



Employee Motivation and Its Influence on Customer Satisfaction

Bachelor's Thesis
International Business
Autumn, 2025
Iuliia Iugova

DP International Business
Author Iuliia Iugova
Subject Employee Motivation and Its Influence on Customer Satisfaction
Supervisors Annaleena Kolehmainen

The purpose of this thesis was to research the influence of employee motivation on customer satisfaction, using the case of Hotel Holiday Inn Tashkent City. The main goal of this research was to analyze this relationship after examining the theoretical background of motivation and the current state of employee involvement in the commissioning company. Based on this, the author also developed practical recommendations for improving service quality.

The theoretical part of the thesis is based on early theories of motivation, such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, and McGregor's Theory X and Y, as well as on contemporary theories that include Vroom's Expectancy Theory, Equity Theory and Locke's Goal-Setting Theory, in an attempt to establish a relationship with customer satisfaction.

The author used a qualitative method to collect empirical data by conducting four in-depth, semi-structured interviews with employees of the Front Office Department. The results of the analysis showed that the employees have a high level of internal motivation, which is based on management recognition, a positive atmosphere in the team, customer gratitude, and the opportunity for professional growth. High employee engagement is directly related to the delivery of top-quality service. The analysis emphasized that because of this, employees go beyond their direct responsibilities, which helps to exceed customer expectations and builds customer loyalty to the company. Therefore, the conducted research confirmed that satisfied employees create satisfied customers.

In the conclusion of this research, a number of recommendations were offered. The author suggested expanding the power of employees to solve problems independently, optimizing routine processes to increase time for communication with customers and improving the recognition system to maintain a high level of motivation. All these recommendations will help not only to maintain the current level of service but also to improve it, creating more loyal and satisfied customers.

Keywords Employee motivation, guest satisfaction, customer loyalty, service quality, hospitality
Pages 34 pages and appendices 3 pages

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background.....	1
1.2	Purpose and objectives.....	2
1.3	Introduction to the case company.....	2
2	Theoretical Framework.....	3
2.1	The Nature of Motivation	4
2.2	Foundational Theories of Motivation	6
2.2.1	Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs	6
2.2.2	Herzberg’s Motivation-Hygiene Theory	8
2.2.3	McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y	10
2.3	Contemporary Theories of Motivation	11
2.3.1	Vroom’s Expectancy theory	11
2.3.2	Equity theory.....	13
2.3.3	Locke’s Goal-Setting Theory.....	14
2.4	Conceptualizing Customer Satisfaction.....	16
2.4.1	Defining Customer Satisfaction.....	16
2.4.2	The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model.....	17
2.4.3	The Important of Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty.....	19
2.5	The Role of Employees in Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty.....	20
3	Research Methodology	21
3.1	Data collection method.....	21
3.2	Sampling.....	22
3.3	Validity and reliability.....	23
3.4	Interview Process and Data analysis.....	23
3.5	Limitations of the study	25
4	Interview Results.....	25
4.1	Interview 1	25
4.2	Interview 2	27
4.3	Interview 3	28
4.4	Interview 4	29
4.5	Analysis of Interviews Results.....	30
4.5.1	Work Environment	33
4.5.2	Job Satisfaction	34

4.5.3	Goals, Feedback, and Fairness	35
4.5.4	Link between Employees' motivation and Customer Satisfaction.....	37
4.6	Recommendations	38
References	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Figures

Figure 1.	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (McLeod, August 3)	6
Figure 2.	Herzberg Motivation-Hygiene Theory (MTD Training, 2010, 12)	8
Figure 3.	Constricting View of Satisfaction-Dissatisfaction (Robbins et al. 2013, 277).....	9
Figure 4.	Theory X and Y (Ebert & Griffin, 2017, 285).....	10
Figure 5.	Vroom's Expectancy Theory (MTD Training 2010, 14)	11
Figure 6.	Equity Theory Relationships (Robbins et al. 2013, 284)	13
Figure 7.	An Illustration of Locke's Theory of Goal-Setting (Mullins & Christy, 2010, 277).....	15
Figure 8.	Traditional Organization versus Modern Customer-Oriented Company Organization (Kotler & Keller, 2021, 124).....	17
Figure 9.	The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model (Bakri, 2012, 3)	18

Tables

Table 1.	Interviews overview	23
Table 2.	Thematic Coding Table	31

Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

Appendix 2. Data Management Plan

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In today's job market, people look for positions with favorable working conditions and a positive atmosphere. Unfortunately, not all companies can provide these arrangements. In some organizations, employees are frequently replaced for various reasons. The main issue is that employers often fail to engage their employees in the work process. Consequently, these organizations suffer from a lack of motivation among their workforce. (Robbins et al. 2013, 274)

Many managers in companies often ask how to improve employee motivation because the success of any company depends on the qualifications and overall efficiency of its employees. Consequently, for sustainable development, effective and appropriate motivation is essential. Employers need to provide employees with a sense of the importance of their role in the organization. This helps employees to engage in responsible tasks and fosters a genuine interest in their work. (Robbins et al. 2013, 274)

The absence of motivation greatly impacts a company's success, weakening its structure and sustainability. Furthermore, if employees are not motivated enough to perform and manage their activities, it will critically hinder the organization's development and future existence. (Black & Bright 2019, 201)

If a lack of motivation is not addressed, it will lead to poor work performance. Employees' performance declines compared to the start of their employment, and the quality of their productivity decreases due to dissatisfaction and demotivation. Additionally, demotivation can result in employee complaints and a decreased desire to continue working in the organization. (Black & Bright 2019, 201)

According to Black & Bright (2019, 201), motivation can be described as a reason that encourages people to start doing something, maintain consistency and get the job done. Therefore, organizations need to maintain motivation at an appropriate level for an optimal working process. Motivation is essential to help new and existing employees perform tasks, achieve goals, learn and develop in their work areas. Sustaining employee motivation can help companies to avoid issues such as incomplete work, employee turnover, difficulties in hiring new staff, dissatisfied customers, and lost opportunities for future success. Well-

organized motivation provides an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of employees' activities. Additionally, motivation can lead to improved outcomes, such as increased sales and revenue.

1.2 Purpose and objectives

Today, sustainable business development is directly linked to an effective personnel motivation system. This is a key element of enterprise personnel management. Ultimately, motivation is recognized as a main factor for increasing labor productivity through both material and non-material incentives. Therefore, the development of an effective motivational techniques for employees is an important goal for management that helps to achieve the company's main business objectives. (Robbins et al. 2013, 8-9)

Recognizing the impact of employees' motivation on daily operations, the following research question has been formulated: How does employees' motivation impact customer satisfaction in an organization?

The objectives of this study were to explore the definition of employee motivation, its various concepts and methods, and to determine the key factors that increase it. The research also aimed to analyze the relationship between employee motivation and customer satisfaction by examining the current state of employee motivation through research. Furthermore, the study intended to compare the research results with the theoretical background and provide suggestions on how to improve employee motivation in the commissioning company and how this improvement could influence customer satisfaction.

1.3 Introduction to the case company

The case company for this thesis is Holiday Inn Tashkent City. This hotel is a key player in the international hospitality industry in rapidly developing Uzbekistan. The hotel was built in 2024 and currently employs a total of 167 people. Holiday Inn Tashkent City operates as a franchise in Tashkent and represents the major hotel group IHG (InterContinental Hotels Group), which is one of the main leaders in the hospitality industry. (Company Holiday Inn Tashkent City, personal communication, September 8, 2025)

InterContinental Hotels was founded by Pan American Worlds Airways in 1946, offering a luxury stay for their passengers. Separately, the Holiday Inn brand itself was founded in

1952 and rapidly became popular. It is oriented towards family and business segments, offering a comfortable and affordable stay. Subsequently, IHG (InterContinental Hotels Group) was formed in 2003, which included InterContinental, Holiday Inn and other brands. Nowadays, it has more than 6 000 hotels of different brands worldwide and shows the high quality standards in the hospitality industry. (InterContinental Hotels Group PLC [IHG], n.d.)

This case company was chosen as a research subject because there is a unique opportunity for the author to conduct a deep internal analysis. Working as a Front Office Manager in this company, the author has access to practical data and observes the operational process from the inside. The Front Office Manager position refers to the middle management level. The main responsibility is to supervise all daily operations at the reception with regard to accommodation and guest services. The author's team in this company consists of 20 people, including positions such as bellboys, concierges, telephone operators, front office agents, front office supervisors and an assistant front office manager. Because of this, the conclusions drawn in this thesis have an added practical value.

2 Theoretical Framework

Nowadays, a company's success rests entirely on its people. Of course, money and good management are important, but ultimately it all comes down to how each individual employee works. The one who really works well is the one who has motivation. It means a person who doesn't just "sit around doing nothing", but really tries and puts his or her soul into the matter. That's why the main task of any business is to create a working environment in which people feel their value and want to work with full dedication. (Sabri et al., 2019, 14)

It has always been difficult to motivate employees, but in the face of global competition, it has become vital. To achieve high productivity, managers need to find an individual approach to everyone, because people work best when they feel that their contribution is really important to the common cause. (Sabri et al., 2019, 14)

Numerous studies confirm the simple truth: happy employees create happy customers. This idea, known as the "service-profit chain," shows that everything starts from the inside. Comfortable working conditions make employees loyal and motivated, they serve

customers better, and satisfied customers, in turn, ensure the company's profit and growth. (Chi & Gursoy, 2009)

The relationship between staff and customer satisfaction is one of the most stable and proven in business. Studies have repeatedly confirmed a positive correlation. The mechanism is simple and logical: by creating an excellent working environment, the company gets motivated and dedicated employees, who, in turn, provide a high level of service and, as a result, form a base of satisfied customers. (Chi & Gursoy, 2009)

2.1 The Nature of Motivation

Motivation is a vital aspect in any organization. Many people have studied it thoroughly, providing various definitions of what motivates individuals.

The main question behind motivation is “Why do people do what they do?”. It explores the reasons behind an individual's choice of actions and their commitment to continue those actions even when faced with challenges. Motivation is characterized as “The degree to which an individual wants and chooses to engage in certain specified behaviors”. (Mullins & Christy, 2010,253)

Many managers mistakenly believe that some employees are inherently lazy or lack motivation, as if this is an innate character trait. In fact, motivation is not something permanent, but a dynamic state that is constantly changing. It is better to compare it with the weather. Today it is sunny and a person is full of energy, and tomorrow clouds may come and all energy will disappear. (Robbins et al. 2013, 274)

According to Robbins et al. (2013, 274) “motivation refers to the process by which a person's efforts are energized, directed, and sustained toward attaining goals”. Effective motivation consists of three elements. The first is energy and it refers to how much effort employees make to reach a goal, as well as the quality of those efforts. The second is direction. In this case, the employee's effort should help to achieve the organization's established goals. If this isn't true, the effort will be useless. The final element is persistence. It refers to the ability of employees to continue working until the organization's goal is achieved.

