




HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: A CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH

Abstract

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Purpose – This study conducted a comparative analysis between hotels located in Brazil and England on human resource practices and employee motivation, using the cultural dimensions developed by Hofstede (1980) and the conservation of resources theory.

Design/Methodology/Approach – Questionnaires were completed by 154 hotels, 96 and 58 dyads of human resources managers and frontline employees from Brazil and England, respectively, corresponding to a total of 308 respondents. Importance-performance analysis was used to examine the data collected through independent t-tests.

Findings – The results showed that Brazilian managers considered training as the most important human resources practice, while information sharing had the best performance in their hotels. English managers ranked employment security with the highest importance and performance ratings. Brazilian frontline employees ranked intrinsic motivation with the highest importance and performance ratings, while English frontline employees ranked extrinsic motivation with the highest importance and performance ratings.

Originality of the research – This research extended previous studies using the conservation of resources theory and also developed competitive strategies targeted to specific cultures. Another contribution was the comparative study between hotel employees (managers and frontline) from two countries (Brazil and England), applying the importance-performance analysis.

Keywords Human Resources Practices; Employee Motivation; Cross-Cultural Research; Hospitality Industry; Brazil; England.

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INTRODUCTION

Human resource management is considered a decision-making strategy focused on how people should be managed, employed, and developed in their organisations. It includes handling employee knowledge, skills, and network, as well as their intellectual capabilities, physical and emotional health, personalities, and motivations (Armstrong, 2016). Schuler (1992) has formulated five headings to operate employment relations through human resources management: philosophy, policies, programs, practices, and processes. So, human resources practices are the activities responsible for implementing the philosophy, policies, and plans, which create formal processes (Armstrong, 2016). Chen et al., (2016) and Hewagama et al., (2019) believe that the current information technology advancements and the increased competition faced by the hospitality industry can be managed using human resources practices as a strategic tool. Likewise, Solnet et al., (2019) and Meira et al., (2022) have concluded that human resources practices can improve service quality, increasing customer satisfaction and, consequently, hotel performance. Hence, professionals and scholars agree that human resources practices should be strategically managed since they can be considered a source of competitive advantage (e.g., Murphy et al., 2018). However, there is a call for empirical investigations on human resources practices since the debate on this topic has grown only in recent decades (Meira et al., 2022; Murphy et al., 2018).

Employee behaviour management has been recognised as an essential strategy by the hotel industry. To do so, one of the most used tools is the staff motivation approach (Chiang et al., 2008; Vetráková & Mazúchová, 2016). Several authors have studied the motivation theory, such as Maslow (1954), Herzberg (1959), McClelland (1961), Vroom (1964), Porter et al. (1975) and Murray (1983). More recently, identifying employee motivation has been the main challenge for service organisations (Dipietro et al., 2014) because a prepared and motivated employee is considered a valuable competitive advantage (Armstrong, 2016). Some scholars believe that hoteliers should motivate their workforce in order to create an environment that provides higher employee satisfaction as well as better organisational performance (e.g., Meira et al., 2022; Putra et al., 2015; Vetráková & Mazúchová, 2016). Similarly, others have concluded that hotel managers must create a comfortable work atmosphere and generate meaningful jobs since motivated employees, committed to their daily tasks, can assist hospitality organisations in achieving the desired service quality (e.g., Dipietro et al., 2014; Putra et al., 2015). Although, to date, employee motivation has still received little attention in the hospitality literature, this research topic has grown in popularity in recent years (Meira et al., 2022; Nieves & Quintana, 2018; Suttikun et al., 2018).

Most of the aforementioned academics have concluded in their studies that there is a need to expand empirical investigations on topics related to human resources management due to the challenges currently faced by the hospitality industry (e.g., Meira et al., 2022; Murphy et al., 2018; Nieves & Quintana, 2018; Suttikun et al., 2018). Hence, investigating human resources practices and employee motivation has practical and theoretical relevance to the field. By doing so, it will be possible to assist hoteliers in strategically managing their human capital as well as academics in expanding their knowledge on these topics. Human resources practices and employee motivation can be studied through the conservation of resources theory, which explains much of human behaviour relationships (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Likewise, this theory can also examine organisational behaviour within its cultural context (Hobfoll, 2011). Additionally, some authors believe that the lack of cross-country studies comparing similarities and differences among multiple cultures opens room for future investigations within the hospitality field (e.g., Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018; Xi et al., 2022). Therefore, human resources practices as input, and employee motivation as output, should be studied more deeply in tourism-dependent destinations worldwide. By doing so, it will be possible to close this literature gap by identifying the effect of culture on these two topics related to human resources management.

