

## Factors Influencing Employee Performance in Hotel-A Comparative Study of Government and Privately Owned Hotels in Eritrea

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### ABSTRACT

*The main objective of this study is to investigate the main factors affecting the performance of employees in the hotel industry in Eritrea. A survey was conducted in the city of Asmara on a sample of 150 employees from 4 private and government owned hotels. The survey research design was employed using a self-administered questionnaire as the data collection instrument. Five factors, namely motivation, leadership, employee-employer relationship, training, and working conditions consisting of 18-items which might influence performance have been developed. The items measuring the constructs were adapted from the extant literature. Data was analyzed using regression and correlation test. The results have shown that there is a positive and significant relationship between motivation, training, working conditions and employee performance. The results also reveal that training as a factor influencing performance is more prevalent in privately-owned hotels than government hotels. However, leadership and employee-employer relationship emerged to have no significant relationship.*

**Keywords:** *Employee performance, hotel businesses, leadership, motivation, working conditions*

### INTRODUCTION

The way of handling an employees and making them to perform at their excellence is a critical factor because employees are treasure, power, and backbone of an organization's success. Most of organizations are fully aware of the importance of the employee performance. Increasingly, employee performance or to find out the ways through which high level of employee's performance can be achieved is becoming one of the decisive factors for any organization success. Manpower performance can be increased by putting efforts to factors that enhance the employee's motivational level, creativity, and job satisfaction and comfort working place environment, etc. Every employee has a unique collection of values and beliefs usually based on national and cultural norms (Al-Malallah and Regondola, 2014). These unique values and beliefs play an important role in their performance.

Employee performance is essential for any organization, because an organization's successfulness is dependent on creativity, innovation, satisfaction and commitment shown by its employees (Ramlall, 2008). Furthermore,

good employee performances and productivity growth are important to stabilize the economy; to improve the better living standards, to grow up the higher wages, and to increase the available goods for consumption.

In any organization employees are the real assets because the achievement or failure of any organization relies on its employee as well. The significance of employee in hotel industry is of paramount importance as the hotel industry is naturally manpower (labour) concentrated. Employee performance is more significant in this industry as employees are having direct contact with the customer and also it is employee of the hotel industry that pleases its customers (SHIK, 2017). The motivation of the employees is a major issue in hotel industry as it directly corresponds to employee turnover and overall quality of service of the concerned hotels (Chen, 2013). The overall profitability of the hotels depends on the service quality provided by the hotels to the customers. Hence, the prime concern of the hotels is to motivate the employees so as to facilitate such an endeavor of the hoteliers. According to Zhang (2016), the performance of the employees plays an important role in determining the profitability of

the hotels as employees are one of the most vital assets of the hotels. This is because the hospitality industry is manpower-intensive industry for which the hotels needs to emphasize on the performance of the employees and should take appropriate measures for enhancing their performances. Further, the performance of the employees is crucial in the hotel industry as the guests have direct interaction with the employees and thus it is the employees of the hotels that are responsible for satisfying the guests.

Employee performance is one of the most important bases for the institution's foundation so the investigation of the factor that would affect it is off a great deal purpose. Organization performance is entirely based on employees' performance, that is, if the employees' in the organization have a better performance, overall the organization are in a higher performance and vice versa. Several studies have shown a relationship between employees' performance and performance of the organization (for example, see Collis and Montgomery, 1995; Mwita, 2000; Abbas and Yaqoob, 2009). To this end, this study attempts to identify factors affecting the performance of employees in hotel industry in Eritrea.

Kuada (2015) shows that there is need to study organizational performance in East Africa since the only research available is for large multinational corporations and not the hospitality industry. In the African continent, the hospitality industry is deemed as one which has employees that are lowly paid and thus their motivation towards getting a specific task done is an issue. To the best of our knowledge, ours is the first study to identify the factors influencing employee performance in hotel industry. Since this report is the first of its kind for Eritrea, it provides new knowledge regarding employee performance in Eritrea.