When studying motivation, it is important to understand that there are two types of motivation and the difference between them is huge. People are driven by completely different stimuli.

The first type is known as intrinsic motivation. This occurs when people do something because they genuinely like it, are interested in it or feel that it's right to do. The activity itself is enjoyable, and people don't require external rewards. Ryan and Deci (2000, 56-57) assume that a person is already familiar with this type of motivation from birth. It occurs in the form of curiosity and a desire to explore the world. They believe that it is the satisfaction of basic psychological needs that underlines intrinsic motivation. If a person wants to satisfy these needs, it is important to have interesting activities. Therefore, from a workflow point of view, an employee should receive exciting tasks that will be supported by "psychological" rewards such as a sense of challenge and achievement, receiving appreciation, positive recognition and a caring attitude. (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 56-57; Mullins & Christy, 2010, 254; Graham & Weiner, 2012)

The second type is known as extrinsic motivation. This type is exactly the opposite. People act in a certain way to get something from the outside. It can manifest itself in different ways. For example, an employee may complete a task not because he or she likes the process itself, but to receive a bonus or promotion. Ryan and Deci (2000, 56-57) underline that extrinsic motivation doesn't always mean "passive submission but also can be a conscious choice". For example, an employee has a difficult task. If the employee completes this task only because of fear of the manager, their motivation is not autonomous. On the other hand, if the employee performs the same task because they believe that it will help them to get a promotion or develop important skills, the motivation remains external but it is more autonomous and is related to personal goals. (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 56-57; Graham & Weiner, 2012)

Therefore, the following conclusion can be made. The effective employee's motivation involves understanding what motivates a person (internal or external factors), as well as creating the right working conditions in which an employee's external motivation will be based on personal beliefs and aspirations. At the same time, external and internal factors help to understand the actions of an employee and find the right approach. (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 56-57; Graham & Weiner, 2012)

2.2 Foundational Theories of Motivation

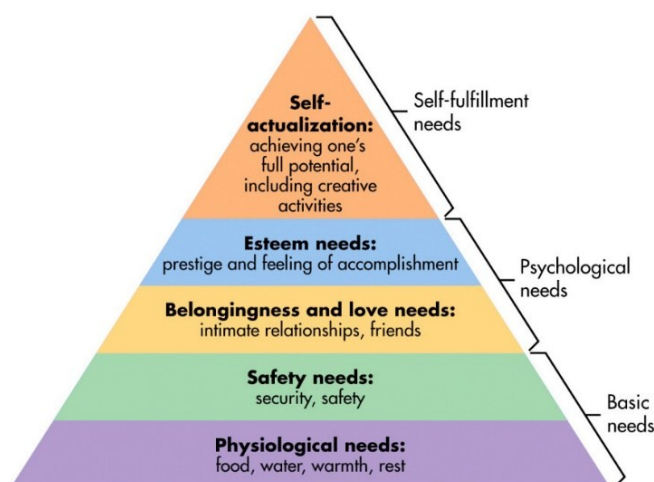
In this chapter, there will be discussion on the three earliest theories of motivation which include Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and McGregor's Theory X, Theory Y. These theories help to understand why people behave the way they do, explaining their goals, morals and choices. These theories are closely related because they developed in one period of time and their authors have influenced each other's work. (Robbins et al. 2013, 275)

2.2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow represented the hierarchy model of individual needs in 1943. In this model, he categorized people's desires into five different levels. He suggested that a person needs to achieve and satisfy the preceding level to move to the next one. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is only possible to go to the next level if the previous one is fully completed. (Black & Bright, 2019, 211)

To demonstrate these five levels, Maslow created a pyramid which shows the hierarchical sequence of people's needs. According to this theory, people cannot motivate someone because they can only create the conditions for increasing a person's motivation. These principles are based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs. The hierarchy of needs illustrates Maslow's conception of how people satisfy their needs in a specific order. (Black & Bright, 2019, 211-213)

Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (McLeod, 2025, August 3)



The hierarchy of needs consists of the physiological needs, the safety needs, the belongingness and love needs, the esteem needs and the self-actualization. All the levels are shown in Figure 1.

The first level is represented in the pyramid as the physiological needs and includes the basic things such as food, water, shelter, rest and warmth. These needs play a fundamental role in people's lives. If these needs are unsatisfied, the person does not attempt to satisfy the higher level of needs. On the other hand, if the physiological needs are satisfied, the person moves to the next level. (Guillén, 2021, 26-27)

The second level is also included in basic needs and represented as safety needs such as security and safety from physical and emotional harm. When the first level of needs is satisfied, people seek safety. The safety needs can help people to not feel in physical danger by having some sort of security. (Black & Bright, 2019, 211; Guillén, 2021)

The belongingness and love needs refer to the third level and comprise social needs such as friendship, intimate relationships, acceptance and affection. In this level, people want to interact with others, to belong to a group and to have friends. (Guillén, 2021, 27)

The esteem needs are on the fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy that relates to respect from people around us and self-esteem. These needs provide people with the feeling of recognition, independence, accomplishment and prestige. (Guillén, 2021, 27)

The last level that is shown in the pyramid is self-actualization. It is represented as the highest and unique human need that cannot be fully satisfied. On this level, people strive to become the best version of themselves developing their individual potential, ability and talent. Each person has their own way of self-actualization because it is defined by personal strength and weaknesses (Black & Bright, 2019, 211;)

In practice, Maslow's theory means that an organization needs to help employees to satisfy basic needs and provide conditions for the actualization of the highest level needs. This requirement can lead to the maximum level of employees' motivation. In this case, the low level of needs is represented by a decent level of salary, safe working conditions and a strong work team. When employees satisfy the lower level they strive to achieve respect and self-esteem. Therefore, this theory explains that before giving employees the opportunity to grow in a professional way and recognize their achievements, comfort and safety should be provided as basic needs. (Black & Bright, 2019, 213)

2.2.2 Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, also known as the two-factor theory, assumes that employees' motivation directly depends on the satisfaction with their work. When employees are satisfied at work, they will be motivated and if employees are dissatisfied at work they will be unmotivated. Employees' attitude towards work plays a key role and can influence their performance results. (Robbins et al. 2013, 276-277; MTD Training 2010, 11.)

Herzberg wanted to understand what employees want from their job and decided to organize the experiment in the form of interviews. He asked them to explain in which situation at the workplace they feel good (satisfied) and in which situation they feel bad (dissatisfied). The analysis showed that the replies of people who felt satisfied with their job significantly differed from people who felt dissatisfied. It helped to identify certain characteristics that are related to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Based on the results, Herzberg created six factors that lead to satisfaction and six factors that lead to dissatisfaction. All these factors are represented in Figure 2. (Robbins et al. 2077, 269; MTD Training 2010, 12.)

Figure 2. Herzberg Motivation-Hygiene Theory (MTD Training, 2010, 12)

Factors Affecting Job Attitudes	
Leading to Dissatisfaction	Leading to Satisfaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company policy • Supervision • Relationship with boss • Work conditions • Salary • Relationship with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement • Recognition • Work itself • Responsibility • Advancement • Growth

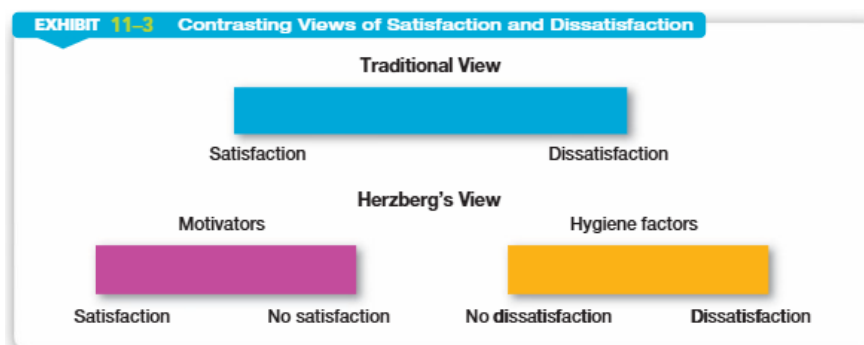
The factors on the right side in Figure 2 are motivators, also known as intrinsic factors. The factors such as achievements, recognition, and responsibility influence job satisfaction and are directly related to the performance itself and self-motivation. These characteristics are clearly expressed by employees who feel good about their work. Therefore, the true

motivation of employees involves evaluation of their skills and knowledge and providing them with interesting goals at work for self-realization. (Robbins et al. 2013, 277; MTD Training 2010, 12.)

The factors on the left side in Figure 2 are hygiene factors, also known as extrinsic factors. These factors are always important for workers. They are not directly related to employees' motivation but can lead to dissatisfaction at the workplace. These factors include things such as company policy, work conditions or supervision. (Robbins et al. 2013, 278; MTD Training 2010, 13.)

Herzberg assumed that "the opposite of satisfaction was not dissatisfaction" and argued that "the opposite of satisfaction is no satisfaction, and the opposite of dissatisfaction is no dissatisfaction."

Figure 3. Constricting View of Satisfaction-Dissatisfaction (Robbins et al. 2013, 277)



Herzberg tried to explain that hygiene factors don't influence the employees' motivation because these only eliminate dissatisfaction that is caused at the workplace. Improving these factors doesn't mean that employees feel satisfied with their work or motivated. It helps only to meet the basic needs that are important for them at the workplace. On the other hand, when working conditions are worsening, such as a lack of electricity or parking space, employees feel dissatisfied and demotivated. The motivator factors in this analysis represent that the presence or improvement of the intrinsic factors leads to satisfaction and motivation but their absence doesn't play any key role and changes nothing. (Robbins et al. 2013, 276-277; Nickerson, 2025)

It is important to understand that elimination of dissatisfaction and creation of motivation are different goals for managers but they depend on each other. If the organizations want to have motivated employees, they need to maintain or improve hygiene factors such as

salary, work conditions, relationships at the workplace, company policy or supervision, but should not forget about motivators such as achievements, growth, recognition or responsibility. Nevertheless, Herzberg suggests concentrating more on the improvement of the intrinsic factors that increase job satisfaction. (Robbins et al. 2013, 277; MTD Training 2010, 13.)

