



Employee Retention Strategies of Hotel Industries in the Philippines Amidst the Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the strategies of accredited hotel industries in retaining their employees amidst the pandemic in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan, Philippines. A quantitative research design employing descriptive research method was used in the study. The respondents of the study were the human resource manager or hotel owner of each accredited hotels in Tuguegarao City using a questionnaire. The findings of the study confirm that fourteen (14) strategies are fully employed in the five accredited hotels. However, the strategy concerning about the remuneration of employees even if there is a reduction in their total salary due to the limited working scheme set by the government is employed.

INTRODUCTION

On December 8, 2019, the government of Wuhan, China, revealed that health officials were treating dozens of new virus cases classified as coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Since then, COVID-19 has been designated a novel strain of SARS (SARS-CoV-2) and has spread to multiple countries as a global pandemic. It's a highly contagious respiratory disease that starts with a fever, cough, and breathing issues after contact with other sick people. Furthermore, asymptomatic individuals can transmit the virus, with up to 40% of infected people staying asymptomatic (World Health Organization, 2020).

However, critical global responses to control the spread of the COVID-19 have included travel restrictions, home quarantine, and social distancing orders. A million workers suddenly became unemployed because of the uncertainty over economic recovery and global fears of continuing COVID-19 spread and future waves. The hospitality industry has been one of the first industries affected, specifically the hotel sector. The hotel industry, in particular, has seen huge revenue declines as occupancy rates have declined as a result of social distance and a sharp drop in the number of tourists (Sobieralski, 2020). With the changes in society due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the hotel industry experienced an employment shock earlier than other industries, with a sharp drop in the number of employees and a dramatic rise in temporary leave. Even before COVID-19, because of technical developments, economic fluctuations, and political insecurity, modern working environments cannot guarantee employment stability to all employees (Etehad & Karatepe, 2019). Employees' views on job insecurity and their subjective and unconscious beliefs of job loss have grown because of organizational restructuring and scale-downs (Niesen et al., 2018), but COVID-19 has aggravated this situation. The rapid onset of the COVID-19 pandemic is contrasted by the severe effect most likely on many hotel employees. It has increased the number of hotels closing their doors, resulting in increased employee turnover. (Soria, 2020).

Moreover, one of the highly valued business assets is its employees because they do the work assigned to them in exchange for a commensurate salary. Employee success is also strongly tied to the success of the team, and keeping experienced and knowledgeable individuals on board will aid the organization's success (Singh, 2018). Since the critical importance of workforce has been recognized, concepts to improve individual and organizational performance, such as employee commitment or engagement, must be realized (Ongel, 2014). Employee retention is all about persuading and encouraging employees to stay with a company for as long as possible. It is also a systematic effort and strategy utilized by organizations to keep a productive staff while satisfying operational goals, such as having strategies, policies, and practices that fulfill their various needs (Mita, 2014; Bidisha, 2013; Bandt & Kostic et al., 2015). Retaining employees in the new normal is essential because many employees have left their job due to COVID-19. Some employees have been forced to stop working, early retirement, and shifted to other jobs such as online selling, sari-sari store, and many more. However, it is also noted that one of the main problems of the business managers is not prepared to address retention

issues (Singh, 2018). Some managers lack strategies to retain employees, especially amidst the pandemic.

Tuguegarao City serves as the Economic Center of Region 02, strives for outstanding performance and competence in administration, citizen participation, community and economic development, cultural arts, education, fiscal management, infrastructure, intergovernmental cooperation, planning, public safety, recreation, and leisure services, social services, and technology. Its economy changed from agricultural to secondary and tertiary economic activities such as trading, commerce, and services. Tuguegarao's role as Northern Luzon's Regional Government Center and Center of Commerce ushered in the change. The city acts as a commercial and institutional center due to its role as a province and regional government seat. As a result, commerce and service businesses and industrial and tourism-related activities increase in the area. Thus, as the Economic Center of Region 02, banking, educational and commercial entities proliferate in the city (Philippines Cities, 2017). The hotel industry is one of the most growing and lucrative industries in the town, contributing as the main driver of the social and economic growth of the place, resulting in an increased job or employment opportunities improved living standards, and other social and economic factors. The population and the influx of tourists visiting Tuguegarao City resulted in the economic growth of the place. It is one of the driving forces that led many business enthusiasts to invest their money in building hotel establishments. The bustling city is a commercial site where multiple businesses and buildings are easily accessible to the target market.

