
Volume 4 *Volume 4 Issue 3*

2019

The Role of Fairness, Job Satisfaction, and Co-Worker Cohesiveness in Influencing the Desire for Unionization Among Polish Cooks

Piotr Zientara
University of Gdansk

Anna Zamojska
University of Gdansk

Monika Bak
University of Gdansk

Follow this and additional works at: https://via.library.depaul.edu/ichrie_rr



Part of the [Food and Beverage Management Commons](#), and the [Human Resources Management Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Zientara, Piotr; Zamojska, Anna; and Bak, Monika (2019) "The Role of Fairness, Job Satisfaction, and Co-Worker Cohesiveness in Influencing the Desire for Unionization Among Polish Cooks," *ICHRIE Research Reports*: Vol. 4 , Article 1.

Available at: https://via.library.depaul.edu/ichrie_rr/vol4/iss3/1

This article is brought to you for free and open access by the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (ICHRIE). It has been accepted for inclusion in *ICHRIE Research Reports* by an authorized editor of DePaul University School of Hospitality Leadership. For more information, please contact rr@depaul.edu. The compilation of the journal issue is copyrighted by ICHRIE, but authors retain the copyright for their article.

The Role of Fairness, Job Satisfaction, and Co-Worker Cohesiveness in Influencing the Desire for Unionization Among Polish Cooks

Working at a hotel is not fun

Hotel work is characterized by unique features and idiosyncrasies. The hours worked in the sector are long and unsocial, which makes it hard for employees to achieve work-life balance [1]. Since the business is seasonal and a large proportion of hotel jobs is low-skilled, there is a high incidence of part-time and temporary employment, which, in practice, translates into low pay, job insecurity, and limited access to training [2]. This explains why hotel employees feel tired, treated unfairly, and dissatisfied with their jobs. Unsurprisingly, staff turnover is very high in the entire industry [3, 4, 5, 6]. Things are aggravated by the fact that hotels in some countries – notably, Poland – are practically without collective representation [7]. It follows that their bargaining position is relatively weak.

Is a dissatisfied employee likely to quit or join a union?

Given all this, it seems particularly interesting to find out whether hotel employees might be interested in unionization [8]. It is also worth investigating whether, in the absence of unions in the workplace, staff can count on their co-workers for support and, by extension, whether this might affect their support for unions and intention to leave. To explore these critical issues, six hypotheses developed on the basis of the relevant literature of the subject were tested. They have important practical implications, which should be of particular value to hoteliers and restaurateurs willing to improve human resource management at their facilities, thereby effectively addressing the problem of high labour turnover and widespread employee dissatisfaction.

Questionnaire survey conducted at a professional gathering

The study is based on data collected through a questionnaire survey conducted among Polish cooks and cook's helpers during an official gathering of this profession, held in Krakow in August 2017 [9]. Altogether, 220 questionnaires were handed to attendees at check-in. A total of 188 responses was collected, of which two were deemed incomplete. Consequently, 186 responses (representing 46 hotel kitchens) were used for further analysis, yielding an effective response rate of 85%.

What do Polish cooks and cook's helpers say?

The findings indicate that there was an inverse relationship between job satisfaction and intention to quit. So those who were dissatisfied with their jobs wanted to quit. It turned out, too, that, contrary to our assumptions, dissatisfaction did not increase one's desire for union membership, which is inconsistent with previous research. A sense of fairness experienced by cooks translated into less desire for unionization and for leaving. Furthermore, there was a positive relationship between cohesiveness and a desire for unionization and an inverse relationship between cohesiveness and intention to quit. In other words, a feeling that one could rely on their colleagues meant greater support for unionization but lesser desire for leaving.

What does it all mean for practitioners?

Hotel managers should remember that dissatisfied workers are more likely to quit than those who are satisfied, which – given that employee retention is the industry's front-and-center concern – is one of the main implications of the study's findings. Considering that managers are unable to completely eliminate the inherent inconveniences characterizing hotel work, they should at least treat staff fairly and respectfully, attempting to foster fairness climates in their workplaces. That, in turn, is likely to ease the challenges of difficult working conditions, thereby helping retain staff. Undoubtedly, workers should be treated fairly on ethical grounds rather than just for pragmatic reasons. Indeed, every employee deserves fair treatment in the name of human dignity and universal equality. Relatedly, to those hotel managers who doubt the *raison d'être* of collective representation, the fact that fairness climate can make employees less willing to seek union membership provides another reason for behaving fairly towards their subordinates. Again, they should not do so just with a view to preventing the presence of unions in hotels (which in itself could be seen as cynical), but out of their own ethical convictions.

The fact that cooks can rely on their co-workers in times of need is significant in its own right. Work in hotel kitchens is stressful, which implies that being able to rely on one's colleagues for support is a plus in the eyes of a cook. Workers naturally value cohesiveness, which, in turn, helps explain why this might weaken their intention to leave. It follows that this aspect of co-worker relations is an important factor behind one's desirability of movement (it lessens one's willingness to quit), which does matter in view of high labour turnover in the industry. Admittedly, hotel managers, by definition, cannot do much about co-worker cohesiveness. But, at least, while recruiting staff, they can pay attention to whether a potential employee is

predisposed towards working in a team. In sum, this research work shows that the way hotel managers treat their charges influences their behaviour in and attitudes towards their workplaces.

Cited References

- [1] Deery, M., & Jago, L. (2015). Revisiting talent management, work-life balance and retention strategies. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(3), 453-472.
- [2] McNamara, M., Bohle, P., & Quinlan, M. (2011). Precarious employment, working hours, work-life conflict and health in hotel work. *Applied Ergonomics*, 42(2), 225-232.
- [3] Chen, Z., Sun, H., Lam, W., Hu, Q., Huo, Y., & Zhong, J. A. (2012). Chinese hotel employees in the smiling masks: roles of job satisfaction, burnout, and supervisory support in relationships between emotional labor and performance. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 23(4), 826-845.
- [4] Gallardo, E., Sánchez-Cañizares, S.M., López-Guzmán, T., & Jesus, M.M.N. (2010). Employee satisfaction in the Iberian hotel industry: the case of Andalusia (Spain) and the Algarve (Portugal), *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 22(3), 321-334.
- [5] Zhao, X., & Namasivayam, K. (2012). The relationship of chronic regulatory focus to work-family conflict and job satisfaction. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(2) 458-467.
- [6] Zhao, X., & Matilla, A. S. (2013). Examining the spillover effect of frontline employees' work-family conflict on their affective work attitudes and customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 33, 310-315.
- [7] Green, C. P., & Heywood, J. S. (2015). Dissatisfied union workers: Sorting revisited. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 53(3), 580-600.
- [8] Information Service of Solidarity Trade Union. (2017). Retrieved November 1, 2017, from <http://www.solidarnosc.org.pl/aktualnosci/informacje/sis/>.
- [9] Zientara, P., Zamojska, A. & Bak, M. (2017). The impact of fairness and cohesiveness on unionization and intention to quit among cooks and cook's helpers. Unpublished manuscript.