2.2.3 McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y

Douglas McGregor assumed that there were two views on how managers perceive the nature of employees. In regard to this, McGregor created Theory X and Theory Y. The differences between these theories are represented in Figure 4. (Ebert & Griffin, 2017, 285; Robbins et al. 2013, 276)

Figure 4. Theory X and Y (Ebert & Griffin, 2017, 285)

Theory X	Theory Y
People are lazy.	People are energetic.
People lack ambition and dislike responsibility.	People are ambitious and seek responsibility.
People are self-centered.	People can be selfless.
People resist change.	People want to contribute to business growth and change.
People are gullible and not bright.	People are intelligent.

Theory X suggests that there is a type of employee who is inherently lacking initiative and doesn't seek responsibility. Therefore, the only way to obtain great performance from them is to use strict and constant supervision. For example, there is a manager called Mark who demands a daily report about work accomplishment and dictates his rules on how to do each task and doesn't give an opportunity to make a decision independently. It happens because Mark believes that without his control nothing works properly and his employees are lazy and irresponsible. In order to motivate them, the manager tries to punish them or reward them. (Ebert & Griffin, 2017, 285; Robbins et al. 2013, 276)

Theory Y suggests that an employee can be self-organized and not be afraid of responsibility. This type of employee doesn't need external control because they are interested in the work and consider it a natural process. For example, there is a manager called George, who doesn't check employees' tasks accomplishment every minute and how time was spent on work, but evaluates their final result. It shows that the manager believes that his employees are independent, ambitious and can take responsibility. This

attitude can motivate employees and directly influence their performance. (Ebert & Griffin, 2017, 285; Robbins et al. 2013, 276)

2.3 Contemporary Theories of Motivation

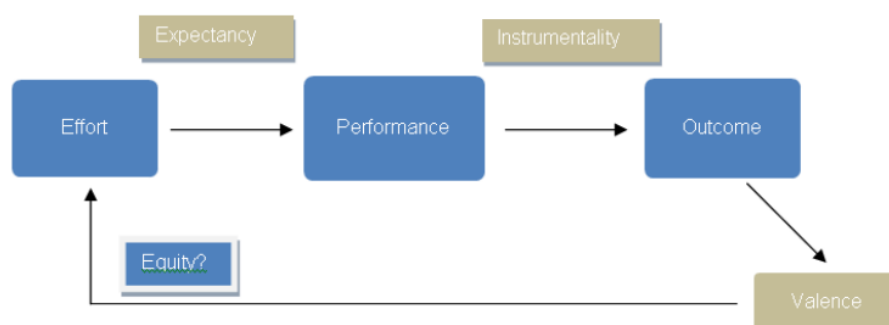
2.3.1 Vroom's Expectancy theory

Vroom's expectancy theory assumes that any goal-oriented human action is a result of an internal calculation. Firstly, people evaluate whether their efforts will lead to a defined and predictable output. Then they weigh how attractive and valuable this end output will be for them. Only if people believe that their actions will bring a desired reward such as a material bonus, recognition or self-respect, will they be more likely to act. It differs from the earliest theories that were discussed in the previous chapter. (Robbins et al. 2013, 283-284)

According to this theory, people are motivated to make an effort when they understand that this effort can lead to a desired result. Therefore, this theory denies that the individual's motivation depends on the inner needs as in Maslow's Theory. People will strive only when they understand that their efforts directly affect the quality of work, and that a good performance will lead to the desired result. (MTD Training 2010, 13)

The three factors (variables) created by Viktor Vroom are expectancy, instrumentality and valence. These factors are represented in Figure 5. (MTD Training 2010, 13-14)

Figure 5. Vroom's Expectancy Theory (MTD Training 2010, 14)



The first variable that is represented in this theory is expectancy. This variable means that employees have a belief that all efforts made will help to achieve the desired level of performance. In other words, it is the people's confidence that if they work hard they can show the best performance results. There are three key factors that can influence this variable. The first is having enough resources for performance such as time, budget or equipment. The second is having the skills and knowledge for performance. The last one is having the support at work from the immediate supervisor or colleagues. (MTD Training 2010, 15; Robbins et al. 2013, 284)

As a result of the above, if employees don't have enough skills, resources or support, their belief in the performance success will be low. Therefore, the supervisors need to ensure these factors are present before setting the goals or providing responsibilities. (MTD Training 2010, 15)

The second variable that is represented in this theory is instrumentality. This variable helps the employees answer the question: "What will happen if I perform well?". It is employees' conviction that there is the link between their performance and their result and it is represented in the form of a reward such as bonuses, promotion or recognition. In order for an employee to believe, she or he needs to have a clear understanding of the performance criteria that can lead to rewards, trust in managers who can fairly evaluate their result and an idea of the transparency of the process where all colleagues understand why he or she was rewarded. Therefore, the manager should have a transparent and fair reward system. When the rules are understandable and the same for all employees, the employees trust the process and are ready to achieve high result in the performance. (MTD Training 2010, 15; Black & Bright 2019, 230)

The last variable that is represented in this theory is valence. It means how valuable or important the reward is to a particular person for their performance. The important aspect of this variable is that the value of reward is subjective. If some rewards are meaningful to someone, it doesn't mean that they are motivators for others. If a manager offers extra pay to work overtime to an employee who is saving for a large purchase, it would be an example of high valence. Conversely, an example of the low valence would be if the manager offers the same to an employee who values personal time and family time above everything else. Consequently, effective motivation is individual. It is vital for managers to understand what is important for employees and reward them accordingly. (MTD Training 2010, 16; Robbins et al. 2013, 284)

Most employees try to compare their efforts and rewards to those of others. This behavior is indicated as equity and is shown in Figure 6. For example, employee A sells 200 units of product and receives his forty-euro reward. Employee B sells 500 units of product and receives the same forty-euro reward. Consequently, employee B will make less effort next time and be less motivated to reach high results because there are inequalities in the rewarding system. (MTD Training 2010, 16)

The main aspect of Vroom's Expectancy theory is that everything depends on an individual's personal perceptions. Motivation remains high when employees understand that their effort leads to results, that they will receive valued and attractive rewards for these results, and how they will be rewarded for reaching the organizational goal. Therefore, managers need to understand that "the rewards an organization is offering align with what the individual wants". (Robbins et al. 2013, 284)

2.3.2 Equity theory

The Equity theory of J. Stacey Adams suggests that employees constantly evaluate a balance between inputs and outcomes. Each employee analyzes whether their efforts are worthwhile, and then compares their results with the results of those whom they consider their equals. This statement is clearly shown in Figure 6. (Robbins et al. 2013, 283)

Figure 6. Equity Theory Relationships (Robbins et al. 2013, 284)

EXHIBIT 11-7 Equity Theory Relationships	
PERCEIVED RATIO COMPARISON*	EMPLOYEE'S ASSESSMENT
$\frac{\text{Outcomes A}}{\text{Inputs A}} < \frac{\text{Outcomes B}}{\text{Inputs B}}$	Inequity (underrewarded)
$\frac{\text{Outcomes A}}{\text{Inputs A}} = \frac{\text{Outcomes B}}{\text{Inputs B}}$	Equity
$\frac{\text{Outcomes A}}{\text{Inputs A}} > \frac{\text{Outcomes B}}{\text{Inputs B}}$	Inequity (overrewarded)

*Person A is the employee, and Person B is a relevant other or referent.

When employees feel that their ratio of effort and reward (inputs-outcomes) is fair in comparison with their colleagues, it means that employees' behaviour remains stable and they remain motivated to work at the same level. At the same time, if inequity appears among employees in the organization, they try to act to restore the balance. According to this theory, inequity can be divided into two types: under-reward and over-reward. If

employees feel under-rewarded, their behaviour negatively affects the organization. This situation can lead to a decrease in job performance and quality because their effort doesn't match the reward. In contrast, if employees feel over-rewarded, it creates a sense of imbalance. In this situation employees try to restore fairness. They try to increase their job performance and quality because they need to justify the reward. (Robbins et al. 2013, 283)

In his theory, Adams also uses the term "referent" to describe people who can be used for comparison in order to evaluate the fairness of one's own position. This term has three criteria. The first criterion is "Persons" which refers to the people such as colleagues, friends, or others in similar roles with whom an individual compares their own conditions or salary. The second criterion is "System" which refers to company policy and rules and how they comply with an individual's salary and conditions. And the last criterion is "Self" which refers to comparison with an individual's own last experience, personal needs and job prospects. Therefore, Adams assumes that the final sense of equity is the result of these three criteria. If one of them is unfair, the individual's motivation decreases. (Robbins et al. 2013, 283)

Robbins et al. (2013, 283) underline that this theory has two types of equity and both of them play an important role in employee's motivation. The first type is known as distributive justice. It is individual's sense of fair distribution of salary, bonuses and other rewards among all in the organization. This fair distribution strongly impacts job satisfaction. At the same time, another type is known as procedural justice. In this case, people suppose that the decision of rewarding itself should be honest and transparent. This influences employees' trust in the manager and the desire to stay in the company. In conclusion, distributive justice makes employees satisfied and procedural justice helps people to trust the company and work there for a long period.

2.3.3 Locke's Goal-Setting Theory

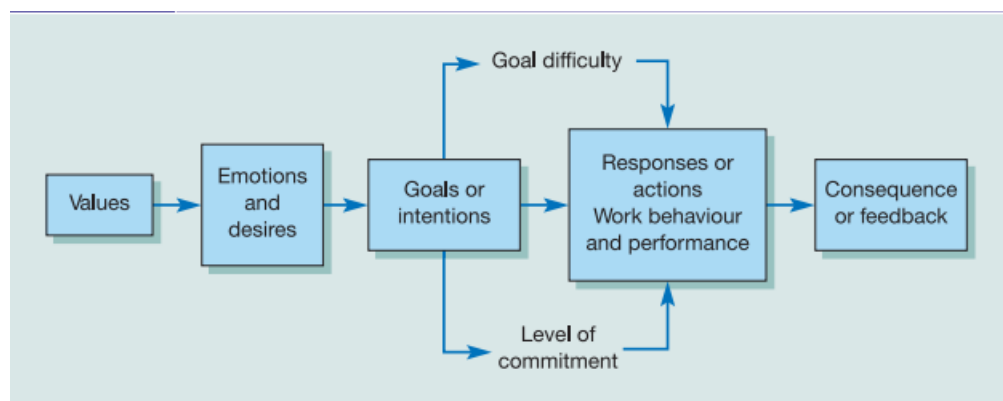
The Goal-Setting theory, which is shown in Figure 7, was developed by Locke and plays the main role in the field of workplace motivation. The main idea of this theory is that goals and intentions have a key influence on shaping human behavior. According to this theory, people are motivated to reach goals which in turn help them satisfy their emotions and desires. In other words, the goals define how people will act and how effective their performance will be. Locke underlines that "goal-setting is more appropriately viewed as a motivational technique rather than as a formal theory of motivation". It means that setting

clear goals is an effective tool to guide employees in the right direction and improve their results (Mullins & Christy, 2010, 276-277)

Mullins & Christy (2010, 277) assume that the amount of effort people are ready to make, depends on two factors such as difficulty of the task and the level of commitment. People who have clear and measurable goals always show better results than people who work without specific targets or certain deadlines. In other words, ambitious goals drive higher productivity.