Employee performance is considered as the product of many factors that could normally have impact on the working behavior of employees such as motivation, leadership, employee-employer relations, training, conflict, work condition, compensation, employee participation, and so on. However, in this study specifically five factors that affect performance are considered. Thus, the main objective of this study is to investigate motivation, leadership, employee-employer relationship, training, and working conditions variables affecting

employee performance. The specific objective of this study is to answer the following questions: *What are the factors that influence the performance of employees in hotel businesses?*

## **BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES**

The service industry, especially hotel management becomes highly competitive and people demand quality service on time. To provide service at the best hospitality standard is the vision of all the service providers to attain their mission. Top management focuses on building a strong culture by actively participating in delivering the quality services by engaging the workforce and develops the long lasting relationship with the customers (Maung and Walsh, 2018).

A study by Khuong *et al.* (2016) illustrated that the factors of career development, team spirit, relationship at work, compensation and benefit, and working environment directly and indirectly affected employee performance through job satisfaction. The causal relationships between the factors of career development, team spirit, relationship at work, compensation and benefit, working environment and job stress and job satisfaction and employee performance are tested and confirmed.

The motivation of the employees is a major issue in hotel industry as it directly corresponds to employee turnover and overall quality of service of the concerned hotels (Chen, 2013). The overall profitability of the hotels depends on the services quality provided by the hotels to the customers. In addition, Suharno *et al.*, (2017), argued that it has been statistically proven that motivation individually or partially has positive and significant effect on employee performance – if motivation is high, thus performance in carrying out the obligations and duties will also be high, and vice versa.

According to Suharno *et al.*, (2017), leadership style individually or partially has positive and significant effect on employee performance—if leadership is strong in directing and leading employees, thus performance in carrying out the obligations and duties will also be good. In fact, Biswas (2012) cited that leadership not directly will affect employee performance, rather leadership will positively affect job satisfaction and eventually job satisfaction will significantly influence employee performance.

Chen (2013) stated that, by improving the relationship with other employees, it is possible to improve the overall performance and achieve the organizational goal collaboratively. In order to build relationship within the organizations, the managers need to arrange counseling and assistance where the employees can share their views. Thus, the relationship motivates the employees to work cooperatively in a team and improve overall performance. Generally, climate factors, interaction between employees, relationships between employer and employees and individual perception towards employee job description will influence the degree of employee perform their jobs. It is because employee will have more confidence if they have adequate information to support the tasks (Chei *et al.*, 2014).

Hanzaee and Mirvaisi (2013) mentioned that the value and quality of the hotel services are defined by the customers, the employees that are responsible for providing the guest experience should not only be trained but also motivated to meet the service quality and value expectations of the guests. The human resources managers as well the hoteliers have a crucial role for training the hotel staff and also motivating them for delivering exceptional service experiences to the customers. Employee growth means to expand the abilities of an individual employee and organization as a whole and research has shown that there is a direct link among employee growth and employee performance (Imran and Tanveer, 2015).

Research has shown that non-financial rewards and incentives such as recognitions, respect at the workplace, good working atmosphere, etc. can increase the employee involvement and motivation in the hotel employees to provide better or quality services (Kim and Lee, 2013). Chiang and Hsieh (2012) stated that the psychological researches that provided various theories and studies of employee motivation explain well the importance of non-financial incentives in motivating the employees. Bornstein (2007) also indicated that in organizations where employees are exposed to stressful working conditions, productivity are negatively influenced and that there is a negative impact on the delivery of service and if working conditions are good, productivity increase and there is a positive impact on the delivery of service. Employees and work environment is interrelated. Employees will work harder and improve performance once

they have good working environment. The ability for employees to share knowledge with one another depends on how the environment utilize. This helps organization to improve effectiveness in terms of profit, level of competitiveness and so on (Akinyele, 2010).

Therefore, based on the above reviews and discussions we propose the following hypotheses:

#### **Hypothesis 1**

H0: There is no significant relationship between motivation and employee performance.

H1: There is a significant relationship between motivation and employee performance.

#### **Hypothesis 2**

H0: There is no significant relationship between leadership and employee performance.

H1: There is a significant relationship between leadership and employee performance.

#### **Hypothesis 3**

H0: There is no significant relationship between employee—employer relationship and employee performance.

H1: There is a significant relationship between employee—employer relationship and employee performance.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

H0: There is no significant relationship between training and employee performance.

H1: There is a significant relationship between training and employee performance.

#### **Hypothesis 5**

H0: There is no significant relationship between working conditions and employee performance.

