



Research on Factors Influencing and Strategies for Enhancing Employee Loyalty in the Food and Beverage Industry

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to investigate the factors influencing employee loyalty in the food and beverage industry and propose corresponding strategies to enhance the attractiveness to high-level talents, reduce or minimize employee turnover, and strengthen the cohesion and centripetal force between employees and food and beverage enterprises, thus improving the competitiveness of the company. The research sample consists of employees from a selected branch of the Hai Di Lao restaurant chain, selected through random sampling. A combination of online and offline questionnaire surveys was conducted, revealing issues related to salary and benefits, promotion opportunities and mechanisms, leadership styles within the organization, and corporate culture planning and development. Finally, based on the specific reasons behind these issues, relevant analysis was conducted to propose appropriate countermeasures. This research provides guidance and reference for increasing employee loyalty in this particular case and offers insights for employee management in other similar food and beverage enterprises.

Keywords: Staff loyalty; Staff management; Promotion strategy; Enterprise talent team building.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Currently, there is an increasing level of competition among different types of restaurants in the same industry. Employees play a vital role, and their loyalty is influenced by various factors such as personal, organizational, and societal aspects, making employee loyalty an indispensable aspect of modern human resource management. It holds significant importance for the development of a company. The concept of "loyalty" was first introduced by Josia Royce, a philosophy professor at Harvard University, in 1908. The assessment of employee loyalty is based on a series of standards set by management and the extent to which employees adhere to and fulfill them. Since the 1950s, American companies have implemented regular evaluation systems to assess employee loyalty, which is still in practice today, as seen in major food industry giants such as Pizza Hut, KFC, and McDonald's. Employees who share the company's hardships, possess a strong sense of mission and responsibility, and display a highly proactive and committed attitude towards their work contribute significantly to achieving organizational goals (Liu., & Chen, 2013). With the progress of time, the new generation of employees has become the backbone of the workforce, but also the most mobile and unstable group, exerting a significant impact on a company's development. From the beginning of recruitment planning to the cultivation of a qualified employee, a considerable amount of time, energy, and financial resources are required. Therefore, employee loyalty is a critical factor in determining human resources. Low employee loyalty leads to work fatigue, resulting in direct human resource cost losses. Decreased employee loyalty affects customer loyalty, and high employee turnover brings a series of costs to the company, including recruitment costs, selection costs, hiring costs, turnover costs, and output loss costs, among others. The quality, abilities, loyalty, and commitment of employees are crucial for achieving organizational performance (Antoncic, 2011). This study takes branch A of Hai Di Lao Hot Pot as an example to conduct an in-depth questionnaire analysis on employee loyalty within the restaurant, identify related influencing factors, and finally propose corresponding enhancement strategies. The aim is to help the company reduce staff turnover, strengthen cohesion and centripetal force, and provide guidance and reference for optimizing employee management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Employee Loyalty

"Loyalty" refers to wholehearted dedication without any personal motives. Employee loyalty encompasses both attitude loyalty and behavioral loyalty, which are not influenced by other factors, but rather demonstrate wholehearted commitment and dedication (Wang., & Yao, 2008; Wei, 2022).

There are three key points that explain employee loyalty: (1) Employees recognize and align with the company's values and culture; (2) Employees trust that they have room for growth and receive certain material benefits within the company; (3) Under the aforementioned conditions, employees wholeheartedly invest themselves in their work and actively contribute to

the company's development (Wei, 2022). If leaders only attribute negative emotions of employees to their loyalty without considering their management approach, it will greatly impact the company's development. Employees demonstrate behavioral loyalty when they consistently perform tasks assigned by the organization with high quality and efficiency. The best manifestation of attitude loyalty is when employees align the company's goals with their personal goals (Liu, 2022). Therefore, the true meaning of loyalty lies not in demanding it, but rather in employees' evaluation of the company. The combination of employees' loyal intentions and loyal actions is like the two wings of an airplane; both are indispensable. Only when both aspects are present can employee loyalty be achieved.