In addition, feedback plays an essential role in achieving a desired goal. It helps to evaluate the current process and compare the results with the original goals. If people receive timely feedback it helps them to identify any discrepancies and make any necessary adjustments to their actions in order to stay on the right track. (Robbins et al. 2013, 279)

Figure 7. An Illustration of Locke's Theory of Goal-Setting (Mullins & Christy, 2010, 277)



In conclusion, Mullins & Christy (2010, 277) represent this theory as an effective management tool that helps leaders to improve employees' performance and motivation. It is important that goals are clear and specific because it helps to focus even unmotivated employees. The given tasks should be challenging enough because they contribute to the professional development and growth. The regular feedback plays a key role, which allows them to track the progress and adjust actions. The maximum impact is achieved when employees participate in setting goals, which increases their responsibility and commitment to the result. Therefore, the theory will be applied successfully, only when all above information is used.

2.4 Conceptualizing Customer Satisfaction

2.4.1 Defining Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction plays a major role in any organization and is based on the result of comparison. People compare their initial expectations of a product or service with the actual result of it. When reality doesn't match expectation, disappointment appears. If expectation matches, it brings satisfaction and exceeding it leads to delight and high loyalty. It is important to underline that the already established attitude towards the brand influences the evaluation of the product or service. In other words, customers often treat a familiar and beloved brand more favorably. (Kotler & Keller, 2021, 128)

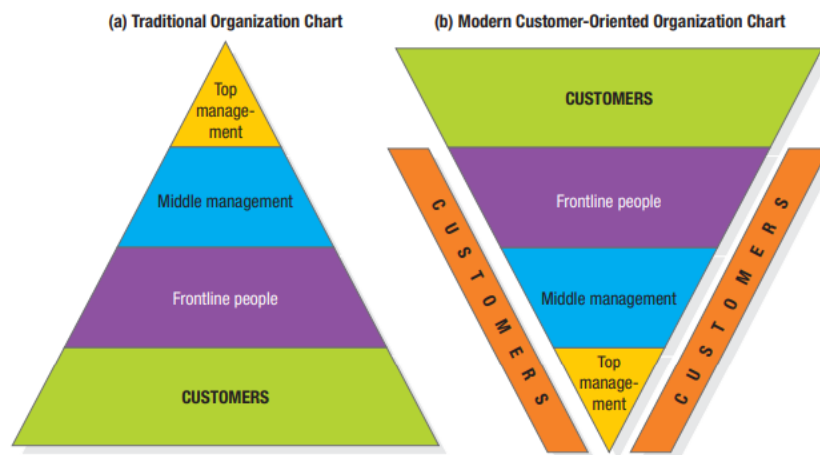
According to Kotler and Keller (2021, 123), customers are the foundation on which any successful business is built. Companies can talk about product quality, innovation, or a team as much as they want, but the only real value that a company generates throughout its existence is created precisely by its current and future customers. Without people willing to pay for companies' product or service, all other assets lose their meaning.

In addition, any organization should take into account the interests of all concerned parties, some of whom are not only customers but also employees. Satisfaction of interests of one party comes at the expense of resources that might be needed for other parties. The main task of the management is to build a balance between providing high-quality customer service, rational use of resources and respecting the interests of all concerned parties. Forming customers' expectations is a complex process. The past experience with the product or service, recommendations from the environment and other factors influence this process. (Kotler & Keller, 2021, 128)

Farsighted leaders in the organizations learned long ago that the only ones who make company profitable are customers and started to abandon the traditional organization chart, as shown in Figure 8. Nowadays, organizations that want to be a leader in the marketplace prefer to use modern customer-oriented organization chart, as shown in Figure 8. Therefore, the customer begins to be the main focus in the organizations. The next most important level is employees (frontline people) who directly contact customers. In this case, the main responsibilities of middle managers are to supervise and support the frontline people to provide great service for customers. Therefore, the mission of top-management is to find and support strong middle managers, creating the right working conditions for

them. Regarding the modern model, the customer should be the company's focus. Managers at all levels should be immersed in customers' needs, communicate effectively. (Kotler & Keller, 2021, 124)

Figure 8. Traditional Organization versus Modern Customer-Oriented Company Organization (Kotler & Keller, 2021, 124)



Nowadays, more and more organizations rely on data, and the measurement of customer satisfaction is becoming one of the key factors in this matter. Companies start to implement a systematic approach that aims to measure the quality of the provided service and identify factors that influence the formation of a positive experience. Organizations modify their operational activities based on the received information. (Kotler & Keller, 2021, 124)

In conclusion, the attention directed at this indicator is not accidental, as it is directly related to customer retention. A high level of customer satisfaction forms a valuable asset for an organization, namely a loyal customer. A loyal customer is someone who actively uses a product or service and becomes a source of positive feedback about the company. Therefore, a loyal customer is a valuable resource for an organization, which allows the company to achieve its indicators and goals. (Kotler & Keller, 2021, 124)

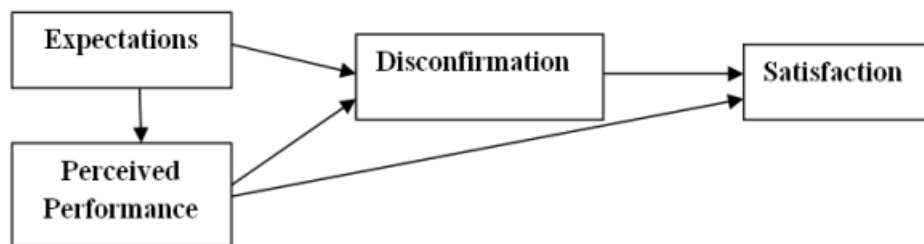
2.4.2 The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model

According to Schiebler et al. (2025), researcher Oliver argues that customer satisfaction is a reaction to how well purchase expectations were met. In this case, it is consumers' conclusion that a product or service provides them with a pleasant and effective experience

of use. This idea underlines that a person cannot be satisfied without any reasons. This feeling refers to a certain product or provided service. And at the same time, it assumes that the level of satisfaction shows how well the product satisfies personal needs for which it was bought or used.

Bakri (2012) assumes that the expectancy-disconfirmation model consists of several elements. These elements are shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9. The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model (Bakri, 2012, 3)



The first element in this model is expectations. Consumers' expectation formation is a process in which the previous experience is the determining factor. This previous experience is related to the interaction with the company, a product or service in the past. The consumers' experience or lack of this experience determines how individuals form their ideas about the product or service. At first, if the consumers don't have any experience, their expectations are formed under external information sources such as the reviews of other consumers, marketing communication (advertisement) or mass media. In contrast to new consumers, frequent consumers build the expectation on their personal experience. It helps to make their predictions about product or service quality more accurate and realistic. Therefore, differentiating consumers based on their experience is fundamental to analyse their behaviour. (Bakri, 2012, 4)

The second element is perceived performance, which is defined as the actual evaluation of a product or service that begins after its purchase or use. This personal experience forms the final impression, after which the consumer mentally compares the performance with their expectations. The product or service can then either exceed those expectations or cause disappointment. (Bakri, 2012, 4)

Another element in Figure 9 is shown as disconfirmation and is defined as the simple comparison process. People always compare their initial expectations of a product with

what they receive in the end. This gap between “expectation” and “reality” determines consumers’ final impression. The first impression can be negative and appears when the product or service doesn’t meet expectations and leads to disappointment or dissatisfaction. The second impression is positive and appears when the product or service exceeds expectations. It always leads to high satisfaction and pleasure of purchase. And the last impression is neutral and appears when the reality exactly meets the expectations. (Bakri, 2012, 4)

In conclusion, the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model shows that the path to customer satisfaction begins even before purchase. In fact, the first thing that consumers evaluate isn’t the product or service itself, but received information about it. Therefore, if the received information corresponds to consumers’ expectations, their initial satisfaction increases. However, if information about product or service is negative or incomplete, disappointment arises and their interest in it decreases. (Bakri, 2012, 5)

2.4.3 The Important of Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty in Hospitality

According to Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000, 346), there is a lot of competition in the global hotel market today. Winning, in such circumstances, at the expense of low prices is a losing strategy that leads to profit reduction. Since the basic services of all hotels are similar, the only real competitive advantage is the ability to build a strong relationship with customers. Success is determined not just by the satisfaction of the guest, who may never return, but by their loyalty. Therefore, the main task of managers is to understand how to win this loyalty, because it ensures stable profits and the future of the hotel.

Customers’ loyalty has two sides. The first is their real actions, that is, regular repeat purchases from the same service provider. The second is their internal attitude. They are positive, ready to recommend the service provider and intend to interact with it. A truly loyal person can be considered someone who has both the behaviour and positive attitude. (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000, 346-347)

The success of a company largely depends on how satisfied its customers are. Research confirms a direct link: the higher a person's satisfaction, the more willing they are to act in favour of the brand. For example, a satisfied customer is more likely to not only make another purchase, but also recommend the company to others. It is this transformation of positive experience into loyalty that underlies the growth of profits and the strengthening of the company's position in the market. (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000, 346-347)

2.5 The Role of Employees in Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

According to Baum (2007, 171-172), In the tourism and hospitality industry, the human factor is critically important. It determines the quality of service, customer loyalty and the competitiveness of the company. Numerous studies confirm that employees are the key to success. Services in this area have a number of special features: they are intangible and are created at the moment of consumption. The customer interacts directly with the staff, which makes the staff an integral part of the product itself. Their appearance, behaviour, and attitude shape the company's image and influence the overall impression of the service. Therefore, employee management directly affects the quality of service, customer satisfaction, and overall business performance.

