

# Hospitality management assignment

[Business](#), [Management](#)



The hospitality Industry needs to provide a good quality of work life (SQL) in order to attract and retain employees. There is yet to be a study that defines the 'expected dimensions of SQL' by the potential and present hotel employees. SQL being multifaceted and context-based, this researcher conducted a qualitative study in an attempt to identify SQL dimensions expected in the working environment of a hotel. 84 students and 64 employees from three hotel management institute and three hotel organization from Mangrove city in India participated through a purposeful sampling frame.

Data were collected using Interviews, focus group discussions and open-ended questionnaires, and analyzed in line with grounded theory method.

The content analysis of the data yielded eight dimensions of SQL.

Implications and limitations of this study along with areas for future research are discussed. ; 2008 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved. 1 . Introduction

Studies have affirmed the contribution of competent and loyal employees towards organizational profits (Helen and Tracey, 2000). Apparently, no hotel can have excellent operations without excellent employees (NZ and Jigsaw, 2000).

Such inferences are suggestive of the fact that employees are the most significant resource within the hospitality organization. But on the other hand, this industry is finding it difficult to attract and retain their human resources. The industry is reeling under the crisis of high turnover (Emmer, 2006), adversely impacting the quality of products and services offered (Pizza and Thornburg, 2000) hospitality graduates have an aversion towards entering the hospitality industry (Sullivan and Sullivan, 2000), despite the

time and effort invested in educating themselves for a career in the hotel industry.

So far there has been little research on the emerging problem as to why so many graduates abandon a career in the hospitality industry (Tent, 2008), though some studies have noted that the hospitality graduates hold an unfavorable attitude towards working and making a career in this industry (Tent, 2008), and one of the reason attributed to this is the poor working condition perceived by them (Gang and Gould, 2002). Also, it has been found that students feel disappointed with the real work experience during the internship that negatively influences their intention to seek employment in this industry (Workdays, 1999; Jenkins, 2001). Responding author. Tell. : +91 824 2245140; fax: +91 824 2246700. E-mail addresses:[email protected]Co. In (I. Sandusky),[email protected]Co. UK (S. Anchorite). 0278-4319/\$ – see front matter ; 2008 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved. Dot: 10. 1016/J. Jim. 2008. 11. 003 In the light of the foregoing concerns in the hotel industry, it is a challenge for the management to motivate employees to stay on the Job, by ensuring measures at enhancing the working condition to counter turnover (You, 1999). Research finding has acknowledged the impact of improved quality of work life (SQL) on reduced turnover (Preference, 1982).

Consequently, inducting quality then into the work lives of hospitality employees is essential and inevitable. Since employees have certain expectations when they Join an organization (Woods, 1993), gaining individuals' perspectives of work and life issues before they enter the workforce can provide insights into factors that predict negative outcomes

(Cleveland et al. , 2007). Furthermore, SQL has been envisaged as a process by which an organization responds to employee needs allowing them to share fully in making decisions that design their lives at work (Robbins, 1998) and ensuring the well-being of employees (Siring et al. 001). Against this background, SQL emerge as vital, to counter the turnover. Hence, this study focused on exploring employees' expectation of SQL dimensions. For this study, 84 students and 64 employees from three hospitality institute and three hospitality organizations from Mangrove city in India participated through a purposeful sampling frame. A qualitative methodology was adopted for this study in order to net-in all probable attributes that very evidently or even remotely influenced the work life.

This study complements the existing SQL literature by contributing an empirical study on the employees' expectation of SQL in a hospitality organization. More specifically, it is hoped that the SQL dimensions identified in this study would provide the HRS practitioners and managers with a better insight into those aspects that are critical for enhancing the work life of the employees. I. Sandusky, S. Anchorite / International Journal of Hospitality Management 28 (2009) 328-337 2. Literature review 2. 1 .

Employee expectations Basically, expectation is a belief about the probabilities associated with a future state of affairs (Seers et al. , 2005) and the anticipation of what will happen (Webster, 1995). Generally, employees start Jobs with expectations based on their life experiences, career aspirations, and personal characteristics (Woods, 1993). Thus, tapping the views of entrants provide valuable information regarding work expectations

(Cleveland et al. , 2007). As such, expectation has been linked to satisfaction, by expectation-confirmation theory (Oliver, 1980).