Most of the cross-cultural studies that have used the conservation of resources theory adopted the dimensions created by Hofstede (1980) to understand the cultural differences among countries (Hobfoll et al., 2018). For this reason, the current research also has applied these dimensions as methodological support to achieve its objective. Nevertheless, Koc & Ayyildiz (2021) have concluded that former studies have focused on one or a few cultural dimensions. So, this investigation aims to perform a comparative analysis between hotels in Brazil and England on human resources practices and employee motivation, using the six cultural dimensions developed by Hofstede (1980) as methodological support and the conservation of resources as the theoretical framework. Koc (2021) and Tasci et al., (2021) have argued that the hospitality industry should carefully deal with cultural differences, as there is a need to better understand their issues and concepts in the most diverse contexts. Also, Suttikun et al., (2018) have concluded in their research that it is prudent to consider the variations among cultures to understand employee attitudes and behaviours in the workplace. Thus, this study contributes to human resources management, creating competitive strategies targeting specific cultures. Another contribution is applying the importance-performance analysis as a statistical tool to compare hotel employees' viewpoints (managers and frontline) from two countries (Brazil and England), which, to the authors' knowledge, has not been investigated in the hospitality field so far.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Human Resources Practices

The literature conceptualises human resources management as a philosophy related to how people should be managed in their organisational environment (Armstrong, 2016). It adopts a holistic approach focused on policies and practices for managing employment relations to achieve organisational goals as well as employee needs. Strategic human resources management, in its turn, is responsible for linkage human resources practices with business purposes, creating value through their human capital, and providing a source of competitive advantage (Ivanovic & Blazevic, 2009; Malik, 2018). Pfeffer is considered one of the most widespread human resources scholars, responsible for developing a human resources practices model with six key drivers of high performance: selective hiring, compensation policy, training and development, decentralisation, information sharing and employment security (Armstrong, 2016; Malik, 2018).

Although several scholars in the service organisations have already used the model created by Pfeffer (1998), the research on human resources practices in the hospitality field is in early development (Murphy et al., 2018; Tracey, 2014). The United States is the country with more academics concerned with employee relations issues in the hotel industry. However, emerging countries such as China are giving more and more attention to this topic, increasing the human resources hospitality studies (Tracey, 2014). Boxall et al., (2010) have argued that Pfeffer's (1998) model should consider the applicability and uniqueness of each particular area. For this reason, it is essential to apply his model in different hospitality environments around the world, since human resources practices can be a source of long-term competitive advantage (Ahmad et al., 2010; Costa et al., 2021; Murphy et al., 2018; Nieves & Quintana, 2018).

Some hospitality scholars have already applied the model created by Pfeffer (1998) in their investigations, such as Nadda et al., (2014), in hotels from the United Kingdom, Lee et al., (2015), in hotels from Taiwan, and Nieves & Quintana (2018) in hotels from Spain. But so far, no research that has done a comparative study among human resources practices across countries has been found. The conservation of resources theory arises as an enabler to conduct comparative studies on human resources practices among different cultures since this theory "begins with the tenet that individuals strive to obtain, retain, foster and protect those things they centrally value" (Hobfoll et al., 2018, 104). Likewise, according to Hofstede (2011), different cultures exhibit different preferences related to the individual conditions of affairs over others, which are called values.

1.2. Employee Motivation

One of the most significant problems faced by the hospitality industry is job dissatisfaction, which reflected in rising staff turnover (Ahmad et al., 2010; Chiang et al., 2008). Highly motivated employees are necessary for the success of services organisations such as hotel companies, adding value and presenting a competitive advantage to them (Kukanja, 2013; Paek et al., 2015; Vetráková & Mazúchová, 2016). So, hoteliers need to develop work motivation strategies once they affect employee behaviour, maximising its financial returns. Likewise, some scholars believe that motivation can assist managers in creating an environment that contributes to higher organisational performance and staff satisfaction (Chiang et al., 2008; Murray, 2022; Simons & Enz, 1995; Vetráková & Mazúchová, 2016). Others argued that motivating employees and keeping them satisfied are some of the ways to deliver service quality (Dipietro et al., 2014; Vetráková & Mazúchová, 2016).

