



Understanding HR practices
in Irish hotels and their
implications for *employee*
retention in the sector.

Mila Ramos de Souza

MBA in Human
Resource
Management

Understanding HR practices in Irish hotels and their implications for employee retention in the sector

Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
MBA in Human Resource Management
at Dublin Business School

Mila Ramos de Souza (10004905)

MBA in Human Resource Management

August 2015

Word count: 18249 words

Declaration

I, Mila Ramos de Souza, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School's academic honesty policy.

Signed: Mila Ramos de Souza

Date: 21/08/2015

Acknowledgments

In full gratitude I would like to acknowledge the following individuals who encouraged, inspired, supported and assisted me throughout my dissertation.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor David Wallace for the useful comments, remarks and engagement through the learning process of this dissertation.

I am grateful to all lectures who shared their knowledge and expertise during the course.

I also thank my fellow classmates for the stimulating discussions and for all fun we have had in the last year.

In addition a thank you to all hotel managers and professional who have willingly shared precious time and useful information during the process of interviewing.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family and friends here and in Brazil for all the support, and in special to my mum and my husband. Their encouragement and quiet patience helped to complete the experience of MBA course and proved that I am able to tackle challenges head on.

“Set your goals high, and don't stop till you get there”.

Bo Jackson

Abstract

The research investigates the impacts of human resource practices on levels of employee retention in the Irish hotel industry context. The material gathered in this study provides an understanding of the following HR practices: training and development, rewards and employee wellbeing. The primary survey was conducted among the HR professionals in the hotels in Dublin by face-to-face interviews. The results suggest that although most participants perceive the importance of HR, the hotels can develop their practices better in order to retain their employees. It is argued that the current and emerging challenges facing the industry demand an approach to HRM that is far more strategic in which practices and policies can contribute for the decision of employees stay in the companies. In the conclusion, a conceptual framework is presented showing the relation between focused HR practices and employee retention. Therefore, the results from the research can be really useful for Irish hotel, as a reduction in employee turnover would be a significant factor for competitive advantage.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction..... | 3 |
| 2. Literature Review..... | 6 |
| 2.1 Literature Introduction..... | 6 |
| 2.2 Strategic Human Resource Management and the impact of HPWS | 6 |
| 2.3 HR Practices | 9 |
| 2.3.1 Training and Development..... | 9 |
| 2.3.2 Reward Management..... | 11 |
| 2.3.3 Employee Wellbeing | 12 |
| 2.4 Employee retention..... | 13 |
| 2.5 Employee turnover in hospitality industry | 15 |
| 2.6 Literature Conclusion | 16 |
| 3. Methodology..... | 18 |
| 3.1 Methodology Introduction..... | 18 |
| 3.2 Research Design | 19 |
| 3.2.1 Research Philosophy | 19 |
| 3.2.2 Research Approach | 19 |
| 3.2.3 Research Strategy..... | 20 |
| 3.2.4 Sampling - Selecting Respondents..... | 21 |
| 3.3 Data Collection Instruments | 22 |
| 3.4 Research Ethics..... | 23 |
| 3.5 Limitations of Methodology..... | 24 |
| 4. Data Analysis and Findings | 25 |
| 4.1 Findings | 25 |
| 4.1.1 Importance of SHRM..... | 25 |
| 4.1.2 Talent management initiatives | 26 |
| 4.1.3 HR practises in the hotel industry | 27 |
| 4.1.4 Training programs | 27 |
| 4.1.5 Career Advice..... | 28 |
| 4.1.6 Career opportunities | 28 |
| 4.1.7 Reward initiatives..... | 29 |
| 4.1.8 Employee wellbeing..... | 29 |
| 4.1.9 Retention practices | 30 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 4.1.10 Challenges | 30 |
| 5. Discussion | 33 |
| 6. Conclusions/Recommendations | 40 |
| 6.1 Limitations and Directions for Future Research..... | 43 |
| 7. Reflections | 45 |
| 8. References..... | 50 |
| 9. Appendices..... | 56 |

List of Tables and Figures

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1 The research 'onion' | 18 |
| Figure 2 Summary of findings | 32 |
| Figure 3 Employee Retention Conceptual Framework..... | 41 |
| Figure 4 Core Model for Reflection..... | 45 |

1. Introduction

In the current competitive market, employee's retention strategies are essential for companies to gain competitive advantage. Certainly, turnover is not always harmful, but a high turnover rate brings on significant issues for the company such as financial costs, work disruptions, and losses of organizational memory and seasoned mentors associated (Allen *et al*, 2010, p. 48). Particularly in the Irish context, retaining qualified employees has become a challenge for various industries. For instance, McCarthy *et al* (2007, p. 248), in their study in the Republic of Ireland, identified that a significant number of nurses expressing the intention to leave their current post were identified, and there are serious implications for workforce planning. Therefore, it seems to be essential for companies that they try to retain their valuable employees, who contribute at their best level to achieve the overall organisation goals.

Competitive advantage through employees is becoming more important because organisations are focusing on their internal resources and viewing human resources as a source of value (Otterbacher and Howley, 2005, p. 85). In this way, the Human Resources Management (HRM) strategies applied by the companies play an important role in managing their employees. A recent survey called The 2014 Global Talent Management and Rewards (Towers Watson, 2104, p.1) shows that most of interviewed organisations have problems to attract and keep key talent, including top performers and high-potential employees. For this reason, a well-designed talent management plan — to effectively hire, retain, deploy, and engage all employees— is a true competitive advantage a company possesses (Oladapo, 2014, p. 20).

In this way, HR practices and policies can be a support or barrier to employees decide to stay or not in a company. Many factors, such as organizational culture, payment rates, benefits and rewards system, training, career development opportunities and employee wellbeing impact on employee turnover's levels in the companies (Narang, 2013, p. 48). For that reason, a strategic HRM planning of approaches has the potential to not only increase the effectiveness of the relationship between employee and the employer, but also to recognise the welfare of employees is fundamental in the achievement of organisational objectives. Besides, when organisations make low HR investments, their employees are not very demanding in what they expect (Piening *et al*, 2014, p. 562). This may affect the companies' perspective about their desire to invest in their capabilities.

One of the HR issues in the hospitality industry, particularly in hotels, is related to high employee turnover (Kyuhwan, 2006; Hui-O and Rd. Hsin-Wei, 2009). Faldetta *et al* (2013, p. 584) state that, amongst different different reasons which cause turnover, the seasonal nature of the hospitality industry leads managers to hire and fire employees according to the rhythm of regular seasonal oscillations. In the Asia scenario, many employees regard hospitality work as a pass-through to a job in a higher level industry, instead of a life-time career commitment (Hui-O and Hsin-Wei, 2009, p. 205). In another research, Wilton (2006, p. 903) affirms that HRM in the UK hotel industry “is typically held to be informal, instrumental and associated with poor employment relation”, consequently leading to significant levels of turnover. Townsend and Lee (2010, p. 65) reinforce this idea saying that hotel industry is usually not concern with personnel management and training, with only few staff having a job description, and an essentially impersonal approach with employees. In the Northern Ireland market, Baum and Devine findings (2007, p. 278) point to the fact that front office work offers unstable prospects in terms of career developments due to relatively limited promotional prospects and low wages. They suggest that a more competitive system and effective measures could help to attract and keep better talent.

In addition to these findings, a research done by Deloitte (2010) adds that the average labour turnover is considered high for the UK industry scoring, which is approximately 30% and approximately 31% for the US. Despite these significant rates of labour spend, the employee turnover in the industry remains high, and companies should start to rethink their people management strategies.

Considering these factors, this research aims to uncover this question:

How HR practices can combine to increase employee retention in the Irish Hotels?

The dissertation aims to identify the HR practices which have been applied by Irish hotels and how they may influence on the employee’s decision to stay or leave the company. The research will be focused on practices particularly related to *training, reward management and employee wellbeing* as they are considered vital for motivating employees and creating a long term association between organisation and employees.

It is important to consider the importance of Tourism in Ireland and the significant number of people who works in the Irish hotel industry: approximately 54.000 individuals (Irish Hotels Federation, 2013). Besides, the Irish Accommodation market has become more competitive: hotels is the strongest sector, but hostels reported a 61% increase in their overall

visitor volumes in the beginning of 2015; and guesthouses have showed gradual improvements, having better expectations for 2015 (Fáilte Ireland, 2015, p. 3 and p. 14). Another aspect to be considered is the popularity growth of peer-to-peer platforms such as Airbnb. Potential hosts offer their spare rooms or apartments on this platform, establish their own nightly, weekly or monthly price, and offer accommodation to guests. In their research about the impact of Airbnb in the Texas market hotel, Zervas *et al* (2013, p. 25) identified that Airbnb has a negative impact on hotel room revenue in this area, mainly affecting lower-end hotels and hotels not catering to business travellers.

Facing this competition, hoteliers need to be prepared to invest in the development and training of their workforces at all levels. Irish hotels have competed for talent and customers, and HRM seems necessary to enhance their talent operations by more strategically aligning or interweaving their teams with other divisions of the business. Therefore, the results from the research can be really useful for this sector, as a reduction in employee turnover would be a significant factor for competitive advantage by, for example, reducing hotel costs and improving labour productivity.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Literature Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to present a range of knowledge and ideas which consist in the background of this research question. There is a significant body of academic literature about employee retention and HR practices, and it is essential to understand these topics to assess this phenomenon in the Irish hotel industry.

In order to fully analyse the research topic, first of all it is necessary to present a brief explanation about *strategic HRM* approaches to recognise how employees are fundamental for the achievement of organisational objectives. In this topic, a short explanation about the *impact of high-performance work systems* is presented to reinforce how 'bundles' of practices can gradually improve organisational performance. As this research focuses on specific HR practices, some insights about *training and development*, *reward management* and employee *wellbeing* will be also discussed, relating them to employee retention. Next are some important ideas about *employee turnover*, its causes and possible consequences to be presented. Finally, a deeper look into *employee turnover in hospitality industry* seems necessary to better understand the peculiarities of this sector.

2.2 Strategic Human Resource Management and the impact of HPWS

A strategic view of Human Resources has great importance on people as a meaning to gain competitive advantage, particularly in service businesses with high frequency of employee–customer interaction (Ahmad et al., 2010, p. 73-74). Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) refers to a set of operational management practices that help to increase business and create value, and to gain competitive advantage through human capital (Ozen et al, 2012, p.118). Ozen et al (2012, p.132) affirm that if companies desire to achieve long term success, they must make long-term strategic plans and execute these plans in an effective way. Consequently, the ability of managing talent people becomes essential to identify the key gaps between the talent in place and the talent required to drive business success (Oladapo, 2014, p. 20). Although the importance of HRM is clearly in the hotel scenario, Young-Thelin et al (2012, p. 335) emphasise that HR practices are not fully developed in this industry and very little effort is put into ensuring their development. It is quite predictable that a level of employee turnover is affected by this lack of interest in HRM.

It is believed that the adoption of ‘best practices’ can improve the attitudes and behaviours of employees, decrease the levels of absenteeism and turnover, and increase the skill levels of employees which can lead “to enhanced quality and efficiency and improved productivity” (Young-Thelin *et al*, 2012, p. 335). The ‘best practice’ is the first approach which study the relationship between HR practices and the company’s performance. Pfeffer affirms that if organisations use balanced HR practices, in areas such as recruitment, training, and rewards, they will have its performance improved (Gunnigle *et al.*, 2006, p. 58). For instance, Lynch & Worden (2010, in Young-Thelin *et al*, 2012, p. 339) mention in their research in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel group, that the hotel “recruits the best employee by putting more focus on the behavioural skills of the candidate, and its T&D processes are in place and 80% of training is conducted in-house to have direct control over the appropriate training method”. Hinkin and Tracey (2010, p. 166) mention “that the new employee training program at Four Seasons Hotel lasts twelve weeks and includes a wide variety of experiential activities, many of which are facilitated by senior managers, which offer to new employees a direct means for learning about the company’s guest service philosophy and standards”.

However, some authors believe that a unique practice may not be the most appropriate response to a given business environment. The ‘best fit’ approach affirms that HR strategies should ‘fits to the organisation’s overall business strategy (Armstrong, 2009, p.35) which helps the HR professionals determine whether certain practices will add sufficient value or not. The ‘best-fit’ model argues that HRM becomes more effective when it is designed to fit certain critical contingencies in the company’s specific context (Boxal and Purcell’s, 2000, p. 189). This also can be related to the hotel industry which operates in a labour market, whereby there is lack of qualified candidates coupled with strong competition. An example is cited by Young-Thelin *et al* (2012, p. 337) in their research about HR practices in small Sweden hotels, as they found out that even though hotel managers understand the importance of implementing T&D programs, they are usually not applied because of: first, the limited financial resources; second, the benefits of T&D can be felt in the longer-term, and most of employees have temporary positions; and finally, there is an absence of professional skills in implementing training.

Besides these two approaches, the resource-based view (RBV) model affirms that a basis for the competitive advantage of a firm is a bundle of valuable tangible or intangible resources posed by the company (Dany *et al*, 2008, p. 2097). It means that companies may copy the practices but, their results may differ if they do not have qualified employees. HRM

plays a key role in building and stimulating the human asset by planning how to recruit, develop and motivate employees (Boxal and Purcell, 2000, p. 197). Indeed, this model suggests that HRM practices should be thought in terms of specific resources to be developed rather than in terms of a mechanical adoption of 'best practices'. Based on the RBV model, high-performance work systems (HPWS) are supposed to improve employee effectiveness in order to have higher levels of organizational performance. They are also known as high-performance work practices or high-involvement work systems, HPWS include managerial practices such as staffing, compensation, flexible job assignments, teamwork, training, and communication, which increase the empowerment of employees and increase their skills with the intention of enhancing employees' commitment towards organization's goals (Lee et al, 2012, p. 19). In the research about labour productivity in small companies, Patel and Conklin (2012, p. 224) affirm that combined HPWS helps to reduce turnover costs, which are significant for a small firm and increases the perceived labour productivity. An illustration presented by these authors refers to training and career development as the combination of increasing involvement by providing training programs together with increasing of commitment by providing career work policies leads to better productivity, "as employees may be more motivated to remain with the firm and to apply their acquired skills" (Patel and Conklin, 2012, p. 207).