It is, therefore, one of the toughest challenges an organization or businesses encounters nowadays is to manage the people amidst the pandemic and keep them on the job as long as possible. The hotel industry, in particular, needs to understand how to retain its employees effectively since they highly contribute to the continuity, profitability, and success of the business. Consequently, it is essential to identify those retention strategies in the hotel industry to gain new insights and approaches for stabilizing hotel employment amidst the pandemic. However, several studies about employee retention have been recently published, but no specific research about retaining employees amidst the pandemic as the topic. For these reasons, the researchers have decided to embark on this study to determine the strategies of accredited hotel industries in retaining their employees amidst the pandemic in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Hospitality and tourism Industry thrives on the patterns of visitations and considerable efforts that are placed by decision makers to attract visitors to support the sector and enhance the multiplier effect from the industry. A study anchored to the several studies in the hospitality industry that have examined employees' motivation, retention strategies, through a job satisfaction and dissatisfaction theory using Herzberg's two-factor theory and other retention

strategy theory, with varying findings (Holston Okae and Mushi, 2018). Holston Okae (2018) highlighted job satisfaction theory and dissatisfaction theory which consists of two dimensions, relating to dissatisfaction theory is the hygiene issues that cause to decrease employees while job satisfaction theory in relation to the motivators which can create recognition, productive, achievement and retain employees. However, it assessed the relationship among the hospitality human resource managers and employees about its turn over factors, job satisfaction, motivational factors, and retention strategies and most the results suggested that job satisfaction, job compensation, employee engagement in the field, and work environment are significant predictors of turnover intentions and the need to assess the retention factors.

According to Damij et al., (2015), intrinsic motivation theory is a type of motivation that comes from within an employee and mirroring the theory of Maslow's psychological and self-fulfillment needs, resulting in satisfaction and improved performance. However, management theory and practice has really focused on the extrinsic motivators wherein these motivators are essential to employees in today's environment in retaining them in every organization. These theories relate to this study give significance and importance in retaining the number of employees in every organization to strengthen the work environment and practices in the organization towards providing sustainable and satisfactory services in the industry.

Hotel Industry

The hotel industry has a broad category of products and services such as accommodation, food and beverages to provide guest satisfaction. The different hotel companies offer it, or establishments taken action by the employees or workers, which may increase the level and growth of the economy and contribute to the income and production from the goods and services offered (Motter, 2020). The hotel industry noted the qualities to successfully deliver products and services by the hoteliers with a hospitable attitude that provides a good experience in the hospitality aspect.

According to Yeswa & Ombui (2019), the hotel industry included a variety of sectors, including tour operators, food and beverage, travel agencies, lodging, attractions, and transportation, all of which require a diverse set of talents. The hotel industry is a powerful source of revenue for all the hoteliers and the tourism industry segment, where it contributes to the Gross Domestic Product in a bigger way. It is also a representation of the hotel industry's processes and actions because it exposes the worth of the products and services. The products offered and produced are growing in the industry or a recession. In this case, customer retention is a good platform to retain the numbers of customers, which fascinate with customer loyalty and or brand loyalty.

There are types of hotels classified based on their star system ranging from 1 to 5 stars. It reflects the characteristics of luxury and sophistication with high-class facilities and meticulous services differentiated on its products and services (Cruz, 2017). It is correlated with the brand's quality based on awarding the quality mark symbol or with the accreditation process, which can

be classified as De Luxe Class, First Class, Standard Class, and Economic Class. From high-class amenities, facilities, products, and services to basic accommodations and limited amenities offered (Bell, 2020). However, the hotel industry needs excellent management in all its functions required, which need an overall operation, a vision and mission, long-term goals, effective strategies, good marketing, and properly acted in management (Alekseevick & Igorevna, 2016).