H1: There is a significant relationship between working conditions and employee performance.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Sample and Procedures**

This study investigates the factors influencing the performance of employees in hotel business in Eritrea. In conducting this study, primary and secondary data have been used. This study is mainly quantitative in nature. Primary data were collected from individual employees using survey questionnaire. Due to its capacity to cover large population efficiently and easiness to conduct mainly through questionnaire, survey

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strategy is an optimal choice for such kind of study (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). A close-ended, structured self-administered questionnaire was distributed to employees in selected hotels located in Asmara. A total of 150 employees from both private and government owned hotels have been included in this study based on simple random sampling.

This sample size is adequate for analyzing whether the performance of the employees is driven by the factors such as motivation, leadership, employee-employer relationship, training, and working conditions.

Secondary data have been extracted from various sources such as academic journals, books, other internet sources...etc.

### Dependent Variables

In this study, the dependent variable is employee performance.

### Independent Variables

Five factors, namely motivation, leadership, employee-employer relationship, training, and working conditions which might influence performance have been included as independent variables in the regression model.

The collected data has been analyzed using SPSS version 20. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables through regression

**Table 1.** Cronbach's alpha test results

Item	Component	Cronbach alpha overall
		<b>0.814</b>
Motivation	0.787	
Leadership	0.698	
Employee-employer relationship	0.594	
Training	0.729	
Working conditions	0.916	

As can be seen from table 1, the test results show that Cronbach's alpha result of all performance indicators was 0.814.

This implies that data collected using all the performance indicator values were reliable since the Cronbach's alpha value was above 0.70.

The alpha for the 'employee-employer relationship' is relatively low.

However, generally the survey as a whole was consistently measuring performance of employees towards an underlying construct.

analysis.

In this study, regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses.

The various influencing factors (motivation, leadership, employee-employer relationship, training, and working conditions) were regressed as independent variables against the dependent variable of 'performance'.

A set of Likert-type scales was used to measure pertinent constructs. Each of 'motivation,' 'leadership,' 'employer-employee relationship,' 'training,' and 'working conditions' category was answered using a five-point scale, where 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree. Thus, a total of five (5) variables consisting of eighteen (18) items have been employed to measure the factors affecting the performance of employees. A reliability test was run to determine the extent to which a construct of performance of employees was being measured.

To measure the reliability of the gathered data, Cronbach's alpha was used. An alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher indicates that the collected data is reliable as it has a relatively high internal consistency and can be generalized to reflect opinions of all respondents in the target population (Zinbarg, 2005).

Table 1 shows Cronbach's alpha of all indicators. Cronbach's alpha results in the component column were computed using the results of all indicators.

## DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

The frequency distribution of the respondents' background is given in Table 2. Of the total respondents, 52 (34.7%) are male, while 98 (65.3%) are females indicating that the majority of employees in the hotel industry are females. Regarding the respondents educational level, 70 (46.7%) were having college and above education level, 66 (44%) high school, 7 (4.7%) middle school, 6 (4%) junior and 1 (0.7%) with no formal education. The largest group being college and above is the contribution of the

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formal education, that is, Hotel and Tourism Management at a college level in Eritrea. In addition, coincidentally the proportion of

marital status is the same in that 50% are single, while 50% are also married.

**Table 2.** Summary indicators of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	52	34.7
Female	98	65.3
<b>Education</b>		
No formal education	1	0.7
Elementary	6	4
Middle school	7	4.7
High school	66	44
College and above	70	46.7
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	75	50
Married	75	50

Regarding age, the mean age (years) of the respondents was almost 34 years (with the youngest age being 21 years old while the oldest 85 years old). As far as work experience is concerned, the minimum and maximum

individual employee's work experience ranges from 6 months to 70 years, respectively. The average work experience of employees in the sampled hotels is 7 years. Table 3 below provides the result.

**Table 3.** Respondents' age and work experience

Age and work experience			
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Age	21	85	33.51
Work experience	0.5	70	7.13

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the basic features of the data in the study. They provide simple summaries of the sample and measures. Thus, to measure the independent variables, using an eighteen item questionnaire related to the variables ('motivation,' 'leadership,' 'employee-employer relationship,' 'training,' and 'working conditions'), which

possibly influence employee performance has been presented in Table 4. The mean indicates to what extent the respondents agree or disagree with the different statements. The higher the mean, the more likelihood the respondents agree with the statement; while the lower the mean, indicated the respondents disagree with the statement.