By the same token, researches have shown that the supportive organizational culture is important for HPWS practices to result in competitive advantage. Amongst results of their study, Yoon-Ho *et al* (2015, p. 53) suggest that HPWS policies will be successful if employees perceive the management's engagement in adopting HPWS. Managers have an essential role on ensuring the credibility of HPWS initiatives and developing trust with the employees leading to higher levels of employee's cooperation. Line managers, for example, are key intermediaries between HRM integration and organisational performance. Dany *et al*'s research (2008, p. 2018) shows that the link between HRM integration and organisational performance does not occur in all situations, mainly if companies are not concerned about sharing the implementation of HRM policies with line managers.

Academic literature and researches have postulated that HRM practices help the development and retention of best human resources available which results to positive results service sectors (Peixoto, 2012, p. 10). Evidently, there is not only one particular HRM strategy that will deliver success in all situations. In fact, hotels need to define a strategy

which is unique to their own situation in terms of context, goals, and the demands of organisational stakeholders.

2.3 HR Practices

2.3.1 Training and Development

Changes in the context of the organisation increase the need to train and develop its members to ensure the firm's organisational success. A well-structured training and development (T&D) program plays a central role to develop and strengthen the employees' competencies (Beardwell and Thompson, 2014, p. 277). The HRM is responsible for creating and implementing T&D programs, and HR professionals need to mobilise efforts that meet both organisational goals and learning needs of the employees (Beardwell and Thompson, 2014, p.218). When considering T&D interventions, the organizational leaders should bear in mind that traditional courses are not the only option. The methods are often divide into formal (e.g. workshops, training courses and seminars) and informal (job rotation, coaching and mentoring, special projects); therefore, HR and managers should be able to design, implement and evaluate the most appropriate learning events (Beardwell and Thompson, 2014, p.277)

Researches indicate the importance of T&D for an organisational performance (FALOLA *et al* 2014; Costen and Salazar, 2011; Ameer-ul-Ameer and Hanif, 2013). Organisations that invest more in training have a significantly higher level of organizational performance which is measured by the quality of the product or service offered, new product development, ability to attract and retain essential employees, and customer satisfaction (Costen and Salazar 2011, p. 276). In addition, Costen and Salazar (2011, p. 276) emphasise that training increases the work satisfaction as it is an opportunity to develop new skills to perform their duties to the company's. Similarly, commitment is an important outcome because the time and effort that an employee puts forth in any training program can lead to a more committed worker (Brom, 2007, p. 6). Furthermore, it can be said that employees recognise and appreciate the investment made by companies, and they recompense employers with better commitment and productivity.

Clearly associated with these benefits, it is noticeable that T&D support to reduce employee turnover as individuals develop a greater sense of what is self-worth and become more valuable to the company (Dunlap, 2015, p. 20). Choi and Dickson (2010, p. 115), in particular have presented in their findings how the investment on effective management

training programs can increase employee satisfaction and consequently reducing turnover. Yamamoto (2013, p. 764) says in his research with job-specialists employees that the results suggest that they believe training and development is enriching, and it tending to increase retention for these employees. He added that “this is because of the belief that training and development of organization actually makes up a large share in competency development of workers” (Yamamoto, 2013, p. 764).

Besides, when these practices are adopted in conjunction with other HR practices, they encourage greater employee satisfaction and it has the potential to reduce employee turnover. In her research, Kennett (2013, p. 128) went further to discuss the relationship between training and labour turnover: she introduced a training and development framework for management application which leads to different impacts on employee turnover. Amongst her conclusions, it is said that when ‘team development model’ – in which training and development was developed by managers and their teams together based on skill gaps and learning identified needs – was adopted, there were more chances to reduce employee turnover.

All the examples below show the importance of running training and development programs. It is also important to say that an employee’s decision to stay or leave is affected by existence or not of career growth within a company. In the research about employee loyalty in Romanian hotels, Ineson and Berechet (2011, p. 142) mention that 50% of interviewed employees who are considering leaving their jobs are doing so in order to find better career opportunities. Besides that, a research in a telecommunications company in Ghana showed that significant percentage of respondents were not aware whether their career was growing or not (Kwenin, 2013, p. 5); and this may bring out negative implications for employee engagement. Last, in a research done with ‘generation Y’ undergraduate students with working experience in the hospitality industry, the findings suggest that students are focused on their career, and they have a top priority in succeeding and achieving an upward promotion (Maxwell *et al*, 2010, p. 60). These studies have shown that by doing a unique career development program, companies can increase employee retention, and positively increase productivity and profits. It appears that a planned career path with opportunities for promotion and job challenges would help to retain most employees.

In short, the assumption may rely on trained employees remain within the investing organisation. Therefore, HRM must stimulate employees’ capabilities through different ways,

and professionals also must be aware of massive digital transformations in the learning and training industry (Deloitte, 2015, p. 25). It is important to note however, that T&D practices alone may offer many benefits but a much greater impact will be found when aligning with other human resources practices and policies (Brom, 2007, p.11). Training is a bridge that can lead to employee satisfaction and a higher retention rate for the company.

2.3.2 Reward Management

Reward Management refers to development, implementation and monitoring of processes, practices and procedures to compensate employees based on their contribution and value to the organisation (Armstrong, 2014, p. 357). Suttapong *et al* add that (2014, p. 47) the implementation of a reward system must fit the overall organisation's business and HR strategies, the significance attached to reward matters by top management, and the internal and external environment. Therefore, it is fundamental that the reward management must fit within the overall management style of any organisation, and must reinforce and support desired behaviours and culture.

Rewards can be classified into two categories: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic rewards are awards that are tangible or physically given to employee for accomplishing something such as pay, promotions, merit bonuses, private office space, etc. (Özutku, 2012, p. 31). Researches have shown that pay-level satisfaction has pervasive effects on build up job satisfaction and affective commitment and reduce turnover intention (Schreurs *et al*, 2013, p. 414). Also, the previous survey mentioned done by Towers Watson (2014, p.3) indicates that employees recognise a fair and competitive base pay as the first reason to stay in the company, followed by opportunities for career advancement.

But rewards are not just about pay and employee benefits. There are intrinsic rewards which are those that originate from within the person such as feelings of achievement, challenge, autonomy, responsibility, and recognition, and often exist in the job itself (Özutku, 2012, p. 31). These types of rewards are closely related to employee motivation because they are factors that drives individuals to behave in a certain way (Hutchinson, 2013, p.50). And motivation varies depend on individual: some people consider money as the main motivator whereas others prefer greater levels of responsibility and autonomy, or a better work-life balance (Hutchinson, 2013, p.49). Following these statements, the research of Beltrán-Martín and Roca-Puig (2013, p.662) presents that job enrichment - an example of intrinsic motivation - is a type of motivation that encourages employees to show greater flexibility in

their job, even more than monetary compensation. An equally significant aspect is presented by Yamamoto (2013, p. 764) as he said that when employees perceive that companies make improvements on employee benefits, they tend to increase retention for employees with high specialty commitment.

This recognition of people being motivated by a combination of these two types of reward has supported the concept called 'total rewards'. The use of the term describes an approach of managing rewards which emphasises the need to consider all aspects of the working experience that are important to employees (Armstrong, 2014, p.365). It can also be said that total reward is a combination of tools used by companies in order to attract, retain, motivate and satisfy employees, encompassing all investments made in its workforce, and everything employees value in the employment relationship (Beardwell and Thompson, 2014, p.467). Given these advantages of implementing a strategic reward management, it is quite surprising that some companies still do not recognise those benefits. According to a survey by CIPD (2014, p. 40), a significant number of employees agree that their organisation do not appropriately recognise or rewards employee success and achievement.

When properly designed, implemented and communicated, a company's reward system can provide an incentive for talented people to join a company, for employees perform at high levels and remain with the company (Kwon and Hein, 2013, p. 32). Indeed, one of aims of reward management is to attract and retain valuable employees, so that companies can achieve a higher return on their investment in employees' benefits by operating a reward system.

2.3.3 Employee Wellbeing

The legislation requires the employer to provide a safe and healthy environment, but the recognition that a wellbeing and healthy workforce has increased due to social attitudes changing and the employee expectations (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2010, p. 415). Employee wellbeing refers to "creating an environment to promote a state of contentment which allows employees to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation" (CIPD, 2007, cited in Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2010, p.415). In order to create this working environment the organisation need to manage stress, assist to work-life balance issues, deal with sexual harassment and bullying problems, provide employees assistance and groups services such as restaurants and social/sporting facilities (Armstrong, 2014, p. 445).

A focus on wellbeing is particularly important at the moment as the organisations and their employees face a competitive scenario. Over the last few years many people have experienced being in work-life balance programmes while encouraging and supporting employees' participation in these activities, then there will be a return on investment in these programmes. In the UK scenario, a study identified that business investing in wellness programmes also had an improvement in their financial benefits (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2008, p. 22).

In addition, a case study presented by the CIPD survey shows that the size of a company does not matter in taking steps to improve the wellbeing of its workers. The example refers to a small company which applied small health and wellbeing initiatives such as encouraging no smoking and healthy eating; giving time to attend external wellbeing courses free of charge; reminders and discussions about wellbeing topics (2007, p.13). Therefore, wellbeing does not have to be expensive and can be incorporated into and enhance existing HR policies, such as training, total reward, and flexible working. Besides, the policies need to be flexible, relevant and understood by the whole organisation. What is important to emphasise is that good employees are physically and mentally able, willing to contribute in the workplace and likely to be more engaged at work.

2.4 Employee retention

It was said that companies have applied HRM practices and policies in order to maintain their employees within the organisation. Having a high employee turnover - meaning the process of replacing one worker with another- brings on some implications for employers (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2010, p.107). Finding a right employee for an organisation is an investment of time and money, and all efforts are simply wasted when the employee leaves (Mackay, 2007, p. 64). The research findings of Davidson *et al* (2010, p. 461) illustrate how the cost of turnover is at an extraordinarily high level in the Australian hotel industry: “without including the intangible costs of loss productivity and service quality, an average hotel in this survey spent A\$109,909 for replacing executive, managerial and supervisory staff each year”. Pilbeam and Corbridge, (2010, p.1 08) also affirms that labour turnover can be a problem when there is less availability of suitable employees in some market conditions. It could also be said that employees who stay a considerable time in a workplace know better the organisation, and when they leave their jobs, they take with

them valuable knowledge about the “company, customers, current projects and past history - sometimes to competitor” (Ratna and Chawla, 2012, p. 36).

In this manner, retaining strategies seems essential to ensure effectively organisational performance. The strategies include knowing how to attract individuals to the organisation, to identifying early signs and reasons why valued employees may be thinking about leaving and providing a good work environment where staff can see the opportunities in their careers (Harvard Business School, 2006, p. 19). In her research for The Society for Human Resource Management, Lockwood (2006, p. 2) emphasises that the companies should implement effective talent management policies and practices that demonstrate commitment to human capital which result in more engaged employees and lower turnover – and clearly, these policies and strategies are interconnected with other HR practices such as learning and development, and rewards.

Having an engaged workforce helps to increase the level of employees’ satisfaction towards their jobs. Evidence for in support of this position can be found in the research of Hausknecht *et al* (2009, p.283) with employees in the leisure and hospitality industry: in their findings, job satisfaction emerged as the primary retention factor, followed by extrinsic rewards, and constituent attachments. In the recent survey Global Human Capital Trends by Deloitte (2015, p.35-36) the employee engagement and culture issues were identified as the main challenge around the interviewed companies: research shows that in most companies engagement is low, and “66% of HR respondents reported that they are updating their engagement and retention strategies”. This reinforce Lockwood’s study as he reinstate the responsibility of HR on identifying and developing strategies to engage employees by driving satisfaction, loyalty and retention (2006, p. 3). But we should also consider the role of managers and supervisors in fostering organisational culture and engaging workforce. The mentioned Deloitte survey suggests that leaders are responsible for building a strong and enduring culture, listening to feedback, and engaging and retaining their teams” (2015, p. 38). Similarly concerning about organisational climate, a research with hospital staff shows that the quality of human relations amongst co-workers influences the retention of these employees (Hwang & Chang, 2009, p. 77).

It is important to note, however, that employee turnover is not always harmful for organisations. Replacement of those who leave the organisation brings new qualified employees who can add value to business (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2010, p. 107). But if

companies desire to implement retaining strategies, they need to not focus only on retaining “particularly talent people, but also people that are delivering an acceptable level of performance” (Mackay, 2007, p. 64). Some workers are able to give a lot more to the company than the average, and the managers must find what skills they have and utilise these to the fullest, while understanding their needs and expectations.

2.5 Employee turnover in hospitality industry

It is known that hospitality industry is a highly guest service-oriented business, and the success of this industry is primarily dependent on the quality of the employees and on how effectively they are managed. However management of staff is a central challenge affecting the HR professionals in the hospitality industry because employee turnover is one of the major problems in this industry (Faldetta *et al*, 2013, p. 584).

The academic literature cites many reasons for the high turnover rate in the hospitality industry. As it was mentioned the seasonal nature of the industry is one of the explanations that lead to casual employment or seasonal workers (Faldetta *et al*, 2013, p. 584). The lack of compensation and excessive workload are often cited as the most common reason to leave organisations in this sector (Deloitte, 2010, p. 38). Although these motives for leaving tend to be external to the employee rather than internal, employee might be also leaving due to personal specific reasons (Dusek *et al*, 2014, p. 88).