Moreover, the hotel industry is one of the fastest-growing industries with a deeper relationship with improved service quality into operations and customer satisfaction (Fernandez, 2019). Additionally, according to Yeswa (2019), the hotel industry promotes employee engagement, which signifies a positive influence in the industry. Hotel managers and owners can manage this to practice employee involvement and participation in all aspects to achieve a clear goal of expectation for all the employees in the industry. Thus, it also affects the practices, theories of commitment in work, and the organization's motivations (Ashton, 2018).

Hotel Industry in Tuguegarao City

The hotel industry in Tuguegarao City offers a wide variety of products and services. There are 18 hotel establishments in the city, namely Taj Hotel, Hotel Casa Angela, two branches of Hotel Joselina, Hotel Carmelita, Hotel Juliana, Mango suites, Balay B and B, Hotel Lorita, Pulsar Hotel, Cocoon Traveler's Inn, Benjie's Place, Livin's Inn, Hotel Kimikarlai, 128 lodges, Radlett Residences, The Pad Tuguegarao, and DDD Habitat Tuguegarao. These various hotel establishments in Tuguegarao City provide customer satisfaction in all forms in accordance of their services and products. It is normally associated with the hospitality sector and is offered by hoteliers, employees, and or workers to provide customer pleasure with their supplied services and products to their customers or visitors. The Department of Tourism-Region II listed a number of accredited hotels within the Cagayan Valley Region or Region II that was fully furnished. With the thirty (30) numbers of hotel listed in the Region, the hotels were guaranteed with great set of standards whereby these hotels complied with the different rules and regulations given by the government for its over-all function of hotel, employees, infrastructures and superstructures (Department of Tourism, 2019).

According to Yeswa and Ombui (2019), there is a need to concentrate on the hospitality industry's employee management; consequently, the hotel business seeks to prevent competent personnel from leaving the hotels, which could harm service delivery. However, hospitality industry managers and owners need an effective strategy in managing an employee to have more growth potentials in the business and the employees in a long-term goal aspect that can also result to a positive service. The hotel industry is significant as the hotel managers in these hotel establishments in Tuguegarao City tend to be more trained, developed, and skilled than the other managers of the different industries in the world. However, it is also an industry infrequently studied by

many researchers and some social scientists regarding hotel managers, its employees, and overall functions (Narag & Soriano, 2019).

Hotel Industry Amidst the Pandemic

Workers are the heart and spine of an association. It is admirable that the lodging representatives without formal preparation and information on the uncommon lockdown have remained by the inns as a mainstay of polished skill (Baharin and Hanafi, 2018). According to Kumar (2021), the travel industry business and relaxation trips have had retractions. There will be numerous recovery plans, yet they may not be compelling. Deficient occupation tasks and execution may prompt dissatisfaction or stress.

According to Sobieralski (2020), the hotel industry, in particular, has seen huge revenue declines as occupancy rates have plummeted as a result of social distance and a sharp drop in the number of tourists. The speed occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic is contrasted by the severe effect most likely on many hotel employees. It has given rise to an increase in the number of hotels that have decided to close their doors, resulting to employee turnover (Soria, 2020). According to Van Rooyen et al. (2021), the hotel employees are putting their health at risk of contracting the virus by working in person. That is why the human resource management are reviewing their safety regulations to ensure that they contain updated safety and health measures of all employees amidst pandemic. The updated protocols would have to include a proper procedure to dry-clean the uniforms so that employees do not contract the germs. To guarantee everyone's health is optimal, temperature-checking will have to be implemented every time an employee clocks in and clocks out. Finally, it has to be mandatory for staff, especially those in housekeeping, to always wear facemasks and gloves at all times to avoid the spread of germs.