Nevertheless, studies have confirmed expectations to be an important factor influencing employee turnover (Pearson, 1995), and the clarification of expectations from newcomers is the key to reducing turnover (Porter and Steers, 1973). Research has found that individuals' SQL is influenced by his or her work experience and future career expectations (Chatham, 1989). Consequently, given the influence of employee expectation on their Job satisfaction and turnover, the study presented here attempts to explore employee expectation as a means to determine the dimensions of SQL. . 2.

Quality of work life The term “ quality of work life” (SQL) was first introduced in 1972 during an International Labor Relations conference (Han and Einstein, 1990) and has since been viewed in a variety of ways including (a) as a event; (b) as a set of organizational interventions, and (c) as a type of work life by employees (Carlson, 1980). It has been observed that the method of defining SQL stands varied, encompassing several different perspectives (Locos and Reschedule, 1991).

In the past, some researchers have adhered to a broad scope for defining the SQL concept, whereas some have defined it based on specific facets of work life. Sternberg (1977), for example, emphasized that SQL be linked to the wider notion of ‘ quality of life’, thereby covering factors such as general life satisfaction, leisure and well being beyond the workplace. In another study, Davis (1983) defined SQL as, the quality of the relationship between

employees and the total working environment with human dimensions added to the usual technical and economic consideration’.

According to Needle and Lawyer (1983), definitions of SQL tend to change focus continuously and have been used at different times to refer to different variables and may also mean different things to different people in different roles (Asking and Burke, 1987). Further, Crayon (1997) defined it as a complex interaction of the elements of the work system; namely individual task, organizational factors, environment, tools and technology. Apart from this even the method used for defining SQL attributes varied, for example, Siring et al. 2001) studied SQL based on need satisfaction and spillover theories, whereas, Delphi technique was used by Levine et al. (1984) to define the attributes of SQL. Some definitions have identified the attributes comprising SQL, without being industry specific. For example, Walton (1975) listed out the following dimensions of SQL; adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, opportunities for personal growth and placement, satisfaction of social needs at work, protection of employee rights, compatibility between work and nonworking responsibilities, and the social relevance of work life.

As per another study, elements that are relevant to an individuals’ SQL included; task, physical work environment, social environment within the (Cunningham and Beryl, 1990). Later, Luau and Bruce (1998), in their study presaged that SQL construct is dynamic; enveloping attributes like Job security, reward system, training and career advancement opportunities, and participation in decision making as dimensions for SQL. In the past, some

studies have focused only on certain attributes or a particular context, for defining SQL.

For instance, based on the attitudinal response to the prevailing work environment, Mechanism (1988) inferred five distinct dimensions of SQL for the federal employees namely: supervision, relations with co-workers, Job task, relations among work groups and economic well-being. Later, Gosh (1992) identified work environment, monetary compensations for work, hours of work, scope of progression, benefits, and welfare services as elements of SQL based on work activities. Lewis et al. (2001) measured SQL in terms of extrinsic (salaries and other tangible benefits), intrinsic (skills levels, authority and challenges) and prior traits.

In recent studies, Rose et al. (2006) studied SQL in terms of career aspects and organizational climate. From the above analysis of the SQL literature, it can be convincingly reiterated that different people have different perspectives on defining SQL (Davis and Churns, 1975). According to Guest (1979), SQL is a construct that is multifaceted and context-based, and there is still a lack of a universally accepted definition of the SQL concept (Kruger et al. , 2002). Considering the SQL studies so far, the approach and methodology mostly loomed over broader definitions of SQL.

Therefore understanding the attributes of each dimension of SQL, presented a unique challenge and doubtful adaptability to a hospitality work environment. It is observed that despite acknowledging that employees' start Job with expectations that has been found to influence their SQL, a definition founded and formulated on the basis of employee expectation is

conspicuously lacking, in the hospitality context. The present study attempted to address this gap by exploring the stakeholders' expectations of SQL and its attributes.

Knowledge regarding these attributes would increase our understanding of expected SQL construct in a hospitality work environment. 3. Method The above section provides the motivation for this study to investigate the attributes that affects the SQL for the hospitality employees. The study adopts the strategy of using phenomenology, because of its appropriateness afforded in understanding the lived experiences of the respondents (Crewel, 2003), to examine the SQL expectations from the undergraduates of the hospitality management course and the hotel employees.