Even though these researches have presented valuable reasons for employee turnover in the hotel industry, some authors affirm that the high turnover cannot be excused as an inherent characteristic feature of the hotel industry, which suggest that it is, in effect, manageable through effective and strategic HR practices (Faldetta *et al*, 2013, p. 585). For example, according to Liao *et al* (2009, p. 1821) if an employer wants to reduce the turnover rate in a hotel industry, it is important that employees feel satisfied with their jobs and thereby improve commitment to the organisation. Besides, Mapelu and Jumah (2013, p. 47) suggest that training together with other HR strategies can lead to greater employee commitment and a more stable workforce.

Finally, in his research, Kyuhwan, (2006, p. 333) recommend that managers improve the work environment through methods such as compensation to create trust and satisfaction towards the organisation. Beyond monetary compensations, Dawson & Abbott (2011, p. 300) suggest a model to explain when companies have HR practices that enable a firm to facilitate a hospitality culture and climate for exceptional service, they will have a positive influence

on organisational commitment, and consequently they will have more power to attract and retain their employees.

Despite these benefits, the CIPD survey (2013, p. 12) shows that 44% of people surveyed said their organisation does not promote health and wellbeing, and “micro, small and medium-sized organisations were more likely to say their organisation doesn’t promote employee health and wellbeing than those employ”. However from the examples above, it is noticeable that high labour turnover became a challenge, but HRM is able to create robust strategic plans to retain critical employees and manage staff turnover.

2.6 Literature Conclusion

By analysing the academic literature, it is possible to gain greater insight into relationship between employee retention and some of the HR activities. Managers have recognised that employees are an important asset for the organisation, and particularly in the hospitality industry, their role is a key issue because they are most likely to have a direct impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty which is an important contributor to profitability in this sector.

It can be seen from the above analysis that there are many different factors that impact on employee turnover rates, but HR practices can support to reduce it. In fact, the adoption of high performance work practices seems effective to align the output of the workforce with the objectives of the organisation. For instance, developing training and learning programs is important because investing in employees helps increase employee engagement and commitment to the organisation (Falola *et al* 2014; Costen and Salazar, 2011; Ameen-ul-Ameen and Hanif, 2013). Besides, we have seen that improving career strategies appears as a key driver of attraction and retention because employees feel valued and empowered.

The reward system has also supported to maximise employees satisfaction and broadly their work experience. It is vital for companies to better differentiate both base salary increase and annual incentives as extrinsic rewards are important factors to be included in a reward management. But intrinsic rewards also seem fundamental when examining the reward package as a whole. Researches have shown that when companies boost feelings of achievement, challenge, autonomy, responsibility, and recognition, they can have positive employee outcomes (Beltrán-Martín and Roca-Puig, 2013; Yamamoto, 2013). Furthermore, companies can adopt a number of positive decisions to assist people to maximise their physical and mental health (CIPD, 2007, p. 4). We have seen that employees have stronger

commitment to their organisations when they perceive that they are committed towards their wellbeing (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2010, p. 415).

It's no surprise that employers carefully manage by HR policies and practices are more likely to remain with their employers. Indeed, if these strategies are aligned and they are working towards common goals, they have more impact than isolated approaches goals. Before analysing how this phenomenon is presented in the Irish hotel market, the methodology used for the research will be outlined in the next chapter.

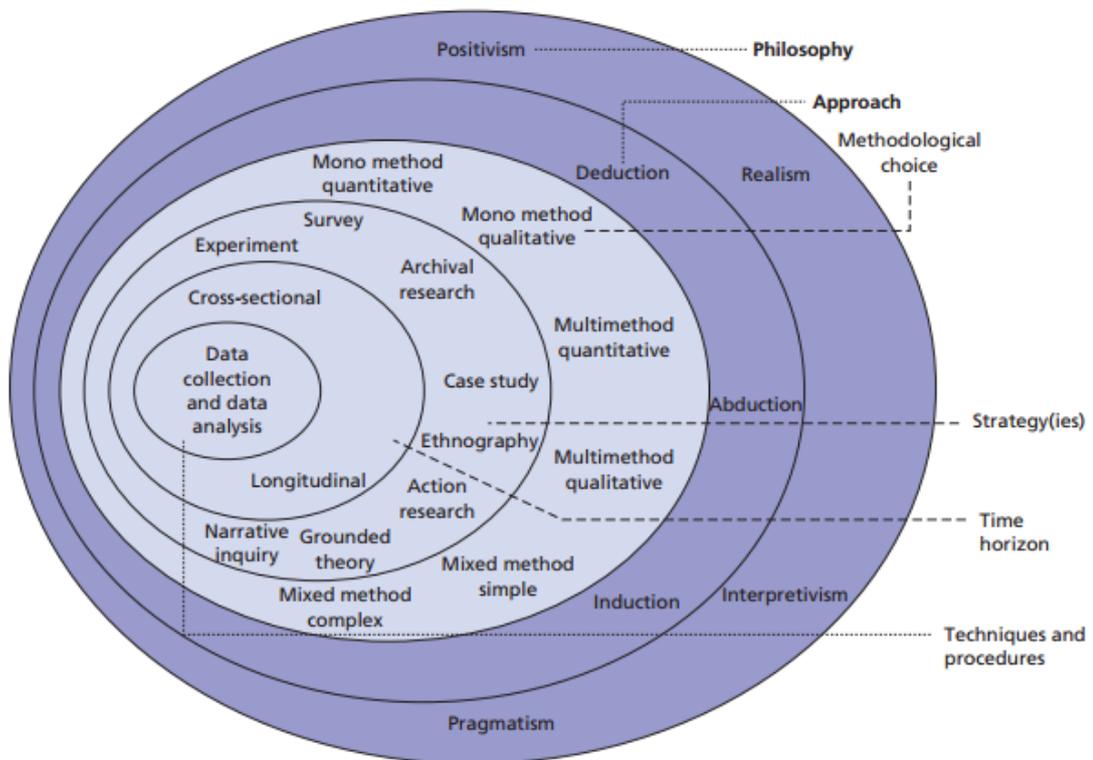
3. Methodology

3.1 Methodology Introduction

In the following stages of this chapter, the areas of research philosophies, research approaches and the different research strategies and designs will be presented. The reasons are given to justify why the researcher chose certain methods over other ones. Furthermore, some of methodological limitations and ethical issues are also considered for conducting this proposal.

The choices are based on the research ‘onion’ (see figure 1), first introduced in 1997 by Saunders *et al.*, it describes the different stages that are involved in the research process. The outer layers of the onion involve the research philosophies and approaches. The middle layers are grounded in research strategies and choices; and in the core of the onion, the data collection and data analysis are considered.

Figure 1 The research 'onion'



Source: Saunder et al, 2012, p. 128

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Research Philosophy

It is important for this research to identify how the HR department works in Irish hotels, and to relate it to possible reasons and motives why employees are leaving their position in these places. For this reason, the philosophy behind this dissertation is *interpretivism* which emphasises “the importance of interpretation and observation in understanding the social world” (Snape and Spencer, 2003, cited in Hennink, *et al*, 2011 p. 14). Thus, interpretivism researchers not only interact with environment but also seek to make sense of it through their interpretation of events in accordance with meanings that they give to these events (Saunders *et al*, 2012, p. 137).

The interpretive philosophy believes that business and management areas are too complex and unique to be formulated in theories and laws in the same way as the physical sciences (Saunders *et al*, 2012, p. 137). In contrast to positivism philosophy which is based on highly structured methodology to enable generalization and quantifiable observations, the interpretivism is not favourable to broader generalizations (Hennink, *et al*, 2011, p. 14). By taking an interpretivism stance, this research aims to gain a particularly understanding of some HR practices applied for hotels and how this can be related to employee’s retention in this industry in Ireland. Following this philosophy, the researcher did not start with concepts determined a priori but rather sought to allow these to emerge from encounters in the field.

By carrying out interviews, this study aims to develop relevant and true statements about the HR practices in the hotel industry. For this reason, interpretivism approaches ensure an adequate dialog between the researcher and HR professionals in the companies in order to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality. For this happens, it is indispensable that the researcher do not generalise data by personal viewpoint and values (Saunders *et al*, 2012, p. 137). Despite this challenge, the primary data generated via interpretivism methods might be associated with a high level of validity because data in such studies are likely to be reliable and honest.

3.2.2 Research Approach

There are two main approaches in which research can be based upon: deductive and inductive. Firstly, according to Saunders *et al* (2012, p. 145) the deduction approach does not depend on observation or experience, “it involves the development of a theory that is then

subjected to test through a series of prepositions”. They also affirm that by adopting a deductive attitude, the researcher has to measure these prepositions, often quantitatively. Secondly, induction approach involves drawing a concept framework based on evidence found from data collection and following research’s analysis from the theoretical studies exists in the literature.

This research will be conducted by an *inductive* approach as the research moves from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories. As it was mentioned by Saunder *et al* (2012, p. 146), by going to the field, the researcher get a feel of what is going on to better comprehend the nature of the problem. The result of all this process is usually expressed as a conceptual framework. In this case, the researcher aims to formulate a conceptual framework about the relationship between some HR practices and employee retention based on the data analysis. Indeed, it seems a more flexible approach because there is no requirement of pre-determined theory to collect data and information. In contrast to deduction approach, the induction method permits alternative explanations that may emerge during the data collection.

Inductive approach is highly associated with the interpretivism philosophy. This approach allows the researcher to provide cause-effect link made between HR practices and employee retention; then conclusions are drawn from the findings that are open to interpretation when considering that every individual has different experiences and opinions.

3.2.3 Research Strategy

Having identified the research approach, it is important to define the type of research design applied for this study. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010, p.103), studies can be exploratory, descriptive or hypothesis testing. This study has taken an *exploratory* approach as there is a need to have a better comprehension about a topic of interest (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010, p. 104). In this case, the researcher went to the “field” to investigate about the HR practices in the Irish hotel industry looking for similarities and disparities.

The issue is analysing similar situations in the hotels, so a *case study* strategy is a valuable approach of exploring a research topic or phenomenon within its context ((Saunder *et al*, 2012, p.179). It is a relevant method if the research question seeks to explain some present circumstances: how and why some social phenomenon works or if your research questions require an “in-depth” description of some social phenomenon (Saunder *et al*, 2012, p. 179). Besides, as an exploratory study, case study can use different data collection

techniques and rely on a variety of sources to investigate the research problem in its context. This research will be a multiple cases study as it analyses HR practices in a specific context which is the sampling of Irish hotels. As it is not possible to uncover the entire phenomenon within the case, the research will be focused on 4 hotels in Dublin which were selected based on different sizes and management structures. This helps to give a variety of scenarios and ‘shape’ a broader case of the phenomenon.

Amongst the research design, Saunders *et al* (2012, p. 164- 165) present that the research as has to differentiate the methodological choice as being a mono method or multiple method choice. It is said that mono-method uses of a single method of data collection along with a corresponding data analysis procedure, while multiple methods use more than one method of data collection and analysis procedure in order to answer the research question. For this research, the *mono method qualitative* approach will be applied to the structure and design to provide a richer and comprehensive to the phenomenon based on qualitative data collected from HR managers/responsible in the hotels. Using qualitative methods, it will be possible to gather in depth information from these professionals, providing opportunity to explore different topics. The choice of the qualitative approach was motivated by the need to capture specific information about how companies manager their employees and which policies and practices they owns. As it is presented by Creswell (2014, p.9) the “qualitative researches seek to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally”. After this step, the researcher interprets the findings, and it is shaped by the individual’s experience and background. For this study, the researcher aims to understand how hotels are commitment to their staff to relate to employees’ feelings about stay or not in the company.

3.2.4 Sampling - Selecting Respondents

It is often impractical to try and study the entire population. That is why sampling techniques are important to select a sub-group rather than all possible cases and elements (Saunders *et al*, 2012, p. 258). There are two groups of sampling technique: probability sampling techniques and non-probability sampling. This research considers using a *non-probability* technique as the researcher may have issues in identifying suitable sampling frame based on information about hotels – they can be uncompleted, inaccurate and out of date.

The research will follow a *purposive sampling* which represents a group of different non-probability sampling techniques. The main goal of purposive sampling is focusing on particular characteristics of a population ensuring that they are able to answer information to achieve the objectives of research (Kumar, 2014, p. 245). Amongst various purposive sampling techniques, this research will follow a *typical case sampling* which is usually used as part of research project to provide an illustrative profile of a representative case (Saunders et al, 2012, p. 289).

Looking for a sample that may provide complete and diverse information, 4 hotels located in Dublin were chosen for this research. They are small to large-sized Irish hotels in Dublin, classified based on number of rooms, and to guarantee anonymity. numbers 1-4 were used to denote the hotels. The case 1 has 129 rooms; the case 2 has 40 rooms; the case 3 has 400 rooms; and the case 4 has 196 rooms. Some of the hotels selected have subsidiaries or partners in other cities in Ireland providing a broader perspective of the results. The sample also differs in terms of organisational structure which gives different scenarios for HRM. In the beginning of the study, the researcher had initial list of hotels, however the researcher did not get co-operation from the management in the previous places. Then, other hotels were selected based on based on the criteria above.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

The data was collected by semi-structured interviews with four managers and/or professionals responsible for planning and implementing the HR strategies in each hotel. For this group, the interviews were guided by open-ended questions which give opportunities for possible discussions of interesting topics. The purpose was identifying the strategies which have been applied to manage their staff, mainly in relating to training, reward and employee wellbeing. Besides, the research aims to identify if they recognise any benefits from these strategies; and if the hotels do not have any strategy, understand the reasons.

The interviews were semi-structured, one-to-one and face-to-face. The choice means to have some pre-determined questions based on the literature review and research question. Having these questions was important for obtaining a deeper and fuller understating for the phenomenon. All interviewees were asked the same questions in order to ensure consistency. Specifically, the researcher asked about formal talent management policies, training systems, rewards practices, employee wellbeing initiatives and questions about employee retention.