Employees personality is becoming an increasingly important criterion in hospitality industry. Employers are looking for employees with a "good attitude" and "social skills," as these traits directly affect the quality of service, customer satisfaction, and the overall effectiveness of the organization. (Baum 2007, 173-174),

The tourism and hospitality industry faces a number of key challenges related to staff behaviour and attitudes, such as high staff turnover, low job satisfaction and motivation, and high stress levels. These negative trends directly affect employee productivity, the quality of service, and, as a result, the success of the entire company. (Baum 2007, 186)

Research shows that the causes of these problems lie in human resource management, work organization, and social conditions within the company. At the same time, the results of such behaviour are a decrease in the quality of service, loss of customers and weakening of competitive positions. (Baum 2007, 186)

In this regard, many scientists study which employee behaviour is considered desirable and how it affects the client. For example, some research identified several important behavioural patterns that help employees perform their jobs effectively. These models serve as the basis for staff training and quality control of services. (Baum 2007, 186)

In turn, another research identified specific positive and negative behaviours in her research that affect customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry. These types include politeness, friendliness, efficiency, and caring. She also noted that the significance of these qualities may vary depending on cultural characteristics. Other studies have examined

undesirable behaviours that annoy clients, such as violating personal space or unethical behaviour. (Baum 2007, 186)

In general, the behaviour, efforts and productivity of employees directly form positive emotional reactions among customers, affect the perception of the quality and value of the service, as well as the corporate image of the company. (Baum 2007, 186)

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Data collection method

For this thesis, the author decided to use a qualitative research method. The qualitative research method is characterized by Lim (2004) as a methodology that focuses on an in-depth analysis of social phenomena in order to understand it from the inside through the prism of the experience and views of the participants themselves. This approach answers the questions “how” and “why” to reveal the motives and context of human behaviour.

Therefore, this approach is the most appropriate for this thesis because it helps to deeply explore opinions, feelings, and employees’ experiences regarding motivation. The qualitative method provides the author an opportunity to receive or obtain detailed answers that reveal a complexity of employees’ behavior and its causes in the work environment. In addition, this method helps to establish and identify the causative links between employees’ motivation and customer satisfaction.

Lim (2004) underlines that the main tools of this research method are flexible and are presented as open conversation, in-depth or focus group interview, or observing events in the natural environment. The goal is to form a holistic, multifaceted picture of what is happening. Consequently, this study is based on empirical data that were collected through in-depth interviews with employees of the author’s own team in the Front Office Department at Holiday Inn Tashkent City.

For this thesis, the semi-structured in-depth interview method was chosen as the optimal tool for collecting high-quality data. This approach was driven by the need to combine two key research requirements: the consistency of data collection and the depth of its content.

According to Lim (2004), semi-structured interviews are one of the types of in-depth interview in which the researcher uses a pre-prepared list of topics or leading questions. The key feature of this method is its flexibility. The interviewer is not required to strictly follow the plan and can ask clarifying questions, study interesting answers more deeply and follow new topics that arise during the conversation. Thus, this method maintains a perfect balance between consistency, allowing for comparison of data from different participants, and adaptability, necessary for deep understanding.

Therefore, this method allowed the author to obtain not just formal answers, but deep, contextually rich data reflecting the real experience and perception of employees. The semi-structured in-depth interview questions were developed and compiled in Russian for the respondents' convenience. The questions were also translated into English language and presented in Appendix 1.

3.2 Sampling

The target sample was formed from among the employees of the Holiday Inn Tashkent City hotel to conduct the study. Considering the author's position as the Front Office Manager and a unique opportunity to conduct an in-depth internal analysis, the author decided to focus on the employees of that particular department.

The Front Office Department is a key point of contact with customers, and employee motivation directly affects the first and last impressions of the hotel. This fact makes this group particularly relevant for exploring the relationship between employees' motivation and customer satisfaction.

A total of four interviews were conducted. The sample included employees who held different positions in the Front Office Department. Two interviews were conducted with front office agents, one interview with the front office supervisor and one interview with a telephone operator.

This selection of participants allowed the author to obtain the opinions of both the line staff and an employee in an entry-level leadership position who has an idea of the team's motivation. The length of employment of the employees at the department ranged from four months to a year. This made it possible to cover the experience of both relatively new and more experienced employees.

3.3 Validity and reliability

Participation in this study was voluntary, and complete anonymity was guaranteed to all respondents to ensure maximum honesty in their responses. Before the interviews, the author informed each participant in detail about the study's goals and targets, as well as the data collection procedure. An informed oral consent was obtained from each respondent, which created an atmosphere of trust necessary for honest answers.

Complete confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed to all participants. The author informed participants in advance that their names wouldn't be published and that anonymized identifiers (for example "Employee A") would be used instead. Before the interview, separate permission was received to make an audio recording with the assurance that only the author would have access to it.

3.4 Interview Process and Data analysis

The interviews were conducted in the period from September 22 to October 5, 2025. Each interview took place individually and in a private room in the hotel to ensure confidentiality. The average length of the interview was 30-40 minutes.

Before the interview started, the study's objectives were explained, complete anonymity was guaranteed, and their consent to the audio recording of the conversation was obtained. Subsequently, the audio recordings were transcribed for detailed analysis.

Table 1. Interviews overview

Interview Data	Interviewees	Position	Work Experience	Interview method	Interview Length
23.09.2025	Interviewees 1 (Employee A)	Telephone Operator	4 months	Face-to-face	40 minutes

26.09.2025	Interviewees 2 (Employee B)	Front Desk Agent	1 year	Face-to-face	35 minutes
30.09.2025	Interviewees 3 (Employee C)	Front Desk Supervisor	1 year	Face-to-face	30 minutes
03.10.2025	Interviewees 4 (Employee D)	Front Desk Agent	6 months	Face-to-face	30 minutes

The author applied a thematic analysis method in order to qualitatively analyze the responses from the interviewees. Thematic analysis is a method that allows researchers to sort the obtained qualitative data, for example, the text of interviews, in order to find key semantic patterns, which are relatively common among the collected data. It helps the researchers to concentrate on uncovering, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of qualitative data. (Naeem et al., 2023) The main purpose of the thematic analysis is to focus on collective experiences and common points of view. This method helps to understand how a particular theme is discussed or perceived by a group of people. This method is successfully applied in a wide variety of theoretical approaches because it is an accessible and adaptive method. (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

This research employed thematic analysis based on the approach of Braun and Clarke (2006). The author began processing with the data from the transcription of audio recordings, ensuring detailed immersion in the material. Coding was conducted using an inductive “bottom-up” method and proceeded in three stages. (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

In the first stage, first-order codes as direct quotes and initial ideas were extracted from the transcripts. Subsequently, these were systematized into “second-order codes” reflecting general patterns. Finally, these categories were transformed into systematized themes. The analysis resulted in the identification of four key dimensions: Work Environment, Job Satisfaction, Goals and Feedback, and Link to Customer Satisfaction, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Thematic analysis is presented as the most suitable method for this thesis. Its application to the interview materials obtained will allow the author to identify and highlight in detail the key factors that will clearly show how employee motivation affects customer satisfaction.

3.5 Limitations of the study

A significant limitation of this study lies in the researcher's positionality. The author, who holds the position of Front Office Manager at the case company, conducted interviews with direct subordinates within the author's own team. Therefore, there is a risk that the answers were influenced by the chain of command. Employees may have avoided being critical, aiming instead to give correct or socially acceptable answers. To minimize this, the author ensured full anonymity, voluntariness, and confidentiality. The author also underlined during the interviews that all these were strictly for scientific purposes. However, despite these measures, the results should be interpreted with the understanding that the managerial relationship may have had an impact.

This study was conducted exclusively for the case company, and its results are intended exclusively for internal use and are strictly confidential. The study was carried out with the official permission of the company's management.

4 Interview Results

The author presented the results provided below that are based on data collected during interviews. These results focus on identifying the employees' level of motivation in the company and the factors that directly affect maintaining this level. Additionally, the research considered the interviewees' definition of a satisfied customer is and how this satisfaction can be achieved. Finally, the results demonstrate the direct connection between employees' motivation and customers' satisfaction, as well as the employees' perceptions of this influence.

4.1 Interview 1

The first interview was conducted with Employee A, who has been working as a Telephone Operator for 4 months in the Front Office Department at Holiday Inn Tashkent City.

Based on the interview results, the author can conclude that Employee A is a highly motivated, customer-oriented, and valuable team member. She demonstrates a deep understanding of her role and its direct impact on the overall success of the hotel. The main satisfaction she receives at work arises from the positive emotions and gratitude of the customers. As she noted: "When guests leave satisfied and thank me for my help, it brings me pleasure. It is especially pleasant to see their smiles and hear positive feedback." The main motivating factor for her is recognition from management, for example, the recently received "Best Employee of the Month" award. She explained that this was critical because, "I felt that my work was truly being noticed. This is very important to me." This type of recognition significantly increased her confidence and the quality of her performance.

Employee A understands that she is the face of the hotel for all customers. A customer's first impression of the hotel and a guest's desire to return depend on her professionalism, as she noted: "My responsiveness and the speed of my help directly impact their decision to return." She has a strong and sincere desire to go beyond her current job responsibilities to help customers, which is demonstrated with a specific example: "A guest once asked me to help with a domestic flight within Uzbekistan. Although it wasn't strictly part of my job, I went ahead and processed the online check-in for their flight myself. The guest was very thankful for that support." This example underlines her personal interest in creating exceptional customer service.

In addition, Employee A describes the atmosphere in the team as warm and supportive, where colleagues are always ready to help, support, and teach. She also highlights that management fairly appreciates everyone's contributions.

In her position, Employee A is a proactive and empathetic person for whom the comfort and positive emotions of customers are the main priority. Her strengths include not only a strong customer orientation and a desire to make customers feel cared for, but also high stress tolerance, which helps her maintain professionalism even during periods of high workload. She recognized this and explained her mindset: "Sometimes those days occur, especially when I'm busy and the exhaustion accumulates. But I always remind myself that guests are here to relax and enjoy their time, so I make an effort to stay welcoming and professional."

According to the interview, Employee A is interested in professional development. She associates it with improving the overall level of service at the hotel and understands that it

directly relates to customer satisfaction. She believes that the feedback, training sessions, and rewards are essential for good performance because they can maintain a high level of motivation. According to her, “The more I grow professionally, the better I can assist guests, which in turn increases the hotel's overall service standard.” At the same time, she suggests automating routine processes, which would allow more time for direct communication with customers.