The different accredited hotels in the Philippines listed by the Department of Tourism (2020) can be used as quarantine facilities since they follow the health and safety measures implemented by the DOH under the directive from the IATF or Inter-Agency Task Force. However, with the length of quarantine days which is fourteen (14) days, these hotel establishments are performing and still functional despite the pandemic. The Department of Health (2020) also recognized hotel establishments to be used in the first ten days of the 14-day quarantine. The remaining four days will be completed at home under the supervision of the local government unit. As of December 17, 2020, fifteen accommodation establishments in National Capital Region (NCR) have been issued Certificates of Authority to Operate as quarantine facilities for stranded tourists and essential workers. These include the Grand Hyatt Hotel, Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Okada Manila Hotel, Shangri-La at the Fort, Nobu Hotel, Joy Nostalg Hotel and Suites Manila, EDSA Shangri-La Manila, Solaire Resort, Hyatt Regency City of Dreams, Nuwa Hotel City of Dreams, The Peninsula Manila, Aruga by Rockwell, Sheraton Manila Hotel, Hilton Manila, and Hotel Okura Manila. Moreover, in September 2020, Department of Tourism Administrative Order 2020-006-A was issued, allowing four- to five-star rated DOT-accredited Accommodation Establishments in the National Capital Region

to operate as Staycation Hotels provided, they have Certificates of Authority to Operate as Staycation hotels (CAOS). An accommodation Establishment outside the NCR with at least a three-star rating was likewise allowed to operate.

Moreover, to help these hotel establishments amidst the pandemic, the Department of Tourism and its partner agencies and associations encourage the hotel owners to apply for special loan programs with minimal interest and employees' subsidies, like cash assistance, relief goods, free training, and the like, while they are on temporary closure. These assistances seek the government to continue its progress even though they experience limitations brought by the pandemic. Under the joint programs of the Department of Tourism which is the Department of Finance, Social Security System, Bureau of Internal Revenue called as Small Business Wage Subsidy grants more than 155,000 employees, including the Hotel Employees and other tourism-related enterprises. According to the Department of Tourism, 2020, the subsidy ranges from Php. 5000 to Php. 8000 and according to the Department of Land and Employment Joint memorandum circular number 2020-001 by the Republic Act No. 11494, known as Bayanihan to Recover as One Act which provides financial assistance and cash work program mostly with workers in the tourism sector to assist the most impacted hospitality and tourism businesses and assistance to the workers or employees due to this Covid-19 pandemic. This subsidy program by the government can be a good platform for hospitality and tourism businesses to sustain their resources, retain employees, and make progress in the economy.

Employee Retention

Employee retention refers to motivating and retaining employees to stay with the company for as long as possible. It is the effort of a business to maintain a working environment that supports current employees in remaining to the company. Employee retention is the procedure and tactic utilized by the businesses to keep valuable personnel from quitting their jobs (Fernandez & Worasuwan, 2017).

Furthermore, it is also determined that employee retention is the most important business goal because recruiting a suitable applicant is critical for a company's success. Companies invest a significant amount of money on the orientation and training of their potential workers; therefore, retention is more crucial than hiring. Understanding what people want in a job and what the job wants in an employee is critical to long-term employee retention (Motter, 2020). Aside from the intrinsic value that can be benefited from it, employee retention is vital to the business itself. They are essential to firms or establishments because employees help the owners and managers in running the business. According to Rombaut and Guerry (2020), employee retention's ultimate purpose is to keep qualified employees from leaving the organization. Khalid and Nawab (2018) also stated that in order to accelerate and achieve employee retention, employers must carefully establish direct and indirect forms of employee participation as well as employee compensation.

Employee retention techniques can aid managers in keeping personnel and maintaining profitability. Staff retention should be viewed as a significant issue by business executives, who should take proactive measures to improve retention by involving managers who are familiar with designing effective employee retention methods (Singh, 2018). Among all motivational factors, training and development and salary and fringe benefits have the highest statistical significance with employee retention (Kaliyamoorthy, Al-Shibami, Nusari, & Ghosh, 2018). Some practices can be put into place to help increase retention and cut losses caused by turnover. The most important step in reducing turnover is proper employee selection, performance appraisal, and compensation (Motter, 2020).

Strategies of Hotels in Employee Retention

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, many workers are concerned about their health and well-being while at work. By addressing these concerns, employers can bring peace of mind to employees and, in turn, attract workers who may have held reservations about their safety. Retaining employees amidst the pandemic is essential because many employees have left their job due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

Hotel employees at the lower hierarchies recognize compensation as an important determinant for their retention, and top-level employees prefer to term it less important. However, in Nepalese hotels, top-level employees see employer branding as the most essential aspect of their retention, whereas lower-level employees see it as less significant (Rombaut & Guerry, 2020).