All of the interviews were carried out on each of the participating hotel sites providing a familiar and comfortable environment for each of the participant.

However, there were disadvantages of doing face-to-face interviews mainly related to arrange a suitable time for meeting the respondents because their daily duties. Despite this difficulty, it is believed that the interviews were the most appropriate method for data collection as the research is exploratory in nature, and doing semi-structure interviews allowed the researcher adapt questions based on some of the answers and ensure they understood all questions (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010, p. 193). In the selected hotels, the researcher had co-operation from the management, consequently a deeper looker about their practices. The collaboration from the management was a central fact to understand the importance of the research.

The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder by respondents' permission, but their names will be remained anonymous. Although anonymity might seem to be ways for the respondents not take responsibility for what he/she says, it is also allowed for more openness and free flow discussion.

3.4 Research Ethics

There are some ethical issues regarding to the data collection. Kumar (2014, p. 285) illustrates some topics which can be related to his research. About research participants, there are matters such as collecting information without the knowledge of the individuals, and their expressed willingness and informed consent. Also, he mentions that some types of information required can pose an ethical dilemma, for example some questions may bring discomfort to answer as the information sought refers to the relationship between employee and employers. Creswell (2014, p. 98) affirms that researcher should avoid to gather information that can bring some harmful. Another issue refers to introduce bias into a research activity which affects the way of looking at and interpreting certain events (Kumar, 2014, p. 285).

During the data collection, the researcher has to be impartial to ensure the data is validity and reliable (Saunders *et al*, 2012, p. 241). It is important to present the full arrange of findings while revealing positives and negatives points toward participants or researcher's objectives (Creswell, 2014, p.99). Likewise, incorrect reporting of the findings is an ethical characteristic of the research practice. In addition, the study should respect the privacy of participants as the HR professionals are disclosing intimate company data.

For handling these issues, the researcher believes that justifying the relevance of the proposal, assuring participants confidentiality of the information, and maintaining anonymous about the collected information are ethical behaviours which were present in all stages of the research process. For example, the research adopts numbers from responses during the data analysis and discussion. Ensuring confidentiality was essential to gain trust and confidence of HR professionals in the selected hotels, and consequently their cooperation.

3.5 Limitations of Methodology

It is important to mention the methodological limitations of the studies involved in this proposal. Referring to the sampling, the initial idea of this study was conducting interviews with HR managers/professional and also using questionnaires for employees in the selected hotels. It would be important to understand how employees feel about their management and their perspective about specific HR practices analysed in this research. However, the researcher had difficult to get in contact with HR managers and/or professionals in most of hotels. It is believe that they may not feel comfortable to share their strategies and practices. And this challenge led to problems in arranging interviews. Some of professionals initially said they would be happy in participating, and even agreed with the possibility of questionnaire employees, but after they had to cancel due to different reasons. An alternative solution was analysing the Irish hotel industry facing a new perspective: choosing another sampling but having four different hotels scenarios providing comparisons and contrasts in these workplaces.

Other limitation was the time to conduct the research as one of the main limitations to conduct the research, particularly having a part-time job. Although the researcher had have a realistic and organised plan with steps to be followed during the process, the delay in getting primary data led to changes in the initial research timetable (see appendix 2). Besides these methodology restrictions, the researcher had to make an extra effort to adopt an empathetic attitude. The researcher's experience in Irish hospitality industry could end in a pessimist view of HR departments in the hotels where the research was conducted because of her previous experience workplaces. To overcome all these limitations it was essential to be prepared with alternatives solutions, and try to do the best with all opportunities.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

For the data analysis, the researcher adopted a generic approach based on these following steps presented by Saunder et al (2012, p. 557-563): first, the data was categorised by terms mentioned in the academic literature which was used as background for this research which it was also used to create the interview questions. The next step was ‘unitising’ data which means identifying chunks or units related to the previous categories. In this research, lines of the transcriptions were used as unit of data. Undertaking this step helped to proceed to the next stages that was to develop an analytical thinking by identifying relationships between respondents who present the same themes based on explanations and examples from the reviewed literature. Since this study has taken an inductive approach, this was important for ensuring validity and reliability of the conclusions. Finally, after all these steps it was possible to draw and verify conclusions. It was important that the researcher have the research question in mind in order to present results that only contribute to answer this question.

In-depth interviews were used to collect qualitative data in order to answer the research question. A purposeful sampling technique was used in determining the respondents by interviewing persons who are responsible for the HR functions. Then, four HR professionals were interviewed using the same semi-structured interview questions (see appendix 1) to extract as much information as possible from them. As it was mentioned before, in order to guarantee anonymity numbers 1-4 were used to denote the four hotels. The numbers assigned to a particular hotel were done at random and do not follow any particular chronology. The findings are presented by the categories and illustrated descriptively while analysis is done in the discussion chapter.

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Importance of SHRM

The interviewees were asked to describe how they see the role of HR department/practices in supporting this company to achieve its business goals.

Case 1: There is not an official HR department in the hotel. The interviewee said that another hotel from the same company, for example, is bigger and then there is a HR manager: “they have more employees.” But he believes that HR has an important role in this hotel: “we don’t have a HR department here, I am the HR assistant and I work together with the general manager”. He also agreed that working together with the management is important to understand more about all departments of the hotel and employees.

Case 2: There is not HR department or structured HR activities in the hotel. When asked who are responsible for some activities such as recruitment, the manager said “each manager is responsible for each department... we decide the best way to hire a new staff, for example ‘putting’ the position online or asking for indications”. Issues like holiday’s time, maternity leave or sick leave are responsibilities of general management.

Case 3: The interviewee cited various activities which the HR department is responsible such as induction training, employees’ contracts, forecasting, and recruitment. She affirmed that HR has an important position in supporting the business, for example the forecasting is essential to plan budgets based on estimation of short and long-term staffing.

Case 4: The manager said that the HR is a busy department in the hotel: “We are responsible for recruitment, training & development, payroll... and we also organise events for all employees”. . Our department contribute to the profitability of the hotel, because we are responsible for recruiting and monitoring labour turnover, all compensation and benefits...ensuring effective cost controls are maintained”. She also said that being part of a luxury hotel group brings on more responsibilities for the department: “we have to carry out our daily responsibilities, but sometimes we receive an activity from the head office that we also have to do at the same time”.

4.1.2 Talent management initiatives

The interviewees were asked to cite examples of talent management initiatives taken by the hotel related to attract, hire and retain talented employees.

Case 1: There aren’t specific initiatives regarding to talent management: “Together with the general manager, I am responsible for recruiting and manage our staff”. About attracting and recruitment employees, the HR assistant said that “the hotel usually posts vacancies on the ‘sisters hotel or online”. He added: “we also have many students working with us in operations areas for example restaurant” as the hotel has internships and college placements programmes: “they do not have previous experience in hotels but they are staffs who want to learn”.

Case 2: Manager said that “unfortunately we do not have HR department here”. For this reason, she said that the hotel does not have any formal HR practice for talented employees.

Case 3: The interviewee said that for some job positions they usually look for talents who are already ‘in-house’: “if someone shows interesting, we are more than happy to develop them... It is always preferable to look inside because people know the policies, they know how we operate”. Particularly about retention strategies for these employees, she said that the hotel group – which the hotel is part of - has a significant training talent with different courses for developing their workforce, so they can develop new skills while being able to move to different departments. In relation to recruitment, the respondent said that as they are a big hotel group, they see if they can “move” employees amongst hotel. Besides, they receive many curriculums by online applications and at the hotel.

Case 4: The manager said “we recruit, train, and reward based on our values”. The HR department has an important role to spread the values and culture of the hotel group. The respondent said that “we want that all members of staff feel they are really proud to be part of our team”. Besides promoting the company culture, the manager said that organising events is an important way to communicate to the employees: “every month we try to organise a meeting with staff in the canteen ...it is an opportunity to meet them and the team know they are being listened to and their opinion count”.

4.1.3 HR practises in the hotel industry

The interviewees were asked to give their opinion about the statement that HR practices are considered not fully developed in the hotel industry.

Case 1: Based on their previous working experiences, he agreed with the statement. “I believe our hotel is doing well, but I think it could be better”. The respondent cites, for example, that the training program could be improved “some trainings are relevant, but it could be more in some of places”... but this hotel the amount is pretty good”.

Case 2: “I completely agree as I said before we do not have HR department and most of hotels similar to us also don’t have”.

Case 3: In her opinion, she believes that most people see HR as a cost for the companies “I see that HR in general doesn’t get attention like other departments because it doesn’t make any money.” That’s why most employees are not aware about HR responsibilities inside the hotel.

Case 4: “I partially agree. It usually differentiates between small and large hotels or available budget. But we believe that HR helps to the overall achievement of the company’s objectives so it should be implemented in any place.”

4.1.4 Training programs

The interviewees were asked to describe the training programs provided by their companies.

Case 1: The hotel has a substantial training program based on hotel group requirements, and every member of staff has to complete. The HR assistant said: “. “Every three months, we got a calendar from the head office with all trainings that they offer”. Some of trainings are free and other the hotel has to pay for staffs. “Every new employee has to complete 11 different trainings: induction to the hotel, fire safety, occupational health and safety management, allegiance awareness, etc...” When asked if there is a specific period of time for these trainings to be completed, he said: “Actually there is no time. We have training calendar, and in the end we calculate the percentage of how many staff we trained. Then, we send to the head office and they make a table with hotel is the best and which hotel is the worst. At the moment, we are 84%, kind of middle”. He pointed out that they do not have training every month because they are not big hotel. However, he remarked that they have started to send new employees to other bigger hotels to have the induction training – from the group- as they provide it every month.

Case 2: There are not structure training programs. The manager said “each manager is responsible for training their own department. The senior staffs and ‘old’ staff are responsible for training new employees. She mentioned that these employees know what tasks they have to do, or what they need to know more about to do their jobs well.

Case 3: There is a training program that every employee has to complete: induction, house safety, fire safety and manual handling. Besides, she said that the general manager and each manager can send employees to do a training offered by the group, or even if individuals themselves show interest in participating they also can apply for a formal training. However, she pointed out that “there is a cost per employee for each training section, so we cannot send everyone, but only people who shows interesting in developing.”

Talking about essential courses for employees, she cited the induction training and ‘moving and handling’. This last one is an important to avoid injury and ill health arising from the

manual handling of loads at working in hotels. She also added that they have a ‘customer care’ course for managers and supervisors improve their customer service.

Case 4: “We have a T&D Executive who is in charge of identifying training needs to highlight our employee skills”. She said that “all of our employees participate in the Proud Induction and Proud Customer Service Training when they join the company”. These training programs are essential to ensure consistent delivery of expert service across the hotel group.

4.1.5 Career Advice

The interviewees were asked if there is another resource than managers to provide career advice for the employees in the hotels.

Case 1: Together with the general manager, the HR assistant is responsible for monitoring employees’ feelings and expectations about their job. For example, he mentioned that “after three months, we do job checking with the employee and after one year we do after another job checking. We review the role of employee, ‘we ask how you see yourself after 2 years here?’, ‘are you happy in this job?’”. He added “Yesterday we did a job checking with a chef and he was saying that he wants to stay in this job at the moment, but he doesn’t see himself in this job in the next 3 years. He wants a different career. Then, it is nothing we can do. So if an employee who wants a different career in the next few months, obviously we would not training him too much...”

Case 2: “No, unfortunately only we managers can support our staff...and we try to do our best though having some limitations”.

Case 3: Besides the managers from each department, she said that the HR department is the main resource to help employees in their career.

Case 4: The manager said that the HR department is available for supporting the member of staff by giving advice in their career in hotel.

4.1.6 Career opportunities

The interviewees were asked to assess the career opportunities to grow and advance in their companies.

Case 1: “In this hotel, there are opportunities to grow. If you want to learn, you can grow.” He cited the internal staff chances which have happened there: “It is possible. We have some people from restaurant that went to reception; housekeeping went to reception or restaurant.”

Case 2: “Honestly there aren’t many opportunities because we are a small hotel, but when positions become available within the hotel, we always try to promote in house”. I started here as receptionist, and there are many other examples here.” Although this is not a formal process, internal recruitment is always considered, and the manager believed that it is positive point of this hotel in promoting their current employees.

Case 3: “It is really good.” She pointed out that it is a big hotel, so they are opportunities to grow in different job positions.

Case 4: The manager said they have excellent opportunities for advancement and development. “This company offers chance to move up. Each year we identify our ‘top talent’ who are team members passionate about their work, who really want to learn, show promise and want to progress within the hotel.” She said that they have strong philosophy of

promotion from within, and there are chances for high calibre people to gain experience abroad in other properties of the hotel group.

4.1.7 Reward initiatives

The interviewees were asked to assess the compensation and benefit programs of the company, and give examples of reward initiative applied by them.

Case 1: “We have some programs for different departments.” For example, for the reception, there is a monthly money gratuity for the receptionist who sells more breakfast deals for guests and/or sells tickets for the tourism tours. Also, if any employee’s name is cited in a good comment in the online hotel reviews, such as TripAdvisor, he or she receives a symbolic recompense. The HR assistant added that “there is an employee of the year for all departments.” The manager selects a model employee who is considered to be a good example based on specific criteria; and this individual, together with other staffs from hotels across the Group, participates in an annual Employee Awards, and the winner receives a prize.

Case 2: The managers affirmed that they haven’t been able to use monetary compensation as motivational options: “We haven’t been able to use promotions and raises in large scale here”. When asked how she recognises employees for good work, she said: “Yes, there are other ways to keep our employees happy. All my staff is good to me, so I am good to them.” Having a good relationship with employees seems fundamental: “It is important keeping them happy and productive if you want they do their work”. She added: “I think that providing more responsibility is another way to say they are doing a good job”.

Case 3: “I think it is fair. I don’t think it is excessive.” She cites some practices such as ‘employee of the month’, or reward employees based on their mention in the online reviews.

