

# **Pride-in-Work and Job Embeddedness Among the Frontline Employees in Hotel Industry**

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## **Abstract**

*Success of service industries, especially the hotel industry, is most dependent on employees' perceptions of work-life balance and the subsequent behaviour of the employees. Since the turnover rate and dissatisfaction of employees are high in the hotel industry, it is important to identify the factors that will assist the hotels in nurturing a favourable work environment for the employees, thereby facilitating their retention. The present study evaluated the Pride-in-Work experienced by employees of different hotels as a factor affecting their Job Embeddedness. A descriptive study was conducted using self-administered questionnaires among 341 frontline employees of different five-star and five-star deluxe hotels of Bengaluru. The results exhibited a significant impact of Pride-in-Work on Job Embeddedness as well as significant differences in perceptions of Pride-in-Work and Job Embeddedness based on demographic factors of the employees.*

**Keywords:** Pride-in-Work, Job Embeddedness, Front-line Employees, Hotel industry.

## **1. Introduction**

The tourism and hospitality industry of India is one of the fastest growing service sectors that accounted for 9.6% of the GDP in the year 2016 and is expected to contribute to 50% of the total market share in the year 2022 (IBEF, 2017). As a

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result of the increasing Foreign Tourist Arrival of India, enhanced Foreign Direct Investment in tourism and several initiatives taken by the government to make India an internationally recognized tourism hub, the hospitality industry of India is expected to develop into the second largest employer of the world by 2019 (Sharma, Johri & Chauhan, 2012; Samal & Raju, 2016; IBEF, 2017). Such continuous demand for hospitality services makes the industry a labour intensive one, thereby demanding a massive workforce to satisfy customer needs and survive the competitive consumer market. However, attracting potential staff to the hospitality industry as well as retaining the existing staff within the industry becomes difficult as the industry poses several challenges to employees such as low wages, continuous shifts, extended working hours, stress associated with excessive customer interaction, etc. (Edralin, 2014; Jain & Hassard, 2014). Such stressors associated with the precarious work environment in the hospitality industry can be detrimental to the growth of the industry as the individual conduct of every employee translates into distinct customer experiences. As a result, the hospitality industry came to be characterized as under-productive, under-performing and unable to achieve complete utilization of talents of employees (Ingram, 1999).

The hospitality industry mainly encompasses two kinds of service: entertainment (e.g., pubs, bars, clubs, discotheques, eating outlets, etc.) and accommodation (e.g., hotels for accommodation). The Indian hotel industry classified hotels in general into star, non-star and heritage categories based on the recommendations of Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC) to ensure that the hotels met international standards (HRACC, 2011). There are also further sub-categories among the star hotels and heritage hotels based on the nature of facilities and services offered by the hotels such as food and beverages, number of staff, guest services, staff welfare facilities, communication facilities, safety and security, etc., such as one-star, two-star, five-star, heritage grand, heritage classic, heritage basic, etc. In the case of hotel industry, the employees act as main points of contact between the hotel and customers, i.e., the employees of the hotel directly affect customer experiences and customer evaluation of services rendered by that hotel (Johnson & Ashforth, 2008), thereby governing organizational success. Besides, an extensive body of literature suggests that the hotel industries throughout the world are characterized by more numbers of contingent employees than permanent ones, the negative consequences of which have also been revealed by researchers in terms of low commitment and motivation (George et al., 2010). Therefore, much emphasis should be placed by hotel managements in recognizing and carefully retaining the frontline employees who exhibit a high quality of service performance and successfully deliver positive customer experiences

(Hartline & Ferrel, 1996; Ind, 2003; Tsaur & Lin, 2004; Wallace & de Chernatony, 2007).

Since the organizational success of hotel industry relies more heavily on employee behaviour, it is pivotal for managements to create a work environment nurturing employee satisfaction. In the present study, the researcher aims to understand the mindset of employees working in different hotels, in terms of their Pride-in-Work (PIW) and Job Embeddedness (JE) by formulating the following objectives: (i) to determine the differences in perceptions of Pride-in-Work and Job Embeddedness based on age, education and marital status of the employees and (ii) to study the effects of Pride-in-Work on their Job Embeddedness.