**Table 4.** Means and standard deviations of variables

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Motivation	2.81	0.723
Leadership	2.62	0.843
Employee-employer relationship	2.71	0.795
Training	2.33	1.260
Working conditions	2.67	0.867
Overall	2.63	0.898

As can be seen from table 4, respondents believe that the five variables presented affect their performance if they are provided by their respective hotels in comparison to the required standards—motivation (mean = 2.81; sd. = 0.723); leadership (mean = 2.62; sd. = 0.843); employer-employee relationship (mean = 2.71; sd. = 0.795); and working conditions (mean =

2.67; sd. = 0.867). Besides, although training scores relatively low means (mean = 2.33; sd. = 1.260), which is less than the average of 2.50 in a scale of five (5), generally, respondents agree that the five variables affect their performances while working at hotels.

After observing the results using descriptive statistics, we also conducted further bivariate

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Pearson correlations for all the research variables used in the regression equations. As Table 5 shows, all of the variables ( $p < .01$  2-tailed values) are related to 'performance.'

Although it indicates that there is a relationship among the independent variables, there are no collinearity problems as checked in the regression models.

**Table 5.** Correlations for all variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Performance	1					
Motivation	.568**	1				
Leadership	.512**	.525**	1			
Employer–employee relationship	.370**	.402**	.553**	1		
Training	.499**	.349**	.412**	.318**	1	
Working condition	.638**	.546**	.547**	.426**	.495**	1

Notes: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The aim of this study was to determine the factors influencing employee performance. Thus, in order to test the stated hypotheses, a linear relationship was estimated between independent and dependent variables through a regression model. A regression analysis was used to establish the influence of the independent variables (motivation, leadership, employee-employer relationship, training, and working conditions) on dependent variable (performance). The regression model for employee performance can be expressed with the following equation:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + e \quad (1)$$

Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.719 <sup>a</sup>	.517	.500	.484

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	36.079	5	7.216	30.820	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	33.714	144	.234		
Total	69.793	149			

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-.152	.180	-.842	.401
Motivation	.241	.070	3.460	.001*
Leadership	.091	.065	1.411	.160
Employee-employer relationship	-.002	.061	-.034	.973
Training	.105	.037	2.853	.005*
Working conditions	.271	.062	4.355	.000*

The significance value of 0.000 and F-values and  $R^2$  values for all the variables shows that the model is significant enough to measure the relationship between variables. Furthermore, a positive relationship was found between

motivation, training, working conditions and employee performance. Based on the findings, the model entailed that motivation was having significant relationship ( $0.001 \leq 0.05$ ) with performance; training scored a significance

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value of 0.005 (less than 0.05); and working conditions also scored a significance value of 0.000 (less than 0.05) leading to the acceptance of each alternative hypothesis of significant relationship between motivation, training, working conditions and employee performance. However, the relationship of ‘leadership’, and ‘employee-employer relationship’ with employee performance was insignificant. Hence, each null hypothesis of no significant relationship for leadership and employee-employer relationship was accepted and the alternative hypotheses that there is a significant relationship were rejected. Thus, it seems plausible to conclude that hypothesis 2 (leadership) and hypothesis 3 (employee-employer relationship) as factors influencing employee performance are rejected.

The model for the above regression analysis is as follows:

$$\text{Performance} = -0.152 + 0.241(\text{motivation}) + 0.091(\text{leadership}) - 0.002(\text{employee-employer relationship}) + 0.105(\text{training}) + 0.271(\text{working conditions})$$

Moreover, two models were estimated in this study in order to compare the factors influencing

performance in government and privately owned hotels. Regression analysis was used to test how motivation, leadership, employee-employer relationships, training, and working conditions variables significantly affect performance of employees. Table 6 shows the results of our regression across the two hotels. As can be seen from Table 6, the significance value of less than 0.05 and F-values and R<sup>2</sup> values for all the variables shows that the model is significant enough to measure the relationship between variables. The regression outcome shows that motivation and working conditions were positively and significantly related to performance (sig. value = .045, p < .05) and (sig. value = .025, p < .05), respectively in government hotels, while in private hotels motivation (sig. value = .000, p < .05), training (sig. value = .000, p < .05), and working conditions (sig. value = .000, p < .05) were positively and significantly related to performance. The results are more or less similar. Nonetheless, the only notable difference is that training is more prevalent in private hotels thus affecting employee performance.