Case 4: The manager mentioned that the hotel group has a ‘brand ambassadors program’: “we nominate and reward an employee across the group properties for their exceptional work and service not only to the customers, but amongst their colleagues as well”. They also have an employee recognition point system which rewards based on her or his performance. Some examples of rewards are chocolate gift, a complementary dinner for two to overnight stays at the hotels, and paid annual leave.

4.1.8 Employee wellbeing

The interviewees were asked to cite some initiatives¹ taken by the hotel to encourage healthy lifestyles and improve employee’s wellbeing.

Case 1: Initially the interviewee could not give examples of wellbeing practices but after some examples were cited, it was identified that an example of physical safety work practices is all employees have to attend to Health and Safety training to be aware of the adequacy of equipment and the pleasantness of the work environment.

Case 2: Based on the same examples of wellbeing initiatives, it was identified that the hotel has an annually fire training but it is not eligible for all employees, mainly for managers, supervisors and security staff.

¹ Illustrations of initiatives from CIPD (2007, p. 7)

Case 3: Besides traditional initiatives such as holidays and bank holidays, the respondent said that they have the ‘Bike to Work’ scheme which encourages employees to cycle to and from work. She recognised that there is an option but it is not highly promoted as it could be.

Case 4: Amongst the initiatives, the manager said that the hotel is fully committed to ensuring the safety, health and welfare of their employees. The employees are trained to receive information about aspects of health and safety relevant to their day-to-day activities in their departments. The manager also said that the hotel group has strong environmental policies regarding energy conservation, waste reduction, conversion to environmentally-friendly cleaning materials and reduction of water consumption.

4.1.9 Retention practices

The interviewees were asked to cite some initiatives that hotel could have taken to keep their human resources and attract other employees from their company.

Case 1: The job checking is the main practice used by this hotel to monitor employee’s feelings and expectations. “We see from the job checking any improvement, training to help the development.

Recently, for example, the receptionist said that she wants to have more responsibility... she wants to training other staff, so that is why we are going to send her to training to learn how to training other staff”. He believes that doing this practice more regularly could have helped to understand how some employees have left their jobs.

Case 2: The managers said that if they had a HR department, we could have handled better some situations which happened with their staff. She recognised that they have non-structured workplace which may be the cause of many employees leave their jobs as they do not provide a continuously support for their staff.

Case 3: She said that training development wasn’t fully development before: “There was a lack of training, but it has been fixe now”. The respondent affirmed that some of employees would have chosen to stay in the hotel, if they had known their career development opportunities. She added that the hotel group identified that training was a problem, then recently, they have improved their training program and they hired a training and development (T&D) manager who is in charge of developing programs for employees.

Case 4: The manager said that “we always try to recruit the best employees, we invest time and money in their training and development and we work for retaining them”. She believes that employee relation is crucial in making employees feel they are part of the hotel and how they personally have a direct impact on the success of the company. The department organises activities to get together at the workplace “In these meetings, employees are able to relax and take a break from their routine work”. This helps to de-stress and connect the group as a team.

4.1.10 Challenges

The interviewees were asked to give their opinion about challenges or barriers that affect the HR practices in the hotel industry

Case 1: He believes that training is the main issue in the area: “I think there is a need to providing more training for all employees”. He recognised that it is an important factor to deliver a good customer service.

Case 2: In this case, the hotel does not have a HR department. The manager said that a lack of practices towards their employees can be considered a challenge as managers from each department are occupied with their own tasks, and they can be deficient in on some issues.

Case 3: The respondent pointed out some problems: “people don’t follow procedures”, for example managers do not give back contracts that need to be signed, nor do not report issue with employees that could be handled by the HR managers. Besides, she said that “people don’t know what HR does”, and its importance which effects how HR could support the company.

Case 4: The manager said that ‘I think that the major challenge is investing on people. We know there are employees who want to share with us their knowledge and who are open to be challenged on certain things’.

She added that the role of HR is constantly changing. For example she mentioned “we need to adapt and keep up with trends, including social media and technology development”. In her opinion, social media will become more prevalent in recruitment and T&D in the next years, and the hotel has been familiarised in some of these tendencies. She ended saying that “technology will also offer opportunities and changes in how we recruit, retain and develop our employees”.

Figure 2 Summary of findings

| Categories | Case 1 | Case 2 | Case 3 | Case 4 |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Importance of SHRM | HR department is partially implemented but designed to support general management goals | Absence of HR department; the departmental managers carry out most HR activities | The HR department is strategic and employee orientation; HRM as a means to realize the strategic goals | HRM is viewed as formally organized and structured process |
| Talent management initiatives | There are few, basic administrative HR practices | Low strategic and lack of employee orientation practices. | There are few, basic administrative HR practices | In addition to HR Investments on training and rewarding, effective two-way communication is important to build up the relationship with employees |
| Opinion about HR practises in the hotel industry | Agreed that HRM isn't fully developed in hotels | Agreed that HRM isn't fully developed in hotels. | Agreed that HRM isn't fully developed in hotels | Partially agreed |
| Training programs | Trainings are strategically Oriented based on employees' needs | Informal on-the-job training | Trainings are also strategically oriented based on employees' needs | Training are strategically consistent with employees' needs and the company's value |
| Career Advice | Support from management | Support from departmental managers | Support from HR department and departmental managers | Support from HR department |
| Career opportunities | There is possibility of change career across departments. | Few opportunities, but hotels always prefer in-house promotions | Vast career options in-house and across hotel group | There are opportunities within the hotel and across the group properties |
| Reward initiatives | There is some monetary compensation based on costumers' reviews or managers/colleagues indications | Lack of extrinsic rewards. There are some intrinsic motivational factors, but not as structured practice. | There are also gratifications based on costumers' reviews or managers/colleagues indications | There are formal initiatives to reward outstanding employees based on their performance with guest and colleagues |
| Employee wellbeing | Health and Safety training | Fire training for managers | Health and Safety training, and "bike scheme" but employees aren't aware of it | Health and Safety training |
| Retention practices | The hotel considers job checking | As there is no HR department, there are no employee-oriented practices. | Providing more training for develop their staff | Focus on employee relation and communication |
| Challenges | Providing training for employees | Lack of HR department | Recognition of HRM activities from some employees | Investing on employees and HRM has to keep up new technologic trends. |

5. Discussion

In this chapter, the results of the data collection will be reviewed, interpreted and related to the discussed academic literature in order to answer the research question. Initially, it will be presented considerations about the importance of HR in each hotel and for the hotel industry in general; secondly the HR practices applied by the places will be discussed; and finally the challenges and questions about employee retention will be analysed.

Role of HRM in the hotels

The sample hotels differs in relation how HRM is presented in each company. In the case 1 there is a HR assistant who represents the HR department in the hotel; in the case 2 there is no HR department in the place; there is a HR department with a HR manager and a HR coordinator in the case 3; and there also a HR department with a HR manager and a T&D executive in the case 4. The larger hotels in the interview sample appear to have a greater range of strategic options than might be available to smaller establishments. This is also noticed by Wilton (2006, p. 917) in his research in the UK hotel industry as he cited that larger hotels has adopted better diversity of HRM practices and approaches management, including range of HRM strategic choices. In our sample, particularly in the case 3 and 4, it is noticeable that HR department is tied directly to the hotel's strategies. For example, the interviewees said that they are responsible for checking all staffing from all departments in order to plan short and long term budget. Jain et al (2013, p. 202) pointed it out saying that "the existence of a human resources department is vital to overall productivity and efficiency of the strong workforce in any thriving company".

The case 2 is an opposite scenario is: the lack of HR professionals leads managers and general management with responsibilities of recruiting, firing, compensation and dealing with interpersonal issues. HRM is characterized by a short-term fragmented activity and concentration on executing operational tasks in that hotel, and the absence of HR activities may cause gaps in the management and operational which impacts on the hotel's performance. Managers often do not have specialized knowledge in dealing with legal issues or employee relation matters as it was cited by the respondent in the case 3 and these factors are crucial for keeping a company competitive. Besides, researches have also argued that a combination of HR activities, such as recruitment, training, rewarding, are more likely to drive sustainable performance outcomes than individual practices (Lee et al, 2012, p. 19).

Then, it is possible to affirm that hotels which have a structure HR department are more likely to have optimum management services concerning employees.

Further to this topic, the different scenarios from the cases also can be illustrated by Piening et al's research (2014, p. 560). They also identified that when HRM is seemed to a strategic role, it is characterized by a greater number and complexity of HR practices that must be vertically and horizontally aligned to organisational goals. In contrast, when the range of HR practices is "limited to fundamental administrative tasks or employees' basic needs (case 2), organizations are faced with a less demanding implementation task" (Piening *et al*, 2014, p. 560). Having identified the role of HR in the hotels, it is also reasonable to look at HRM models previously discussed. On the one side, the research findings suggest that the case 3 and 4 adopt a 'best practice' approach in which hoteliers have a bundle of practices that, when in place, results in mutual gain for employees and employer. Especially for this research, it was mentioned that implementing best practices helps to reduce the levels of absenteeism and turnover (Young-Thelin et al, 2012, p. 335). On the other side, particularly the case seems to adopt a 'best fit' approach because HR functions in the hotel are characterized by a cost-based strategy which is appropriate with its specific organizational and environmental context. Based on the previously criticisms (Boxal and Purcell's, 2000) - which point that 'best practice' may not be affordable and justifiable in all types of companies even in the same sector, and 'best fit' fails to consider that internal context of the company - , it is notifiable that a different strategic position for HRM raised by resource-based view (RBV) approach is not incorporated by the hotels. The RBV explains how internal resources contribute to enhancing the competitive advantage of a business (Dany *et al*, 2008, p. 2097), and the relation to HPWS is plausible because this creates a human resource advantage by enhancing employee knowledge and skills using interrelated and aligned set of HR practices (Lee et al, 2012, p. 19). Applying this approach, hoteliers can boost working conditions and reduce employee turnover.

A last point mentioned by the case 3 refers to the lack of knowdeleg about HR function in general, not only in hotels. The respondent said that the HR department is usually really busy, but e the results of their work are not that visible, then most of employees do not know what this department really does.

Training

It is evidently that training is an important issue in the interviewed hotels. In the case of hotels which are part of hotel chain, they usually have a training program for developing their employees. Some of these trainings are mandatory to all staff such as induction and house safety, and there are programs that aim to enhance practical skills which staff needs to do their jobs, or even important to improve their soft skills. For example in the case 1 and 3, managers are able to send employees to courses or programs to develop the specific skills they need such as ‘Customer Care Training’ or ‘Telephone skills for reservations and reception’. It seems a positive aspect to boost employee satisfaction: as it was mentioned by Kennett (2013, p. 124), when managers together with their team identify what it is the ability or skill needed to have a better performance, employees are more likely to stay at the company because it was built a sense of belong and commitment from part of the company towards its members of staff.

It In contrast, the informal on-the-job training has emerged as a common activity in the small hotels for example in the case 2. The internal training increase identification and attachment as it promotes a greater level of socialization (Brum, 2007, p. 8). It is a less cost option, but it also can dangerous for this company because there is a chance of improper work conducts may be passed on from existing employees to new employees. Besides implications on the task performance, Costen and Salazar (2011, p. 280) reinforce that the absence of training focus on hard and/or soft skills can effect on the quality of customer service which is vital for this industry.

Having considered this, it is also reasonable to say that large hotels have more chances to keep their employees if they invest on improving employees’ hard and soft skills. As it was pointed out by CHOI, Y, & DICKSON, D (2010, p.113), when companies invest on enhance quality and rigor of raining programs for its managerial workforce, they significantly increase employee satisfaction level and consequently reduced the turnover rate. For this reason, providing opportunities to enhance employee development is an approach to gain employee loyalty.

Rewards and Career Opportunities

In relation to rewards practices, it is possible to affirm that most of hotels do not have a structured reward system. In considering pay and other aspects of remuneration, it is noticeable that how the size of the hotel impacts on the of reward strategies. In the case 1 and

3, the hotels reward their staff based on the levels of customer service giving monetary compensation. Following the same approach, the case 4 have more rewards programs which are linked to the individual's performance and business' expectations, and consequently it creates a perception that performance is adequately valued and rewarded. However, it is believed that the links between reward and performance can be more structured. Referring to CIPD research (2014, p. 40) which shows that 48% of employees in the private sector would like to have their pay linked to own performance. These linkages are essential as it was presented in the Towers Watson's research (2014, p. 4) which shows that only "53% of participating companies report that employees understand how this is done", and it can cause implications on productivity across the whole workforce.

Rewarding employees is a noteworthy initiative because it encourages better levels of service which leads to customer satisfaction. Indeed, extrinsic motivators such as pay, promotion, careers and pensions are a useful and important part of keeping employees engaged, but they are certainly not the only ones (Hutchinson, 2013, p.69). The findings also indicate that all hotels are interested in providing and learning opportunities and career growth. Indeed, promoting from within gives employees a clear path of advancement. Particularly, the case 3 and 4 offer opportunities across each hotel group and it can be a positive aspect because employees identify that their career choices are multiple and there are possibilities of moving areas. Suttapong et al (2014, p. 40), in particular, has affirmed that providing career development is one of the keys HR best practices for building a high performance management system. Therefore, by encouraging inn-house career development and promotion opportunities, the hotels are applying essential strategies to attract and retain employees.

Although, in the case 2, the manager affirmed that they encourage internal promotions, the hotel is not able to provide salary rise and promotions. They have applied some alternatives of reward initiatives, which are used to recognise employee's contribution, for example giving more meaningful tasks to employees and being flexible in their working hours. It is an informal recognition but it can be also a motivator to help building long-term employee engagement. This point, for example, sustains the work of Beltrán-Martín and Roca-Puig (2013, p.662), as they state that promoting employee empowerment and autonomy, by expanding the range of activities for which employees, helps to increase motivation and commitment amongst employees. By the same token, Patel and Conklin (2012, p.224) affirm that an organisational culture which focus on change, and concerns

growth, creativity, and external adaptation may be an important factor affecting to retain employees and enhance productivity. Finally, we have seen from Dawson & Abbott (2011, p. 291) that small companies which reinforces a hospitality culture and climate for exceptional service; they are likely to have committed employees, and more power to attract and retain their employees.