Studies on employee motivation are gaining importance in the last years since human capital is being increasingly valued by organisations (Nieves & Quintana, 2018; Sehkarán & Sevcikova, 2011). Herzberg (1959), one of the most respected motivation theorists, has argued that two factors could influence employees' motivation: hygiene and motivators (Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020). The latter is the issues driven by the enjoyment of the job itself (non-monetary). Hygiene is those that come from outside the individual, such as money or rewards (monetary). According to Kovach (1987), managers do not realise that monetary incentives are necessary, but sometimes non-monetary are the better choice and relatively inexpensive to implement. On the other hand, Sobaih & Hasanein (2020) have found that hygiene factors (monetary) positively affect job satisfaction, while motivators (non-monetary) are a source of dissatisfaction. Likewise, Zheng et al.,'s (2022) findings have revealed that both motivational factors (monetary and non-monetary) were significant determinants of turnover intention.

It is important to highlight that motivated employees, whose needs and expectations are met, have better behaviour, and their satisfaction will be reflected in customer satisfaction (Suttikun et al., 2018; Vetráková & Mazúchová, 2016). Hence, to find out how to motivate employees and keep them satisfied has been a managerial challenge for decades, and also an academic hot topic to be developed and studied deeply (Murray, 2022). Similarly, some scholars believe that the lack of cross-country studies comparing multiple cultures opens room for future investigations within employee motivation in the hospitality context (Dipietro et al., 2014; Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018; Zheng et al., 2022). Thus, the conservation of resources is also a great theoretical approach to be applied since it explains a lot about the similarities and differences between human behaviour (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

1.3. Cross-Cultural Research

Over the last few years, the conservation of resources has become one of the most broadly cited theories in organisational behaviour field (Hobfoll et al., 2018). This theory is based on the idea that employees seek to obtain and retain valued resources in the workplace environment (Bailey et al., 2017; Hobfoll, 2011). These resources, which give employees a sense that they are capable of meeting diverse challenges, can be personal, social, and material (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Bailey et al., (2017) believe that according to this premise, these resources - in this case, the six key drivers of high performance provided by the human resources practices - can raise motivation levels since they buffer the potential negative effects in the workplace relations. Similarly, Hobfoll (2011) have argued that the resources should be supported by organisations through management strategies to make employees feel motivated.

It is well-known that people's motivations are influenced by their cultural background (Heine, 2019). It is also known that most cross-cultural investigations that have used the conservation of resources as a theoretical framework have adopted some of the six dimensions created by Hofstede (1980), named: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism or collectivism, masculinity or femininity, long or short-term orientation, and indulgence or restraint (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Hofstede, 2011). Following previous studies, Hobfoll et al., (2018) suggested using more than one dimension to represent both theoretical and empirical approaches. These scholars have also argued that more research should be done to examine the influence of cultural attributes on organisational management, applying the conservation of resources theory since resources are viewed differently, depending on their environment (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

Culture has already been defined in several ways. Hofstede (2011, 3) has theorised as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others." It is considered a collective phenomenon, though, it can be connected to several individuals apart. The term culture is most commonly used for ethnic groups, nations, and organisations. Some scholars have already researched the cultural difference between nations in the hospitality field (e.g., Ahmad & Zafar, 2018; Aydin & Tuzun, 2019; Xi et al., 2022). Ahmad & Zafar (2018) have applied a survey to hotel employees in Pakistan and have concluded that similar business models do not work across cultures, as people from different countries behave differently. Similarly, Aydin & Tuzun (2019) have found that different cultures can present contradictory results in the hospitality industry. They have concluded that hotels need to provide organisational support for their employees according to their culture. Finally, Xi et al., (2022) have investigated Airbnb online reviews and have found that Chinese-speaking tourists are generally more positive and objective than English-speaking tourists.

2. METHODOLOGY

The current study aims to conduct a comparative analysis between hotels in Brazil and England on human resources practices and employee motivation, using the cultural dimensions by Hofstede (1980). His model states that England has a low power distance. This means that people believe that inequalities amongst them should be minimised. England is also an individualist society, where people are supposed to look after themselves. Presenting a low score of uncertainty avoidance, English people do not worry about the future, and their planning is not detail-oriented. However, their end goal is clear. On the other hand, Hofstede (1980) has described Brazil with a high-power distance. This means that society believes hierarchy should be respected, and inequalities amongst people are acceptable. Brazil is also a collectivist country, where people are integrated into strong groups that protect themselves. Finally, with a high uncertainty avoidance score, Brazilian people show a strong need for rules and elaborate legal systems (Hofstede, 1980).