## **2. Related Studies**

### ***Pride-in-Work***

Pride-in-Work indicates the pride carried by employees in performing the job assigned to them or for being a part of an organization or group. It represents the individual connection felt by the employees to services offered by the company, pride arising from a sense of personal achievement resulting from the job and efforts taken by the organizations to appreciate the outstanding achievement of employees (Lau and May, 1998; Tracy & Robins, 2007). Employees feel proud when they perceive their jobs to be meaningful and when they feel their jobs to be of some value to the organization and people in general (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011). When employees feel proud of what they do, they do it with efficiency, commitment and productivity (Burchell and Robin, 2011). Pride-in-work as an important factor of organizational well-being was established by 'best companies to work for' model given by Lau and May (1998) and 'great place to work' model by Burchell and Robin (2011). Therefore, the present study evaluated Pride-in-Work as a determinant of Job Embeddedness of employees working in the hotel industry.

Arnett, Laverie and McLane (2002) proved that Pride-in-Work and job satisfaction led to positive employee conduct in the workplace. Jin and Guy (2009) revealed that employees who needed to oversee feelings of others in workplace felt lower levels of pride in their work. Magee (2014) revealed that Pride-in-Work and job satisfaction differed among employees of different age and gender. According to the researcher, the female employees advanced in their jobs through hierarchical positions at a slower pace when compared to men. Mas-Machuca, Berbegal-Mirabent and Alegre (2016) confirmed organizational pride to be an intermediary variable between work-life balance and job satisfaction of employees.

### ***Job Embeddedness***

In the present study, employee retention is studied in terms of Job Embeddedness, which encompasses three important dimensions, namely, links, fit and sacrifice. Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski and Erez (2001) referred to Job Embeddedness as the tendency of employees to become immersed in their circumstances and surroundings to that extent that it becomes difficult to detach them from their surroundings. According to the authors, Job Embeddedness is where an employee intends to stay with the organization due to his/her association with the organization or the community. The employee is embedded through the facets of “fit”, “link” and “sacrifice” into the organization or the community. The connections assumed by the employees with their co-workers and the organization as a whole, both formal and informal, constitute the ‘links’ dimension of Job Embeddedness. The perceived compatibility of employees with the organization is referred to as their ‘fit’ while the benefits perceived to be lost by the employees in the event of leaving the job encompass the ‘sacrifice’ dimension of Job Embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Several research studies employed Job Embeddedness as a measure of studying the combined forces that encourage employees to remain with an organization. Terence, Brooks, Thomas, Chris and Erez (2001) revealed that Job Embeddedness influenced employee’s intention to stay with the organization and their organizational attachment. Ringl (2013) demonstrated that organizational embeddedness enhanced the work engagement of employees. Harman, Lee, Mitchell, Felps and Owens (2007) showed that off the Job Embeddedness predicted absenteeism and turnover in employees while on the Job Embeddedness predicted their job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviour. Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney and Taylor (2009) found strong relationships of Job Embeddedness with employee compensation and job opportunities, which in turn influenced their intention to stay. Bambacas (2011) revealed fit, link and sacrifice at organizational and community levels to be the determining factors of Job Embeddedness. A study by Robinson, Kralj, Solnet, Goh, and Callan (2013) revealed that organizational sacrifice and community links were positively related to organizational commitment and negatively related to employee’s intention to quit. Ferreira, Ferreira, Martinez, Lamelas, Rodrigues et al (2017) found that job satisfaction and Job Embeddedness interceded each other.

From the literature survey, several gaps in Job Embeddedness research were identified by the researcher. Even though the concept of Job Embeddedness was found to be much researched with respect to different sectors such as the health sector, public sector, non-profit sector, etc., (Alatriza & Arrowsmith, 2004; Seston, Hassell, Ferguson & Hann, 2009; Jiang, Liu, McKay, Lee & Mitchell, 2012; Hayes,

O'Brien-Pallas & Duffield, 2012), research on Job Embeddedness among employees of hotel industry was found to be scanty. Further, most of the studies relating to Job Embeddedness were found to be in relation to job satisfaction, commitment, work engagement, turnover intention, etc. (Terence et al., 2001; Harman et al., 2007; Bergiel et al., 2009; Bambacas, 2011; Robinson et al., 2013; Ferreira et al., 2015), while no studies had explored Pride-in-Work as a predictor of Job Embeddedness.