Furthermore, Suttapong et al (2014, p. 45-46) sustains that HR policies should encourage staff to participate in key decisions and providing them with access to resources when required. In the case 2, it seems that the hotel encourage workers by giving more responsibilities, but not providing them to have an input in decisions. Applying both strategies would combine productivity and employee satisfaction. In addition, the manager believes that her relationship with her staff is an important point in the workplace. The idea of developing positive relationships with all colleagues across the company is also disseminated by the HR department in the case 4. This agree with the work of Beltrán-Martín and Roca-Puig (2013, p.664) as they affirm that the relationship between employees and the company helps” to create a workforce that is more willing and able to learn and behave flexibly”.

These findings suggest that managing employee's psychological contact and alignment of personal goals with organization's goals and practices have implication for employees' retention. Finally, Jacobs et al's research (2014, p. 9) indicates that individuals who are provided with high levels of intrinsic rewards they are more dedicated and actively involved in their work.

Employee well being

It can be seen from the above analysis that all hotels do not apply significant wellbeing practices toward employees. Most of the interviewees could not identify examples of initiatives that support the health and wellbeing among their workforce. The examples of practices asked to the interviewees were more focused on physical and mental health and physical safety, for example gym time and membership, healthy food, flexible work hours; these are healthy activities which contribute to a culture of health and assist employees by improving or maintaining their health for maximum productivity. The results of the interviews also have shown that common initiative that hotels have applied refers to physical safety which is the ‘fire safety training’. It is a legal procedure which hotels have to cover. Some hotels also offered “manual handling training”, and other courses more specific for

each department such as ‘food hygiene training’ for kitchen staff. Certainly, these are significant courses for employees who work in the hospitality industry, but the hotels do not own initiatives to promote better health. Only the case 3 has a healthy practice - bike scheme - but it is not a well-known initiative amongst employees.

Referring to the earlier discussion mentioned by Boyd et al (2014, p. 59), staff cuts and the associated increases in work pressures led employees to adopt unsafe work practices in the hotel industry. For this reason, training program such as ‘manual handling’ seems relevant for the members of staff. Employee stress and variable hours also are common issues in the hospitality industry (Hwang et al, 2014; Faldetta et al, 2013). By developing policies and programs to manage employee wellbeing, hotels are investing on health and productivity because they reducing rising costs of absence and employee illness. A study published by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2008, p. 22) done with British companies, support this statement as the research indicates that companies have a positive impact on reduction in staff turnover by implementing a variety of wellness programs and initiatives Another example is the retail Marks & Spencer which had “8% reduction in employee sickness absence by providing physical therapy for employees with musculoskeletal health issues (CIPD, 2007, p. 11).

Retention and Challenges

In the case 1, 3 and 4, the respondents affirmed that providing training opportunities for employees could be way to retain these individuals in the companies. When employees perceive that companies invest on programs to develop their skills, they become more productive and focused on organizational goals (Brum, 2007, p.4). This suggests that organisations can influence employees' commitment through their training practices. Evidence for in support of this position can be found in the research of Dusek et al (2014, p. 99) as their findings suggest that organizational commitment is negatively related to intention to leave the hospitality industry for employees in USA. This point is also sustained by Deloitte survey (2015, p.25) which indicates that most of respondents companies recognise that they cannot simply recruit all the talent they need, but must investment in learning. Therefore, hotels managers also seem to know that learning and development is a critical issue and they are aware about the importance of develop their skills which the workforce need.

Doing a regularly job checking, as in the case 1, it is useful for the hotel uncovers and addresses concerns proactively, improving satisfaction and productivity and keeping the

employees in their positions. It appears to be critical for employee satisfaction and commitment. Kyuhwan (2006, p. 323), in particular, affirmed that when hotels do not provide accurate information about the job itself to their employees, they have negative impact on building a relationship quality – which is "the accumulated trust and satisfaction in interpersonal and organizational relations" -; and this leads to increase the levels of employee turnover intention. The goal is to gain a better understanding of what affects employees' motivation so hotels can work with them to create an engaging and satisfying work environment.

Creating a good conductive working is also a further point to be expected from the HR department. In the case 4, the department is responsible for organising and coordinating employee communications, celebrations and employees' meetings. It could be said that organising these activities helps to strength the connection among the employees and bring them closer. As it was mentioned before, creating a positive work climate improves performance and retains valued employees (Hwang & Chang, 2009, p. 74). Besides, fostering the organisational culture seems to be an essential issue. For instance, in the case 4, the respondent said that one of the department's roles is building the company culture that prevails in all departments of hotel. It helps bringing the best of each employee and creates a higher job satisfaction. It was mentioned in the Deloitte research (2015, p. 35) that culture and engagement is a main issue for companies around the world. Then, the hotel has adopted a right attitude by spreading company culture and values.

The HR coordinator in the case 3 mentioned an important challenge for HR in the hotel industry. She said that most of employees do not really know what they do, or they do not collaborate for accomplishing the HR procedures. This argument is supported by Piening et al's findings (2014, p. 557) which suggest that a lack of consensus about the goals and design of HRM amongst decision-makers becomes a barrier for the implementation of HRM practices. In this manner, it is possible to say that through collaboration with other departments of hotel, HR can increase its understanding of qualifications and skill sets to ensure to employees can carry out their work.

6. Conclusions/Recommendations

The aim of this research was to examine the set of human resource practices used by hotels, and to analyse the interrelations among the various facets of these practices and levels of employee retention in these places. We had to look inside each hotel to determine if they provide career advancement paths or training opportunities, if they appropriately reward their employees and if they have initiatives to increase their employee wellbeing. Despite the relatively small sample, the study revealed some interesting findings about HR in the industry. In general, it can be said that the nature of the company and its size significantly impact on the development of HR strategies. The research suggests that generalisations about employee management in such a broad industry are difficult to make and, a contingent approach is necessary to understanding the HR management practices. However, broad trends can be discerned regarding important topics, and they will be presented below.

By analysing the findings, this study suggests a conceptual framework (see figure 3) with a general view of the relation between HR practices and employee retention. The conceptual framework was derived from the results from the interview questions in order to uncover the research question of this study. It has the purpose of clarifying the process of increasing employee retention through the application of HRM practices. In order to obtain a better understanding of the interrelation of these factors, the importance of each practice will be summarised in the framework and related to the hotel scenario based on previous findings.

The conceptual framework is therefore built around six pillars. First, although the respondents agreed with the importance of HR practices and policies, it is ironic that little effort is exerted to ensure their development. Overall, it appears the case that the range of HR practices and the adoption of a strategic position are associated with labour cost; and this is a big issue more for managers in larger hotels than for those in smaller establishment. For instance, in the small hotel, they justified the absence or neglect of SHRM functions due to the size of the organization. It is important to note however, that putting one person in charge of managing employee benefits, perks, reviews and related tasks takes is vital to reduce the pressure on managers, and mainly to ensure that employees are treated fairly. Another reason is because HR professionals are also more up to date on employment laws and trends. Therefore, understanding the differences amongst hotels' scenarios, the framework suggests that hoteliers should adopt a resource-based view (RBV) approach as a strategic option to develop employees' behaviour being aligned with business strategy and also to build up capabilities and competencies that can add value in long term thinking. Focusing on their

internal resources can be an option for hotels sustain their competitive advantage, and simultaneously keep their employees. By the same token, organisations which adopt high performance work practices know that investments on human capital make the work challenging, interesting and motivating.

Figure 3 Employee Retention Conceptual Framework



Second, given the previous results, it is quite predictable that courses and developing programs should be getting attention from hotels. In the hospitality industry, we have seen that companies have to maintain an exceptional level of guest experience to be competitive in the market. Implementing a comprehensive training and development program for employees is essential to improve their set of skills to better performance the day-to-day activities or learn something extra apart from their routine work. And generally, grooming outstanding employees minimize the turnover rates because hotels encourage the individual development. By the same token, the findings indicate the companies are aware of the importance of providing career opportunities. The following pillar refers to career opportunities. This third aspect in the conceptual framework reinforces that members of staff need to see realistic opportunities within the hotel to assess their personal growth and development.

The fourth pillar refers to reward system. In considering rewarding and other aspects of gratifications, it was noticed that the hotels' practices are restrict to employee performance based on customers' reviews or indications from supervisors. Having a not structure rewarding system and relying only on intrinsic motivators can be dangerous. We have seen that offering both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards can help companies to attract and retain workers. Given the importance of offering competitive compensation and variable resources for rewards, it is imperative for hotel to better differentiate their reward systems. The framework suggests that rewards should be clearly linked to performance, so it is easy for employees to understand the meaning of good performance which has to be aligned with the organisational objectives. Then, a reward model which is linked with the performance system helps to create a fair reward system to encourage employees to maximize their contributions. An addition important point for the hospitality industry is that reward initiatives can be used to shape employee behaviour in the most desired direction for the hotels which is providing a good customer service for their guests.

The following point is about development and promotion of a wellbeing approach in the work place. All hotels affirmed to provide a compulsory 'fire safety training', and some establishments provide 'manual handling training' and other specific training for the various departments. They are essential to show the importance of following good working practices. However, the research suggests that hotels do not have significant initiatives to promote physical health for their employees. An example of initiative cited by the interviewee in the case 3, which encourages the use of cycling, could be more invested and also other activities to promote a physical activity and/or offer access to online information and support on mental health issues. Previously, we have seen that researches show employees who have higher wellbeing cost less in healthcare for employers. Besides, companies are likely to have higher productivity because individuals take less sick days; it also increases employee motivation and improves employee retention.

The final pillar to be considered was not included in the main HR practices discussed in the literature review which is the importance of communicating and building relationship amongst employees - as it was cited in the case 2 and 4. The HRM in hotel, broadly in the hospitality industry, should invest time in getting to know their employees by encouraging them to participate in extracurricular activities in which employees and managers are presented. Examples of activities are organising staff or team meetings to create comfortable collaboration spaces in which employees can gather together. This can translate into an

increase in employee satisfaction and loyalty; and it also impact on delivering an outstanding customer service.

In other words, hoteliers may increase their levels of employee retention by applying these six pillars. It was mentioned in the case 3 that some employees do not know the role of HR in the company. It is agreed that expanding the range of implemented HR practices enhances the visibility of HRM within the organization, which can be attributed to the set of practices being more present in employees' daily work routines. These practices should not focus only on recruiting and selecting the most suitable candidate, rather more emphasising on retaining the employees.

Finally, it is possible to assume that each hotel may have benefits in their operational stability and performance. For instance, the case 1, 3 and 4 are part of renowned groups in the market, and having satisfied employees is fundamental to keep their reputation in the market. For the case 2, investing in staff is a way to grown in the sector. As an addition point, we have seen that employees who are satisfied in their workplace, they will be good ambassadors for their companies, and then they project a friendly and outgoing attitude toward the customer.

Having considered all these aspects, it is reasonable to say that the findings of this study have shown key factors that affect the attraction and retention of local employees in the Irish hotel industry. Following this conceptual framework, companies can design appropriate strategies and programs for helping managers seeking to retain and engage key employees in their establishments.

6.1 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

It is however, important to note the limitations of this research, mainly because the results of this study should be considered in light of its sampling. The small size of our study sample increases the risk that significant relationship between HR practices and employee retention will not be detected. However, the researcher received good support for all respondents, and it is favourable point for the findings.

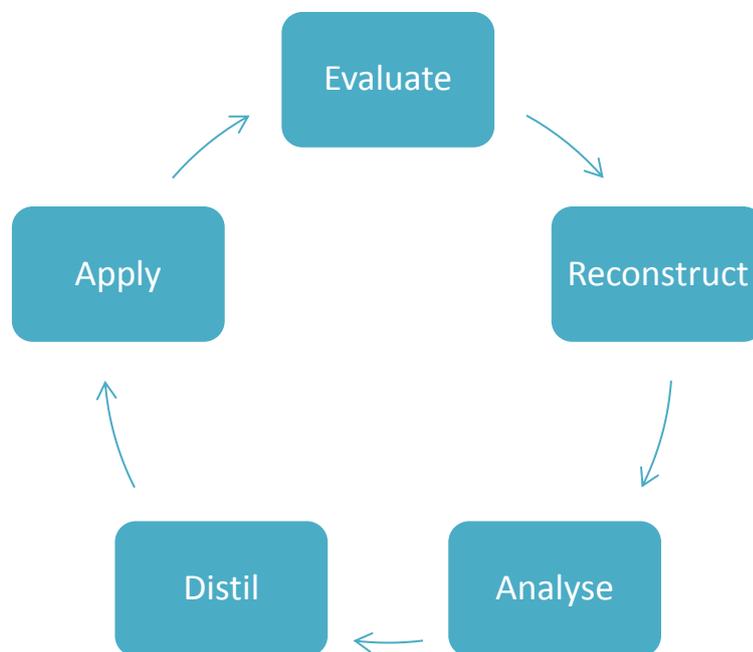
Finally some directions for future researches are suggested: first about practice suggestions, it will be useful to be replicated the proposal with a larger sample in the hotel industry. Besides having HR managers/professionals perceptions, they could also bring employees' views to find out reasons for these staff works in their workplace; reasons for leaving other previous jobs in the same industry and perspectives about their career in the

company. Second, in relation to methodology ideas, following researches can consider to questionnaire hotel staff from different departments – such as reception, kitchen, housekeeping, restaurant, etc. – and from different shifts in order to provide a variety to the sampling researcher distributes questionnaires to various types of employees. Doing interviews seems suitable to gather deeper information from the respondents but if the researcher aims to have a larger sample, using questionnaires can be more appropriate. Notwithstanding the previous limitations, this research worth remains as a valuable starting point for future research on the complex linkages between HRM practices and employee retention in the hotel industry.