Therefore, according to the three dimensions discussed above, it is possible to determine that Brazil and England have presented different cultural features. The authors could not consider the other three dimensions of Hofstede's (1980) model in the present study since Brazil has shown average masculinity and long-term orientation scores. England, in its turn, has presented intermediate scores only on long-term orientation. In the indulgent dimension, both countries have shown similar scores. This means that people possess a positive attitude and tend towards optimism (Hofstede, 1980). According to the conservation of resources theory, people view resources differently depending on whether the studies are conducted in individualist or collectivist cultures (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Likewise, Heine (2019) has argued that people in interdependent contexts are more concerned with group goals and adjust their behaviours to achieve them together.

2.1. Data Collection

Surveys were distributed to employees from hotels located in Brazil (Balneario Camboriu, Gramado, and Natal) and England (Brighton, York, and Bournemouth). These countries were selected because they presented opposite cultural dimensions, avoiding potential limitations, as suggested by previous studies (e.g., Murphy et al., 2018; Yang, 2012). On the other hand, the cities were chosen through a convenience sample. This option was selected because they are considered touristic destinations and have similar characteristics, such as the number of hotels, typology, number of stars, and market segmentation. Therefore, the two countries present different cultural contexts, but their cities have similar characteristics. In a population of 255 hotels across both countries, surveys were sent to all of them and completed by 154 hotels (return of 60.4%), 96 and 58 dyads of human resources managers and frontline employees from Brazil and England respectively, corresponding to a total of 308 respondents.

2.2. Research Instrument and Data Analysis

Data was collected using a two-phase survey. It started with the human resources practices questionnaire, which was administered to human resources managers of the 255 hotels that have made up the population of this study. The second phase was applying the motivation questionnaire to the frontline employees of all hotels that answered the first-phase survey. The questionnaire administered to human resources managers had 43 items distributed into six dimensions, named: selective hiring, compensation policy, training and development, decentralisation, information sharing, and employment security (Appendix). This survey has replicated the measurement model proposed by Pfeffer (1998), which has already been validated for the hospitality field by Nadda et al., (2014), Lee et al., (2015), and Nieves & Quintana (2018). All questions were rated on a five-point scale, ranging from 5 (extremely important and extremely performed) to 1 (nothing important and nothing performed).

The employee motivation survey has replicated the study by Dipietro et al., (2014), who used the Ten Factor Model proposed by Kovach (1987) as previous scholars (e.g., Breiter et al., 2002; Simons & Enz, 1995). This questionnaire had ten items (Appendix). Due to suggestions from previous investigations (e.g., Murphy et al., 2018; Schuckert et al., 2018), this study has separated the items into extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, similar to the research by Murray (2022). Again, all the questions were rated on a five-point scale, ranging from 5 (extremely important and extremely performed) to 1 (nothing important and nothing performed). These questions were created and previously applied using ordinal-level scales (e.g., Breiter et al., 2002; Dipietro et al., 2014; Kovach, 1987; Simons & Enz, 1995). However, this research has used an interval scale, following a more recent study by Meira et al., (2022), who have verified its validity and reliability. Both surveys also had questions on hotel management (hotel affiliation and star rating), and respondent profile (gender, age, education level, and tenure).

The questionnaires were initially developed in English. Thus, to apply the surveys to Brazilian hotel employees, all items had to be adapted using the back-translation method, as previous scholars (e.g., Karatepe, 2013; Karatepe & Karadas, 2015). Before data collection, the questionnaires were evaluated by six specialists (hotel managers and hospitality professors) in order to make some adjustments. The surveys were also tested with a pilot sample of 40 employees. After some wording modifications, the questionnaires were completed by 324 employees, and 308 were validated to achieve this research result. Finally, the importance-performance analysis was used to examine the data collected through independent t-tests. Although Martilla & James (1977) have created this tool to analyse consumer satisfaction, some scholars have already applied the importance-performance analysis to measure manager (e.g., Nizamuddin, 2015; Prajogo & McDermott, 2011) and employee (e.g., Del-Castillo-Feito et al., 2022) perspectives, as well as bank financial performance (e.g., Tailab, 2020).