### **3. Methodology**

A descriptive study was carried out with Pride-in-Work as the independent variable and Job Embeddedness as the dependent variable. Selection of survey participants was performed using non-probability convenience sampling technique and data was collected through self-administered questionnaires between January and June of 2017 in the city of Bengaluru. 341 completed questionnaires of frontline employees from five-star and five-star deluxe hotels in Bengaluru were selected and treated as the final sample for the study.

Job Embeddedness was measured with the help of an 18 item scale adapted from the Job Embeddedness scale of Mitchell, Sablinski, Burton and Holtom (2004), which included six categories, namely, Fit-community, Fit-organization, Links-community, Links-organization, Sacrifice-community and Sacrifice-organization. For measuring Pride-in-Work, a seven item Pride-in-Work scale by Guy, Newman and Matracci (2008) was adopted.

Statistical analysis of the data collected was performed with the help of Statistical Package Program Version 21.0. Descriptive statistics were used to exhibit the demographic characteristics of the study sample. Pearson's correlation was employed to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between pride and Job Embeddedness. ANOVA was used for comparison of Pride-in-Work and Job Embeddedness of respondents grouped based on their education, marital status and age. Linear regression analysis was performed to establish the relationship between Pride-in-Work and Job Embeddedness of employees.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1. Demographic profile of employees**

The demographic profile of the employees taking part in the study revealed that the majority of respondents were male employees (57.5%). Less than half of the employees (41.3%) working in different hotels in Bengaluru originally belonged to Karnataka while the other employees had relocated to Bengaluru from different states of India and from out of India. Most of the respondents were

qualified with a degree (62.2%), were single (66.9%) and belonged to the age group of 21 to 30 years (75%).

**Table 1: Demographic profile of employees**

| Factors        |                     | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender         | Male                | 196       | 57.5    |
|                | Female              | 145       | 42.5    |
|                | Total               | 341       | 100.0   |
| State          | Karnataka           | 141       | 41.3    |
|                | Other Indian states | 197       | 57.7    |
|                | Outside India       | 3         | .9      |
|                | Total               | 341       | 100.0   |
| Age            | 21-30 years         | 257       | 75.4    |
|                | 31-40 years         | 58        | 17.0    |
|                | 41-50 years         | 23        | 6.7     |
|                | 51 above            | 3         | .9      |
|                | Total               | 341       | 100.0   |
| Qualification  | Plus two            | 90        | 26.4    |
|                | Degree              | 212       | 62.2    |
|                | PG                  | 33        | 9.7     |
|                | Others              | 6         | 1.8     |
|                | Total               | 341       | 100.0   |
| Marital Status | Married             | 103       | 30.2    |
|                | Single              | 228       | 66.9    |
|                | Others              | 10        | 2.9     |
|                | Total               | 341       | 100.0   |

#### **4.2. Differences in perceptions of Pride-in-Work and Job Embeddedness**

From Table 2 it is seen that perceptions of Pride-in-Work and Job Embeddedness greatly differed between employees of different generations, probably as they

are in different stages of their career and hold different levels of experience. Genuine differences in personality because of differences in age can also result in perceptual differences among employees. Pride-in-Work exhibited increasing values with increasing age, suggesting that Pride-in-Work increased among the employees as they grew older. Employees of age >51 years exhibited most Pride-in-Work (Mean=6.57) while employees between 21 and 30 years of age exhibited the least Pride-in-Work (Mean=5.80) among all the age categories. Similarly, Job Embeddedness was also significantly affected by age of the employees, with employees >51 years exhibiting most Job Embeddedness (Mean=4.42) and employees between 21 and 30 years showing a relatively less level of Job Embeddedness (Mean=3.63) when compared to the other categories.

The enhanced Pride-in-Work and Job Embeddedness in older employees when compared to the younger ones can be explained on the basis of the underlying dimensions of the variables: older employees were easily motivated and formed connections in the workplace easily, they were more dependent on their jobs than the younger employees in helping with family responsibilities and were also more compatible to their organizations. Cennamo and Gardner (2008) and Amangala (2013) also reported that older employees exhibited a better organizational commitment in terms of person-organization fit than the younger group, i.e., the older employees were easy to believe that the organization's systems were in alignment with their expectations. The older employees also perceived more life security from their jobs than the younger employees, which translated into enhanced Job Embeddedness.