Moreover, a study in Kenya by Krémer (2019), employee retention in hotels is influenced by established practices such as paying reasonable salaries and wages, performance bonuses, reimbursing employees for overtime and holidays, rewarding employees with extended leave, providing enough recreational facilities, paying salaries that match the work, and matching the hotel's salaries with other hotels' compensations.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers utilized a descriptive quantitative research design. This study was conducted in the accredited hotels in Tuguegarao City. The human resource manager or hotel owner of each accredited hotel were the respondents of the study. The researchers decided to include human resource managers or owners as their respondents since they are involved in the day-to-day activities of all the employees and are knowledgeable with HR management policies and strategies of the hotel. Furthermore, purposive sampling was employed since the criteria of selecting hotel respondents will be those accredited by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and who have retained all their employees amidst the pandemic. This study utilized a survey questionnaire to gather the needed data. Part 1 consists of the profile of the hotel respondents in Tuguegarao City in terms of length of operation, hotel classification, type of ownership, and the number of employees. Part 2 on the other hand consists of the employee retention strategies of accredited hotels amidst the pandemic in Tuguegarao City. This part was modified from the study of Shweta (2019), and

the content experts validated it. The data gathered from the survey questionnaires were analyzed through descriptive and frequency analysis. The respondent's profile was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage, while the employee retention strategies of the hotel industries was analyzed using mean with the following legend for interpretation: 3.50 - 4.00 = Fully Employed, 2.50 - 3.49 = Employed, 1.50 - 2.49 = Least Employee, 1.00 - 1.49 = Not Employed.

RESULTS

Table 1. Profile of the Hotels

Profile Variables	Frequency	Percentage
No. of Years in Operation		
6-10 Years	3	60.00 %
11 Years and above	2	40.00 %
Hotel Classification		
Economy Class	3	60.00 %
Business Class	2	40.00 %
Type of Ownership		
Sole Proprietorship	4	80.00 %
Corporation	1	20.00 %
No. of Employees		
10 Below	1	20.00 %
11-20 Employees	1	20.00 %
21 & Above	3	60.00 %

The accredited hotel establishment in Tuguegarao City are profiled in Table 1. It can be gleaned from the table that three hotels have been in operation for six to ten years, and two have been in operation for ten years or more. In addition, the majority of the hotels are categorized as economy. When it comes to ownership, the majority of them are sole proprietorships. Finally, most of the hotels have 21 and above employees.

Table 2. Employee Retention Strategies of Hotel Industries

Strategies	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. The hotel communicates a clear role and responsibilities assigned to employees amidst the pandemic.	3.80	Fully employed
2. The hotel strictly follows government protocols to maintain a safe and secure working environment.	4.00	Fully employed
3. The hotel empowers employees by having a good time listening to their ideas and suggestions amidst the pandemic.	3.80	Fully employed
4. The hotel sets a work-life balance among employees.	3.80	Fully employed
5. The hotel continuously gives employee benefits, such as incentives, medical assistance, cash assistance, and the like.	4.00	Fully employed
6. The hotel provides training and development programs against the COVID-19 pandemic.	3.60	Fully employed
7. The hotel conducts performance appraisals and continuous feedback for employees' performance.	3.80	Fully employed
8. The hotel values and extends employee contracts despite the COVID-19 pandemic.	4.00	Fully employed
9. The hotel observes work fairness in job scheduling, promotions, and the like.	3.60	Fully employed
10. The hotel has a systematic policies, practices, and good working conditions that retain employees.	3.60	Fully employed
11. The hotel persistently remunerates its employees even if there is a reduction in their total salary due to the limited working scheme set by the government.	3.40	Employed
12. The hotel management consistently works and helps boost employee morale amidst the pandemic.	3.80	Fully employed

13. The hotel administration guides and manages employees on a professional standard of conduct.	3.80	Fully employed
14. The hotel establishment builds a culture of teamwork among employees in the working environment.	4.00	Fully employed
15. The hotel establishment promotes trustworthy, tactful discipline and ethical considerations.	4.00	Fully employed

The employee retention strategies of the hotel industries were analyzed using mean with the following legend for interpretation; 3.50 - 4.00 = Fully Employed; 2.50 - 3.49 = Employed; 1.50 - 2.49 = Least Employed; 1.00 - 1.49 = Not employed. The table shows that majority of the strategies have been fully employed except for one strategy which concerns about the remuneration of employees even if there is a reduction in their total salary due to the limited working scheme. Since majority of strategies got a mean of 3.50-4.00, the 5 hotels strongly agreed that they are using the following strategies to retain their employees amidst the pandemic.

