Research Paper

Management
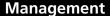
Reducing Stress Through Spiritual Training in Hotel Industry

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ABSTRACT

Human resource is one of the major factors of distinguishing one hotel property from other. This edge of a hotel property over other is possible through retention of satisfied employees. The satisfaction of employees may be associated with remuneration, employee welfare, work-life balance, professional growth, etc. The present paper attempts to understand levels of distress of hotel employees and the role of spiritual training in reducing the same. The study tries to encompass related studies conducted in hotel sector and behold methods of spiritual training used for releasing distress among employees. Attrition rate is found to be high in hotel industry in comparison to other industries. Techniques of spiritual training have been identified for spiritual development of employees and viz-a-viz employee satisfaction.

KEYWORDS

Introduction

Tourism and hospitality industry is major sector playing pivotal role in Indian economy, and accounts for around 12.4 per cent of the total employment in India. The growth and development of any hotel or industry specific is directly related to performance of employees. And the performance of employees depends on job satisfaction. Factors like proper compensation, employee welfare, motivation, work scheduling, incentives and benefits, performance appraisals, job design, health and safety and social security measures have been identified by many authors [Denamin, 2008; Shaskova, 2010; Naghshbandia, Afkhami and Moradi, 2012]. But it is been observed that hotel industry in India has high turnover due to various factors like: low compensation, dissatisfaction with working environment, long working hours, lack of clear human resource policy, transparency in promotional policies, empowerment in decision making, poor job prospects, working shifts, job insecurity, etc. Looking at the facts, it is been apprehended that the proper human resource policies, their implementation and employee training can affect the satisfaction level of the employees and performance accordingly. Various authors have identified spiritual development through spiritual training can meet the challenge of distressing employees for various individual factors (Roja & Kleiner, 2000; Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008; Flaxmana & Bonda, 2010; Locander & Weinberg, 2014). Spirituality in the workplace is related with nourishment of both vertical and horizontal dimensions of employees' spirituality at work. Spiritual development of employees is associated with growth at workplace and contribution towards society. Vertical spirituality may include devoting time for meditation and horizontal may include factors like environmental sensitivity, social responsibility. Spirituality has many definitions, but at its core spirituality can lead to a clearer life purpose, better personal relationships, better performance at work and enhanced stress management skills. Many may take spirituality in the form of religious observance, prayer, meditation or a belief in a higher power and for others, it can be found in nature, music, art or a secular community. Spiritual training may have certain benefits; it can help a person in focusing on personal and later to organisational goals. Spiritual training may help employees to uncover what's most meaningful in their life. Spiritual training provides realisation of being connected to oneself and with the world, leading to inner peace during difficult times. Moreover, spiritual training helps in releasing control, expanding one's support network and above all lead a healthier life.

Background of study

Workplace spirituality plays a significant role in establishing a strong, well understood, encouraging positive organizational culture by enhancing employee motivation level and in improving employee productivity and organisational performance (Yogesh & Srishti, 2010). Roja and Kleiner (2000) suggested that company could arrange physiology or psychology courses about stress for employees, gives yoga training or massage service to the employees or give the employees training about time management and anger management, etc to understand themselves and to motivate themselves in a less stressful way. Holland & Neimeyer (2005) indicated that daily spiritual experiences might mitigate physical, cognitive, and emotional forms of burnout in the workplace. In addition, a negative correlation was found between the amount of end-of-life training received and burnout in the physical and cognitive domains. Moreover the unique stressors faced by practitioners who frequently come in contact with situations that involve end-of-life issues, successful coping mechanisms and preventative measures that can help lessen their distress need to be more fully explored. Past research has shown that these health care workers can benefit from a variety of personal and professional factors such as staff retreats, weekly support groups, daily journaling, and maintaining a sense of humor (Riordan & Saltzer, 1992). Significantly, Benson and Roehlkepartain (2008) addressed that the spiritual development of young people has the potential to strengthen youth work and its outcomes and pointed out positive impacts of spiritual development for youth. Donatelle and Hawkins (1989) determined that stress on the job costs businesses over 150 billion dollars per year. Further, Ernesto (1997) recommended that stress management programming is an important component of any worksite health promotion program. Flaxmana and Bonda (2010) while in their study of 311 local government employees randomly assigned to stress management training based on acceptance and commitment therapy, which consisted of three half-day training sessions programme, and imparted a mixture of mindfulness and values-based action skills. Across a 6-month assessment period, stress management training resulted in a significant reduction in employee distress. Furthermore, Shankar & Keerthi (2012) suggested that stress reduction of employees could be achieved through conducting various programs like vocational tours, cultural programs, sports, classes for yoga and meditations, meeting, and counseling. Arme and Miguel (2008) opined that when employees experience workplace spirituality, they affectively attach to their organisations and get instrumentally committed. Malikeh and Elham (2013) stated that spirituality improves employee well-being and quality of work life. Moreover, the organisations involved in encouraging spiritual experience had a positive impact on organisational performance and profitability.

Methodology

It is argued that spiritual training is inextricably significant, but ought to ensure that researchers and academicians have the opportunity to gain multiple perspectives on the phenomenon they are studying. The review of literature consulted so far indicates some traceable links to empirical studies that address the possibility for introspection of spiritual training constructively. Thus, the interpretive methodology is adopted to identify the challenges faced by employees in hotel industry especially in India and to provide insight of how this stress could be managed in the future.

Findings and Results:

The study has explored various factors, techniques and measures for stress management. The fundamental objective was to identify reasons for stress in hotel management employees. The major reasons of stress identified are low compensation in industry, stressful work environment, poor human resource policies, unpleasant timing and work pressure. Spiritual training at workplace may help in learning to listen to inner voice, meet workplace demands, and bring in empowerment. It may even help in attaining ethics and values towards accepting workplace and social responsibility. And the major techniques which could be used for reducing stress is by adopting spiritual training methods like Laughter therapy, Meditation Yoga (Asana), Sports, Cultural Activity, Self-Development Courses and Special Lectures for reducing stress. Moreover, employers need to have employee friendly HR Policies. Spiritual training helps in feeling a sense of purpose, helps in connecting to the world in positive manner, releases control by helping in sharing burden, expands support network and tends in leading a healthier life. People observing such training programmes may enjoy a good quality of work life. Results from literature even show that companies with spiritual workplace experience improved productivity and reduces turnover form the employees.

Conclusion:

Satisfied staff is the way to success for any organisation and hotels not being exception. The hotel operators should understand the significance of employee satisfaction and the factors responsible for their distress. Proper compensation, employee welfare, motivation, work scheduling, incentives and benefits, performance appraisals, job design, health and safety and social security measures are the measures of motivating and retaining employees. Human resource managers in hotels need to identify any source of distress for employees and provide appropriate solution for the same. Small training and mentoring sessions can get employees on the right track, were employees not only recognise themselves but even will have a positive notion of the organisation. Stress of employees may turn in conditions like burnouts, absenteeism, look towards environmental risks and related benefits. Implementing sustainable environment practices will benefit in hotel operations and will meet need of future generations. Further, empirical studies may be conducted to understand operational practices adopted by hotels and be able to compare those to industry specific.

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