3. RESULTS

3.1. Human Resources Practices

Most of the surveyed hotels had three stars (44%) and were independent (60%), without any affiliation to a hotel chain. The majority of the human resources managers were male (53%), between 30 and 39 years old (60%), with a university level or beyond (60%) and tenure between 5 and 10 years (44%). There is only a gender difference between the two countries, since, in Brazil, most of the respondents were female (57%). Table 1 shows the independent t-tests of human resources practices in each country separately.

Table 1: Independent t-tests of human resources practices.

Human Resources Practices	Importance ^a	Performance ^b	Significance
BRAZIL (96 Cases)	4.10	3.49	t= 6.789*
Selective Hiring	3.87	3.35	t= 5.609*
Compensation Policy	3.88	3.23	t= 5.388*
Training and Development	4.36	3.50	t= 8.122*
Decentralisation	3.98	3.41	t= 6.128*
Information Sharing	4.28	3.77	t= 5.818*
Employment Security	4.25	3.65	t= 5.452*
ENGLAND (58 Cases)	4.11	3.91	t= 2.774*
Selective Hiring	3.21	3.18	t= 0.214
Compensation Policy	3.68	3.57	t= 2.061**
Training and Development	4.45	4.32	t= 2.002**
Decentralisation	4.01	3.72	t= 3.287*
Information Sharing	4.47	4.15	t= 3.670*
Employment Security	4.84	4.53	t= 3.512*

^a Measured on a scale of 1= nothing important to 5= extremely important.

^b Measured on a scale of 1= nothing performed to 5= extremely performed.

* p<0.001; ** p<0.050.

According to Table 1, all importance ratings were higher than those of performance in both countries. However, only Brazil has shown significant differences between all ratings. Training is the most important practice for the Brazilian human resources managers, followed by information sharing and employment security. The performance ratings were the same, but in a different position, starting with information sharing and followed by employment security and training. Compensation policy and selective hiring had the lowest ratings for human resource practices in Brazilian hotels. England has shown employment security as the most important human resources practice, followed by information sharing and training. And again, the performance ratings were the same, but in different sequences, starting with employment security and followed by training and information sharing. And similar to Brazil, compensation policy and selective hiring had the lowest ratings of human resource practices in English hotels.

It is essential to highlight that the importance ratings of human resources practices as a whole, has shown similar results in both countries. However, England had higher ratings related to performance than Brazil, but still below its importance ratings. Employment security, information sharing, and training were the practices that had the highest ratings related to importance and performance in both countries. Costa et al., (2021) and Lee et al., (2015) also have found training as one of the most ranked human resources practices in their research. On the other hand, selective hiring and compensation policy was the human resources practices that had the lowest ratings in both countries. Nadda et al., (2014) and Nieves & Quintana (2018) have found the opposite results since selective hiring and compensation policy had the highest ratings in their studies. It is also important to highlight that selective hiring was the only practice that has shown no significant difference between importance and performance in English hotels. However, information sharing, and employment security had the highest difference, while training and compensation policy were those with the highest difference in Brazilian hotels.

3.2. Employee Motivation

Most of the frontline employees were also men (56%), aged between 20 and 29 years old (52%), without a university level (40%) and tenures of 5 years or less (83%). The majority of the results were similar between Brazilian and English hotels. There is only one difference. In England, most of the respondents were female (58%). Table 2 presents the independent t-tests of employee motivation from each country separately.

Table 2: Independent t-tests of employee motivation

Employee Motivation	Importance ^a	Performance ^b	Significance
BRAZIL (96 Cases)	3.89	3.18	t= 6.497*
Extrinsic Motivation	3.87	3.17	t= 5.841*
Intrinsic Motivation	3.90	3.19	t= 6.518*
ENGLAND (58 Cases)	3.79	3.58	t= 2.327**
Extrinsic Motivation	3.92	3.66	t= 2.623**
Intrinsic Motivation	3.65	3.49	t= 1.676

^a Measured on a scale of 1= nothing important to 5= extremely important.

^b Measured on a scale of 1= nothing performed to 5= extremely performed.

* p<0.001; ** p<0.050.

Table 2 shows that all importance ratings of Brazilian hotels were significantly higher than performance ones. Intrinsic motivation has presented the highest ratings for importance and performance. However, it has shown the highest difference between both ratings. This result corroborates Dipietro et al., (2014), which have found intrinsic motivation with higher ratings than extrinsic ones. The English hotels have also offered all importance ratings with higher values than performance ones. Though, the difference between intrinsic motivation ratings was not statistically significant. This result was exactly the opposite of Brazilian hotels. The extrinsic motivation has shown higher ratings for importance and performance in English hotels. Again, the opposite effect was obtained in Brazilian hotels. However, this result corroborates Breiter et al., (2002), Murray (2022), and Simons & Enz (1995), which have found extrinsic motivations with higher ratings than intrinsic ones. Finally, it is essential to highlight that the ratings for employee motivation's importance have presented the opposite results in both countries. Brazil has shown higher ratings related to importance than England. On the other hand, England has presented higher ratings related to performance than Brazil.

