observational studies can be conducted over time to observe how motivation changes as time passes. Cross-industry comparison of luxury, mid-scale, and budget hotels would also identify industry-specific best practices and variation in motivation policies across business models.

The utilization of qualitative interviews as well as questionnaires is can remove emotional and psychological dimensions of motivation that standard questionnaires cannot. Studies should also explore how technology influences motivation in the future, such as how HR software powered by artificial intelligence, virtual reward systems, as well as engagement platforms stimulate work motivation.

Lastly, investigating cultural differences in motivation would assist global hotel chains in formulating HR plans to suit various work cultures and expectations in different regions. Research in these fields can further evolve motivation theories and create evidence-based engagement plans for the hospitality sector.

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Declaration

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Not applicable.

Consent for publication

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Availability of data and materials

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon request.

Competing interests

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Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies

During the preparation of this work the author used Grammarly in order to correct spelling mistakes and help me make better sentences. After using this tool/service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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