**Table 2: Effects of age on Job Embeddedness (JE) and Pride-in-Work (PIW)**

| Age (Years) | N   | Mean         |              |
|-------------|-----|--------------|--------------|
|             |     | JES          | PIW          |
| 21-30       | 257 | 3.63 ± 0.652 | 5.80 ± 1.178 |
| 31-40       | 58  | 4.08 ± 0.655 | 6.23 ± 1.054 |
| 41-50       | 23  | 3.91 ± 0.695 | 6.32 ± 0.609 |
| >51         | 3   | 4.42 ± 0.225 | 6.57 ± 0.742 |
| Total       | 341 | 3.73 ± 0.677 | 5.92 ± 1.140 |

An interesting finding from Table 3 was that employees qualified with a higher secondary education exhibited enhanced PIW (M=6.18) as well as enhanced JE (M=3.84) when compared to employees with better educational qualification. More pride in those employees with lesser educational qualification might be a result of conscious motivation offered by the hotel management to such



employees. Further, the increased JE exhibited by this group of employees suggests that employees with relatively lesser educational qualification formed connections with their co-workers effortlessly. This group of employees was also more compatible with the organization, which implies that while the hotel industry easily fulfilled the needs of less educated employees, they were not as successful in satisfying the superior expectations of well educated employees. Al-Kahtani (2012) also reported similar findings in relation to organizational commitment of employees from Saudi Arabia. Further, employees with lesser education perceived their alternative job opportunities to be less and therefore perceived to lose more benefits in the event of losing the present job, a finding also reported by March and Simon (1958) and Igbal (2011).

**Table 3: Effects of educational qualification on JE and PIW**

| Education        | N   | Mean         |              |
|------------------|-----|--------------|--------------|
|                  |     | JES          | PIW          |
| 0                | 1   | 3.83 ± 0.    | 6.14 ± 0.    |
| Higher secondary | 89  | 3.84 ± 0.674 | 6.18 ± 0.955 |
| Degree           | 212 | 3.69 ± 0.684 | 5.80 ± 1.215 |
| PG               | 33  | 3.71 ± 0.674 | 6.02 ± 1.024 |
| Others           | 6   | 3.56 ± 0.524 | 5.43 ± 1.080 |
| Total            | 341 | 3.73 ± 0.677 | 5.92 ± 1.140 |

With respect to marital status (Table 4), it was found that married employees exhibited more JE (Mean=3.98) as well as PIW (Mean=6.37) when compared to the other categories. The high JE among married employees can be explained in terms of the 'sacrifice' dimension of JE. Since the perceived responsibilities of married employees are more towards their families, their perceived sacrifice in the event of losing the job will also be high, thereby resulting in enhanced perceptions of PIW and JE. Further, in the event of balancing work and family, married employees overcome more obstacles to advance in their career and therefore exhibit more JE. Additionally, as reported by Kanter (1977) as well as Pfeffer and Ross (1982), married employees easily invested more into their work than single employees as they had extra help in the form of spousal support in managing the household and other endeavours, which in turn translates into increased JE. The enhanced JE in married employees revealed by the results can also be explained on the basis of the social expectations theory proposed by Landau and Arthur (1992), which states that married employees being the chief breadwinners of the family faced increased urge to advance in their careers when compared to single employees. Another interesting view proposed by Becker



(1975) suggested that organizations viewed married employees differently while allocating wages and perceived married employees to be more stable as well as responsible. Accordingly, the results of the present study also suggested that the conduct of the hotel industry towards married employees might have been more favourable, thereby resulting in enhanced JE. Similar results in terms of enhanced organizational commitment among married employees were also reported by Dodd-McCue and Wright (1996) as well as Salami (2008).

**Table 4: Effects of marital status on JE and PIW**

| Marital status | N   | Mean       |            |
|----------------|-----|------------|------------|
|                |     | JES        | PIW        |
| Married        | 103 | 3.98±0.714 | 6.37±0.928 |
| Single         | 228 | 3.62±0.645 | 5.72±1.175 |
| Others         | 10  | 3.8±0.223  | 5.64±1.048 |
| Total          | 341 | 3.73±0.677 | 5.92±1.14  |

### 4.3 Impact of PIW on JE

The relationship between PIW and JE was computed using Pearson’s correlation. A significant positive correlation between PIW and JE ( $r=0.581$ ,  $p=0.00$ ) was exhibited by the results. Since the  $r$  value obtained was  $>0.5$ , it is inferred that the level of correlation between PIW and JE was high (Cohen et al., 1998).