3.3. Comparative Study Between Brazil and England

The profile results have shown that Brazilian hotels had more women as human resources managers than English hotels, that is, more women in decision-making positions. On the other hand, English hotels had more women in customer contact positions as frontline employees. As mentioned earlier, both countries have shown importance ratings with higher scores than performance ones. This means that human resources practices and employee motivations were considered important for those who answered the surveys but must be better managed to achieve the performance desired by hotel employees.

The results obtained through the human resources managers have shown that Brazilian and English hotels have ranked the same practices with the highest importance and performance scores. However, for Brazilian managers, training is the most important practice, while information sharing is the one that has the best performance in their hotels. These results support their dimensions on Hofstede's (1980) model. With training and information sharing, employees could learn about the hierarchy, as well as the rules and legal systems of their organisation. Employees can also protect and help each other through these human resources practices. On the other hand, human resources managers from England have ranked employment security with the highest importance and performance ratings. These results also corroborate their dimensions on Hofstede's (1980) model. This means that with safety in their workplace, inequalities amongst people should be minimised since everybody has access to the same resources. These results also have shown that they are concerned about themselves as people in individualist societies.

The practices that had the lowest scores in both countries were compensation policy and selective hiring, the latter showing a non-significant difference between importance and performance in English hotels. These practices had these scores, probably because of the respondents, human resources managers. Maybe if frontline employees had answered these questions, these results could have been different. On the other hand, respondents were chosen because of their knowledge of the hotel as a whole, following previous studies (e.g., Lee et al., 2015; Nadda et al., 2014; Nieves & Quintana, 2018). Finally, although human resources managers in both countries have ranked importance ratings with similar scores, the English hotels have ranked performance ratings higher than Brazilians. This means that English hotels are managing human resources practices better than Brazilians. This result corroborates Ahmad & Zafar (2018), who have found that different cultures behave differently, and Aydin & Tuzun (2019), who have concluded that different countries can show contradictory outcomes.

The results obtained from the frontline hotel employees have shown that Brazilian and English hotels have shown the opposite results. Intrinsic motivations have appeared with the highest importance and performance ratings and also with the highest difference between both importance and performance ratings in Brazilian hotels. Dipietro et al., (2014) found a similar result in their study with employees from Aruba hotels. These results corroborate their dimensions on Hofstede's (1980) model related to power distance, collectivist culture, and uncertainty avoidance. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation in English hotels did not significantly differentiate between importance and performance ratings and has shown extrinsic motivation with the highest importance and performance ratings. Breiter et al., (2002), Murray (2022), and Simons & Enz (1995) have found similar results in their studies with hotel employees from North America. These results corroborate their dimensions on Hofstede's (1980) model related to power distance, individualist culture, and uncertainty avoidance.

Finally, frontline employees from Brazilian hotels have ranked employee motivation importance ratings as a whole higher than the English. On the other hand, English hotels have rated employee motivation performance ratings as a whole higher than Brazilian. Again, these results corroborate Ahmad & Zafar (2018) and Aydin & Tuzun (2019), who have found that different countries had different behaviours. These results were also supported by the conservation of resources theory, which considers that people view resources differently, according to where the surveys are conducted, in individualist or collectivist cultures (Hobfoll et al., 2018). People in interdependent environments are more concerned with the group goals and are more willing to adjust their behaviours to achieve them (Heine, 2019). It is also important to highlight that these results corroborate their cultural dimensions in Hofstede's (1980) model. Brazilian employees believe that hierarchy should be respected; they are integrated into strong groups that tend to protect themselves; they have a strong need for rules and legal systems. On the other hand, English employees believe that inequalities amongst people should be minimised; they also tend to think about themselves instead of the whole group; they do not worry about the future as their planning is not detail-oriented.