The steps followed for this study is graphically presented in Fig. . 3. 1 .

Sampling and data collection The sample for the study comprised of hotel employees and final semester hospitality management students. These were the Fig. 1. Methodological steps for this study. 330 students who have undergone one semester of internship during their degree course. Apart from this, most of them take up employment in various hotels during their vacations. This experience of working in the industry facilitates better insight into their expectation of SQL.

The student respondents' belonged to the age group 19-21. These respondents were selected on the basis of the maximum exposure they ad, working in various departments and hotels. The percentage of male respondents was 51. 9% and that of female respondents being 48. 1%. From among the employees involved in the survey, 61. 8% were male and 38. 2%



were female. Of the total respondents, 26.5% belonged to the food and beverage service department, 29.4% belonged to the food and beverage production department, 17.6% belonged to the housekeeping department, and 26.5% were from the front office department. At the time of the study 44.1% of the respondents belonged to the less than 31 years of age, 32.4% were between 31 and 40 years of age, and finally 23.5% were more than 40 years of age. All of them were either diploma holders or graduates in hospitality management and their work experience in this industry ranged from 8 to 30 years. The researcher secured permission from two hotels belonging to the four star category and one boutique hotel for obtaining responses from their employees on roll.

The rationale for choosing these hotels was that, two of the organizations had dynamic human resource development practices in place and recorded low turnover, whereas, the third organization had high turnover. The researcher sensed diverse and mismatched feelings regarding SQL among the employees of these three organizations. This drew enthusiasm to finalize these organizations for the study, since the disparate reactions were expected to enrich the study by capturing varied elements of work life attributes.

Barman (1989) recommends that between one and five organizations are appropriate in cases where the primary focus is on qualitative interviews. Similarly, three hotel management institutes conducting an eight semester course in hospitality management was chosen for collecting responses from their final semester hospitality graduates. The study espouses purposeful

sampling technique for contracting maximum variations in sampling and capturing axiom attributes pertaining to SQL framework, assisting the basic research purpose (Orlando et al. , 1993).

Participation was voluntary, confidentiality was guaranteed, and the organization fully endorsed their participation. It is seen that, there are several ways to increase the likelihood of a credible and trustworthy findings and interpretations from qualitative research (Lincoln and Cuba, 1985). Aptly, Triangulation, which involves using multiple sources and method of data collection to verify or Justify a theme, is one way of enhancing trustworthiness and credibility (Crewel, 2003). According to Dentin and Lincoln (2003), triangulation (deploying different methods) can be seen as an alternative to validation.

Hence, for this study data was collected by means of interviews, open-ended questionnaires and focus group discussions. 3. 1. 1 . Interviews Interviews provide an opportunity for detailed investigation into each individuals' personal perspective and an in-depth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomenon is found (Crewel, 2003). Also, qualitative methods of data collection need to take place events (Crewel, 2003). And, as felt comfortable by the employees, the interviews were conducted in the staff cafeteria.

Besides this, in order that the participants have the opportunity to wholly explain their experiences, interviews started off with open- ended queries like, “ Can you think of any aspects that contributes to a good work life”, and alternatively, “ Can you think of some aspects that made your work life

experience bad.. The respondents were allowed to narrate incident after incident, regarding those aspects of the Work life' influencing their SQL positively or adversely, affording a critical insight for this study. The interviews were taped, transcribed, and then coded following the process described by Strauss and Carbon (1990).

To start with, the interviewees were briefed on the subject matter prior to interviews, thereby facilitating validity and reliability by enabling them to gain an understanding of the information being requested (Saunders et al. , 2000). Interviews generally lasted 20-30 min which were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Participants' consent was obtained prior to the interview. Once the interview was over, a brief summary of what it meant to the researcher was discussed with the respondent as a way to ensure content validity. . 1. 2.

Open-ended questionnaire Those respondents contemptuous of expressing orally to the queries put forth for this study opted to respond to the open-ended questionnaire. According to Neumann (1997), open-ended comments are often the best way to learn, ' how a respondent thinks [and] to discover what is really important to him or her'. Opened responses are thus a rich and relatively unique source of data that privilege workers' own accounts and representations of their work experiences. The open-ended questionnaire comprised of two incomplete sentences, they being; (a) I would like a workplace that has... ) I would dislike a workplace that has... These statements were framed after intense debate and discussion with practicing managers and academicians regarding its merit on shelling out every

possible view. The above two statements was followed by a request to list out 1 (minimum) to 10 (maximum) attributes which according to the respondent is decisive in facilitating a good SQL for the employees in this industry. The open-ended interactions have several other benefits. First, the employee can provide his or her own views without any constrains.