2.2 Employee Management

In the development of a company, the management of individuals will greatly impact the efficiency and quality of work. This is particularly crucial in the restaurant industry, where there are numerous employees and complex responsibilities. The company should establish internal regulations in accordance with laws and regulations, as it is a primary manifestation of a standardized operating system and the exercise of human rights. However, in reality, not everyone can adhere to this standardized operating system. Different companies have different intricacies, which necessitates more precise, comprehensive, and user-friendly approaches. Designing an employee management system based on the actual conditions of the enterprise will enhance employee loyalty, thereby ensuring smoother and more efficient operations.

2.3 Building an Enterprise Talent Pool

In an enterprise, talent is the most significant human capital and a vital component. Therefore, attracting and selecting the best talents, providing training to the top employees, and retaining them become crucial tasks in human resource management. They also form the main content of enterprise human resource planning and implementation. As such, the company must establish corresponding systems for talent acquisition, recruitment, performance evaluation, and talent integration.

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Questionnaire Survey Method

The questionnaire design for this study is based on the survey questionnaire of employee loyalty by Wang XueJun (2019), combined with the theme of this study. The questionnaire consists of five sections, totaling 17 questions. The first section includes basic demographic information of the employees in this case, consisting of 5 questions. The second section focuses on employee welfare benefits, with 3 questions covering aspects such as salary benefits, company holidays, and their corresponding impact on loyalty. The third section addresses organizational culture and development mechanisms, with 5 questions covering promotion mechanisms, career planning, corporate culture, corporate values, and employee relations. The fourth section examines leadership factors, with 2 questions related to leadership style and level of trust in leaders. The fifth section consists of 2 open-ended questions, seeking suggestions for improving employee loyalty. SPSS tools were used to analyze the collected data.

3.2 Pre-survey and Implementation of the Questionnaire

This study focuses on the A branch of Hai Di Lao Restaurant located near the author's workplace. Before conducting the formal questionnaire survey, a sample of 10 employees was selected for a pilot test. A total of 10 questionnaires were collected, and all were deemed valid, resulting in a 100% response rate. The standardized Cronbach's α coefficient for the pre-survey of employees was found to be 0.968, indicating good questionnaire reliability. Based on these findings, the pilot questionnaire was used as the official questionnaire for the study.

3.3 Reliability and Validity Testing

The reliability coefficient indicates the stability and reliability of the questionnaire. From Table 1, it can be observed that the verified survey questionnaire achieved a reliability coefficient of 0.912, indicating high reliability. A higher reliability coefficient suggests that the measured data is closer to the intended data. As shown in Table 2, the KMO value of the questionnaire is 0.743 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating good questionnaire validity.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.912	.913	10

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.743
	Approx. Chi-Square	400.380
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	15
	Sig.	.000

RESULT ANALYSIS

The questionnaire for this study was conducted using a random sampling method, targeting individual employees as the sample. It was administered on February 16, 2023, through online platforms (such as WeChat and email) as well as offline distribution. A total of 65 questionnaires were collected by February 26, with 2 invalid responses. Therefore, the number of valid questionnaires was 63, resulting in a valid response rate of 96.92%. The collected questionnaire data will now be analyzed.

4.1 Basic Analysis of Survey Participants (I)

Based on the results of the gender survey conducted in this study, it was found that 37 of the employees were female(58.73%), while 26 were male(41.27%). This indicates a predominance of female employees. Refer to Table 3 for further details.

Table 3: Employees Gender

Gender	Employees	%
Female	37	58.73
Male	26	41.27

The data in Table 4 illustrates the composition of employee age groups. The age group of 19-24 years old accounts for 57.14% of the total. Following that, employees aged 25-30 constitute 31.75%. The number of employees in the 31-36 and 37-42 age groups is the same, each accounting for 4.76%. Lastly, employees aged 42 and above represent only 1.59%. The overall employee population is predominantly composed of young individuals. It is precisely this younger age group that experiences frequent personnel changes, leading to lower levels of loyalty towards the company.