7. Reflections

In this chapter, it is presented how the dissertation and the MBA programme has added value to my academic and professional development. For writing my reflective chapter I had to adopt a thinking approach to my experiences, and also to do some tests and activities from the book *Study Skills for Success* (Cottrell, 2010) which helped me to engage in my personal reflection. This book presents some famous models of reflection which guide me in this practice, but the main points in my own process was based on the ‘Core Model’ which has five components to support the understanding of how and why all the process worked out the way it did for me (Cottrell, 2010, pp. 206-209).

Figure 4 Core Model for Reflection



Source: Adapted from Cottrell (2010)

For applying this model, I had to focus on points of most relevance and interested during the work, and followed these steps:

1. Evaluate: what was good and bad about the experience?
2. Describe an experience: reconstruct the fact and write my feelings about it.
3. Analyse: what sense can I make of the situation?
4. Distil: what else could I have done? Main lessons learnt by the experience.
5. Apply: action plan to consider if it arose again what would I do?

Undoubtedly, the dissertation process was a stage in which I developed more my skills and gained knowledge. As I was reflecting about doing this research paper, I could simply say that every aspect of the study has taken me into different but challenging experiences. The following topic presents the main stages of my MBA course and dissertation:

MBA experience

When I chose a MBA course to continue my studies in Dublin, I did not realise how significant it could change my life in terms of routine, responsibilities, personal and professional development. Indeed, I could see that post-graduation course requires a considerable engagement from part of the students in relation to research and critical thinking, and a huge expectation from the college and lecturers. After completed all modules and dissertation, I can affirm that the course helped me to develop some skills which are essential in the world of work such as analytical and critical thinking; problem solving and identifying solutions; time management and communication and presentation skills. Generally, I have improved them by doing individual and group assignments, class presentations and exams.

Skills gained during MBA course

In general, the course experience has contributed to the improvement of time-management skills which provides considerable benefits for my personal life, as well as, for my professional career. For example, being able to critically assess situations and resources was essential to have a good performance in my assignments and exams as I have to avoid that accepting everything is true, to start to question facts, and to develop a critical thinking skill. This reflects in my professional environment as I have started to consider order to all aspects in order to ensure taking the most appropriate decision.

I also have recognised that I have improved in some essential areas to get prepared for my professional career. For example, I understood how a planned preparation is important for a successful presentation. In the first semester, I wasn't confident about doing public speaking; but, during my second presentation for the same module, I could express all my ideas to the audience, being nervous in the beginning but much more comfortable than my first experience. I also could say that the my level of communication skills has also been greatly enhanced as a result of conducting the survey for this research because I had to

conduct on my own the interviewees in a confident manner to pass my research's objectives, and get confidence from the respondents.

During the course, we did many assignments and presentation in groups, and I can affirm that it had considerably evolved my team working skills. I have experienced some situations where unexpectedly I took a leader position to ensure the work would be completed. I have enjoyed organising group meetings and allocating tasks to my classmates, but honestly it is not always an easy job. I recognised that working with people who have different ways of doing things can be hard, and I needed to more be patient and focused on the team goals. Nevertheless, I believe that these experiences will be valuable for my future career as I will be working with people with different backgrounds and opinions.

Choosing my research topic for dissertation

Defining my research question during the final weeks of the first semester was a big challenge. I had to write a proposal which included finding a researchable topic, identifying the problems and developing an appropriate research methodology. During the semester, I could give ideas of themes for colleagues in different streamings, but I was stuck in deciding my own research topic. My initials ideas were related to hospitality industry, specifically hotels, as I have been working in this sector since I arrived in Dublin. In order to narrow down the topic, I had to think deeper about my experiences and colleagues' statements. Having chosen Human Resource Management as MBA streaming, I started to wonder how it was the management in my previous workplaces, and the employees' feelings about working their working environment. By completing the first semester, I had learned about some important HR practices which can influence on employee satisfaction and motivation, and consequently in his/her decision to stay in the job. For this reason, I started to be curious to investigate more about some of their main HR practices in the hotels in Dublin.

Doing the secondary research

While doing my literature review, I could understand more about the HR topics which I was investigating, and be more familiar with some areas. Indeed, doing this chapter was a big task in the first semester. After, I had recognised this challenge I become more dedicated in writing a better literature review chapter. I am happy that I could compile different researches and findings from a considerable number of articles in this research. I believe I have learned to prioritise the secondary data in order to find the most appropriate researches connected to my proposal. Besides, having a critical thinking was important to analyse the

secondary data so I was able to gather a comprehensive annotated bibliography, and as consequence the literature review reflects both depth and breadth coverage of many studies.

Defining methodology

For conducting an exploratory research, I had to immerse in the field to provide a better understanding of HRM in the Irish hotels. A particularly useful book which helped me to write the methodology chapter was *Research Methods for Business Students* (Saunders *et al*, 2012). Particularly about defining the research design options, the book was useful to show the difference between different philosophies and approaches to decide better which one fits to my proposal. Also, the chapter which explains qualitative methodology gave me a broader idea on how I should conduct my primary data. In fact, I admit that researching and writing a dissertation – particularly one based on qualitative research methods – demand a different set of skills and offer some special challenges because of its nature and scope. Besides, as subsection of the methodology, I had to identify the ethical implications of the research undertaken while showing that the necessary precautions which have been taken to protect the rights of the research subjects. I recognised that it is really appropriate for my research topic because of the close involvement of the researcher with the participants in asking information about their hotels practices and policies.

Doing the data collection

Doing the interviews wasn't an easy process. Indeed, the time was one challenge, but getting in contact with interviews was the biggest one. It was definitely a case of trying to hunt the managers in the hotels. My initial research proposal idea was doing interviews with HR managers/professional responsible in the places and also applying questionnaires to employees. Although I had a huge list of possible hotels – and during the process I added more, I did not hear from many of them. Since the beginning of my research, I knew that getting permission to talk to employees in the companies could be complicated, but I did not expect that HR managers or professional would be not accessible like they were. Honestly at some point I gave up, but I had to push further disregarding these challenges. This affects my motivation, but I had to find another possibility to carry on the work. For this reason, I chose to do only interviews and try to get more useful information related to my research topic.

Time management was also big challenge during the entire course. Although I had planned my research tasks for every week, I had to make an extra effort to carry on the work even with difficulties of the data collection and my professional responsibilities. Actually, it

was a big challenge during all college trying to organise my academic and professional responsibilities, but I believe I have done my best to complete academic goals. I tried to ensure the progress of the study according to the timetable, but some delays mainly arose at data collection stage of the research. For future projects, I will ensure to give enough time between tasks to avoid delays.

Using feedback

During all course, mainly about dissertation, I recognised that it was essential to cope with constructive criticism given by lectures and classmates because they mentioned areas to improve my academic and professional development. I tried to work on the points presented by the supervisor in order to ensure the ongoing improvement of my research. Besides, it was also important for me talking to other people such as family members and colleagues to help me to introduce my research, and to explain why my topic can be considered truly different and innovative. This gave more confidence to contact the interviewees for the primary data. Personally, I also enjoy giving feedback to other students and colleagues. It helps me to develop my critical skills which are helpful both in understanding other people's work and in evaluating my own.

Expectations for my professional career

The knowledge gained from the MBA program covered important subject areas of business to prepare the students for their professional career. From this time, I believe it will be a challenge to apply all theoretical concepts in practical situations, but I am looking forward to start my career in the HR field. I am aware of the fact that I do not have experience in the area, and it might not be so easy to find a job opportunity. Though, I expected that the MBA course gives a differentiation in my curriculum, and open doors for new opportunities.

I have learned about HR practices in Irish hotels, and this may be an area which I will be looking for job opportunities in the soon future. Working in a customer service industry, managers need to be conscious that a well-managed employee is more likely to provide the best service, and work together to achieve company's goals. Certainly, I would like to work in a company where there is a continual learning experiences and my job will have a significant contribution. I will continue my development and constantly look for increasing knowledge in order to achieve all my career goals and become a successful in the position I chose.

8. References

A

Ahmad, R, Solnet, D, & Scott, N (2010) 'Human Resource Practices System Differentiation: A Hotel Industry Study', *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Management* (Cambridge University Press), 17 (1), pp. 72-82. Available from: 10.1375/jhtm.17.1.72. (Accessed: 13 June 2015).

Allen, D, Bryant, P, & Vardaman, J (2010), 'Retaining Talent: Replacing Misconceptions with Evidence-Based Strategies', *Academy Of Management Perspectives*, 2 (2), pp. 48-64, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 15 April 2015).

Ameeq-ul-Ameeq, & Hanif, F (2013) 'Impact of Training on Employee's Development and Performance in Hotel Industry of Lahore, Pakistan', *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 4 (4) pp. 68-82, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 15 April 2015).

Armstrong, M. (2009) *Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*. 11th edn. UK: Kogan Page.

Armstrong, M. (2014) *Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*. 13th edn. London: Kogan.

B

Baum, T, & Devine, F 2007, 'Skills and training in the hotel sector: The case of front office employment in Northern Ireland', *Tourism & Hospitality Research*, 7 (3/4), pp. 269-280, *Hospitality & Tourism Complete*, EBSCOhost. [Online]. Accessed: 13 June 2015).

Beardwell, J and Thompson, A (2014) *Human Resource Management – A contemporary approach* 7th edn. Harlow: Pearson.

Beltrán-Martín, I, & Roca-Puig, V 2013, 'Promoting Employee Flexibility Through HR Practices', *Human Resource Management*, 52 (5), p. 645. Available from: 10.1002/hrm.21556. (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Boyd, C, Tuckey, M, & Winefield, A (2014) 'Perceived Effects of Organizational Downsizing and Staff Cuts on the Stress Experience: The Role of Resources', *Stress & Health, Journal Of The International Society For The Investigation Of Stress*, 30 (1), pp. 53-64, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 16 April 2015).

Boxall, P., & Purcell, J. (2000), "Strategic human resource management: Where have we come from and where should we be going?", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 2(2), 183–203 Available at: http://www.researchgate.net/publication/227624098_Strategic_human_resource_management_where_have_we_come_from_and_where_should_we_be_going (Accessed: 15 June 2015)

Brum, Scott (2007). *What Impact Does Training Have On Employee Commitment and Employee Turnover?* Schmidt Labor Research Center Seminar Paper Series. University of Rhode Island. Available at: <http://www.uri.edu/research/lrc/research/papers/Brum-Commitment.pdf> (Accessed: 14 April 2015).

C

CHOI, Y, & DICKSON, D (2010) , 'A Case Study into the Benefits of Management Training Programs: Impacts on Hotel Employee Turnover and Satisfaction Level', *Journal Of Human Resources In Hospitality & Tourism*, 9 (1), pp. 103-116, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 12 March 2015).

CIPD (2007) 'What's happening with well-being at work?' Available at: <http://www.cipd.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/DCCE94D7-781A-485A-A702-6DAAB5EA7B27/0/whthapwbwrk.pdf> (Accessed: 16 April 2015).

CIPD (2013) 'Employee outlook – Focus on employee well-being'. Available at: http://www.cipd.co.uk/binaries/employee-outlook_2013-autumn-employee-well-being.pdf (Accessed: 16 April 2015).

CIPD (2014) 'Employee Outlook – Employee views on working life.' Available at: http://www.cipd.co.uk/binaries/employee-outlook_2015-focus-employee-attitudes-pay-pensions-winter-2014-15.pdf (Accessed: 16 April 2015).

Costen, W, & Salazar, J (2011) 'The Impact of Training and Development on Employee Job Satisfaction, Loyalty, and Intent to Stay in the Lodging Industry', *Journal Of Human Resources In Hospitality & Tourism*, 10 (3), pp. 273-284, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 15 April 2015).

Cottrell, Stella. (2010) *Skills for Success*. 2nd edn. Palgrave Macmillian.

D

Davidson, M, Timo, N, & Wang, Y (2010) 'How much does labour turnover cost?: A case study of Australian four- and five-star hotels', *International Journal Of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 22, 4, pp. 451-466, PsycINFO, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 16 April 2015).

Dany, F, Guedri, Z, & Hatt, F 2008, 'New insights into the link between HRM integration and organizational performance: the moderating role of influence distribution between HRM specialists and line managers', *International Journal Of Human Resource Management*, 19 (11), p. 2095, Publisher Provided Full Text Searching File, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 17 June 2015).

Dawson, M, & Abbott, J 2011, 'Hospitality Culture and Climate: A Proposed Model for Retaining Employees and Creating Competitive Advantage', *International Journal Of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 12 (4) pp. 289-304, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 23 July 2015).

Deloitte (2015) 'Global Human Capital Trends 2015: Leading in the new world of work'. Available at: http://d2mtr37y39tpbu.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/DUP_GlobalHumanCapitalTrends2015.pdf. (Accessed: 01 August 2015).

Deloitte (2010) 'Hospitality 2015'. Available at: http://www.fairtrade.travel/uploads/files/Hospitality_2015_Deloitte_report.pdf (Accessed: 05 Dec 2014).

Deery, M (2008) 'Talent management, work-life balance and retention strategies', *International Journal Of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 20 (7), pp. 792-806, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 16 April 2015).

Dunlap, M (2015) '5 Keys to an Effective Training and Development Program', *Journal of Financial Planning*, 28, 1, pp. 20-21, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 15 April 2015).

Dusek, G, Ruppel, C, Yurova, Y, & Clarke, R (2014) 'THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE SERVICE ORIENTATION IN TURNOVER IN THE U.S. HOTEL INDUSTRY', *Journal Of Organizational Culture, Communications & Conflict*, 18 (2) pp. 87-104, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 16 Apr 2015).