Second, respondents' words can be evaluated for embedded emotions and integral ideas pertaining to the construct under study. This questionnaire was pilot tested on eleven respondents and on being convinced of the response quality, it was then finalized as a tool for data collection. 3. 1. 3.

**Focus group discussion** In general, focus groups allow researchers to concentrate on a single topic in depth, and gain a better understanding of the participants' responses. The group members are more likely to challenge each others' views, argue for or change their own views, and bring forward issues that are important to them (Barman and Bell, 2003).

Themes were constructed y triangulating the participants' stories and experiences. Focus groups thus reflect the process through which meaning is constructed in everyday life (Barman and Bell, 2003) and is therefore deemed as especially informative for the purpose of theory development in this study. 3. 2. **Data coding** To ensure that sufficient data was collected, the author followed the argument that data collection should continue until composition of data and the number of responses collected using various tools. The responses of the interview with the students were coded as SSL, SO, .. ASS; wherein

SSL represents the response from the first student; SO, the response from the second student and so on. The responses from the employees were coded as EI, E, .. EYE, 328-337 Table 1 Chart representing the mode of data collection and the number of respondent. Sample category Potential employees Present Employees Interview 1 5 25 Open-ended questionnaire 57 30 Focus group 3 (each group comprising of four members) = 12 3 (each group comprising of three members) = 9 331 Total responses 84 64 wherein EI represents the response from the first employee; E the response from the second employee and so on.

The institutes were coded as I1, I2, I3 and the hotels are identified in this study as H1, H2O and HE. For the focus group discussion, group members from the first institute were coded as I1-a, I1-b, I1-c, I1-d; where a, b, c, d were the codes assigned to each of the participant from this institute. Similarly the codes for second and third institute group members were I2-a, I2-b, I2-c, I2-d and I3- a, I3-b, I3-c, I3-d. Parallel coding procedure was adopted for the focus group members from the hotels; the first hotel group members were labeled as H1-a, H1-b, H1-c and the responses from the second and third hotel were coded as H2O-a, H2O-b,

H2O-c; HE-a, HE-b, HE-c, respectively. 4. Analysis 4. 1 . Overview of the SQL construct development A grounded theory approach that can be derived inductively through the systematic collection and analysis of data pertaining to a phenomenon (Strauss and Carbon, 1990) is adopted for this study. Grounded theory methods (Strauss and Carbon, 1990) were used to evolve codes and develop theory. The data analysis phase of this study involved the

researcher, and an expert, specialized in HRS (human resources) and well versed with the grounded theory methodology. Data collection and item classification was carried out simultaneously.

The early coding phase was intentionally kept flexible and reflexive allowing the data to stimulate thinking about themes and their relationships, focusing on the emerging theory and the need for subsequent data collection.

Although there are many text analysis software, Microsoft Excel software was employed for critical reasons as follows: (a) The intention of this study was not to calculate the frequency of occurrence of a theme, rather to list and classify the emerging themes. (b) As the analysis and comparison of themes were taking place, the spreadsheet provided a glimpse of the various discharges and themes within each category. (c) Insertion of categories, themes into the existing spreadsheet and alphabetic sorting was possible using this software. (d) Participants offered rich in-depth narratives of their experiences and its essence could be captured only by human psyche and human analysis. Items were classified based on the understanding of its content in the circumstantial context. As new existing dimension, then it was sub-classified under this dimension, else, if it was agreed upon as entirely unrelated to the existing dimension, then it was labeled as a new dimension.

The classification for the theme followed the same logic. Fig. 2 provides a graphical representation of the classification process. The data were categorized based on 'commonalities and differences' across emerging themes (Gharry and Groundhog, 2002). The SQL construct in this study comprised of eight dimensions. The dimensions and themes that emerged is

summarized in Table 2. 4. 2. Analysis and discussion of the SQL construct 4.

2. 1 . Job characteristics During the interview sessions, majority of the respondents emphasized their preference for taking up ‘ challenging task and ‘ interesting work.