In conclusion, she demonstrates a sincere desire to help and provide an unforgettable experience for customers into her performance. Employee A's motivation can be maintained through recognition, training, and workflow optimization. This is important because it directly influences the future quality of service at the hotel.

4.2 Interview 2

The second interview was conducted with Employee B, who has been working as a Front Office Agent for one year in the Front Office Department at Holiday Inn Tashkent City. She gives the impression of being a motivated, customer-oriented, and thoughtful employee. She clearly understands her role: “We are the face of the hotel, and the first impression depends on the check-in experience.”

A satisfied customer for Employee B is not just a person without complaints, but someone who leaves the hotel with a smile on their face and with a sincere desire to come back again. A high focus on the customers is an essential point at work for Employee B. She strives to achieve guest satisfaction through attention to the details and anticipation of the customers' needs. Her initiative and proactivity at work are supported by a brilliant example she shared during the interview: “Although it was not part of my direct duties, I helped them contact the airline, called the airport several times, and even arranged for a courier to deliver the suitcase directly to the hotel.”

Despite the fact that work can be dynamic and stressful, especially during busy hours, employee B demonstrates a high level of stress tolerance. She admits the possibility of emotional burnout, which she noted happens especially “when guests are irritated or complain for no reason”, but she has her own mechanisms for dealing with it, as she explained: “I also try to remember that it might be the guests' first day of their holiday, and my mood has a direct impact on their impression.”

Non-financial motivation for this interviewee is a key factor in successful performance. Personal recognition and praise from management, especially given openly among colleagues, are valuable and vital elements at work for her, stating: “The most valuable thing is when they thank you personally, in front of the whole team. Even a simple “thanks, you handled today really well” from a manager makes my day.” She values it when management shares reviews that mention her by name and believes that this kind of appreciation from a customer is one of the best moments of any day.

In addition, she is motivated by the development opportunities that are provided by the company through offline and online training sessions. For example, she recently received an award for outstanding performance in her position. She clearly understands her responsibilities and has set a goal of becoming a Front Office Supervisor.

In conclusion, this interviewee is a valuable employee of the organization whose personal qualities and professional goals fully correspond with the objective of providing first-class service. Employee B’s motivation depends on her understanding of further career development, the regular recognition of her contributions and opportunities to expand her responsibilities to solve more complex situations.

4.3 Interview 3

The third interview was conducted with Employee C, who has been working as a Front Office Supervisor for one year in the Front Office Department at Holiday Inn Tashkent City. She defines her role as “ensuring the smooth operation of the shift, coordinating the team, and handling any emerging problems.”

The key source of professional satisfaction for Employee C is communication with customers. This aspect of her work is meaningful to her because positive feedback from a customer can dramatically improve her mood. She gave an example in the interview: “I felt motivated recently when a guest on my night shift said I was handling my job exceptionally well. My exhaustion was relieved immediately. I felt energized and worked enthusiastically for the rest of the shift.” A smile and gratitude from a customer for Employee C are the most valuable rewards because these rewards are clear confirmation that her performance matters.

On the other hand, Employee C notes that her focus shifts away from customers during periods of high workload or a large flow of customers to operational tasks such as

customer registration and reporting. She finds that this situation leaves less time for providing real hospitality, specifically human communication. Sometimes, on such difficult days, the interviewee noticed that “the main factor of frustration can be an inability to complete scheduled tasks. This feeling of incompleteness affects me for the rest of the day.”

The philosophy of hospitality for Employee C is to make customers feel that they are not just served, but they are truly important. According to her, the customers feel this “when they are heard and seen, and when a personalized approach is found for them. In her opinion, “A satisfied customer is one who feels the care and attention manifested in small ways, such as having their name remembered or preferences noticed.” An experience she shared during the interview demonstrates this philosophy: “Once, I helped a customer from South Korea on my own initiative. She had several large suitcases, and when she was checking in, I felt a strong urge to help. I helped her bring the suitcases and the stroller up to her room, just because I could see she was struggling to manage by herself.”

She describes the atmosphere in the team and the relationship with management as quite healthy, and confirms that each employee’s contribution is evaluated fairly and equally. She noted: “The sincere support and management recognition directly increases the team's desire to provide an exceptional experience for customers.” Employee C clearly understands how her performance influences the hotel’s overall success. She noted that she receives enough feedback from management and sees an opportunity for professional growth, linking it with improving the quality of service that directly impacts customer satisfaction.

4.4 Interview 4

The fourth interview was conducted with Employee D, who has been working as a Front Office Agent for 6 months in the Front Office Department at Holiday Inn Tashkent City.

In the interviewee’s opinion, communication with customers and a dynamic, busy environment give him energy for the high-quality performance of his duties. As he noted: “I really enjoy communication and having a heavy workload. When there’s nothing to do at work, I feel like I’m not using my time wisely.” Employee D believes that the key objective in his position is to create a positive first impression and to help customers with any problems that arise during their stay at the hotel. He also emphasized the importance of the first

contact, stating: “Everything begins from the first experience. As soon as guests arrive, make a maximum effort to welcome them positively, provide information about the hotel and the city, and I believe they are left with a good impression.” He noted during the interview that at work he tries to be proactive, ambitious, and customer-oriented to create an exceptional and unforgettable experience for customers.

According to the interview, the author can conclude that his motivation doesn't depend on external factors, as he emphasized: “I always come to work in a good mood and motivated. I love my job, and I get satisfaction from everything I do here.” He noted that when there is little work, he feels discomfort and tries to neutralize it by actively engaging in dialogue with customers or developing through online training sessions provided at work. It is important to underline that Employee D associates his future with the hotel, expressing the clear desire to build a career in this hotel and believing in such an opportunity. These aspects vividly reflect his loyalty to the organization. This is also supported by his constructive perception of both positive and negative management feedback about his performance, which he applies for his professional growth. According to him, “I take all feedback directed at me, whether positive or negative, constructively, and it helps me work.”

Despite such positive comments from Employee D about the company and his work, during the interview he highlighted several points for improvement because the interviewee understands how they can affect customers' satisfaction. He noted that “the difficult situations that arise are currently solved by management, as customers tend to take managers more seriously.” He would like to expand his responsibilities in order to resolve more complex conflict situations with customers in a timely manner and without delay. Also, he emphasized that management needs to pay more attention to the employees' work in the Bellboy position so that they can perform their duties fully. Everything that Employee D mentioned above in the interview directly affects customers' overall experience and satisfaction.

4.5 Analysis of Interviews Results

In this chapter, the author analyzed in more detail the empirical data that were collected during interviews with four employees from the Front Office Department at the Holiday Inn Tashkent City hotel. Using thematic analysis, the author systematized the main comments, ideas and employees' experience into one holistic picture. This analysis helped to clearly represent the relationship between employees' motivation and customer satisfaction in the

context of the commissioning company. The thematic coding table below served as the basis for the distribution of responses by themes.

Table 2. Thematic Coding Table

First-Order codes (Quotes / Direct ideas)	Second-Order codes (Interpretive categories)	Aggregated themes
<p>“Overall, the atmosphere is friendly. We support each other, particularly when large groups are checking in. I have good relationships with my colleagues. We can even go for coffee after a shift.”</p>	<p>Supportive Team Atmosphere</p>	<p>Work Environment</p>
<p>“Our Front Office Manager is very fair and open, and she's always ready to listen. She often supports and motivates the staff. For example, she changed the schedule and gave us the opportunity to both work and study.”</p>	<p>Fair & Supportive Management</p>	<p>Work Environment</p>
<p>“The most valuable thing for me is the personal recognition in front of the whole team. I appreciate it when positive guest feedback is shared at a meeting”</p>	<p>Recognition & Achievement</p>	<p>Job Satisfaction</p>
<p>“When a guest smiles, says thank you, or simply leaves satisfied is already the best reward for me.”</p>	<p>Positive Customer Interaction</p>	<p>Job Satisfaction</p>

<p>“I really enjoy communication and having a heavy workload. When there's nothing to do at work, I feel like I'm not using my time wisely.”</p>	<p>The Work Itself</p>	<p>Job Satisfaction</p>
<p>“When I was recognized as 'Employee of the Month', I felt that my work was truly noticed. This is very important to me.”</p>	<p>Perceived Fairness</p>	<p>Goals, Feedback and Fairness</p>
<p>“I'm definitely aiming for the Front Office Supervisor position. I always make the extra effort because I'm confident that management notices high-quality work.”</p>	<p>Clear Career Goals</p>	<p>Goals, Feedback and Fairness</p>
<p>“I take all feedback directed at me, whether positive or negative, constructively, and it helps me work.”</p>	<p>Constructive Feedback</p>	<p>Goals, Feedback and Fairness</p>
<p>“A guest once asked me to help with a domestic flight... Although it wasn't strictly part of my job, I went ahead and processed the online check-in for their flight myself.”</p> <p>“Although it was not part of my direct duties, I helped them contact the airline, called the airport several times, and even arranged for a courier to deliver the suitcase directly to the hotel. When the luggage was returned, the guests were so grateful that</p>	<p>Personal Engagement in Guest Welfare</p>	<p>Link between Employee Motivation and Customer Satisfaction</p>

<p>they left a very warm review about our service”</p> <p>“Once, I helped a customer from South Korea on my own initiative. She had several large suitcases, and when she was checking in, I felt a strong urge to help. I helped her bring the suitcases and the stroller up to her room, just because I could see she was struggling to manage by herself.”</p>		
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--

4.5.1 Work Environment

The author began to analyze interviews by considering a fundamental aspect: the work environment. This aspect creates the daily experience for employees in the Front Office Department at the hotel Holiday Inn Tashkent City. The elements of the work environment correspond to what Frederick Herzberg identified as extrinsic factors in his motivation-hygiene theory. According to Herzberg’s theory, these factors aren’t a direct source of motivation but their absence or negative development can lead to staff dissatisfaction. On the other hand, if these factors are present, they create a feeling of stability, security and comfort. Therefore, for the employees of this commissioning company, the key extrinsic factors are relationships with management and colleagues.

All employees emphasized during the interviews that they highly appreciate the atmosphere within the team. Employee B expressed this more vividly than others, and said in the interview: “Overall, the atmosphere is friendly. We support each other, particularly when large groups are checking in. I have good relationships with my colleagues. We can even go for coffee after a shift.” This kind of atmosphere contributes to effective teamwork and fast knowledge exchange, and positive relationships with colleagues create a sense of belonging and psychological security.