4. CONCLUSION

The present research has performed a comparative study of human resources practices and employee motivation between hotels located in Brazil and England, using the cultural dimensions by Hofstede (1980) as methodological support and the conservation of resources as the theoretical framework. By doing so, it was possible to broaden the discussion on cultural differences in human resources management between tourism-dependent destinations. This investigation has surveyed hotels located in Brazil and England. These countries were chosen due to previous studies that have suggested examining human resources in different cultural contexts to avoid potential limitations (e.g., Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020; Yang, 2012). Murphy et al., (2018) have argued that business literature has done several studies on human resources across countries, a trend that has not yet been widespread in hospitality literature. According to Hofstede (1980), Brazil has high power distance and uncertainty avoidance scores, considering a collectivist country. On the other hand, England has low power distance and uncertainty avoidance scores, considering an individualist country. Thus, applying surveys in these two countries with opposite cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1980) avoids cultural limitations and gives some interesting insights into the academic and practical field.

4.1. Practical and Theoretical Implications

This study can assist professionals and academics in developing human resources practices that are considered key drivers of high performance, as well as finding the factors that can motivate employees in their daily tasks, thus creating sustainable workplace environments. From the practical viewpoint, it is possible to conclude that both Brazilian and English human resources managers have considered more important and with the best performance issues related to employment security, information sharing, and training. Likewise, the human resources managers of both countries have also considered the selective hiring and compensation policy as the worst human resources practices in terms of importance and performance. Finally, all importance ratings were higher than performance ones. This means that although hotels in both countries are paying more attention to the right practices, they should improve the performance of human resources practices as a whole, in order to achieve better organisational results, satisfying employees in their workplace.

On the other hand, employee motivation in both countries has presented the opposite results. For Brazilian frontline employees, intrinsic motivations have received the best scores on importance and performance issues, as well as the highest differences between both importance and performance ratings. This means that although frontline employees are more concerned about issues related to their human needs that can foster employee growth and development (Paek et al., 2015), these motivations still demand more attention from hoteliers. However, issues related to extrinsic motivations have shown higher scores of importance and performance for English employees and also have presented the highest difference between both importance and performance since intrinsic motivation did not offer any statistical difference between them. This means that although issues related to employee well-being, which boost their efforts to fulfil their job requirements, are being achieved (Paek et al., 2015), these motivations still need more attention from English hoteliers.

It is vital to highlight that although all importance ratings had higher scores than performance in both countries, some issues need more attention than others. For example, Brazilian hotels should focus their efforts on human resources practices related to training and compensation policy, as well as their employee intrinsic motivations since these issues had the highest differences between importance and performance. Employees need to receive regular training and better compensation to feel secure in their jobs, probably because of their high uncertainty avoidance score in Hofstede's (1980) model. Likewise, it is crucial to understand that, according to this research, the compensation policy should focus on intrinsic motivations; this means, non-monetary incentives. On the other hand, English hotels should concentrate their efforts on information sharing, employment security, and extrinsic motivations, since these issues showed the highest differences between importance and performance. These results were also related to their low power distance and individualism features in Hofstede's (1980) model. And again, besides monetary incentives such as better wages, English employees must have good working conditions and job security to be better extrinsically motivated.

Finally, it is critical to understand that the hospitality industry relies on motivated human capital to provide a competitive advantage through employee-customer interactions (Kong et al., 2018; Sakdiyakorn and Wattanacharoensil, 2018). Likewise, these interactions should be managed to create a sustainable work environment through human resources practices. So, the management of these two topics - human resources practices and employee motivation - is essential to provide valuable experience in service encounters and a key reason for loyalty to hospitality companies (Ahmad et al., 2010). Organisations must be successful and ensure employees are motivated with their daily tasks, thereby providing high-quality customer service. Motivated employees whose needs and expectations are met have better behaviour, and their satisfaction will be reflected in customer satisfaction (Ivanovic & Blazevic, 2009; Kukanja, 2013). However, Kovach (1987) found in his study that managers did not know what motivates their employees. The present research came to close this gap by providing practical information on the issues that motivate hotel employees and foster human resources practices, which are vital for achieving employee needs and expectations.

From the theoretical point of view, this research provides insights into the cultural differences in the human resources management between two countries, which is supported by Murphy et al., (2018) and Yang (2012). These scholars have concluded that academic research should manage these cultural differences in order to avoid potential limitations. Likewise, other researchers also have agreed that employee behaviour should be studied more in tourism-dependent regions of the world to identify aspects related to job satisfaction and organisational performance (Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018). Thus, the present research provides some unique information that can help to close these literature gaps by using the conservation of resources as the theoretical framework, as suggested by Hobfoll (2011).