These responses reflect the sentiments of those associated with the socio-technical movement, contemplating that an interesting and challenging work would lead to employee satisfaction (Muffed, 2006). Nevertheless, variety and challenge at work was found to positively influence Job satisfaction in a study involving occupational therapist Oinks, 1991). Similar sentiment emerged from the respondents of this study like; “. . I try out new frillings and layouts every week and this gives me great pleasure and I experience Joy at my work.. (El 1: challenging and interesting work).

The open-ended questionnaire, had majority reporting that ‘ extended shift’ and ‘ routine over load of work, lowered their enthusiasm. Though most of the respondents do not mind working for a 9-10 h shift, they experienced physical and mental fatigue after prolonged shifts, impinging on their efficiency and well being, the next day. Since work overload is a salient feature in this industry, response confers with the conclusion drawn by Shelley and Andrea (2007), that employees’ perception of work overload has negative implications for mental and physical health, affecting their work life.

In contrast to this, a large number of respondents felt that they can work efficiently and experienced a sense of fulfillment, when they have the liberty to solve their guest complaints, instead of approaching the duty manager. With the exception of the employees from hotel HE, participants from the

other two hotels revealed, having opportunities to act autonomously and the freedom to assume responsibility for the way they carry out their work. The outcome of having autonomy is reflected in the response from an employee in the service department: "... Guest was complaining about a dish that was served.. I decided to serve him a complementary dessert, he was taken by surprise and appreciated the gesture... I felt happy, that I had the freedom to take remedial measures by myself. . (H2O-b: autonomy) Fig. 2. Process for classification of items. 332 study. No. 1 Dimensions Job characteristics Themes (attributes) a. Challenging task b. Interesting and satisfying work c. Workload that is manageable d. Long and unpredictable work hours e. Autonomy a. Matching qualification b.

Matching individual interest a. In terms of growth and performance b. Adherence to safety and hygiene standards c. Image of the organization in the society a. Adequate and fair compensation b. Opportunities for training and development c. Orientation d. Performance appraisal e. Fringe benefits a. Team spirit, b. Cooperation, c. Friendly, d. Trust, e. Responsible, f. Respect, g. Support, h. Communication a. Enough working space, better lighting, and good air circulation b. Ergonomically designed work station and equipments, use of latest technology a.

Time for social/family life a. Customers showing disrespect to hospitality employees and usage of harsh words b. Customer praising the employee for a good service/food 23 Person-Job fit Company image 4 HRS policies 5 Work group relationship 678 Physical working conditions Work-life balance Interaction with customers Moreover, studies have found that, employee



autonomy would be particularly appropriate for such complex tasks as service delivery (Hooligan, 2002) that has immense relevance in a hotel organization. . 2. 2. Person-Job fit Another potential area that impinges on the work life of the hospitality employees was the fit between the person performing the Job and the Job being performed. Primarily the related themes that emerged in this category was that, employees' would like to be placed in Job matching his/her qualification and interest. An apprehension of misfit seemed to bother a majority of the potential employees and also a few recent recruits. An excerpt of the response echoes this. “.. Actually I had applied for a position in front office for which I am qualified and am interested in, but I am placed in the housekeeping department, with an excuse that there is a shortage of staff in housekeeping, and I would be soon transferred to the front office. I feel I am a total misfit for the housekeeping department... Would have enjoyed my Job as a front office staff... This is demeaning.. EYE: Person-Job misfit). Such emotions corroborates with the Job fit theory that; each individual possesses unique drawn to and most suited for (Starks, 2007).

Considering this frame, respondents in this study expressed their displeasure in case of a mismatch between their interest and Job requirements, as was also evident from the responses to the open-ended statement; “ I would dislike a workplace.. Capturing phrases like ‘ places me in a Job that suits my background’, ‘ assigns Job that interests me’. 4. 2. 3. Company image The image associated with an organization also emerged as a potent influencer on the laity of work life.

The themes captured, characteristic of an organization, that the respondent was motivated to happily connect and relate were: (a) respondents would like to work for an organization that is growing (b) respondents are happy when their organization is performing well in the industry (c) organization adheres to safety standards and hygiene policies (d) respondents are happy to work in an organization that is well known and has a brand image of repute. These responses substantiate the finding of the study by Cable and Turban (2003), that a firms' reputation is a source of pride for its members.