Relationships with management are also evaluated positively in the company. For example, Employee C described the relationships with management as healthy enough and added that each employee’s contribution is evaluated fairly and equally. She noted during the interview: “The sincere support and management recognition directly increases

the team's desire to provide an exceptional experience for customers.” At the same time, Employee B noted: “Our Front Office Manager is very fair and open, and she's always ready to listen. She often supports and motivates the staff. For example, when our university studies started, she changed the schedule and gave us the opportunity to both work and study.” These moments are directly related to extrinsic factors such as supervision and company policy. In addition, this fair and respectful leadership style prevents a feeling of injustice that, according to Adams’ Equity Theory, is a strong factor that can lead to employees’ demotivation.

Therefore, the author can conclude that the management has successfully created and maintains a healthy working atmosphere in the Front Office Department. As a result, the management is able to minimize the causes of dissatisfaction, allowing employees to focus on more important tasks such as achieving results in the company.

4.5.2 Job Satisfaction

According to Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory, the main factors that influence high performance and service quality are intrinsic factors. It is these factors that bring professional satisfaction to employees, stimulate them to take initiative, and form their loyalty toward the company.

A strong source of motivation for all interviewees is recognition of their effort at work. A vivid example is the experience of Employee A, who emphasized during the interview that receiving “The Best Employee of the Month” award increased her self-confidence and the quality of her performance, stating: “I felt this especially in August when I was recognized as ‘Employee of the Month’. It was a highly motivating moment for me.” The author can conclude that recognition directly affects productivity. Employee B noted in the interview: “The most valuable thing for me is the personal recognition in front of the whole team. I appreciate it when positive guest feedback is shared at a meeting or included in an internal newsletter. Financial bonuses are important too, naturally, but that human recognition is a stronger motivator.” The above examples illustrate how intrinsic factors, such as achievement and recognition described in Herzberg's theory, work.

As a result of the interviews, the author can conclude that employees showed a strong desire for professional development and the expansion of their responsibilities. Employee D noted during the interview that he has a powerful desire to gain more responsibility to solve complex conflict situations on his own. Employees B and D highly appreciate the

opportunity for development in the company. They see these opportunities in the online and offline training sessions provided by the company. These aspects correspond very vividly to intrinsic factors such as responsibility and growth, according to Herzberg's theory.

The author also noted that a dynamic environment and assisting customers bring satisfaction to employees. Employees C and A repeatedly emphasized in their interviews that the source of their professional satisfaction is the positive emotions and gratitude of customers. Employee A highlighted during the interview: "I get pleasure when customers leave satisfied and thank me for help. It's especially nice to see their smiles and hear positive feedback". Employee C described this: "The greatest satisfaction comes from the process of communicating with customers", adding "When a guest smiles, says thank you, or simply leaves satisfied is already the best reward for me." In turn, Employee D receives energy for work when there is a dynamic and busy environment around, stating: "I really enjoy communication and having a heavy workload. When there's nothing to do at work, I feel like I'm not using my time wisely." All the above examples confirm the importance of intrinsic factors, such as the work itself, in Herzberg's theory.

In addition, the data collected during the interviews allows the author to conclude that the employees of the Front Office Department are bright representatives of Theory Y employees, according to McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y. The employees are internally motivated, not afraid of responsibilities, take the initiative, and get satisfaction from their work.

4.5.3 Goals, Feedback, and Fairness

Rational and cognitive factors also influence employees' motivation in the Front Office Department. The analysis of interviews showed that employees constantly evaluate the fairness of the system, manage expectations about their future in the company, and use management's feedback to improve their performance.

According to Adams' Equity Theory, employees always compare their ratio of contribution and results with the ratio of their colleagues. The results of the interviews showed that the level of perceived justice is maintained high in the Front Office Department. Employees A and C noted during the interview that management fairly evaluates the contribution of each employee. Employee A confirmed this: "When I was recognized as 'Employee of the Month', I felt that my work was truly noticed. This is very important to me." At the same time Employee C highlighted this by sharing, "The most valuable thing is when people really

notice my effort. I really appreciate it when a manager can simply say, 'Good job' or recognizes our team's accomplishments during a meeting." All of the above indicates that the company has an honest system of recognition. Consequently, the author can conclude that a sense of fairness is extremely important for employees because it creates confidence in them that their hard work will be noticed and adequately rewarded.

In addition, the analysis showed that each employee has clear goals and expectations, which motivates them to work hard. Employee B noted that she has a clear goal to become a Front Office Supervisor. She makes an effort because she expects quality work will be noticed and lead her to the desired result, stating: "I'm definitely aiming for the Front Office Supervisor position. I always make the extra effort because I'm confident that management notices high-quality work, and I believe that this effort is what will lead me to that promotion." In turn, Employee D associates his future with the hotel and believes in the possibility of career growth, stating: "I want career growth at the hotel, and I believe it will happen." Both examples clearly show how Vroom's expectancy theory works. The powerful motivator for them is to have clear and achievable career prospects. Employees clearly see the connection between their prospects and efforts because these efforts can lead them to the desired results.

Also, the interviewees noted that regular feedback from management plays a key role in achieving results. This element is central to Locke's theory of goal setting. (Mullins & Christy, 2010, 276-277) All employees emphasized during the interview that they receive enough feedback from management and use it for their further development. Employee D underlined that both positive and negative feedback allows him to track his progress at work in order to develop in the right direction. This belief motivates him to be proactive and accept management's feedback constructively, which he confirmed by sharing: "I take all feedback directed at me, whether positive or negative, constructively, and it helps me work." Constructive criticism and praise mentioned by employees serve as guides for them, which help them move more effectively towards personal and organizational goals. This process makes achieving goals more conscious and manageable.

Therefore, the author can conclude that a sense of justice, clear goals and expectations, and regular feedback create a transparent and effective motivation system. All employees believe that their effort will be fairly appreciated and that achieving high results will open up career opportunities for them. They trust the management and are confident that they will be provided with all the necessary information for professional growth.

4.5.4 Link between Employees motivation and Customer Satisfaction

This section is the most important part of the entire interview analysis because it is the one that most vividly and directly answers the research question of this thesis. The interview results don't just confirm that employee motivation affects guest satisfaction, but demonstrate it in action.

The analysis showed that the high level of employees' motivation is the main factor that directly leads to the creation of an exceptional guest experience from a stay at the hotel, which confirms the concept of the "service-profit chain". According to this concept, employees' satisfaction and loyalty lead to the improvement of service quality. (Chi & Gursoy, 2009) All interviewees don't limit themselves to the formal performance of their duties, but they act proactively. They strive not only to satisfy customers but also to exceed their expectations.

Employee A is motivated by the recent recognition of her achievements because she received "The Best Employee of the Month" reward. She clearly understands that her role is to be the face of the hotel. Therefore, she helped foreign customers with online flight registration on her own. These actions go far beyond her responsibilities and demonstrate a sincere desire to help, as she said in the interview: "A guest once asked me to help with a domestic flight within Uzbekistan. Although it wasn't strictly part of my job, I went ahead and processed the online check-in for their flight myself. The guest was very thankful for that support, and I felt that I was able to make his trip more comfortable."

Employee B, for whom the key motivation factors are personal recognition and career opportunities, contacted the airlines on her own to help the customers with their lost luggage and deliver it to the hotel. This initiative is a direct manifestation of her involvement and desire to solve the customers' problem, even if it was not the fault of the hotel. She shared an example during the interview: "Although it was not part of my direct duties, I helped them contact the airline, called the airport several times, and even arranged for a courier to deliver the suitcase directly to the hotel. When the luggage was returned, the guests were so grateful that they left a very warm review about our service."

Employee C, for whom communication with guests and their gratitude are the key to her professional satisfaction at work, helped the customer to carry the luggage and stroller to the room on her own initiative. This act is her philosophy of hospitality, which she noted in an interview. It is vital to her to make the customers feel that they are truly important. She

shared this example: “Once, I helped a customer from South Korea on my own initiative. She had several large suitcases, and when she was checking in, I felt a strong urge to help. I helped her bring the suitcases and the stroller up to her room, just because I could see she was struggling to manage by herself.”

All the examples described above fit well into the concept of the Expectation-Disconfirmation Model. Customers expect standard, courteous, and efficient service. They don't expect that employees of the Front Office Department will solve their problems with the airline or help with flight registration. When employees perform these kinds of actions, they create a significant positive disconfirmation, where perceived performance significantly exceeds initial expectations. As a result, employees turn simple satisfaction into delight, and customers' loyalty to the hotel is formed.

In conclusion, the analysis showed that the management built a clear mechanism of operation. Management tries to create a favourable atmosphere with strong extrinsic and intrinsic factors that were described in Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. (Nickerson, 2025) They pay more attention to recognition, growth and responsibility because these factors allow employees to develop a high level of internal motivation and personal engagement. As a result, motivated employees understand their responsibilities and are personally interested in the well-being of customers. The interest of interviewees is manifested in proactivity and actions that go beyond their responsibilities. These kinds of employees' actions create unforgettable impressions for customers, which exceed their expectations. Therefore, there are satisfied and loyal customers. As a result, customers leave positive feedback, which in turn serves as a new source of recognition and motivation for employees.

4.6 Recommendations

This research aims to identify the influence of employee motivation on customer satisfaction at Holiday Inn Tashkent City. The study reveals that a high level of employee involvement is the basis for creating an exceptional customer experience. The analysis showed that the management has already created a healthy work environment, which directly affects the creation of high-quality service. The key task is to create conditions where all customers will feel truly important and cared for. Therefore, in order to improve this, the following recommendations are focused specifically on enhancing the positive impact on the customer impression.

First of all, in order to increase customer satisfaction, it is necessary to expand employees' responsibilities to promptly solve problems. The customer who faces difficulties always expects immediate resolution. The current situation in the Front Office Department is that complex issues require mandatory management intervention, which can lead to delays, and, as a result, customer disappointment. Therefore, management needs to provide employees with more autonomy that can be supported by offline and online conflict resolution training. This can help employees to respond instantly to customer requests and solve problems quickly without delays. This can turn a potential negative experience into a positive one, showing customers that their comfort is a top priority. Thus, if management invests in employee independence, it will increase service quality and customer satisfaction.

Secondly, it is necessary to optimize routine processes that help employees have more time to provide true hospitality. The analysis showed that employees are more concentrated on operational tasks such as paperwork during high workload periods. This situation reduces the time for direct communication with customers. From the customer's point of view, a warm welcome, attention to detail, and sense of caring are more valued than, for example, the speed of check-in. Automated processes will allow employees to devote more time to personalized communication or offering help. Also, moments when employees go beyond the standard procedure create an unforgettable impression and make guests come back.