**Table 6.** Regression results for government and private hotels

Variable	Model 1 (Government hotels)		Model 2 (Private hotels)	
	R <sup>2</sup> change	β	R <sup>2</sup> change	β
Motivation	.371	.214*	.819	.383*
Leadership		.115		.066
Employee-employer relationship		.010		-.101
Training		.057		.152*
Working condition		.260*		.293*
N		150		150
F- value	11.099*		39.818*	

Note: \* p < .05.

Generally, with the test results above, it has been found that in both cases, that is, in the first model where government and private hotels analyzed together; and in the second model (Table 6) where both hotels are analyzed individually, ‘leadership’ and ‘employee-employer relationships’ are not factors influencing employee performance.

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The objective of this study is to identify the factors that influence employee performance in the hotel industry in Eritrea. The study employed two models using five variables—namely motivation, leadership, employee-employer relationship, training, and working

conditions to establish if a relationship exists with employee performance in the hotel industry. The study found out that there is a positive and significant relationship between motivation, training, working conditions and performance, while leadership and employee-employer relationship emerged to have no significant relationship. On the other hand, in the second model, the study revealed that there is a positive relationship between motivation, working conditions and employee performance in the government hotels. Similarly, the relationship established by this study between motivation, training, working conditions and employee performance was strong in the private hotels. Nonetheless, a considerable difference

was found that training influences performance only in private hotels. This may indicate that private hotels provide area specific training for enhancing employee skills and knowledge thereby increasing performance.

The empirical results of the analyses in this study suggest that the impact of motivation, training, and working conditions on employee performance is significant. These could be owed to the fact that employees are satisfied with their current salary, rewarded for the quality of their efforts, received recognition and appreciation from their supervisor, got incentive and bonus and promotion as well, and that the tips and encouragement given by customers is so considerable that influencing employees' performance. In addition, the training provided to employees on their new jobs in giving them direction or to the current employees to enhance their skill and knowledge is enabling them to perform well. Finally, availability of adequate facilities, arrangement of working hours, and the general working environment affects employee performance. Generally, our results support the findings reported in other studies (see Chen, 2013; Chei *et al.*, 2014; Suharno *et al.*, 2017; Imran and Tanveer, 2015; Kim and Lee, 2013; Chiang and Hsieh, 2012; Bornstein, 2007).

Furthermore, the study did not find any significant relationship between leadership and employee performance. Perhaps the results could be attributed to the situation that there is no or little employee participation in the activities of the hotels; an absence of proper mechanism for handling employee complaints and grievances by the management; and lack of clear and strong leadership directives. Thus, unlike many studies, the influence of leadership on performance has been minimal in the Eritrean case. However, the results of this study concur with the findings of Biswas (2012) who found that leadership does not directly affect employee performance, but contradicts with the findings of Suharno *et al.* (2017).

The most noticeable result of this analysis was that employee-employer relationship is not related at all to performance. In a country where it is collectivist society (extended family system), socialization and social cohesiveness is high and considered as social insurance, it is surprising to see that employee-employer relationship doesn't influence employee performance. Normally, one would expect that cohesiveness and coordination of employee with

employers; visibility of management in all activities; and management's prompt cooperative interdisciplinary relationship with employees to increase their performance. However, this didn't hold true in the Eritrean case. This finding contradicts the finding of Chen (2013), Chei *et al.* (2014), Kim and Lee (2013), and Chiang and Hsieh (2012) who reported that employee-employer relationships or relationship among the employees increase their performance.

The work reported in this paper examines the relationship between motivation, leadership, training, employee-employer relationships, working conditions and employee performance. The findings of the present study offer important academic implications. While it makes important contributions to our understanding of employee performance in a developing country, this study is clearly only a first step and additional research is needed on this issue in other geographical settings to better understand the generalisability of these findings. Future research would benefit from including a large survey to study how the factors included in this study also affect hotel performance such as profits or productivity or output per labour.

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