DISCUSSION

This study has provided data needed to learn how hotel industries, specifically in Tuguegarao City, managed to develop and implement strategies for employee retention amidst the pandemic. The result regarding the employee retention strategies were obtained from the five (5) respondents of different accredited hotels, primarily using their total profiling percentages.

First, it was found that three (3) accredited hotel establishments in Tuguegarao City were functional and offering their products and services by their employee's workforce over 6 to 10 years while the remaining two (2) were found operating for at least 11 years and above. Second, it was noted that three (3) hotels were classified as economy class, while the remaining two (2) hotels were revealed as business class. Third, these accredited hotels' ownership type has shown four (4) single individual or sole-proprietorship while one (1) accredited hotel was established with shareholders or corporate ownership. Lastly, it was found that three (3) hotels have 21 and above number of employees, one (1) accredited hotel has 11-20 employees and one (1) accredited hotel has below 10 employees respectively.

On the other hand, the result of the study shows that hotel respondents in Tuguegarao City had strictly followed and implemented strategies to retain employees. Based on the result, these accredited hotels have identified the following as their top strategies to support them in keeping their employees amidst this adversity. These accredited hotels in Tuguegarao City who had retained their employees showed that they are highly-engaged with their employees which resulted to a mean of four (4) and considered as the

qualitative description (QD) of fully employed ranked as the highest strategies by this accredited hotel establishments.

First (1), the hotel strictly follows government protocols to maintain a safe and secure working environment. This implies that amidst the pandemic, the hotel industries strictly act and work in accordance to the protocols within the working environment to avoid contacting the disease in every employee at work. This relates with the publication study of the International Labor Organization (2020) that in every working establishment, it is significant to have a safe, secure and healthy working conditions in order to avoid circumstances in every employee and the management of the company, can sustain the workforce, and sustain the quality of service in the industry.

Second (2), the hotel continuously gives employee benefits, such as incentives, medical assistance, cash assistance, and the like. It implies that in every industry and/or working company, excellent packages of benefits and assistance in rewarding and appreciating employees' work is helpful in retaining them. This result of the study agrees with the findings of Stalmasecova & Genzorova (2017), that it has been really a significant and an excellent factor to motivate employees in the hotel. Through this strategy, it may result to success of the company. With the presence of this employee benefits, it may be an excellent form of building their corporate identity on interesting, excellent, and unique employee benefits and advantages.

Third (3), the hotel values and extends employee contracts despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The result of this strategy implies that with all its importance, employee contracts continuously values and extends by the accredited hotels in Tuguegarao City despite the Covid-19 pandemic, as it has something to do with all the employee rights, responsibilities, the different duties and working conditions in every hotel industry which also signify the company's duty to pay their employees. This result contradicts with the publication study of International Labor Organization (2020) that with the threat of Covid-19, some contracts of employees from the different company/organization had experience severe stress and collapsed of employees due to the forfeit of sales and income in the company. It has been reported that employee contracts are still vital to every business company/organization.