Besides, it was the first time that human resources practices and employee motivation from Brazilian hotels were compared to English ones. Both countries have shown some opposite cultural dimensions, according to the model created by Hofstede (1980), which makes this study a valuable theoretical contribution. Following this model, it was possible to conclude that both countries have shown characteristics that match their cultural dimensions and also corroborate previous studies (e.g., Breiter et al., 2002; Dipietro et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2015; Murray, 2022; Simons & Enz, 1995). Similarly, English hotels have shown higher ratings related to performance than Brazilian, confirming Ahmad & Zafar (2018) and Aydin & Tuzun's (2019) studies. These scholars have concluded that people from different countries behave differently, and sometimes they can show contradictory results in the hospitality industry investigations. Finally, the current research has applied the importance-performance analysis in order to compare the data collected from hotel employees (managers and frontline) from two countries (Brazil and England), which, to the authors' knowledge, has not yet been used in the hospitality field for this purpose.

4.2. Limitations and Future Research

Although this investigation has provided valuable practical and theoretical implications, it is not free from limitations. First, this research has used a convenience sample of hotels located in six touristic destinations in Brazil and England, which does not allow scholars to generalise the results to the entire country. Future studies should apply the same survey to other destinations in both countries in order to enable generalisations. Second, this research has presented different sample sizes across countries, with 96 hotels from Brazil and 58 from England. Future studies should exhibit a larger sample size and a closer number of respondents between the two research populations to achieve better results and allow testing of their differences. Finally, this investigation has used cross-sectional data. Future studies should conduct longitudinal surveys to enable hotel managers to identify and manage the improvements obtained with the information provided due to the investigations over time.

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APPENDIX

Human Resources Practices and Employee Motivation

Selective Hiring

External consultants are used to hire staff.

Pre-employment tests are used to hire staff.

The selection is preferably based on people who fit into the organizational culture of the hotel.

The selection of staff is made in order to ensure the quality of the services provided.

The hotel usually hires employees with special needs.

Before hiring an outside employee, an internal investigation is first made to identify the promotion potential of existing employees.

Compensation Policy

There is a career development plan oriented to meet employees' needs, through internal promotion.

The career development plan aims to promote employees who have most commitment with the hotel's objectives.

The career development plan is a process followed strictly by the company.

The team is rewarded with the aim of reducing turnover.

Incentives are offered to boost individual performance.

Employees are paid based on their contribution.

Employees who are committed to the hotel's aims are rewarded.

Training and Development

The training makes employees improve their performance.

The staff is trained and developed systematically and regularly.

The training is considered essential for the hotel's performance as a whole.

Teams are trained to achieve multiple skills and abilities.

Training aids in the learning process of the employees.

The training is carried out in order to meet customer needs.

Decentralization

Decentralized decisions are encouraged.

Teams are used to decide on internal problems.

The teams are regularly rotated to perform various tasks.

Decisions are made by consulting the team.

Team members are constantly been encouraged.

The sectorial managers motivate their teams in order to achieve the hotel's objectives.

There is constant communication between the different teams.

The hotel encourages and integrates the employees, in order to provide decision-making power to work teams.

Information Sharing

The staff are well aware of the hotel's objectives and strategies.

Teams receive information about their performance.

There is an improvement in the teams' performance after the employees receive the information.

Teams use the information to perform services quickly and with customization.

The sectorial managers communicate with their teams in order to achieve the hotel's objectives.

There is communication between the various sectors of the hotel with the purpose of sharing information.

There is a formalized system, with pre-established rules for sharing information.

The hotel controls the flow of information in order to check if it is being transferred correctly.

Employment Security

Employees that perform your work practices correctly do not get fired.

The hotel treats its employees with transparency, making them feel secure in their jobs, if they properly perform their duties.

The hotel cares about the safety of its employees in the workplace.

The use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is mandatory and the hotel performs a rigorous inspection.

The hotel controls the proper use of PPE by their employees.

Employees who handle machines, equipment and dangerous and/or flammable products receive training directed to perform a certain task.

The hotel conforms to the requirement of the Health & Safety Executive.

The hotel offers physical adaptations to employees who have any kind of special need.

Employee Motivation

Good Wages

Discipline

Job Security

Interesting Work

Feeling of Being in on Things

Opportunity for Advancement

Good Working Conditions

Loyalty to Employees

Sympathetic Personal Help

Appreciation for a Job Well Done

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