Further, the impact of PIW on JE was also evaluated using linear regression analysis. The result of the regression analysis exhibited that PIW was a significant predictor ( $p<0.05$ ) and accounted for 36 % of the variation in JE. R value was found to be 0.596, indicating a moderate positive relationship of the variables with JE. The Durbin-Watson value obtained was 1.924, which is well within the permissible limit  $1.5 < d < 2.5$ , indicating the absence of first order linear auto-correlation in the regression data (Field, 2009). The results also revealed that for every unit change in PIW, B=0.318 variations were caused in JE. The researcher also checked for multicollinearity in the regression model and found that tolerance was  $> 0.1$  and VIF was  $< 10$  in all the variables, indicating an absence of multicollinearity of the predictors.

The results suggest PIW to be an important job motivator, in accordance to Damij, Levnajia, Skrt and Suklan (2015) who stated that pride was a greater motivator of employees, even greater than money. A positive relationship between emotional organizational pride and commitment to customer service as well as between attitudinal pride and turnover intention of employees was also exhibited by Gouthier and Rhein (2011).

**Table 5: Model summary of PIW as predictor of JE**

| Model Summary <sup>b</sup>    |                   |          |                   |                            |               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Model                         | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
| 1                             | .596 <sup>a</sup> | .356     | .350              | .54624                     | 1.924         |
| a. Predictors: (Constant) PIW |                   |          |                   |                            |               |
| b. Dependent Variable: JE     |                   |          |                   |                            |               |

**Table 6: Impact PIW on JE**

| Coefficients <sup>a</sup> |            |                             |            |                           |        |      |                         |       |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|-------------------------|-------|
| Model                     |            | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics |       |
|                           |            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      | Tolerance               | VIF   |
| 1                         | (Constant) | 1.335                       | .227       |                           | 5.875  | .000 |                         |       |
|                           | PIW        | .318                        | .027       | .535                      | 11.585 | .000 | .896                    | 1.116 |
| a. Dependent Variable: JE |            |                             |            |                           |        |      |                         |       |

## 5. Conclusion

The hotel industry should work hard towards ensuring JE of employees because in the end, high level of JE will keep the employees enthusiastic, bring stability to the industry and ensure overall success of the industry in the competitive consumer market. The disadvantages of poor JE of employees are two fold: the employees cannot personally advance in their careers, they will be deprived of the benefits offered by their jobs as well as lose their job security by exhibiting poor JE and on the other hand, the industry as a whole also will get incapacitated in a meeting with its goals.

In the present study, a significant high impact of PIW on JE was exhibited by both Pearson's correlation and regression analysis. This finding suggests that the hotel industry could emphasize on employing appropriate evaluation procedures to assess the performance of employees in order to show appreciation towards positive performers, thereby enhancing their feeling of pride. The organizations can also ensure that the employees are given challenging and interesting jobs so that they are left with a feeling of contentment and pride after completion of the job. Pride building programs can be introduced by identifying the right pride builders within the workforce, who excel at motivating their teams and making them more compliant to the organizational culture. Placing such pride builders in the frontline supervising positions will help them act as role

models to the other employees. The employers should therefore work beyond just financial recognition of employee performance and indulge in acknowledging the varied efforts of employees by sending appreciation letters, recording thanks in response to their efforts, appreciating the efforts of employees in public meetings and introducing achievement titles such as 'employee of the month'.

The study also attempted to understand similarities and differences between employees of different demographic groups so that the organizations can understand the diverse needs of employees, structure their managerial practices accordingly and thereby improve employee retention rate. The results exhibited that perceptions of PIW and JE were enhanced in older employees of age >51 years who were married and possessed an educational qualification of higher secondary school when compared to other demographic categories. The less PIW exhibited by youngsters in the present study when compared to the older employees might stem from their inexperience, implying that the employers should take extra precaution in recognizing the efforts of the young employees of their organization. Further, the industry can introduce more flexible work practices such as part time work etc., and offer better assurance of work-life balance in order to improve the JE of young employees working with the industry. It is also evident from the results that the presence of a family, positively influences employee outcome. Therefore, the hotel industry should continue to promote family friendly initiatives to keep up the enhanced JE of married employees. The industry should also offer equal benefits to single employees to encourage their intention to stay with the organization. The relative dissatisfaction of educated employees as revealed by the study can be rectified by attempting to understand their needs and enforcing policies to fulfil them.

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