Furthermore, the fourth (4) strategy is the hotel establishment builds a culture of teamwork among employees in the working environment. This implies that in every business company and/or hotel industries, it is an excellent mark leading to better productivity in every employee, greater profitability, and highly collaborative work actions to be done by the employees allowing them to meet the goals in the hotel. With this result, it relates to the study of Wanyeki & Maina (2019), that collaborative working effort indicates and enhances the team effectiveness in terms of productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency at the workplace. Through the culture of teamwork, every employee in the hotel industry keeps each other and also realize the group reward resulting to a more motivated and an excellent performance. Fifth (5), the hotel establishment promotes trustworthiness, tactful discipline, and ethical

considerations. This result implies that every employee evolves to their quality a trustworthy, tactful discipline and ethical behavior which resulted to them a culture of inspiring, developing aspect, and may establish an excellent culture of trust and respect in the working environment. This strategy is an advantage to retain the number of employees in the company, increased productivity and loyalty. The result of this study agrees with the findings of Soria (2020) that in every company, employees should acquire the ethical behaviors under the rule of the company, rightful discipline and quality of trust in which the hotel industries can achieve and sustain its goals not just within the company but also to its employees.

The second to the highest ranked strategies of accredited hotels focused on the support given by hotels toward their employees amidst the pandemic namely, first (1), the hotel communicates a clear role and responsibilities assigned to employees amidst the pandemic. It implies that most accredited hotels conveyed all the necessary duties and obligations to each employee amidst the pandemic. In line with this, according to Fernandez & Worasuwan (2017), once employees are given autonomy, they have the necessary information to assess different situations and they are empowered to make decisions and take responsibility. They feel they are able to communicate with both immediate colleagues and senior management in an open and honest way through a two-way open-door policy. Clearly, effective communication encourages staff to adjust their assumptions of what is expected of them. So, the management of expectations is one of the most important ways in managing employee retention; second (2), the hotel empowers employees by having a good time listening to their ideas and suggestions amidst the pandemic. It shows that the majority of the employers emancipate their workers to tender their opinion and recommendations in regard to hotel operations amidst the pandemic. Based on the results of the study of Fernandez & Worasuwan (2017), listening is a key to improve employee retention because it creates an environment where employees feel valued and because it provides managers with insights into ways to continuously improve the workplace. By seeking first to identify and understand the needs and interests of the employees, it can create an environment that lets them voice out their thoughts and opinions. The more they share the more information it may have to create innovative solutions for motivation and engagement. But it is more than just listening to the words they say. To become an effective listener, managers must go beyond literal content and learn to hear the intent, the emotions, and the deeper meaning others are trying to communicate.

Third (3), the hotel sets a work-life balance among employees. It can be inferred that, commonly, accredited hotels equalize work and personal life among their employees. Contrarily, as stated in the results of the study of Shrestha (2018), the relationship between age group and career growth, balanced work life, and employer branding indicates that younger employees view career growth opportunities as the strongest HR retention factor that could retain them with their current employment.

Moreover, the fourth (4) strategy that concerns about the hotel conducts performance appraisals and continuous feedback for employees' performance implies that most accredited hotels ensured that there is a clear communication between their employees for them to carry out their tasks effectively and efficiently amidst the pandemic. According to the study of Fernandez & Worasuwan (2017), management techniques in the hotel employee retention manifest itself in understanding themselves, proper communication, listening, engaging, and providing autonomy, personal and professional development, trust, and reciprocity. Nevertheless, individual managers can have a profound effect on employee retention by implementing these strategies. They foster an environment in which workers are more likely to share the organization's values, to recognize their roles, to be happy and committed, and to provide higher-quality service to hotel guests;

Fifth (5), the hotel management consistently works and helps boost employee morale amidst the pandemic. This implies that most accredited hotels persistently motivates and empower their employees to increase their confidence during this time of adversity. The results demonstrated that the more motivated the human factor is, the higher efficacy, loyalty, and individual performance is given to the institution in the chosen three dimensions: strategy, communications, and common feedback (Zámečník, 2020).

Sixth (6), the hotel administration guides and manages employees on a professional standard of conduct. This implies that most accredited hotels exerted an effort to guarantee the improvement and development of their employees on a standard professional basis. This relates to the study of Yeswa & Ombui (2019), that the reward systems, career development, employee engagement, and training are major contributors to influencing employee retention in the Kenyan hotel industry. Thus, reward systems should be further improved.