Table 4: Employees Age Groups

Options	Employees	%
19-24 years old	36	57.14
25-30 years old	20	31.75
31-36 years old	3	4.76
37-42 years old	3	4.76
42years old and above	1	1.59
Total	63	

According to the data in Table 5, the educational level of the employees is relatively low. The majority have a college degree, accounting for 42.86%, which is nearly half of the total. The number of employees with a bachelor's degree is 30.16%, while those with a college degree or below make up 26.98%. There are no employees with a master's degree or higher. This indicates that the knowledge level of this group is average, and they place more emphasis on material incentives rather than spiritual motivation.

Table 5: Employees Educational Backgrounds

Options	Employees	%
Below Junior College	17	26.98
Junior College	27	42.86
Undergraduate	19	30.16
Master's degree	0	0
Total	63	

Based on the data in Table 6, the distribution of work experience reveals that employees with less than 1 year of experience hold the highest percentage at 41.27%. The majority of employees in the company are newcomers who have worked for less than a year. It takes a certain process for new employees to integrate into and identify with the company. If the company fails to provide sufficient support and motivation during this process, it may result in lower loyalty from new employees. The next group consists of employees with 1-3 years of work experience, accounting for 38.1%. This is followed by employees with 3-5 years of work experience, representing 12.7%. The lowest percentage is for those with more than 5 years of experience, accounting for only 7.9%.

Table 6: Employees Work Experience

Options	Employees	%
Within 1 year	26	41.27
1-3 years	24	38.1
3-5 years	8	12.7
More than 5 years	5	7.94
Total	63	

4.2 Analysis of Employee Loyalty in Three Dimensions(II)

The degree of employee loyalty to the company's compensation system is as follows: 47.62% express satisfaction, followed by 31.75% who are generally satisfied, and 19.05% who are very satisfied. Only 1.59% of employees express dissatisfaction. Overall, employees are satisfied with their current monthly income, but have not yet reached a level of complete satisfaction.

Regarding the company's existing welfare system and the degree of employee loyalty, the majority of employees express a general level of loyalty, accounting for 44.44% of the total, which is close to fifty percent. 41.27% of employees express loyalty, while 14.29% express a high level of loyalty. No employees express a lack of loyalty. Overall, employees consider the current welfare system to be at a moderate level, indicating that there is still significant room for improvement in this aspect.

Regarding the company's existing promotion mechanism and the degree of employee loyalty, the percentage of employees who express a general level of loyalty is the same as the percentage of employees who express loyalty, both at 41.27%. 14.29% of employees express a high level of loyalty, while 3.17% express a lack of loyalty. Overall, employees consider the current promotion mechanism of the company to be at a slightly above average level of loyalty.

Regarding the company's provision of career planning for employees and the degree of employee loyalty, the highest percentage of employees (41.27%) express loyalty, followed by a general level of loyalty (36.51%), a high level of loyalty (14.29%), and finally employees who lack loyalty (7.94%). Overall, providing career planning for employees can lead to a higher level of loyalty towards the company.

Regarding the company's existing corporate culture and the degree of employee loyalty, the percentage of employees who express a general level of loyalty is the same as the percentage of employees who express satisfaction, both at 41.27%. 15.87% of employees express a high level of satisfaction, while 1.59% express dissatisfaction. Overall, employees consider the current corporate culture to be at a slightly above average level, indicating that the company should pay more attention to planning and developing the corporate culture in this aspect.

Regarding the alignment of company values with employee values and the degree of employee loyalty, the highest percentage of employees (42.86%) express uncertainty about the alignment, followed by employees who agree with the alignment of values (41.27%), and employees who strongly agree (15.87%). There are no employees who lack loyalty in this aspect.

