

Exploring the Impact of High-Performance Work Systems on Job Satisfaction of Hotel Chefs in 5-Star Hotels in Kandy, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The demanding environment of luxury hotel kitchens, including long hours, intense pressure and emotional labour, makes chefs especially vulnerable to low job satisfaction and turnover. This study examines how a package of human resource practices, known as High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS), affects job satisfaction among chefs in five-star hotels in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Guided by the AMO (Ability–Motivation–Opportunity) framework, the research focuses on five HPWS dimensions: training, staffing, compensation, performance management, and communication. A quantitative survey was administered using a structured self-report questionnaire among the chefs in all five five-star hotels in Kandy. A total of 115 questionnaires were distributed, and following the data cleaning procedure, only valid responses were included in the analyses. Participants were selected using simple random sampling, and the data analysis was performed in SPSS employing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The regression model was highly significant and explained a substantial portion of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.739$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.726$), indicating that the five HPWS dimensions together account for approximately 73.9% of the variance in chefs' job satisfaction. Compensation, communication, performance management, and staffing indicated significant positive effects on job satisfaction ($p < .05$), while training demonstrated a small negative and non-significant effect ($p > .05$). Practically, the findings suggest that luxury hotels aiming to enhance chef retention and service quality should prioritise fair, performance-linked compensation, clear and timely communication, robust performance management, and adequate staffing levels. In addition, training programmes should be critically redesigned to better align with chefs' needs. This study contributes empirical evidence from Sri Lanka's luxury hospitality sector, an under-researched context, by examining HPWS dimensions specifically among chefs and identifying which HR practices most strongly predict job satisfaction in high-pressure kitchen environments.

Keywords: chefs, five-star hotels, High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS), hospitality industry, human resource management, job satisfaction