The strategies that ranked as 3rd highest strategy got a mean of 3.60 and fully employed accredited hotels in Tuguegarao implemented in retaining their employees were: first (1), the hotel provides training and development programs against the COVID-19 pandemic. This implies that some of the accredited hotels made their employees undergo series of training and development programs to avoid contracting the deadly disease during the COVID-19 outbreak. According to Gigauri (2020), in terms of development of HRM strategy to adapt to the new reality shaped by the pandemic and for managing remote working systems considering the employee perspectives, training and development of employees are vital. Second (2), the hotel observes work fairness in job scheduling, promotions and the like. This implies that some of the accredited hotels promoted fairness among their employees regarding their work schedule and promotion amidst the pandemic. High performers and non-hourly workers were more likely to cite advancement opportunities and organizational prestige as reasons for staying, whereas low performers and hourly employees were more likely to cite extrinsic rewards. These findings highlight the importance of differentiating human resource management practices when the goal is to retain valued employees (Hausknecht, Rodda &

Howard, 2009); Third (3), the hotel has systematic policies, practices and good working conditions that retain employees. This implies that some of the accredited hotels practiced their systematic policies and took less consideration regarding the working condition of their employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are positive inter-correlations among employee retention factor and other factors that relate to work conditions that support employee retention such as compensation, employee development, work engagement, work relations, and working hours (Ezeuduji & Mbane, 2017).

The least strategy that the accredited hotels employed was (1) the hotel persistently remunerated its employees even if there is a reduction in their total salary due to the limited working scheme set by the government. This implied that remuneration for employees was an area that most hotels neglect and do not take as a threat in retaining their employees. The result of the study agrees with the findings of Khalid & Nawab (2018), that employee compensation significantly moderated the relationship between types of employee participation and employee retention. Furthermore, the study concluded that organizations of both manufacturing and service sectors should develop such practices, which could enhance employee engagement and voice within their task-related decisions. These participation practices would in turn enhance employee retention and would give organizations its aligned benefits.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the accredited hotels in Tuguegarao City had used different strategies to retain their employees. These strategies are fully employed namely: (1) The hotel communicates a clear role and responsibilities assigned to employees amidst the pandemic; (2) The hotel strictly follows government protocols to maintain a safe and secure working environment; (3) The hotel empowers employees by having a good time listening to their ideas and suggestions; amidst the pandemic; (4) The hotel sets a work-life balance among employees; (5) The hotel continuously gives employee benefits, such as incentives, medical assistance, cash assistance, and the like; (6) The hotel provides training and development programs against the COVID-19 pandemic; (7) The hotel conducts performance appraisals and continuous feedback for employees' performance; (8) The hotel value and extend employee contracts despite the COVID-19 pandemic; (9) The hotel observes work fairness in job scheduling, promotions, and the like; (10) The hotel has a systematic policies, practices, and good working conditions that retain employees; (11) The hotel management consistently works and helps boost employee morale amidst the pandemic (12) The hotel administration guides and manages employees on a professional standard of conduct; (13) The hotel establishment builds a culture of teamwork among employees in the working environment; (14) The hotel establishment promotes trustworthy, tactful discipline and ethical considerations. However, the strategy that concerns about the remuneration of employees even if there is a reduction in their total salary due to the limited working scheme set by the government is

also employed. Therefore, this is a good indication that the accredited hotels here in Tuguegarao City are undertaking efforts to retain all their employees.

The findings of this study have practical implications for the retention strategies of hotels and future direction of research. First, this study has a limited outline due to the relatively small number of respondents. Therefore, future researchers may increase the sample size and associate with the other available and active hotels within the community to encapsulate the differences in the effective strategies of these operational hotels within the region. Furthermore, the researchers advise future researchers to use the same sample population but collect additional data using a qualitative or mixed method. As for the participating accredited hotels, it is recommended that they maintain their strategy to retain their employees. Moreover, hotel owners or managers may share their employee retention strategies with other managers outside their firm to help hotel industry in the region to retain their employees. To generate sufficient innovative capacity and achieve competitive advantages in the hotel sector, business managers may implement these strategies to improve stability, reduce employee turnover, and boost the relevant expert knowledge in an organization.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

The researchers also recommend to the accrediting body of hotels, Department of Tourism, to use these strategies to strengthen the retention policies and practices of the hotel industry in Tuguegarao City towards providing a sustainable and satisfactory service.

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