Based on the company's leadership style and the degree of employee loyalty, the highest percentage of employees (42.86%) express satisfaction, which is the same as the percentage of employees who express a general level of satisfaction with this leadership style. However, only 12.7% of employees express a high level of satisfaction. There is also a small percentage of employees (1.59%) who express dissatisfaction.

Regarding the level of trust in company leaders and the degree of employee loyalty, the highest percentage of employees (55.55%) express loyalty, followed by employees who express a general level of loyalty (28.57%), and employees who express a high level of loyalty (15.87%). There are no employees who lack loyalty in this aspect.

As shown in Figure 1, the data indicates that the highest percentage of reasons for employee turnover are personal reasons and lack of promotion opportunities, both accounting for 58.73%. Tied for second place are better conditions offered by other companies and inconsistency with salary and welfare expectations, both accounting for 50.79%. The next reason is dissatisfaction with the company's leadership style, accounting for 42.86%, followed by disagreement with the company's corporate culture, accounting for 36.51%. Additionally, 7.94% of employees believe that other factors have led to their resignation.

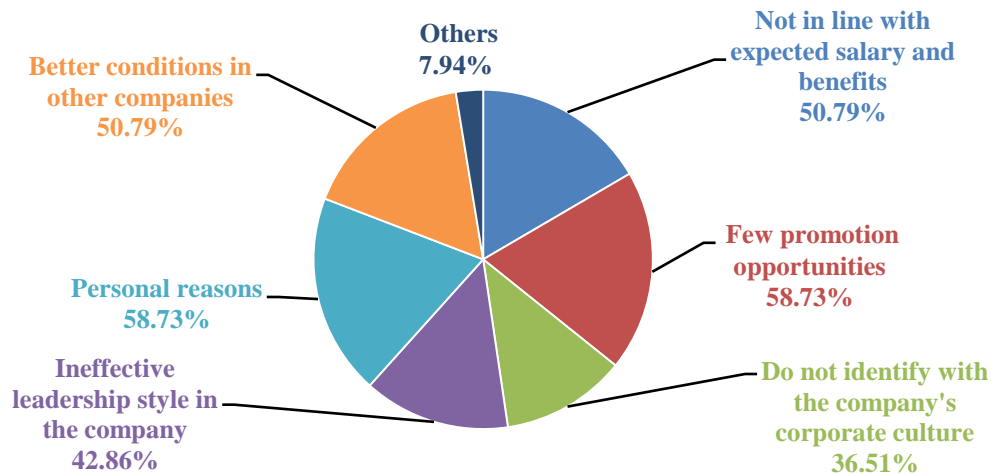


Figure 1: Factors for employees turnover

The data presented in Table 7 indicates that, in order to enhance employees' loyalty to the company, the respondents believe that the following areas need improvement: a staggering 77.78% of employees believe that there is a need for enhancement in terms of salary and benefits. Furthermore, 69.84% of employees consider the need for improvement in terms of their personal growth and development. Subsequently, there is a prominent percentage of 61.9% of employees who believe that improvements in leadership style are necessary. Additionally, over half of the employees, accounting for 55.56%, perceive a need for improvement in terms of company culture. The remaining 11.11% of employees suggest improvements in other areas.

Options	Employees	%
Salary and benefits	49	77.78
Growth and development	44	69.84
Corporate culture	35	55.56
Leadership style	39	61.9
Others	7	11.11
Total valid responses	63	

STRATEGIES AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Factors Influencing Employee Loyalty (I)

5.1.1 Individual Factors

The factors influencing individual loyalty mainly include gender, age, personality traits, level of maturity, and technical abilities.

According to the survey, employees aged 30 and below account for 88.89% of the sample, indicating a large proportion of the younger generation in the workforce. Generally speaking, the younger generation is highly susceptible to external influences, making it more restless and less loyal to the company. This generation is more individualistic, with a more proactive mindset, having grown up in a materialistic society, and being more sensitive to their own feelings.