F

Fáilte Ireland (2015) 'Tourism Barometer'. Available at: http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/3_General_SurveysReports/REPORT-Failte-Ireland-tourism-barometer-May-2015.pdf?ext=.pdf (Accessed: 18 June 2015).

Faldetta, G, Fasone, V, and Provenzano, C (2013) 'Turnover in the hospitality industry: can reciprocity solve the problem?' *Pasos: Revista De Turismo Y Patrimonio Cultural*, 11 (4) pp. 583-595, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 24 Dec 2014).

FALOLA, H, OSIBANJO, A, & OJO, S (2014) 'EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE AND ORGANISATION COMPETITIVENESS IN THE NIGERIAN BANKING INDUSTRY', *Bulletin Of The Transilvania University Of Brasov. Series V: Economic Sciences*, 7, 1, pp. 161-170, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 15 April 2015).

G

Gunnigle, P., Heraty, N. and Morley, M. (2006) *Human Resource Management in Ireland*. 3rd edn. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.

H

Harvard Business School, (2006) *Retaining your best people, The results-driven manager series*. Harvard Business School Press, Boston, Mass.

Hausknecht, J, Rodda, J, & Howard, M 2009, 'Targeted employee retention: Performance-based and job-related differences in reported reasons for staying', *Human Resource Management*, 48, 2, pp. 269-288, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost. [Online]. (Accessed: 31 July 2015).

Hennink, M, Hutter, I and Bailey, A. (2011) *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: SAGE

Hinkin, T. R., & Tracey, J. B. (2010). "What makes it so great? An analysis of human resources practices among Fortune's best companies to work for". *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 51(2), 158–170. Available at: <http://scholarship.sha.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1215&context=articles> (Accessed: 13 June 2015).

Hui-O, Y, & Dr. Hsin-Wei, F (2009) 'CONTEMPORARY HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY: IDENTIFYING THE PRIORITIES', *International Journal Of Organizational Innovation*, 2 (1) pp. 201-224, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost. [Online]. (Accessed 24 Dec 2014).

Hutchinson, Sue (2013) *Performance Management: Theory and Practice*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Hwang, J, & Chang, H (2009) 'Work climate perception and turnover intention among Korean hospital staff', *International Nursing Review*, 56(1) pp. 73-80, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, EBSCOhost. [Online]. (Accessed: 04 August 2015).

Hwang, J, Lee, JJ, Park, S, Chang, H, & Kim, SS 2014, 'The Impact of Occupational Stress on Employee's Turnover Intention in the Luxury Hotel Segment', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 15 (1), pp. 60-77. Available from: 10.1080/15256480.2014.872898. (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

I

Ineson, E, & Berechet, G 2011, 'Employee Loyalty in Hotels: Romanian Experiences', *Journal Of Human Resources In Hospitality & Tourism*, 10, 2, pp. 129-149, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, , Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost. [Online]. (Accessed: 31 July 2015).

Irish Hotels Federation (2013) 'IHF Policies'. Available at: <http://www.ihf.ie/content/ihf-policies> (Accessed: 05 Dec 2014).

J

Jacobs, S, Renard, M, & Snelgar, R 2014, 'Intrinsic rewards and work engagement in the South African retail industry. Original Research', *South African Journal Of Industrial Psychology*, 2, Academic OneFile, EBSCOhost. [Online]. (Accessed 21 July 2015).

Jain A, Giga S, Cooper C 2013, 'Stress, health and well-being: the mediating role of employee and organizational commitment', *International Journal Of Environmental Research And Public Health*, 10 (10) pp. 4907-4924, MEDLINE, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 16 April 2015).

K

Kennett, G (2013) 'The Impact of Training Practices on Individual, Organisation, and Industry Skill Development', *Australian Bulletin of Labour*, 39 (1) pp. 112-135, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 15 April 2015).

Kumar, R. (2014) *Research Methodology – a step-by-step guide for beginners*. 4th edn. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Kwenin, Daisy Ofosuhene (2013) 'RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK ENVIRONMENT, CAREER DEVELOPMENTcOPPORTUNITIES AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN VODAFONE GHANA LIMITED'. *Global Journal of Human Resource Management*, 1 (4). Available at: <http://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Relationship-between-Work-Environment-Career-Development-Opportunities-and-Employee-Retention-in-Vodafone-Ghana-Limited.pdf> (Accessed: 01 August 2015).

Kwon, J, & Hein, P (2013) 'Employee Benefits in a Total Rewards Framework', *Benefits Quarterly*, 29 (1) pp. 32-38, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 16 April 2015).

Kyuhwan, C (2006) 'A Structural Relationship Analysis of Hotel Employees' Turnover Intention', *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 11 (4), pp. 321-337, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 15 April 2015).

L

Lee, S, Lee, D, & Kang, C 2012, 'The impact of high-performance work systems in the health-care industry: employee reactions, service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty', *Service Industries Journal*, 32 (1), pp. 17-36, Hospitality & Tourism Complete EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 25 June 2015).

Liao, S, Hu, D, & Chung, H (2009) 'The relationship between leader-member relations, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in international tourist hotels in Taiwan', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20 (8), pp. 1810-1826, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 16 Apr 2015).

Lockwood, N. R. (2006, June). Talent management: Driver for organizational success. *HR Magazine* [51(6)] (June SHRM Research Quarterly).[1-11]. Available at: <http://www.shrm.org/research/articles/articles/documents/0606rquartpdf.pdf> (Accessed: 31 July 2105).

M

Mackay, A. (2007) *Recruiting, Retaining and Releasing People – Managing redeployment, return, retirement and redundancy*. USA: Elsevier Ltd.

Mapelu, Isabel C and Jumah, Lucy (2013) 'Effect of Training and Development on Employee Turnover in Selected Medium Sized Hotels in Kisumu City, Kenya', *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Sports - An Open Access International Journal*. Available at: [http://pakacademicsearch.com/pdf-files/art/518/43-48%20Vol%201%20No%201%20\(2013\).pdf](http://pakacademicsearch.com/pdf-files/art/518/43-48%20Vol%201%20No%201%20(2013).pdf) (Accessed: 16 April 2015)

Maxwell, G, Ogden, S, & Broadbridge, A 2010, 'Generation Y's Career Expectations and Aspirations: Engagement in the Hospitality Industry', *Journal Of Hospitality & Tourism Management* (Cambridge University Press), 17, 1, pp. 53-61, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, Business Source Complete EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 03 August 2015).

McCarthy, G, Tyrrell, M, & Lehane, E 2007, 'Intention to 'leave' or 'stay' in nursing', *Journal Of Nursing Management*, 15 (3), pp. 248-255, PsycINFO, Business Source Complete EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 24 June 2015).

McCarthy, A, Cleveland, J, Hunter, S, Darcy, C, & Grady, G 2013, 'Employee work–life balance outcomes in Ireland: a multilevel investigation of supervisory support and perceived organizational support', *International Journal Of Human Resource Management*, 24 (6), pp. 1257-1276, Business Source Complete EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 24 June 2015).

N

Narang, Uma (2013) 'HRM Practices – Its Impact on Employee Retention', *IRC'S International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Social & Management Sciences*, 1(4), pp. 48-51. Directory of Open Access Journals [Online]. Available at: <http://ircjournals.org/vol1issue4/48-51.pdf> (Accessed: 26 Dec 2014).

O

Oladapo, V 2014, 'THE IMPACT OF TALENT MANAGEMENT ON RETENTION', *Journal Of Business Studies Quarterly*, 5 (3), p. 19, Publisher Provided Full Text Searching File, EBSCOhost, (Accessed: 18 June 2015). Available at: http://jbsq.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/March_2014_3.pdf

Otteribacher, M, & Howley, M (2005), 'Impact of employee management on hospitality innovation success', *FIU Hospitality Review*, 23 (1) pp. 83-93, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 15 April 2015).

Ozen Kutanis, R, Mesci, M, Comlekci, I, & Sahin, O 2012, 'INVESTIGATING HOTEL EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT IN STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT', *Tourismos*, 7(1), pp. 117-134, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 15 June 2015).

Özutku, H (2012) 'The Influence of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards on Employee Results: An Empirical Analysis in Turkish Manufacturing Industry', *Business & Economics Research Journal*, 3 (3) pp. 29-48, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 16 April 2015).

P

Patel, P, & Conklin, B 2012, 'Perceived labor productivity in small firms--the effects of high-performance work systems and group culture through employee retention', *Entrepreneurship: Theory And Practice*, 2, p. 205, General OneFile, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 25 June 2015).

Peixoto, AA 2012, 'In Search for Best Practices: exploring the relationship between the effective use of management practices and organizational performance in the UK's Hotel Sector', *Turismo Em Análise*, 23 (1) pp. 3-27, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 15 June 2015).

Piening, E, Baluch, A, & Ridder, H 2014, 'Mind the Intended-Implemented Gap: Understanding Employees' Perceptions of HRM', *Human Resource Management*, 53, 4, pp. 545-567, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 23 July 2015).

Pilbeam, S. and Corbridge, M. (2010) *People Resourcing and Talent Planning*. 4th edn. Harlow: Pearson.

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (2008) 'Building the case for wellness'. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/209547/hwwb-dwp-wellness-report-public.pdf (Accessed: 25 July 2015).

R

Ratna, R, & Chawla, S (2012) 'KEY FACTORS OF RETENTION AND RETENTION STRATEGIES IN TELECOM SECTOR', *Global Management Review*, 6 (3), pp. 35-46, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 16 April 2015).

S

Sekeran, U. and Bougie, R. (2010) *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach*. 5th ed. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2012) *Research Methods for Business Students*. 6th edn. Harlow: Pearson.

Schreurs, B, Guenter, H, Schumacher, D, Van Emmerik, I, & Notelaers, G 2013, 'Pay-Level Satisfaction and Employee Outcomes: The Moderating Effect of Employee-Involvement

Climate', *Human Resource Management*, 52, 3, p. 399, Publisher Provided Full Text Searching File, Business Source Complete EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 03 August 2015).

Suttapong, K, Srimai, S, & Pitchayadol, P (2014) 'Best Practices for Building High Performance in Human Resource Management', *Global Business & Organizational Excellence*, 33 (2) pp. 39-50, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 16 April 2015).

T

Towers Watson (2014). 'Global Talent Management and Rewards Study'. Available at: http://www.towerswatson.com/assets/jls/2014_Global_Talent_Management_and_Rewards_Study_at_a_glance_EMEA.pdf (Accessed: 02 August 2015).

Townsend, P, & Lee, C 2010, 'The relevance of human resource management theory on the management practices of hospitality providers on Phillip Island Victoria', *Research And Practice In Human Resource Management*, 2, Academic OneFile, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 16 June 2015).

W

Wilton, N (2006), 'Strategic Choice and Organisational Context in HRM in the UK Hotel Sector', *Service Industries Journal*, 26 (8) pp. 903-919, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, EBSCOhost. (Accessed 25 Dec 2014).

Y

Yamamoto, H 2013, 'The relationship between employees' perceptions of human resource management and their retention: from the viewpoint of attitudes toward job-specialties', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24, 4, pp. 747-767, Business Source Complete EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 28 July 2015).

Yoon-Ho, K, Dong-One, K, & Ali, M 2015, 'The Effects of Mutual Trustworthiness between Labour and Management in Adopting High Performance Work Systems', *Relations Industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 70 (11), pp. 36-61, Business Source Complete, , EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 25 June 2015).

Young-Thelin, L, & Boluk, K (2012) 'A Case Study of Human Resource Practices in Small Hotels in Sweden', *Journal Of Human Resources In Hospitality & Tourism*, 11(4), pp. 327-353, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, EBSCOhost [Online] (Accessed: 13 Jun 2015).

9. Appendices

1. Interview questions

This interviewer should take no longer than 30 minutes and to be done on your convenience. The data/results of this study will remain absolutely confidential and to be used on educational proposes only.

Your name: _____

Name of hotel: _____

Job position: _____

Introduction

1. How would you describe the role of HR department/practices in supporting this company to achieve its business goals?
2. Can you tell me how this hotel plans some talent management initiatives related to attracting, hiring and retaining talented employees?
3. Although HRM is clearly important in the hotel scenario, most HR practices in this industry are not fully developed, and very little effort is made to ensure their development. Do you agree with it? How do you feel about it?

Training & Development

4. How would you describe the training programs provided by this hotel? Is there any particular training program that you consider essential for an employee in this company?
5. Do employees have resources other than their managers inside this hotel for career advice?
6. In general how would you assess your opportunities to grow and advance in this hotel?

Reward

7. How would you rate the compensation and benefit of this company?
 - 7.1 Could you cite one example of reward initiative applied for this hotel?

Employee well-being

8. Does the hotel promote initiatives to encourage healthy lifestyles and improved well-being in their organisation? (see some examples of initiatives below)
9. What are the reasons for offering well-being programs/initiatives to your employees?
10. For the majority of your well-being programs, who is eligible to participate?

Final

11. What actions could the organisation have taken to keep their human resources and attract other applicants?
12. In your opinion, what are the main challenges or barriers that affect the HR practices in the hotel industry?

2. Research Time plan

| | 25/05 | 01/06 | 08/06 | 15/06 | 22/06 | 29/06 | 06/07 | 13/07 | 20/07 | 27/07 | 03/08 | 10/08 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| Task | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 5 | Week 6 | Week 7 | Week 8 | Week 9 | Week 10 | Week 11 | Week 12 |
| Designing questionnaires and questions for semi-structured interviews | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Getting in contact with hotels | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Monitoring of literature review | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Conducting primary data collection | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Conducting data analysis phase | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Writing / finalising results chapter | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Writing / finalise discussion, conclusions & abstract | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Compiling first overall draft (inc. references, appendices, etc.) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Editing and editing and more editing | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Final proofing | | | | | | | | | | | | |