Finally, it is necessary to strengthen the recognition and development systems focused on the customer experience in order to provide stable, high-quality service. The research confirms that the main source of employees' professional satisfaction is the positive emotions and gratitude of customers. When management publicly celebrates employees for exceptional service, for example, by reading out positive reviews where their names are mentioned, this not only motivates, but also sets the standard of service for the entire team.

In conclusion, the Front Office Department at the Hotel Holiday Inn Tashkent City has already motivated and engaged employees in the team. The above recommendations aim to improve existing strengths and create a more sustainable system in which happy employees will continue to provide an unforgettable experience, creating satisfied and loyal customers.

4.7 Conclusion

The main goal of this thesis was to study the impact of employee motivation on customer satisfaction in the hotel Holiday Inn Tashkent City. The main research question was: "How does employees' motivation impact customer satisfaction in an organization?" The author analyzed foundational motivation theories and the current state of employees' involvement in the company. Therefore, this allowed the author to develop practical recommendations to improve the service quality.

The theoretical part of the thesis is based on early theories of motivation, such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, and McGregor's Theory X and Y, as well as on contemporary theories that include Vroom's Expectancy Theory, Equity Theory and Locke's Goal-Setting Theory. Also, the Expectation-Disconfirmation Model was used to analyze customer satisfaction. The relationship between employees and customers was studied through the "service-profit chain" concept.

A qualitative research method was chosen to collect empirical data. The author conducted four semi-structured interviews with the Front Office Department employees. The author had interviews with two front office agents, a telephone operator and a front office supervisor. This method provided deep insights into their perceptions, personal experiences, and the factors that drive their motivation.

A key finding is that the employees have a high level of internal motivation. Their drive comes primarily from non-financial factors such as achievement recognition, gratitude from customers, and opportunities for professional growth and increased responsibility. The employee demonstrates independence and gets satisfaction from the work itself. Also, employees are motivated because they perceive fairness in the system, have clear career goals, and trust that their efforts will produce the desired results.

The research strongly confirmed a direct link between employee motivation and guest satisfaction. The analysis showed that high internal motivation encourages employees to go beyond their basic job descriptions. This proactive behavior was seen in examples when an employee helped customers with check-in for the domestic flight or searched for lost luggage, which demonstrates proactive behavior. According to the Expectation Confirmation Model, these actions create a "positive disconfirmation of expectations" for customers because the perceived service significantly exceeds standard expectations. (Bakri, 2012, 4) Therefore, the employees don't just satisfy the requests, but generate

delight and high loyalty among the customers, which fully confirms the concept of the "service-profit chain". (Chi & Gursoy, 2009) This research confirmed that motivated and engaged employees are the main factor in creating an exceptional customer experience.

Three main recommendations were developed for the hotel management based on the analysis. First, it was recommended to empower employees to solve more difficult situations on their own. Secondly, it was suggested to optimize routine operational processes, for example paperwork. Lastly, it is necessary to strengthen the recognition and development system, focusing on exceptional cases of customer care.

In conclusion, this thesis successfully answered the research question, confirming that high employee motivation is a direct and powerful factor that exceeds customer expectations and builds their loyalty at the Holiday Inn Tashkent City hotel.

References

- Bakri, A. (2012). A review on the expectancy disconfirmation theory. Eprints.utm.my.
https://eprints.utm.my/id/eprint/33036/2/AryatiBakri2012_ReviewonExpectancyDisconfirmationTheory.pdf
- Baum, T. (2007). The human dimension: A review of human resources management issues in the tourism and hospitality industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 19(3), 269–272. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09596110710739922>
- Black, J. S., & Bright, D. S. (2019). *Organizational behavior*. OpenStax.
https://assets.openstax.org/oscms-prodcms/media/documents/OrganizationalBehavior-OP_TtwWleQ.pdf
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Chi, C. G., & Gursoy, D. (2009). Employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and financial performance: An empirical examination. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(2), 245–253. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2008.08.003>
- Ebert, R., & Griffin, R. (2016). *Business essentials*, ebook, global edition. Pearson Education, Limited.
<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.hamk.fi/lib/hamk-ebooks/reader.action?docID=5185927&ppg=1&c=UERG>
- Graham, S., & Weiner, B. (2012). Motivation: Past, present, and future. In K. R. Harris, S. Graham, & T. Urdan (Eds.), *APA educational psychology handbook, Vol. 1: Theories, constructs, and critical issues* (pp. 367–397). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13273-013>
- Guillén, M. (2021). *Motivation in organisations: Searching for a meaningful work-life balance*. Routledge.
- InterContinental Hotels Group PLC. (n.d.). Our history. Retrieved September 8, 2025, from <https://www.ihgplc.com/en/about-us/our-history>
- Kandampully, J., & Suhartanto, D. (2000). Customer loyalty in the hotel industry: The role of customer satisfaction and image. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 12(6), 346–351. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09596110010342559>
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2021). *Marketing management* (16th ed.). Pearson.
<https://gnindia.dronacharya.info/MBA/1stSem/Downloads/MarketingManagement/Books/Marketing-Management-text-book-1.pdf>
- Lim, W. M. (2024). What is qualitative research? An overview and guidelines. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 33(2), 199–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582241264619>
- McLeod, S. (2025, August 3). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. *Simply Psychology*.
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>

- MTD Training. 2010. Motivation Skills. Ventus Publishing ApS.
https://oldmis.kp.ac.rw/admin/admin_panel/kp_lms/files/digital/Core%20Books/Career%20guidance%20and%20counselling%20books/Motivation%20skills.pdf
- Mullins, L. J., & Christy, G. (2010). Management and Organizational Behaviour (9th ed.). Financial Times Prentice Hall.
- Naeem, M., Ozuem, W., Howell, K., & Ranfagni, S. (2023). A step-by-step process of thematic analysis to develop a conceptual model in qualitative research. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231205789>
- Nickerson, C. (2025, April 18). Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation-hygiene. Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/herzbergs-two-factor-theory.html>
- Robbins, S. P., DeCenzo, D. A., & Coulter, M. A. (2013). Fundamentals of management: Essential concepts and applications (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Sabri, S. M., Mutalib, H. A., & Hasan, N. A. (2019). Elements of employees' motivation in hospitality industry. Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management, 4(14), 1–11.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332110447_Elements_of_Employees%27_Motivation_in_Hospitality_Industry
- Schiebler, T., Lee, N., & Brodbeck, F. C. (2025). Expectancy-disconfirmation and consumer satisfaction: A meta-analysis. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-024-01078-x>

Appendix 1. Interview questions

1. Could you please describe your role at the hotel and how long have you been working here?
2. What aspects of your job do you enjoy the most? And what are the biggest difficulties you face?
3. How would you describe the atmosphere in a team and relationship with the management? Do you feel that each employee's contribution is valued fairly?
4. Try to remember when you felt truly motivated at work. What was the situation and how did it affect your interactions with customers?
5. Have there been times when your motivation was low? How did you manage to provide quality service on such days?
6. What kind of recognition or praise is most valuable to you? Do you feel that your achievements, which impact the guest experience, are noticed?
7. How clearly do you understand how your work impacts the overall success of the hotel and the customer experience? Do you receive enough feedback on this?
8. Do you see opportunities for your professional growth and development at the hotel? Do you connect your own growth with improving the quality of service?
9. What do you think it is about an employee's behavior that makes a guest feel not just served, but truly welcome and important?
10. Have you encountered a situation where a colleague's positive attitude directly helped resolve a difficult situation with a customer? Please tell us about it.
11. Can you give an example of a time you went above and beyond your regular duties for a customer, simply because you were in a good mood and wanted to help?

12. What actions from management do you believe could directly increase your motivation to create an exceptional experience for every customer?
13. What does a "satisfied customer" mean to you personally? Is it simply a customer, with no complaints, or something more?
14. If you could change one thing about your job to make it more enjoyable for both you and the customers, what would it be?

Appendix 2. Data Management Plan

1. Description of thesis research data

The research data represent qualitative data that was collected for this thesis. The data were obtained through an empirical method.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the data collection method. This method was chosen as appropriate because it allows the author to study employees' opinions, feelings, and experiences in depth regarding motivation and its influence on their work.

The target group of this research consisted of employees of the Front Office Department at Holiday Inn Tashkent City. The sample included four employees who hold different positions. There were two Front Office Agents, one Front Office Supervisor and one Telephone Operator.

The research data were collected in the form of audio recordings of interviews. These audio recordings were transcribed into text files for further analysis. The analysis was then carried out in the form of semantic analysis and thematic compilation of textual data.

2. Management and storage of the research data

The research data for this thesis will be stored and processed on the author's personal computer and will be password protected. This data includes audio recordings of all four conducted interviews.

In order to ensure data security and prevent loss, a backup copy was created. This backup copy will be saved in a separate encrypted folder that is kept separate from the files that were used for analysis.

Only the author will have an access to the data. If it is necessary, the thesis supervisor can have an access to the processed and anonymized data for academic guidance and the reviewing process.

The study was carried out with official permission of the company's management. This study is dedicated only to the case company, and its results are intended exclusively for internal use and are strictly confidential.

3. Processing of personal data and sensitive data

The personal data were processed during the research. These data include the employees' position and length of employment. The collection of these data was necessary to analyse the employees' opinions, taking into account their position and level of experience in the Front Office Department.

The collection and processing of this data were based on an informed oral agreement from each respondent before starting the interview. The interviewees were informed in detail about the research objective and data collection procedures.

All interviewees were guaranteed complete anonymity. No personal names are used in the thesis. Instead, the author used anonymous identifiers (for example, "Employee A", "Employee B"). The initial interview data containing identifying information were not published as an appendix to the thesis.

4. Ownership of research data

The rights to the initial collected research data belong to the author of the thesis. The rights to the research results in the form of a final thesis belong to the author and the educational institution.

In accordance with the agreement reached before the data collection, the commissioning company Holiday Inn Tashkent City has the right to use the research results and recommendations presented in the thesis for its internal purposes.

5. Further use of research data after the completion of the thesis

The research data will not be reused or shared with third parties after the completion of the thesis. The thesis author will securely store the data for one year from the date of the final thesis approval. This period is necessary to ensure that the results can be verified if needed. All the original data, including audio recordings, will be securely and permanently destroyed after this one-year period.