In terms of personality, employees are independent individuals, each possessing their own nature and sociability. Due to factors such as family and upbringing, their loyalty to the company includes both subjective inclination and objective

influences beyond their control. Each employee has a suitable workplace, where they can fulfill their agreed-upon tasks within a reasonable timeframe and obtain the basic necessities of life, which is their primary need.

In terms of cognition, data analysis shows that employees have varying educational backgrounds ranging from below college degree to college and above, and they also differ in terms of their tenure in the company. Employees have certain psychological expectations of the company, and only when these expectations are met will they become more focused on their responsibilities. When employees perceive their work environment differently, their loyalty to the company will also be affected. If employees underestimate their own importance and value to the company, their trust and sense of belonging will decrease. This becomes particularly evident when the company's improper actions have a significant negative impact on employees, further lowering their loyalty (Xu, 2021).

5.1.2 Enterprise Factors

Enterprise factors primarily include compensation system, corporate culture, growth opportunities, working conditions, and leadership factors.

Regarding the compensation system, the younger generation has become the backbone of the catering industry. After meeting their basic survival needs, a satisfactory income will motivate them to work diligently. Salary and benefits are important factors to be considered by most employees and are necessary conditions for fostering loyalty. If there is a significant disparity between wages and benefits, loyalty becomes an empty phrase. For instance, despite facing external challenges and various unfavorable factors, Byte Company still provides bonuses to eligible employees. This gesture has excited some employees, expressing, "At this moment, I feel compelled to dedicate myself to Byte." Although this statement may be exaggerated, it highlights employees' support for the company (Li, 2021). Therefore, the impact of wages and bonuses on employee motivation should not be underestimated.

As for corporate culture, a good corporate culture can foster unity and possess strong cohesion among company members. Corporate culture refers to a set of widely accepted values and behavioral guidelines that emerge in the long-term stable development of a company. It is a spiritual force (Li., et al.2018). Survey data reveals that as high as 41.27% of employees perceive the existing corporate culture as "average," which is detrimental to the company's development. A corporate culture that is highly embraced can attract and enhance employees' identification with the company.

Regarding growth opportunities for employees, survey data shows that 41.27% of employees still perceive loyalty to the existing promotion mechanisms of the company as "average," and some even indicate "none" of their loyalty, indicating a less optimistic situation. Therefore, as an enterprise, it is crucial to provide employees with career planning as soon as they join the company. The career planning provided by the company must be feasible, progressive, and logical, allowing employees to have goals and motivation (Wei, 2022).

In terms of working conditions, they can be categorized into hardware and software conditions. A comfortable, hygienic, and safe workplace is necessary to ensure the physical, mental, and smooth functioning of employees' work. Maintaining harmonious relationships and effective communication among colleagues and superiors is crucial in enhancing employee satisfaction.

Regarding leadership factors, survey data shows that leadership style and credibility have a significant impact on employee loyalty. The competence of leaders directly influences the work atmosphere, corporate culture, and collaboration among members of different departments within the company. Infectious leaders can inspire and motivate people to work under their guidance. A favorable working environment can foster a sense of belonging and cohesion among employees. When employees establish a tacit understanding with their superiors and colleagues, they will have more confidence and enhance their loyalty.

5.1.3 Social Aspect

The external environment encompasses factors such as policies, culture, economy, and technology, which are uncontrollable and can impact businesses. However, there is generally not a significant difference among companies due to their varying missions and objectives (Xu, 2021). In specific environments, apart from existing industry competitors, there are various potential competitive forces that companies must consider when engaging in activities to enhance employee loyalty. According to survey results, more than half of the employees indicate that they would voluntarily resign due to better offers from other companies. Individuals have their own aspirations, so when a company provides a better working environment for its employees, they may choose to leave the company.

5.2 Enhancement Measures (II)

Both individual and social environmental factors of employees are external reasons. Therefore, if a company wishes to enhance employee loyalty, it must start with its own internal factors. Hence, based on employee characteristics and the current situation of the company, this study aims to select practical improvement measures to enhance employee loyalty.

5.2.1 Reasonable Compensation System

Firstly, the salary level is crucial as employees work to obtain a certain remuneration to support their livelihoods (Wang,2020). A well-designed compensation system can attract and retain more employees. After fully understanding employees' expected salaries, companies should combine this information with the actual situation to provide employees with satisfactory compensation. Additionally, it is important to note that higher compensation is not always better; instead, companies should formulate competitive wages and benefits based on their specific circumstances, while also making adjustments as the company develops. Employees who make different contributions to the company should be rewarded with differentiated salaries. Therefore, the principle of differentiated incentives should be incorporated into the salary system. Lastly, establishing a fair corporate performance evaluation system is essential. Performance evaluation is one of the six major elements of human resources in a company, and its effectiveness greatly improves the company's talent management. Conducting performance evaluations for outstanding employees allows them to receive substantial performance bonuses and admirable recognition. To achieve this goal, companies should combine quantitative and qualitative indicators, construct a scientific and rigorous performance evaluation system, and improve the rewards and penalties system.

5.2.2 Corporate Culture

Enterprise culture is the core of modern human resource management, and it is the central idea that companies must follow in their pursuit of excellence. A strong culture allows employees to identify with the company's goals and values, creating high cohesion and integration (Wang., & Yao, 2008). Emphasizing people-oriented management is the core value of a company, which means treating people with respect, understanding, care, reliance, development, and service (Antonicic, 2011). Effective motivation enables individuals to act spontaneously, actively participate in innovation and creation, and unleash their potential. By allowing employees to play their maximum role in their work, providing maximum motivation to employees, and promoting the common development of employees and the company, passive loyalty of employees to the company can be transformed into active loyalty.

5.2.3 Opportunities for Growth

Providing good career development opportunities is essential. Some successful companies attach great importance to employees' career planning, providing them with learning opportunities to better fulfill their personal plans. Development space includes two aspects. Firstly, in the current stage of development, employees mainly focus on their expectations for salary and benefits, so companies should continuously optimize their compensation and benefits. Secondly, future development should also be considered. A good soldier is not unwilling to be a general, and a good employee is not unwilling to be a manager. Both material and spiritual incentives are important. Employees want to be recognized and valued by their superiors, which requires company managers to have a deep understanding of grassroots-level work dynamics and achievements, and to give timely recognition to employees (Li, 2021).

5.2.4 Competent Leaders

Leaders are the most important link between employees and the company. Leaders play a significant role in establishing employee loyalty. Leaders who interact with employees day in and day out not only influence their work experience but also directly impact their work performance and growth (Yao, 2021). If a company wants employees to have a high level of loyalty, leaders must set an example. A qualified leader should meet six criteria, including good physical fitness, strong psychological qualities, extensive knowledge, solid skills, noble moral character, and advanced concepts. Managers should manage human resources in terms of their social sustainability actions, participation, and transparency, in order to achieve greater loyalty and retention rates, improve organizational performance, and bring greater benefits to society (Gabriel., et al. 2022). The key aspect is advanced management concepts. Many leaders have a strong sense of hierarchy and an attitude of looking down upon their subordinates, which is detrimental to management. High-quality managers should be courageous, proactive, and armed with forward-thinking to lead their teams, guide and motivate employees' morale, and enable them to actively and voluntarily strive for the company's development goals.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study explores the factors related to employee loyalty in A Hotel Company based on three dimensions: individual, company, and external. According to the questionnaire results, the overall loyalty of employees to A Company is

relatively low, and the reasons can be attributed to three aspects. At the individual level, factors such as gender, age, personality traits, maturity of thoughts, and technical abilities play a role. At the company level, factors include compensation system, enterprise culture, growth space, working environment, and leaders. At the external level, factors include generous compensation provided by the company and ample development space.

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